The Sufi Paradigm and the Makings of a Vernacular Knowledge in Colonial India

The Case of Sindh (1851–1929)

Michel Boivin

palgrave macmillan

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روزا نمازون, اي پڻ چڱو ڪم,

او ڪو ٻيو فهم,جنهن سان پسنجي پرين کي

(سر آسا,4)

Namaz and Fasting are indeed good deeds
But there is some other wisdom
By which to behold the Beloved

— Shah Abd al-Latif, *Risalo Shah Abd al-Latif urf Shah jo risalo, Volume I*, ed. H. M. Gurbakhshani, Karachi, 1923.

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Entrance to the Town of Schewan, on the Side of Lal Shahbaz's Tomb, **Lieutenant William Edwards,** *Sketches in Scinde*, **London, 1846, Hand-colored lithograph, 27 × 37.5 cm**

Acknowledgments

I started this journey many years back, about 15 years ago, and since the time I have devoted to this issue is significant, I had many opportunities to present different steps of the research in various places, such as Paris, of course, but also Karachi, Mumbai, Miami, London, Rajkot, Heidelberg, and others. I am thus very thankful to all of my colleagues, students, and other scholars for their comments and questions. These engagements were so helpful for me in clarifying my construction and discourse.

Over the years, I have published a number of papers, in French and in English, regarding the issue of the making of a new vernacular knowledge in colonial Sindh (see Boivin 2005, 2011, 2015a, b). The first resulted from a lecture I delivered at the University of Saurashtra in Rajkot (Gujarat). The proceedings were published long ago, but I have never found an opportunity to see my paper published, although I have seen it quoted in other papers. This is so interesting, to see the venture of academic papers. Nonetheless, since then, the data under study has been expanded quite a bit, and the gradual elaboration of the issue has compelled me to reframe the perspective many times.

In this respect, an unexpected step in the completion of this book was the discovery in the British Library of a handwritten book, or more exactly a catalogue, named the *Catalogue of Sindhi Books*, which contains about 2000 references regarding books in Sindhi, most of them printed in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. It offers living evidence of the intense debates that occurred in Sindh regarding groundbreaking issues around the areas of society, religion, community, and nation. Furthermore, it is not that this collection had been

underestimated; it has rather been totally neglected. I warmly thank the staff of the British Library in London: Martin Moir, Marina Chelini, and Nur Sobers-Khan. Another mine of gold for my research was the Sindh Archives in Clifton, Karachi. Here, again, I want to warmly thank the staff and especially my friend Akash Datwani. After I had identified the role played by the Theosophical Society in the making of the Sufi paradigm, I was greatly helped by my friends from the Theosophical Society in Karachi and Hyderabad. Despite the difficult conditions they face in these times of religious radicalization, they shared their archives without any restrictions: may they be witnesses to my immense gratitude.

In Mumbai, I am very grateful to Chhaya Goswami for her constant availability to help me and for her guidance in the Maharashtra State Archives. Regarding Mirza Qalich Beg's work, I was lucky to meet his grandson Mirza Aijaz Ali Beg, who generously shared the catalogue he had made. It would be a surrealistic challenge to mention all the people with whom I have exchanged thoughts and information about the Sufi paradigm. Nevertheless, I want to mention that I have also greatly appreciated the help provided by Saba Halepota, Kamran Kumbher, Yogi Sehni, and Uttara Shahani.

Note of Transliteration

No academic attempt has been made to transliterate the vernacular words in this manuscript. There is no universally accepted system for Sindhi, and my conviction is that people who don't know Sindhi will not know it better through the use of transliterated words. And those who do know Sindhi will know the word, be it transliterated or not.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Building of Colonial Knowledge and Its Aftermath

British Representation of Sehwan as a Metaphor

The painter, Lieutenant William Edwards, selected an infrequent view of Sehwan in order to draw what he called *Entrance to the Town of Schewan, on the Side of Lal Shahbaz's Tomb*, which was published in a book in 1846. The drawing was completed soon after the conquest of Sindh by General Napier and the British army. The hand-colored lithograph is dominated by the color brown, which can reflect the dominant light or the mud with which most of the houses were built, or even a British representation of Sindh. As suggested by the title, it is Sehwan seen "on the side of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's tomb." But contrary to what Edwards claims, the entrance of Sehwan was not located at the main door of the shrine, as we can see in another British officer's map—that of Henry F. Ainslee, drawn in 1852. The most amazing aspect of Edwards' painting is how he decided to represent his subject, the town of Sehwan.

Contrary to all of the following colonial representations, be they paintings, drawings, or photographs, the mausoleum where Lal Shahbaz Qalandar is supposed to be buried is not the core of the representation. For Edwards, the mausoleum was not the embodiment of the town of Sehwan. While in the mid-nineteenth century the mausoleum was

considered to be the spiritual center of the town, and the most attractive building in the Kalhora architectural style,[1] Edwards represented it only as a marginal element of the painting, it being reduced to the extreme right. But while it is located at the extreme right of the painting, the somewhat vertiginous perspective of the wall as given by Edwards provides a kind of threatening shadow coming from the mausoleum, as reinforced further still by its impressive size. The characters look very small in comparison with the wall, whose size has probably been exaggerated.

The other buildings still exist, so it is very easy to acknowledge the view. The main building is presently known as Bura Badl Sher Kafi, a Sufi lodge belonging to a younger branch of the Sabzwari Sayyids, one of the two most powerful Sufi groups in Sehwan. This building was given a main space in the painting, allowing the painter to show the delicate floral decoration. On the left side, after this building, one can presume there is a narrow lane which stands in the shadow, meaning that the drawing was completed at sunset. The last building on the second plan is maybe the one that has been through the most changes, especially as there are tombs which cannot be seen now. At the extreme left, one can see the basis of the *qadim alam* (the old standard), namely the *alam* of Ghazi Abbas, the half-brother of Imam Husayn.[2] It is still a primary spot in the pilgrimage itinerary when driving to the mausoleum. Notwithstanding, the construction of the painting is arranged to make viewers focus on the people who are represented at the bottom, despite the fact that they look small and thus vulnerable in comparison with the wall of the mausoleum.

Although they occupy a restricted space in the whole iconographical construction, they appear to embody the final aim and meaning of the painting. There are 21 persons. They are all standing near the entrance of the shrine. Eleven among them are indigenous, some being half-naked or wearing different types of turbans. Ten characters are soldiers—apparently Sindhi soldiers as they were represented in the Talpur army. Six soldiers have guns in their hands, most of these individuals being settled close to the entrance of the shrine, as if they are taking care of it. Only the soldiers are standing, while all other characters are sitting on the ground. Nonetheless, they do not look to be ready for war, and a kind of feeling of

[1] The Kalhoras is a Sindhi dynasty who ruled Sindh from 1701 to 1783.

[2] Ghazi Abbas is one of the most popular characters of the Karbala tragedy in 680. The third Shia imam, Imam Husayn, was slaughtered with his family and followers by the Caliph Yazid's army in 680.

ease is expressed through how they behave according to their representations. The last character is settled close to the *alam*, sitting with crossed legs on a carpet with a loincloth around the hips. Careful examination of the painting makes the viewer wonder if, finally, this character is not the intended focal point of the painting. As a matter of fact, most of the other characters are looking at him, while he himself looks at the painting. Edwards' representation of the character matches the archetypal figure of the *jogi*, or yogi, the Indian renunciant.

Edwards' painting works as a kind of metaphor for how the British represented Sindh, the society and also the religiosity, as well as Sufism, understood in its broader meaning. The town of Sehwan is restricted to an uncommon representation, not focusing on its most famous monuments, such as Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's mausoleum, or it could have been Alexander's Fort.[3] The lieutenant of the East Indian Company is not interested in what the British will later on name as antiquities. For somebody who does not know Sehwan, it is quite impossible to understand what has been drawn. The mausoleum is cut and represented from an insensate perspective, the *alam* is not itself painted, and the other buildings, although with pretty arabesque decorations, look like common dwellings with no special purpose.

The attention of the viewer is consequently turned toward the characters, and the ones he must remark on firstly are the soldiers with their Talpur uniforms and their long guns. Only after a while does the viewer observe that they mostly turn their faces toward another character, the *jogi*, with the exception of one character, a soldier who, according to the black color of his skin, should be a Shidi.[4] Like the *jogi*, he is looking at the painter. The *jogi* could also be named a *qalandar*, since in Sindhi Sufi poetry the two figures are hardly distinguished.

However, three years after the conquest of Sindh, it is hardly surprising that a British officer, William Edwards, while supposed to be drawing a painting of a town known for its antiquity, would be obsessed by the army. He totally neglected the mausoleum, although he was obviously posted

[3] Alexander's fort, or the Kafir Qilla, the Infidels' Fort, is a hill located north of Sehwan, which is made of the ruins of an ancient fort. According to the local legend, it would have been built by Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.), but the excavations made by a French archaeological mission led by Monik Kervran could not find any remains before the second century C. E.

[4] The Shidis are the descendants of the Africans who were brought to Sindh as slaves, until slavery was abolished by the British.

very nearby to complete his painting. For him, it was a non-subject, probably related to an irrational religiosity, which would be named, after Richard Burton, Sufism. Nonetheless, the painting is discreetly arranged to drive the viewer toward an archetypal figure, the *jogi*, who, in mid-nineteenth-century India, was the incarnation of the most exotic representation of the Indian religion. In the end, Edwards' painting accumulated both the fascination and the non-genuine interest that the British of that time would have for Indian religiosity.

In 1841, two years before the conquest, another British officer, Sir Keith Jackson, published a book of drawings in which he included the drawing of Alexander's Fort in Sehwan Sharif, completed in 1838, as an impressive wall of rocks. In the same book, he also presented a drawing of the mausoleum of Khwaja Khizr, located in the north of Sindh on an island of the Indus River (Jackson 1842: plate 12). Before the conquest, the British had another representation of Sehwan focusing on the main antiquity of the town, which was a symbol of strength and power, and of Sufism. As a matter of fact, Khwaja Khizr's mausoleum was drawn with a quite romantic perspective, as a majestic and well-balanced building centered on a huge *iwan*,[5] with many magnificent domes in turquoise and decorations of beautiful palm trees.

In the late 2000s, I was doing fieldwork in Sehwan Sharif and used to meet a young local Sayyid whose lineage, going back to the Sabzwaris, was that of one of the two Sayyid families who had been in charge of Lal Shahbaz's mausoleum before it came under government control in 1960. His father, Hasan Ali Shah, was running a local Sufi lodge known as a *kafi* in Sehwan, the Kat Dhani Kafi, and they were staunch Twelver Shias. For the time of Moharram, Ghazanfar Ali Shah was spending time with his brothers to prepare and decorate the family *tazia*, the miniature shrine of Imam Husayn at Karbala, which they were to parade during nocturnal processions. While we were talking about his ancestors, the young man told me he had a picture of one of his most important ancestors, one Bura Badl Sher. He entered another room and came back with a painting: It was Jackson's painting, and the *jogi/qalandar* was, according to him, his ancestor.

[5] The *iwan* is an architectural term with different meanings. In Sindh, it designates a monumental entrance.

The Debate Over Colonization and Vernacular Knowledge

About 20 years ago, an intense debate emerged about the production of knowledge in the colonial context, in the wake of the groundbreaking study published by Edward Said in 1978. As summarized by Philip Wagoner, there were two positions regarding the role played by the colonized in the production of colonial knowledge. The first position, which Wagoner refers to as post-colonialist, claims that the colonized played a negligible role, if any, in the production of colonial knowledge. The Europeans imported their forms of knowledge, which they had built in Europe. The categories of European knowledge were instrumental in the submission of the colonized, beyond the military conquest of the territories. In the process, the importation of colonial knowledge produced an "epistemic disjuncture." Wagoner explains that, according to the post-colonialist assumption, "There can be no significant continuities across the great rift generated by colonial knowledge for all the indigenous forms of knowledge and bodies of cultural practices are effectively superceded and displaced through the imposition of new, imported epistemes" (Wagoner 2003: 784).

The second position wishes to go beyond the Foucauldian cleavage of continuity and rupture. It accepts that colonial knowledge played a fundamental role in the process of colonization, but claims that its making happened with the collaboration of active indigenous partners. Thus, this position challenges the assumption of post-colonial theory, as well as the subaltern one. Wagoner states that if there was a process of intellectual dialogue or conversation, "One would expect to find the impress of indigenous conceptual categories and even forms of thought on the final form and content of the resultant knowledge" (Wagoner 2003: 785). My own intention is different. I am not primarily interested in the building of colonial knowledge as such. In this respect, I am of the opinion that colonial knowledge was obviously a powerful means for domination in South Asia and that some indigenous collaborationists played an active role in the making of colonial knowledge in a process Wagoner refers to as dialogue or conversation.

In this study, I aim at decentering the debate from the production of colonial knowledge to that of vernacular knowledge. Briefly put, I argue that the colonizers incidentally started a process of making a vernacular knowledge focusing on what I shall call Sufism, this being a first phase that was shifted to a second phase by the indigenous intellectuals. The analysis

of these complex processes will be rooted in a case study of colonial Sindh. Incidentally, I have used the word "Sufism" because there is much evidence that, for the British, Sufism was not a subject of interest per se, and moreover, in the context of colonial domination. They gave Sufism a unique role, but this was never their plan when they selected a Sufi work of poetry, the *Shah jo Risalo* authored by Shah Abd al-Latif (1689–1752), as a kind of textbook for the British officers to use in learning Sindhi for the purpose of their immediate administrative business.

Furthermore, Sufism has long attracted the interest of scholars. As an academic topic, one can claim that, to some extent, the history of the study of Sufism follows the development of Orientalist knowledge. Interestingly, one of the founders of Orientalist knowledge, Sir William Jones—who in 1784 created the first Orientalist institution in Calcutta, named the Asiatic Society of Bengal—was himself a specialist of Sufism, but mostly as expressed in the Persian language. Hence, there is a great plasticity in the use of the word "Sufism" that, in more than one case, works as an umbrella term. When dealing with Sufism, one can be referencing saints, philosophy, poetry, or social organization. As for all of the human phenomena, which were initiated more than a millennium ago, there are innumerable ways to understand what Sufism is, and while initially it started as a mystical path to reach God, it would consequently be difficult to expose the shared elements these denominations could have.

From Culture to *Episteme*: Vernacular Knowledge and the Sufi Paradigm

Culture, Ideology, and Paradigm

This study has a different goal since it intends to take Sufism as knowledge, following what Michel Foucault called an *episteme*. In his *Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault wrote: "By episteme, we mean, in fact, the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalised systems" (Foucault 1972: 148). In the field of South Asian studies, it wishes to be located in the wake of Sheldon Pollock or Bernard Cohn's works in dealing with the production of knowledge, rather than among other works focusing on knowledge as science, such as Kapil Raj or Peter Gottschalk's study (Raj 2007; Gottschalk 2013).

First, it is to answer a very basic question: how, and why, do people know what they know; and how and why do people not know what they do not know? What was the process by which knowledge of something was developed? And, finally, who were the main agents behind the process? While I immediately felt that the term Sufism was too loose to be used for my object of study, it was not easy to find a more appropriate word, keeping in mind that the adjective would always be Sufi. First, I dealt with culture—thus, Sufi culture—and then Sufi ideology, but finally I have selected the idea of a Sufi paradigm. It could be useful here to give some explanations for why I did not select culture or ideology as the primary subject in order for my object of study to appear more visible and relevant to readers.

According to Clifford Geertz's definition, culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1973: 89). Starting from the idea that Sufism had in Sindh provided the basic lexicon and concepts for devotion, I was following Jethmal Parsram who, in his famous book *Sind and Its Sufis* published in 1924, used the expression "Sufi culture of Sindh" (Parsram 1924: 49–56). But after reflecting on my object, I went on to be convinced that the word "culture" encompassed too many features which could, or could not, be concerned with Sufism. For example, the ritual field is quite different for a Sufi, a follower of Guru Nanak, a Daryapanthi (who was a follower of Jhulelal), and a Shia Muslim. Although they share a devotional religiosity mostly in using Sufi poetry, the idiom of ritual could raise distinctions between these religious traditions.

Regarding the word "ideology," this term obviously refers to a close intellectual system, finally denying the main dimension of the Sufism of Sindh, that of its openness and inclusiveness—at least for the majority of the Sufis. Ideology also implies there is a central authority embodied in an institution, such as a state or a political party that builds and controls the contents of the ideology: nothing like either of these authorities can be found in the Sufism of Sindh. Interestingly, Foucault also deals with the relationship between knowledge and ideology, arguing that if science can be structured by an ideology, the episteme is beyond the row of an ideology. However, the expression "Sufi paradigm" offers many advantages in the process of examining what I intend to study and in the argument I wish to prove. To begin, there is the question: what is a paradigm?

Borrowed from the lexicon of the grammarians, a paradigm is a pattern from which other elements of a language are modeled. It is an element of a language that has been selected by the grammarians as a pattern for declination or conjugation. This means that the paradigm has not itself originated the elements using it as a pattern. I surmise that the term perfectly highlights the role played by Sufism in the relationship it had with the other religious traditions and spiritualities of Sindh.

Colonization and Social Mobility

Through this point, issues related to the building of knowledge in a colonial context have been introduced, and it can be asked why this study locates in the field of historical anthropology instead of that of history. The answer comes from the assumption that knowledge should not be reduced to the essential, and not even restricted to the action of a state or of any institution: the main actors behind the processes to be scrutinized are made of people we shall call the agents. The state and its servants have been investigated at length. Some works have also been devoted to the "collaborationists" (to quote Philip Wagoner). The agents who are dealt with here can nonetheless not be called "collaborationists." As a matter of fact, while most of them were employed by the British administration, they were also the main agents for the making of the new knowledge built on Sufism as a matrix that is the main issue addressed in this study.

The interaction between colonial power and the emergence of new social classes is certainly one of the most original points underscored by this study. Indeed, it is not that this issue has never been addressed, but rather that the process underway in Sindh was quite original, compared to other regions of the Indian Empire, and even other colonized territories around the world. This is particularly evident when we look at the evolution of Muslims. Indeed, the Muslims of the Delhi region studied by Margrit Pernau define themselves in relation to the Ashraf culture, that is, the culture of the traditional Muslim elite who claims not to be of vernacular origin (Pernau 2013). Nor is it the same transformation of the Muslims of Bombay studied by Nile Green, for whom Persian culture still constituted the central core of their Muslim identity (Green 2011). In Sindh, the emergence of a new social class has occurred through three interrelated dynamics: the group has been formed in British educational institutions; it has developed outside the traditional Muslim elites who previously held the monopoly of knowledge; and it

has been formed from a religious heritage shared by Muslims and Hindus, and embodied primarily by the Sufi paradigm.

Already, the role played by the Indian scribes working for the British has been underscored. A common word was used by the British to name them: the *munshi*. According to the famous *Hobson-Jobson*, a *munshi* is "a secretary, a reader, an interpreter, a writer." The term is commonly applied by Europeans all over the Indian Empire to a native teacher of language or, more broadly, to any well-educated native gentleman (Yule 1903: 581). The word is very widely used in the archives of Sindh, especially in the 1850s, when Sir Bartle Frere, the commissioner in Sindh, wanted to spread education among the natives, but before that among the British officers so that they could use Sindhi in their immediate administrative affairs. All over the empire, the *munshi* was the archetypal figure of the collaborationist (Alam and Subrahmanyam 2004).

By the way, and contrary to what is commonly stated, the archives of Sindh belonging to this decade clearly show that the *munshi*s were not only Hindu, but also Muslim, and more precisely Shia Muslims, something that can be deduced from their surnames. For example, in the list of the first 12 books printed in Sindhi in 1855, 6 are translations made by *munshi*s, while B. H. Ellis, the assistant of the commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, prepared the others. The names of the translators from English to Sindhi were Munshi Nandiram, who translated three books; Munshi Ghulam Ali, who translated one; Munshi Ghulam Husain, who translated one; and Munshi Miran Muhammad, who also translated one work (*Sindhi Language and Books*, no. 143 of 6 April 1855, fol. 235–236). Therefore, half of the books were translated by a Hindu *munshi* and three others by three Muslim *munshi*s.

However, the archives show how the *munshi*s were instrumental in the first phase of the construction of a vernacular knowledge. But in this phase, *munshi*s were technical specialists in charge of translating what the British asked them to translate (this being the specific meaning of the word *munshi* in this context, from my view) specifically for the building of a colonial knowledge of Sindh. Other native agents, such as the *kardar*s, were in this respect much more powerful, but their authority was restricted to a given administrative territory and, secondly, they were not directly involved in the building of colonial knowledge.[6] In the second phase, I

[6] Amazingly, the Hobson-Jobson quotes the *kardar* as being a term specifically used in Sindh, and simply translates it as "an agent (of the government)" (Yule 1903: 475). The role played by the *kardar* in rural Sindh was underscored by Matthew Cook (Cook 2016: 40–44).

argue that new social classes emerged in the Sindhi society and implemented a process of appropriating a number of European categories related to knowledge, which they then applied to their own vernacular knowledge. The climax of this process was the making of the Sufi paradigm, in which the *munshis stricto sensu* were not involved. Instead, old groups with new agendas were at the vanguard of the new epistemic dynamic; first of all, here I am thinking of the Amils.

Very early in colonial Sindh, the Amils were given special treatment by both the British and the Sindhi Hindus.[7] In his book on the population of Sindh published in 1851, Richard Burton devoted a whole chapter to them (Burton 1851: 338–351). Although the role they played cannot be underestimated, other groups of literati were ignored—such as minority religious groups, or those Muslims who belonged to what I shall call "declassed groups." Regarding the minority religious groups, I would include mostly the Parsis and the Shia Muslims, such as the Ismailis. In the social structure of Sindhi society, and despite their claims to the contrary, some groups were not seen as "true" Muslims either because they had been recently converted to Islam, and there we have the question of to what Islam, or because they had retained many Hindu religious features both in their practice and beliefs (though these two factors were usually coupled). The birth of these new social classes, and the role they would play in the making of the Sufi paradigm, should not conceal that the most powerful class in Sindhi society during the whole colonial period was that of the *zamindar*, the landlord.

The process through which indigenous agents became the main actors in the making of the Sufi paradigm was complex. Many other problems should be tackled also, even beyond studying the role of such and such agents. I am thinking of issues such as authority and its devolution, as well as kinship, involving, for example, the alliances the different new social classes had built, and how they interacted, or failed to, with old dominant classes. Also, there was the issue of status, with its corollary related to purity. The colonial period was marked by an increasing social mobility through which low classes were attracted by higher class ways of life, and

[7] On the Amils, see the pioneer work by Bherumal Advani (Advani 1919) and the recent one by Saaz Aggarwal (Aggarwal 2018).

started to mimic them before finally claiming a superior status.[8] Among the Muslims, this phenomenon is known as the dynamic of ashrafization, and sanskritization among the Hindus. But Sindh is a good case study for illustrating many other micro-processes that provide evidence of the importance of locality in social construction. And as a classical issue of historical anthropology, there is finally the honor, or *izzat*, which was hardly addressed by the specialists of Sindh, with the exception of David Cheesman (Cheesman 1997: see index). Yet, it is well known to anthropologists that honor was a key factor in structuring South Asian societies.

Beyond the selection of the expression "Sufi paradigm," and the use of historical anthropology, another justification should be provided in relation to the field—namely, colonial Sindh. If compared with neighboring areas such as Punjab, Sindh did not deserve scholarly attention, especially in the field of religion-making and production. The process of religion-making in colonial Punjab has been thoroughly investigated, with, for example, the groundbreaking study by Harjot Oberoi (Oberoi 1994). Turning back to Sindh, it is interesting to observe that there is no equivalent study, and obviously, Sufism was not an issue in the academic books published on the era of British colonization, with the one exception being Sarah Ansari's study on the Pir Pagaros (Ansari 1992), to which I shall return below.

Sindh as a Case Study

What can Sindh as a case study bring to the issues that are to be dealt with? In other words, how can we explain that the case of Sindh has an exemplary value, and of what is it exemplary? To answer these questions, it is necessary to look at religion as a subject of study in the academic literature on Sindh. The issue of religion was addressed as an issue related to the previous periods of the history of Sindh, by scholars such as Derry McLean (1987), Ansar Zahid Khan (1980), and H. T. Sorley (1940). Their works cover a long historical period running from the eighth century to the eighteenth century, with a gap between the twelfth through the fifteenth

[8] This process has been studied at length in colonial India, and for the Hindus, it is usually named "Sanskritization," and "Ashrafization" for the Muslims. A very similar process was also at work in France simultaneously. In the nineteenth century, the enriched bourgeois wanted to be assimilated with the prestigious nobility even after the end of monarchy in 1870. For example, they used to buy lands, and to put the name of the land to their previous name, bridging them with "de," which is in France the mark of nobility.

century included, thus making for a gap of four centuries. While religion is not always a central issue in these studies, they offer much information about the religions practiced in Sindh during this huge span of time, and especially Sufism. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that no work was devoted to the portion of time between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, given that it is a period when major religious changes are known to have taken place. Historically, this period is also important because Sindh was ruled for the first time by “indigenous” dynasties, the Somras and the Samas, before being ruled by “foreign” groups coming from Central Asia, the Arghuns and the Tarkhans, and being included in the Moghul Empire.

The interest to be devoted to the Somras and Samas is not only due to political or religious factors. As a matter of fact, some historical events of this period were translated into folk narratives. The Somra rulers provide for a number of heroes incarnating the medieval culture of Sindh, especially after they were used as such by the Sufi poets. Also, some figures can be understood as embodying key historical events, such as the transition between the domination of the Sodha Rajputs to a branch, which had converted to Islam, probably the Ismaili persuasion, in the late fourteenth century, the Somras. Furthermore, according to the few firsthand sources available, and also according to the studies devoted to neighboring areas with which many goods, men, and ideas were circulating, three religious movements were active in Sindh at this time, although it is not easy to understand the details of what transpired. First among them is Ismailism, a branch of Shia Islam. The Ismailis are supposed to have reached Sindh as soon as the late ninth century, and as a kind of vassal state of the Fatimid Empire based in Cairo, Egypt, they ruled the Indus Valley with Multan as the capital, this to be followed by Mansurah. The second main religious process to be noted here is the spread of Sohrawardi Sufism, once again centered in Multan. The third religious achievement is the spread of the Nathpanth, a Shivaite movement created by Gorakhnath.

The construction of Sindhi religiosity was a long-term process built over several centuries. From the studies mentioned above and the firsthand sources available, it is possible to summarize a number of features. Since long, Sindh appears to have been a shelter for minor religious movements, be they Buddhist, Hindu, or Muslim. Paradoxically, Sindh is both a buffer zone—located between the Iranian world and the Indian world, with the Indus River and the desert as its porous border—and a border zone. A border zone has a contradictory function: it separates, but it also puts locations in touch, in contact. Sindh served as both of these zones

simultaneously during the larger part of medieval and modern history, peripherally, because it was located far from the imperial centers such as Delhi, Kabul, Tehran, and Calcutta. Also, Sindh was the outlet of the Indus Valley on the Indian Ocean and, once again, here it stands as an apparent paradox: it was peripheral from the perspective of the political center, but strategically relevant throughout this geographical area.

Turning back to the colonial period, the very word "Sufism" does not appear in the index of four among the five major works on colonial Sindh: those of Cheesman (1997), Cook (2016), Jones (2002), and Khuhro (1978). Furthermore, religion is also a kind of marginal entry in their works since these authors prefer to focus on economy or politics. Does this focus mirror the state of their sources? Or, in other words, is the lack of interest in religion a result of a lack of sources? Before finding some answers to these issues, it is necessary to focus on the fifth book: Sarah Ansari's work on Sufism in colonial Sindh.

As suggested in the title, *Sufi Saints and State Power*, Ansari focuses on the political interplay between the Sufi masters of Sindh and the British colonial state as represented in the province of Sindh. She does not take Sufism as a religious ideology or religious culture, although she fully acknowledges the multi-level role it plays in the local society of Sindh. Furthermore, Ansari's work centers on a single Sufi brotherhood, Pir Pagaro's *tariqa*. Ansari is interested in how Sufi masters were able to challenge the State's power in colonial Sindh. Obviously, her study is a landmark in a field of Sindhi studies that is very well documented and addresses as its main issue the political aspect of colonial history.

However, there is the question of how the case of the Pir Pagaro brotherhood is representative of the other Sufis of Sindh. In fact, it is difficult to take Pir Pagaro's rebellion as a reference in regard to the Sufism of Sindh. To the contrary, it is more relevant to see it as a consequence of a localized situation, and the final meaning of their resistance to the colonial state is to be understood in the context of the feudal organization of Sindhi society. Nonetheless, Sarah Ansari provides a thorough analysis of how powerful the Pir Pagaro brotherhood functioned not as mere Sufis, but rather as landed gentry. Last, her study shows that the particular fate of the Hurs, followers of Pir Pagaro, is an exception mostly due to the personality of Pir Pagaro—mainly reflecting the state of disorder that preceded the departure of the British.

As for most of the territories included in the British Empire of India, there are two broad categories of sources: the colonial or British sources

and the vernacular sources, which are mostly in Sindhi. Inside each group, there is another distinction—that of the printed and non-printed material. Already, the lack of academic studies devoted to Sindh has been noted in comparison with neighboring areas. Another characteristic to be pointed out is the dispersion of the firsthand sources, especially regarding the archives. They can be found in London, Karachi, Bombay, Delhi, and Islamabad, not to speak of the private collections in Pakistan, in India, and throughout the whole Sindhi diaspora. It addresses the issue of how the British managed the distribution of their reports, as well as how the archives were managed at the time of partition.

To deal with the printed knowledge also addresses the issue of literacy and, beyond the agents and actors, who was the target of the makings of the Sufi paradigm. The mechanisms of this process should seem quite related to the spread of education and literacy. In order to implement the publications working at the construction and distribution of the Sufi paradigm, people needed to be able to read. Nonetheless, the growth of literacy was slow in Sindh when compared to neighboring provinces. According to the 1901 census, about 10% of the whole population could read, with the exact figures being 9.3 for the Hindus and 0.74 for the Muslims (Aitken 1907 [1986]: 480). Among the Amils, 27% of the caste was able to read. The statistics are different in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, according to which 2.9% of the total population was able to write and read at this time (IGI 1909: 30). In 1941, it came to 8%, and after half a century more, and independence, the percentage of literacy grew to 13.2% (Sorley 1968: 698). As Sorley detailed, being considered among the literates only required that one could read clear print text, and not necessarily handwritten text, and that one could write “a simple and easy letter” (Sorley 1968: 697).

Before the rise of printed knowledge, there was already a written body of knowledge based on manuscripts. Once again, it seems that, if compared with neighboring provinces, the collection of manuscripts of Sindhi was not that big. The catalogue of the British Museum published in 1905 gives only, as Blumhardt himself observed, 11 manuscripts, acknowledging a single one can be made of thousands of folios (Blumhardt 1905: vi). There are 74 in Marathi, 57 in Gujarati, 40 in Bengali, Assamese, and Oriya, and 60 in Pushtu. However, as Pollock wrote: “(…) the history of manuscripts culture (…) is among the more critically underdeveloped domains of the South Asian humanities” (Pollock 2011: 8–9). Even if the number of manuscripts in Sindhi was scant, this does not prevent us from

focusing on another major issue: the relationship between oral knowledge and printed knowledge. After trying to identify the limitations between oral, manuscript, and printed knowledge, we will therefore also have to center in on a possible impact, which the oral knowledge could have had on the spread of the Sufi paradigm.

Scope and Objectives

This study addresses the issue of shifting from a colonial knowledge to a vernacular knowledge built on the Sufi paradigm. Another main focus is on the history of an intelligentsia that was ready to exercise power, but was superseded by a new ideology based on proto-nationalism that made obsolete their fundamental understanding of the Oneness of God as the core of a universal wisdom. Some would argue that, after the development of the post-colonial studies, such a topic has been studied at length, throughout groundbreaking studies such as the ones by Cohn and Dirks, Mir, and Oberoi. All those who have worked on such issues know well how intricate they are, and how challenging it is to propose the most significant matter of relevance.

Notwithstanding this difficulty, this study aims at providing a fresh perspective on the field by adding a singular contribution based on the data as provided by a specific region, Sindh. Also, it deals with data that has never been studied, and furthermore, I am not aware of any works—be they devoted to South Asia or not—where the Sufi paradigm was understood as having such a significant role in the making of a vernacular knowledge. We can nevertheless find works on other parts of the Muslim world in which the influence of Sufism has been evaluated regarding, for example, Arabic literature (Elmarsafy 2012) or the role played by the narration of the Sufi past in the makings of Indonesian Islam (Laffan 2011). Here, I intend to see Sufism as a main component that frames knowledge in a given area, Sindh, at a given time, during the British colonization of India. I have selected a timeframe stretching from 1851 to 1929. The first date refers to Burton's seminal work, in which he provides the first comprehensive study on Sufism in Sindh. Also, it alludes to the beginning of Bartle Frere's rule in the province. The second date is designated to point out that a new era was starting in Sindh, this being that of the communal riots in Sindh. It does not mean that no communal riot had occurred before, but rather that, from 1929 onward, this was a permanent feature of Sindhi society.

The issue under study is developed through three parts and ten chapters. The first part deals with colonization and the shaping of a vernacular knowledge. It is made of three chapters, focused on the set-up of colonial knowledge on Sindh; the transmission of colonial knowledge; and knowledge, Sufism, and the issue of the vernacular literature. A brief period of British colonization was fundamental for the formation of colonial knowledge on Sindh. This period of the 1850s decade matches up with the rule of Sir Bartle Frere, who was commissioner in Sindh almost for the same duration. Following rules and regulations issued in Delhi, he was in charge of replacing Persian as the official language with Sindhi and English. The first step of this educational policy was that of translating and printing books in Sindhi.

A previous step had been to select a dialect to be used as the standardized Sindhi language, as well as an official script among the 17 alphabets in use (as depicted by Captain Stack). A corollary enterprise was the making of grammars and dictionaries. A last step was, with the start of the census, the production of a summarized body of knowledge of Sindh, this coming through the shape of the gazetteer. This chapter also deals with the different categories of Sindhis who were involved in this new policy. The first indigenous agents were the well-known *munshi*s, whose social and religious background is investigated here, challenging the common assumption that they were only Hindu.

After a section on the state of knowledge in pre-colonial Sindh, the first chapter aims at analyzing how the colonial knowledge on Sindh was constructed through the study of language and script. It also wishes to underscore how Orientalism framed their representation of knowledge in Sindh, which led the British to undertake their policy of translation and printing for new education. Throughout this step, the British were not interested in Sindhi culture and society per se, but they needed to obtain some knowledge to reinforce their domination as a colonial power.

The second chapter focuses on the transmission of colonial knowledge in Sindh. The British undertook to create schools—first for themselves and as private initiatives. In a second phase, with the expansion of the education policy implemented all over India, schools were built all over Sindh in order to improve literacy. All in all, the education structures that were organized in the second half of the nineteenth century aimed at dispatching the colonial knowledge throughout the province. Once the colonial knowledge on Sindh was completely formed, official means of distribution were created, especially after the census organized from

1871–1872 onward. In the empire of India, the distribution tolls were studies such as "tribes and castes," the two main categories that followed the nascent anthropology. Sindh did not attract the interest of British officers for writing of "tribes and castes," maybe because of the comprehensive work already achieved by a British officer, Richard F. Burton, to which I shall return later on. In Sindh, the first summary following the census was via gazetteer, published for the first time in 1874.

The third and last section of the first part of this book clearly shows that the vernacular literature, be it expressed in Sindhi or Persian, was not a main concern in the education policy as implemented by British colonizers. Nonetheless, the third chapter deals with some European individuals who started to take interest in a possible body of Sindhi literature, a word that needs to be defined in this case—primarily, these men were Richard F. Burton and Ernst Trumpp. Their works followed a double perspective and aim: (1) to provide elements showing the existence of a Sindhi (vernacular) literature, and (2) to highlight the role played by the Sufi paradigm in this construction. Burton's work on Sindh goes beyond the scope of literature, and he built what can be seen as the first ethnography of Sindh. Burton is a main actor in nineteenth-century Orientalism, a kind of atypical Orientalist who was one of the very few to enjoy Edward Said's indulgence.

Claiming to be an ethnographer, while he was by profession a lieutenant in the army of the East India Company, Burton gives a comprehensive study of the society of Sindh as well as its religious system. He took advantage of the five years he spent in Sindh, and of his mastering the Sindhi language, to draw an often-balanced depiction, although it is not deprived of the common European prejudices of his time in relation to non-European cultures. His main achievement was, beyond the establishment of a Sindhi literature, the significance of Sufism he was able to identify in the construction of Sindhi culture.

The second part of this book is devoted to social mobility and the makings of the Sufi paradigm. It includes four distinct chapters: the archaeology of the Sufi paradigm; the birth of a middle class and the set-up of the Sufi paradigm; Sufi knowledge as built by Mirza Qalich Beg; and the deployment of the Sufi paradigm. The fourth chapter, and the first in this second part of the book, is centered on the process of building the Sufi paradigm. This process occurred in two main steps, starting with the European who printed a primary Sufi work, the *Shah jo Risalo* by Shah Abdul Latif, for the teaching of the British officers in Sindhi. I argue that

this work, accomplished by Ernst Trumpp in Germany, had unplanned consequences, especially in relation to what I call the "canonization" of this Sufi poetry and the objectification of Sufi literature.

The main consequence of the printing was that it caused a kind of awareness of the importance of the Sufi poetry by the Sindhi literati; I speak of an intelligentsia, and gradually of the middle classes that were developing in late nineteenth-century Sindh. The fifth chapter will be devoted to the interaction between the building of the Sufi paradigm and the birth and growth of the middle classes. At the end of the nineteenth century, the main concern of the intelligentsia was making the *Shah jo Risalo* a reference for the majority of the Sindhi population, in what can be called a democratization process. Besides this development, a minor representation of the Sufi paradigm was built throughout the medium of art and architecture. The archeologists of the Archaeological Survey of India would include Sufi buildings among the "antiquities" of the region without highlighting any relation to Sufism, but rather reinforcing the interdependence of Sufi artifacts with those produced by the rulers.

The sixth chapter focuses on the work completed by a leading Sindhi scholar: Mirza Qalich Beg. His production is a kind of reminder of the encyclopedic project that wishes to cover all of the knowledge of the word. In this respect, and although he did compose several books on Sufism, including *Ilm Tasawuf*, or "The Sufi Knowledge," for about 20 years, the *Shah jo Risalo* would stand as the sole reference for the making of the Sufi paradigm. After publication of the text, two complementary processes would be implemented. First, the text would be "humanized," since future books would focus on the personality of the poet, on his life, and even on his daily life. The second process would be a lexicographical approach to make it more accessible to all of Sindhi society. Beyond main contributions he had achieved, Mirza Qalich Beg wished, maybe in the last ten years of his life, to propose a universal tolerance, which could work for all of humanity. Beg's work would be continued to a lesser extent by Jethmal Parsram, whose small book published in 1924—*Sind and Its Sufis*—would be a true synthesis of the Sufi paradigm.

The seventh and last chapter of the second part of this book focuses on the new steps of the making of the Sufi paradigm, which would be reached at a turning point between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From the very early twentieth century on, the Sufi paradigm would be enlarged with the publishing of new Sufi poets—namely, Sachal Sarmast, Rohal Faqir, and Shah Abd al-Karim. Also, non-Sufi poets would be included in

the paradigm, such as Sami and Sabit Ali Shah. This first step would be followed by the use of the Sufi paradigm in a non-Muslim context. Another step of the paradigm would be reached when it extended beyond the sphere of the Muslim episteme. As a matter of fact, non-Sufi Muslims and Hindus would attempt to incorporate their distinct religious traditions into the Sufi paradigm. We will have to scrutinize the processes they implemented for reaching their goals, as well as evaluate how successful they were. In any case, the Sufi paradigm as expressed in the early twentieth century illustrated the ability of the paradigm to incorporate non-Sufi traditions and also the impact it had on other spiritualities. Last, it will be another final point here to understand how all of these processes worked as complementary dynamics.

The third part of this book will leave the makings of the Sufi paradigm proper to focus on the other regimes of knowledge that were developing in colonial Sindh, as well as competing with the Sufi paradigm. If I think it is relevant to speak of competition, it is because Sufism was most of the time explicitly condemned by some of these regimes of knowledge. Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, nationalism was in an embryonic stage with, for example, the creation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 in Bombay, and Sayyid Ahmad Khan feared domination of the Muslims in a country where the Hindus would be the majority. This can be seen as the first step of the communalization of Indian politics.[9] The spread of communalism is a very complex process in which different social groups, usually known as castes, started to organize themselves through following the framework of European associations, and also looking at social mobility and centralization on the scale of the whole Indian subcontinent in the wake of the British census.

The ninth chapter of this study examines the devotional regimes of knowledge. While I shall explain in details in the third part why I have selected the expression "devotional regimes of knowledge," let us say for now a devotional regime of knowledge had three main characteristics: the use of vernacular literature, the devotional accentuation of this literature, and the importance of musical performance with instruments. The focus on devotion may produce a direct competition with the Sufi paradigm, in which emotion is a main component. This said, devotion had also been used to form an autonomous community as a branch of an

[9] Such an issue has been addressed at length by scholars. One of the best works is Gyanendra Pandey's study (Pandey 2012).

institutionalizing religion, or to create a sectarian community. The first case can be applied to the Sikhs of Sindh, who became Nanakpanthis who wished to belong to Hinduism. Gradually, the followers of Guru Nanak, who had never been Khalsa,[10] started to enforce their separate belonging from the Sikhs and claimed to be Hindus. The second case is that of Hindus known as Daryapanthis, or the followers of the River God, Jhulelal, who attempted to build a distinct religious community through using a distinct script, the Khudawadi, for publishing their devotional literature.

Some of the re-framings of these different regimes of knowledge finally reinforced the Sufi paradigm. Sometimes, the Sufi paradigm was criticized because of its openness and inclusiveness in a time when the mainstream dynamic was to re-imagine religious traditions as resulting from a literal reading of the sacred scriptures. Another issue the exponents of the Sufi paradigm dealt with was the relation between the paradigm and the popular practice of Sufism. The ninth chapter will approach this issue. It will attempt to disentangle the different strata that made up Sufism following the assertions of Sindhi literati such as Mirza Qalich Beg. I shall start from the hypothesis that devotion is the bridging link to what has been introduced as two different, if not competitive, ways of understanding Sufism. The chapter will also focus on the issue of emotion as a very popular concept for addressing many issues in the social sciences.

The tenth chapter focuses on a last field which can be seen as competing with the building of the Sufi paradigm, that was, as we shall see, based on the spread of a printed knowledge: oral knowledge. The topic is itself a most challenging one since, per its definition, oral knowledge in colonial Sindh did not have any material support and, therefore, cannot be framed as data on which a relevant study can be completed. Yet, this chapter means to scrutinize how oral knowledge was located in regard to the printed knowledge: was there a competition between both, and who were the agents for transmitting oral knowledge? Was the Sindhi intelligentsia, as agents of printed knowledge, in touch with them? Using an innovative method to overcome the lack of sources, I shall start with studying the figure of the bard as a main agent of transmission. In a second step, I shall

[10] The Khalsa Sikhs are those who strictly follow the Sikh tradition as organized by Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), the last guru. They follow the five symbols known as the five K: the *kesh* (uncut hair), the *kangha* (a wooden comb), the *kara* (an iron or steel bracelet worn on the wrist), the *kirpan* (a sword or dagger), and the *kacchera* (short breeches). Also their worship is focused on the Sikh gurus, at the expense of other religious figures such as Sufi pirs, Hindu gods, and so on. For more details, see Chap. 9.

try to piece together the oral corpus and to mirror it against the printed one. In the last section, I shall examine performance as the main characteristic of the oral tradition, and also as the most relevant lever of distinction from printed knowledge.

Finally, as I began by claiming that a number of studies have already been devoted to the issue of the building of knowledge in colonial India, I observe that they were mostly focusing on Hindu-dominated areas, or on territories where the population was about half-Muslim, and half-Hindu or Sikh, such as Punjab. From this religious perspective, Sindh was a unique province of India. The Muslims dominated it, being about 70% of the whole population, but there was a meaningful Hindu minority, with Hindus making up about 25% of the population. Furthermore, there is much evidence that the role played by the Hindus in the society of Sindh was much more important than what their number would imply. They dominated the trade, as well as justice and other administrations, such as revenue. Consequently, this work on Sindh is the first one to be devoted to a Muslim-dominated province included in a non-Muslim-dominated vast territory, known as the Indian subcontinent.

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PART I

Colonization and the Shaping of Vernacular Knowledge

In the last part of the nineteenth century, the British ruled the entire Indian subcontinent. When Sindh was conquered in 1843, they already had significant experience in ruling India since they had been settled in Northeast India for about a century. In terms of administration, the British had first used the Moghul system, in particular for tax collection. Later on, a new issue was to be discussed: that of civilization. How was the superior European civilization to be brought to the uncivilized Indians? By utilizing local knowledge? By imposing the use of English for transmitting European knowledge? Would Christianity have a leading role to play in the civilizing process? Would the numerous churches and their missionaries be main actors in the process?

The different territories of India all had to face such issues after they fell under British domination. Since it was one of the last to be incorporated into the empire, with Punjab in 1849, Sindh should have benefited from the experience of the British—especially because, once it had been included in the Bombay Presidency, many British civil servants had worked in other areas of the presidency before being posted in Sindh. On the other hand, the singular situation that prevailed in Sindh was to provide singular answers to issues addressed at large all over the empire, and mostly related to the field of knowledge. The first part of this book wishes to highlight

the characteristics that Sindh shared with other provinces of the empire, especially Punjab and Gujarat as its neighbors, and what was singular to this province.

Thus, this portion of the book will deal with such issues as colonization, the building of a colonial knowledge on Sindh, and the making of a vernacular knowledge in Sindh. Of course, a main challenge in such studies is to deal with the fact that all of these processes are interrelated, and often at work in the same span of time. For example, despite the fact that I use a kind of chronological enumeration of the processes, this approach does not mean that the making of a vernacular knowledge started after the building of a colonial knowledge was over. The colonial knowledge on Sindh involved a long-term process, which lasted as long as the British were colonizing Sindh, through 1947. During the whole process, the main aim of the British was to compel the structures of Sindhi society and cultures to enter and conform to the categories they had built following their understanding of and then their representation of Sindhi society. Yet, their final goal was to increase the emphasis on education to allow British officers to be more efficient in their daily work.

Also, they had to educate some local Sindhis to collaborate with them in administrative jobs, without whom it would have been impossible to rule Sindh. Once again, this situation was not specific to Sindh, as the pan-Indian figure of the *munshi* shows. But gradually, as the construction of colonial knowledge continues, another process will be based on the appropriation of certain parts of this knowledge, in order to build a vernacular knowledge. Again, both processes were not exclusive, nor contradictory. In fact, some Sindhi civil servants did participate as actors in both, and sometimes it was not easy to see the limitations of colonial versus vernacular knowledge. Also, it must be noted that colonial officers could have played a leading role in the foundation of the vernacular, though they had hardly planned it. For example, as we shall see later, Richard Burton provided evidence of the existence of a literature in Sindhi, which was an important feature for ranking a society. Literacy and illiteracy were a primary cleavage for identifying civilized and uncivilized people.

Despite this fundamental action, Burton was still convinced that "knowledge is power," which was a leading motto of the British policy in India. Furthermore, he also highlighted the importance of what he called *tasawuf*, using the classical Arabic term for Sufism, in the society and culture of Sindh. The last step of the building of a colonial process would in this case be the first step of the making of a vernacular knowledge: the printing of the *Shah jo Risalo*, a Sufi work composed by Shah Abd al-Latif in the first

half of the eighteenth century. The selection made by Bartle Frere of this difficult text for educating the British officers learning Sindhi is still not totally understood. Probably, the choice came from the influence Burton still had after his departure from India. Another explanation could be related to Ernst Trumpp, the German missionary who Frere would fund to print the Sufi poetry for the first time in 1866.

In any event, the makings of the Sufi paradigm did not result from a planned incentive which would have aimed at consciously building a paradigm that could work to form a Sindhi vernacular knowledge. Rather, it was the result of a number of sometimes antagonistic forces, including the colonial masters and the new sections of Sindhi society, but the main part of this work was to be completed by dead actors: the deceased Sufi poets. A study on an issue such as the making of a Sufi paradigm and the making of a vernacular knowledge had to face a number of difficulties. Maybe the main one was to deal with the lack of sources, or, in other words, with the prevalence of oral tradition. Before turning to the study itself, I would like to share some reflections in this respect.

Indeed, it is a crucial issue when one deals with the transition between an oral tradition and a written one, or better a printed tradition: and this issue stands at the very core of the present study. Many individuals have already studied how the "printization" impacted a given tradition. Yet, I want to underscore that the challenge I am facing is to work on a paradigm, a Sufi paradigm, with sources which were written, published, and printed by a very small section of the Sindhi society: what about its distribution? What about the reception it had among the different social structures? Is it really relevant to claim that a written tradition solidifies and sets a tradition, which implies that an oral tradition would not? Many historians, anthropologists, and other scholars have tackled this problem. When he had to face it in his groundbreaking study on the popular traditions of nineteenth-century rural France, Eugen Weber spoke of songs, dances, proverbs, tales, and pictures as "particularly fruitful source of evidence" (Weber 1976: xii).

The first European scholars in this area of study, such as Burton and Trumpp, did mention numerous folktales and other non-written elements of knowledge. Unfortunately, and contrary to other Indian regions such as Punjab—with Richard Temple's work on the legends of Punjab (Temple 1884–1886)—no one systematically collected such a corpus. Of course, Burton did include some in his books, but the dominant trend was to avoid considering these as being of interest. Hence, some blind spots are easy to identify, but the only way I have found to the oral tradition of

colonial Sindh is to use the anthropological data, which I have collected for about 25 years. I am fully aware of the distortion such a method introduces in the building of my argument. For me, however, the choice was between taking this approach and totally ignoring a main component on which the making of the Sufi paradigm will be built: the oral tradition.

In my view, an oral tradition is a corpus of oral texts which has authority and legitimacy to teach the people how to believe and to behave. Another main element that has convinced me to proceed as I have is the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of finding boundaries between oral and written traditions. The issue of performance cannot be used as a reliable process of distinction between them. As a case study I consider to be relevant, I shall take the case of the Manganhars, with whom I have spent some weeks in Sindh. They are a group of professional musicians. They sing a very large and varied repertoire of songs, which can be divided into devotional pieces and social pieces. They are the first to sing in *dargah*s and *darbar*s, and in the celebrations pertaining to "rites de passage," such as births, weddings, and funerals.

The professional musicians, as well as the non-professionals, have for centuries played a capital role in the transmission of the corpus that makes up the Sufi paradigm. I met the Manganhars in the *dargah* of Jhok Sharif. They had been asked by the *sajjada nashin* to perform a number of Sufi songs. After they had sung for him, we would stay together in the room they had been given for enjoying some rest. Their repertoires included many different works, whose authors belonged to different religious persuasions. Then, one night, the head of the group showed me a notebook with thousands of songs authored by many different poets, ranging from Shah Abd al-Latif to Kabir and Mira Bai. The songs were handwritten, and all transcribed in the Arabic Sindhi alphabet. During the performance, the master had a short look at the notebook, and he started to sing. The question is: was this an example of the oral or the written tradition?

References

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CHAPTER 2

The Set-Up of the Colonial Knowledge on Sindh

Introduction

After the British conquest of Sindh in 1843, the conqueror, General Napier, served as governor of the province for four years. After his departure in 1847, Sindh was incorporated into the Bombay Presidency and ruled by a deputy of the Governor of Bombay, the commissioner in Sindh. From 1850 to 1857, Sir Bartle Frere (1815–1884) held the post, and his achievements extended over a number of fields, straddling areas ranging from the economy to knowledge. This chapter intends to analyze the manifold impacts of colonial knowledge on Sindh, with the understanding that it would be used as a kind of prerequisite for the production of a vernacular knowledge, this development resulting from a number of decisions taken by Frere. The related decision usually presented as the most important was the decree he issued in 1851 making compulsory the use of the Sindhi language in British administration, instead of Persian, but I intend to provide evidence that this decree was not only a starting point, but also an outcome of a fairly long process that had begun in late eighteenth-century British India.

In 1853, a committee was constituted under Assistant Commissioner B. H. Ellis and the Chief of the Education Department, with an equal number of Hindu and Muslim members. The 1851 decree imposed the creation of schools and designated books for teaching. But it also addressed another salient issue: the use of a common dialect and script all over Sindh.

As a matter of fact, the linguists usually acknowledged six dialects of Sindhi, these corresponding to the different areas constituting Sindh and others which were bordering it: Utradi in the north, Vicholi in the center, Lari in the south, Thari in the southeast, Lassi in Eastern Balochistan, and Kutchi in Western Gujarat. Furthermore, according to Captain Stack, the Sindhi dialects were written in at least 17 different alphabets (Stack 1847), although Burton reduced the number to five or six dominant scripts.

Hamida Khuhro did an excellent analysis of the administrative side of the British rule in Sindh (Khuhro 1978: 266–277). In this chapter, my wish is to disentangle the dynamics through which alliances were arranged between the British and a number of groups of the Sindhi population, starting with some Hindu persons. This portion of the story involved issues related to power, status, and wealth. One particular individual played a tremendous role, as well as a controversial one, in this first phase of British domination over Sindh: Seth Naomal Hotchand (1804–1878); many subsequent evolutions of the relationship between the British and the Sindhis originated in this early alliance.[1] Nonetheless, the aim of this chapter is rather to try to contextualize the role played by different sections of the Sindhi society, especially regarding how new classes emerged with the British and, finally, if they were influential in the makings of the Sufi paradigm.

In order to rule Sindh, the British were compelled to find allies, and to be efficient, they meant to hide the most influential strata of the society, such as the merchants of Sindh, or the landlords, the *jagirdar*s and the *zamindar*s. The feudal-like system created during the Moghul Empire had made these characters instrumental all over India, but in Sindh, these categories were overlapped by another one: the *wadero*. The status of the *wadero* was related to his *izzat*, itself resulting from a number of factors, which give him respect and its corollary, authority. The *wadero* could take his prestige from his wealth, military power, or sainthood, although he could also be poor and without any power.

Maybe the word "charisma" could best tag the origin of his status.

[1] Cook had already dealt with this issue of Seth Naomal Hotchand (1804–1878) (Cook 2016: 54–65).

Knowledge and Its Agents in Pre-colonial Sindh

We can gain a sharper sense of both colonial knowledge and vernacular knowledge on and in Sindh if we first consider the state of knowledge in pre-colonial Sindh. Two categories of knowledge were in use: the religious and the non-religious (usually named "folkloric" by scholars). The corpora of religious literature in Sindhi remain difficult to circumscribe: they are made up of oral traditions, or sometimes handwritten, but few manuscripts have survived. Let us start with Muslim knowledge. However, they have in common that they reference a devotional conception of Islam rather than the normative orthodox conception as it appeared in the manuscripts and first works printed in the nineteenth century. In the context of South Asian Islam, few specialists have worked on these materials, but no major study has really sought to restore the importance of these corpora. It is also important to situate this literature vis-à-vis the Sindhis in general and Muslims in particular. To do this, we must look at the agents who transmitted it.

These agents can be divided into two main groups: bards and preachers. The bards, or Manghanar, were not religious specialists, but part of their body of work included devotional and mystical poetry. The preachers who would use this corpus in Sindhi could be Ismaili or Sufi. In medieval times, some preachers endorsed a dual Ismaili/Sufi identity and this when they did not adopt a third to reach Hindu populations. The most famous case is that of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, a Sufi who came from Persia to settle in Sehwan Sharif at the end of the thirteenth century. His hagiography generally claims that he was born Ismaili, and that he became a preacher of the Sohrawardiyya, while Hindus venerated him under the name of Raja Bharthari, named after a famous *jogi* of the Nathpanth.

How were these specialists in devotional Islam concerned with the transmitters of orthodoxy? The situation of Islam in colonial Sindh calls for a nuanced picture—several Islamic discourses coexisted. Orthodox Islam came in the dominant form of Hanafi Sunnism. Parallel and sometimes competing sources of normative production existed. The sources of this competing production came from environments where a double impregnation was at work: a Shiite impregnation (Twelver and/or Ismaili) and a Sufi impregnation. The first is evident from the importance of devotional poetry relating to the martyrs of Shia Imams, which went well beyond the Shias, *stricto sensu*. There are also places of worship in Sindh devoted to Imams: *imambaras*, but also *mowla-jo qadam* (see Glossary).

The second is evident through the importance of devotional poetry around the figure of the *pir*, the sacred mediator whose worship constitutes the core of popular religion. Sindh was dotted with mausoleums of various sizes dedicated to deceased saints.

Additionally, there is a reciprocal interpenetration between Muslim religious culture and Hindu religious culture, which often results in the adoption of the literary forms of one by the other. For example, the devotees of Udero Lal, a regional Hindu deity, did not hesitate to compose *madah*s in his honor. The *madah* is originally a hymn of praise devoted to God, the Prophet Muhammad, a saint or a *guru*. And sometimes literary forms were identical although different terms were used depending on whether they were composed by Hindus or by Muslims. This is, for example, the case with *bhajan*s. We must also add the traditions, which had incorporated elements that were not part of the Islamic tradition, but instead parts of various bodies referring to Hinduism. For example, the manuscripts of the Khojas contain many excerpts from Hindu authors such as Mira Bai, Kabir, and Tulsidas.

It would be misleading, however, to think that the production of Islamic orthodoxy was strictly speaking an Ulema production. The Sufi/Ulema cleavage was not operative at all times, because it is known, for example, that a revival of the Sunni doxa was implemented in the eighteenth century by the Naqshbandi Sufis. Mian Abul-Hasan (d. 1711) focused on religious education about the basic duties of Islam, and he opposed emotional devotion. He composed a treatise, *Muqaddimat al-salat*, the versification of which was inspired by the Arabic *qasida*, where he expounded for the first time in Sindh on the questions relating to ritual practices (Blumhardt 1905: 37; Schimmel 1974: 18) (Fig. 2.1).

There was, therefore, a category of religious scholars—the scholars of the Sunni doxa—who transmitted a normative Islam whose values holding universal claims did not intend to make any concessions to local cultures. The doxa they enunciated was always a form of *sharia*, the Islamic law. With this practice, and by the very statement of this doxa, they marginalized all those who did not conform to it. In Sindh, which has been crossed by many protest movements (such as the Ismailis and Mahdawis), the situation was particularly complex. In the final analysis, what distinguished the discursive forms produced by these groups from those produced by scholars of the Sunni doxa is that the latter claimed to state a universal doxa, whereas the precedents were often conceived only for members of their

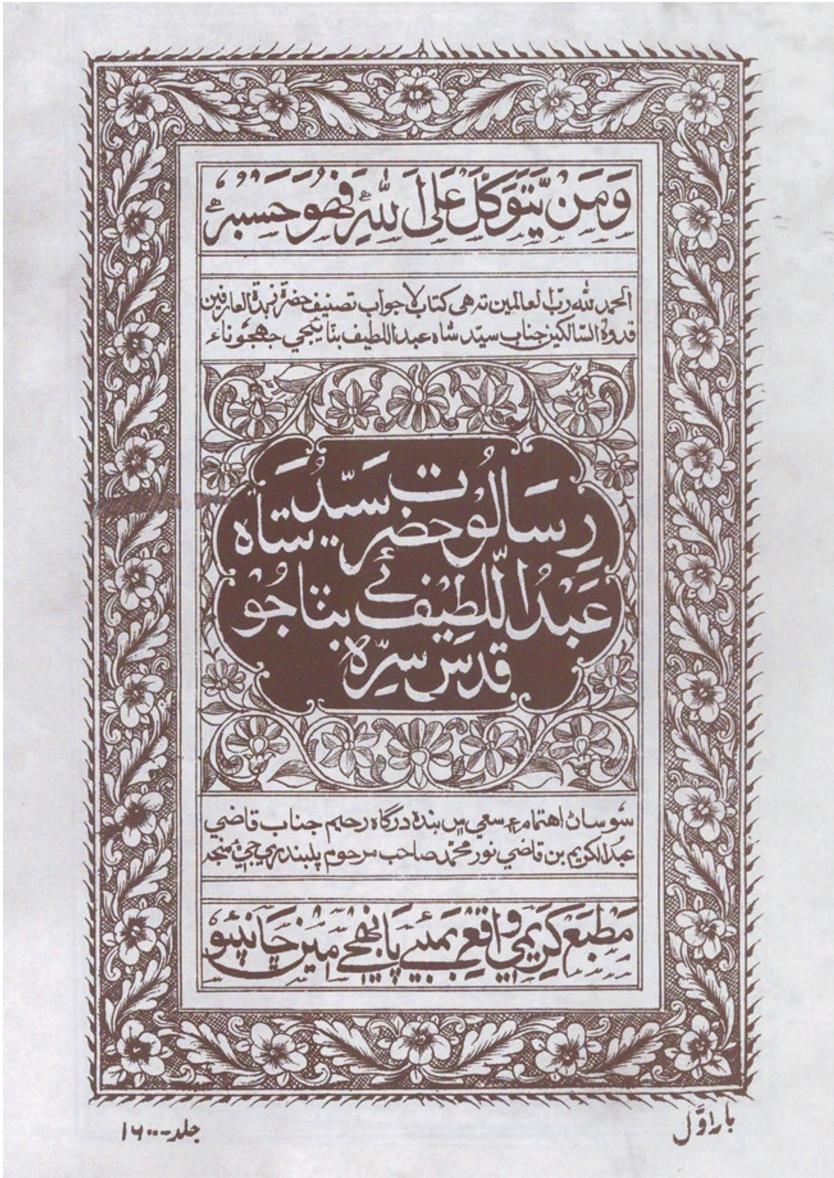

Fig. 2.1 A manuscript of the *Shah jo Risalo*, seventeenth century.

groups, or non-Muslims, while enunciating a more vernacularized form of Islamic discourse.[2]

Another dimension related to the question of vernacularization is the decisive cleavage separating the literalists from the "interpretationists." The scholars of the Sunni doxa usually consider the exact wording, to the letter, to be what prevails in a sacred text, while others believe that any text must be interpreted according to cultural or historical criteria. This cleavage once again makes it possible to relativize the distinction between Ulema and Sufis when we know that the Naqshbandis implemented a literalist reading of the scriptural sources of Islam. On the other hand, the Ismailis affirmed the superiority of the allegorical reading of these same sources.

Finally, we may well wonder whether the use of a given liturgical language among Muslims did not depend on the social category to which the speakers belonged, as well as their status. Muslim society of South Asia is generally divided between Ashrafs and Ajlafs. The Ashrafs are the descendants of the immigrants and are subdivided according to whether they are of Arab, Turkish, or Iranian origin. In their midst, the Sayyids are a kind of aristocracy. Ajlafs are descendants of Hindu caste members converted to Islam at various times. Does the cleavage of Ashraf/Ajlaf cut across the cleavage between orthodox Islamic speech and indigenized Islamic speech? In other words, can it be said that the Ashrafs were the only ones to state a discourse of Islamic orthodoxy and that the Ajlafs were the only ones to state an indigenized Islamic discourse? Was Islamic orthodoxy expressed in Arabic or Persian, while vernacular Islam would have used Sindhi?

This cleavage is not always operative in the case of Sindh. Indeed, if all of the scholars of the doxa were indeed Ashraf, other Ashrafs were in favor of a symbolic reading of the scriptural texts of Islam, and of expression in the vernacular languages. This was, for example, the case with Ismaili missionaries (*pir*s) of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They were themselves Persian Sayyids, and therefore Ashrafs, but they composed religious hymns (*ginan*s) in vernacular languages such as Sindhi and Gujarati. The Sufis seem to have reached Sindh later on. Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, a Sufi from Persia who came in the thirteenth century, left *ghazal*s in Persian. Their lexicon and themes are typically Persian, and

[2] On the issue of vernacularization of knowledge, see the groundbreaking study on Sanskrit culture completed by Sheldon Pollock (Pollock 2006). Regarding the case of Sindh, see Boivin 2015.

there is no concession to the forms of local literature. On the other hand, Shah Abd al-Latif, the author of the famous *Shah jo Risalo*, was a Sayyid who lived in the eighteenth century. He composed all of his poetic work in Sindhi.

In any case, the religious corpora used by the majority of Sindhis were composed in a Sindhi dialect. Other vernacular languages could also be used, though—especially Punjabi, Hindi, and Gujarati. These languages had in common that they were neither classical liturgical languages, such as Arabic or Sanskrit, nor literary languages such as Persian or Hindustani/Urdu. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was an exuberance of poetic composition in vernacular languages. Sufi literature represents the majority of this production. The traditions concerned were characterized by the use of vernacular languages, the devotional emphasis of sacred literatures, and musical performances with the use of instruments.

The morphology of the religious culture of Sindh can be partially completed by the episteme as expressed in the *pothi*s.[3] In Sindh, a *pothi* was a *vade mecum* that brought together various types of writing, such as prayers, mystic poetry in Sindhi, extracts from sacred texts, folk tales, and treatises on divination. These different categories allow us to update a first characteristic of the episteme of Sindh before 1843—its eclecticism, on which it will be necessary to return through the case of the Khojas. If the *pothi*s indicate the existence of a shared culture, how can one restore its importance in Sindh of the nineteenth century?

We can circumscribe it by looking at the language used and the people who transmitted it. It is, above all, religious literature produced in Sindhi by various communities. These corpuses of religious literature in Sindhi are composed of oral traditions, or sometimes handwritten ones, which are generally classified as folkloric. Devotional literature in Sindhi thus formed the bedrock of a culture that transcended social, religious, and ethnic divides. This culture will be called Sindhized culture, an expression for a set of social, religious, and cultural traits that existed in the Sindhi area at the time when the Sindhi area encompassed the south of present-day Punjab and the bordering territories of Rajasthan.

When the British arrived in Sindh, accurate population statistics were not available. By accepting the idea that these data could hardly have

[3] Interestingly in Bengal, the *pothi* (*puthi*) is a manuscript, but this designation was still used after the texts it contained have been printed (Ghosh 2006: 260).

varied between 1843 and 1872, the date of the first census, we arrive at the following distribution. Of a total population of 2,333,527 million, Sindh had: 1,718,688 Muslims; 393,092 Hindus; 5034 Christians; and 86,663 persons recorded in a section entitled "Other Castes, Sikhs, Parsis, Jews, etc." (Hughes 1874: 878). Two remarks must be made from the outset. On the one hand, there are three explicitly named religions: Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity. This nominal designation implies that they are considered major religious institutions. The last section brings together religions considered minor. Moreover, they are called castes. Rather than seeing confusion in designating a religion by the term caste, it must be understood that the term "caste" had already established itself as an inescapable paradigm for categorizing any human group into an Indian context.

Sindhi as a Distinct Language

In the period following the conquest, the British aimed at gaining the loyalty or at least the neutrality of the leading social groups. Soon after, they realized that, in order to impose efficient rule, it was necessary for them to have a minimum knowledge of the province, firstly regarding the language. The British had imported European conceptions about the status of language, and this issue was a primary step within the imperial project of thrusting civilization toward India. For eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europeans, there was a clear connection between the features of a particular language and the minds of its speakers. This idea can be traced to the work of the philosopher John Locke, especially in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* published in 1690. The theory would grow and evolve in the eighteenth century and, in 1836, Humboldt would definitively establish that the characteristics of a language could be made to mark distinctions in mental development and civilizational status (Dodson 2005: 812–813).

Another decisive step regarding the issue of language was the "discovery" made by William Jones—which would be elaborated upon by Franz Bopp, the founder of comparative grammar—of the Indo-European languages. He claimed that the languages from Europe, Iran, and India were related and that their relationships were comparable to those between members of the same family. But it is only thanks to recent scholarship that we know Jones was borrowing from a work completed by a Persian scholar, as his acclaimed *Grammar of the Persian Language* is but a translation of a

Persian work (Pollock 2011: 270). However, from this relationship, the Orientalists quickly established a kind of correspondence between Greek and Latin on the one side and Sanskrit on the other. As early as 1786, Jones praised Sanskrit as a language with a wonderful structure, which was copious and exquisitely refined (Dodson 2005: 815). The British went on to consider that Sanskrit was the equivalent of Greek and Latin, and thus the medium of an ancient Indian civilization, which could be compared with European Antiquity.

Very soon, the British were also convinced that Sanskrit was the fountainhead, in a perfect state, from which all of the vernacular languages of Northern India had been derived. For them, the very structure of a language was also an index of the evolution of the population that used it. For example, when they compared Sanskrit with Hindi, it was clear that the "progress has been from languages rich in inflections, to dialects simple in their structures" (Dodson 2005: 816). Hindi was a derivative language of Sanskrit, as Italian was of Latin. In comparing them with Sanskrit, the British were convinced the vernaculars possessed very little in the way of expressive capability or refinement. Sanskrit was for them the only source of beauty and energy.

Let me now turn to the suppression of Persian as the official language in the empire in 1837, and its replacement by English. The East India Company based in Calcutta had already desired British officers to learn colloquial Indian languages—Hindustani first of all. In 1800, Lord Wellesley (1760–1842), the governor-general of India, had founded the Fort William College for them to be trained, and John Gilchrist (1759–1841) was appointed the first Professor of Hindustani while he also served as the Principal of the College. Gilchrist was said to be the best specialist of Hindustani, especially after he had published in 1798 his first set of Hindustani conversations. He identified three levels of styles in Hindustani, and he selected one of them to be the standard dialect. Later on, Gilchrist published a grammar and a dictionary, these publications being the two stalwarts for the knowledge of a language (Cohn 1996: 36).

The Resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council, dated 4 September 1837 and replacing Persian with the Indian vernacular (read: English), resulted from a controversy known as the Orientalist Anglicist Controversy. The party of the Orientalists wanted to use classical oriental languages, especially Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian, for the education the British wanted to develop. The other party—that of the Anglicists—wanted to replace all of the Oriental languages with English. As pointed

out by Macaulay, the basis of the argument was that English was a superior language for expressing sophisticated ideas when put in comparison with the Oriental languages. The first step came when, in 1813, the British Parliament imposed on the company to encourage the Indian languages, and to allow the activities of Christian missionaries. In 1833, there came a second step when the Governor-General of India, Lord Bentinck (1774–1839), appointed Charles Trevelyan to the General Committee of Public Instruction. Trevelyan was an Anglicist who advocated the use of English instead of Oriental languages (Fig. 2.2).

Therefore, and this point is usually not mentioned in the studies on Sindhi, the work completed by Sir Bartle Frere, the then commissioner in Sindh, regarding the Sindhi language, was not really innovative since he could have benefitted from having a strong hand in the process of selecting a language for standardization. In fact, the issue of replacing the

Fig. 2.2 Locating Sindhi among the Aryan languages of India, 1909

Persian language in Sindh had been discussed soon after the conquest. Nonetheless, Frere's endeavor was only a part of the imperial policy, but the Sindh case provides a good sample of how the British applied the appropriation process of Indian languages to serve as a crucial component in the consolidation of their rule in recently conquered provinces. For North India, Cohn identified the years 1770–1785 as the formative period during which the British began the program of appropriation of Indian languages (Cohn 1996: 20–21). Sindh thus became a field for experiencing the language policy of appropriation more than half a century after North India.

This said, there is no mention of this precedent in the archives of the British officers of Sindh. The selection process, as well as the decision to select a standard dialect of Sindhi, was only discussed between Europeans, mostly English, who stayed in Sindh. The governor of Bombay and his secretary did register the final decision made by Frere, but without discussing any related matter. Cohn claims the control over language was the first of the three major projects the British enacted in India: the objectification and use of Indian languages as instruments of rule, to understand better the subjects and finally to conciliate and control the peoples of India. As we shall see, the two other major projects he mentions are debatable in the context of Sindh. The second was the discovery of the wisdom of the ancients, and the third the patronage of institutions and specialists who maintained and transmitted what the British defined as traditions (Cohn 1996: 46). To the contrary, this study argues that the Sindhi literati would take advantage of the works completed by the Europeans in order to form a new vernacular knowledge.

After contextualizing the issue, it is now necessary to scrutinize the process that led to the standardization of the Sindhi as language, as well as the issue of script. As we shall see, Sindh was a kind of precursor regarding selecting a script, because the Hindi movement asking for the replacement of Urdu written in Persian with Hindi written in Devanagari in North India would start in 1868 (Brass 1974: 130). Notwithstanding, many books had already been published in India with the purpose of teaching how to write good Persian letters, to the point that these works had become a literary genre known as *insha* (Alam and Subrahmanyam 2004: 186–187). In fact, the archives of Sindh are mute regarding the selection of the standard dialect, as if the decision was self-evident. Most of the exchanges between the British officers of Sindh and of the Bombay governorship relate to the script.

Education was thus a main colonial issue. There was the need for the British officers to learn Sindhi, but also for the Sindhis to learn English. The first schools created by the British aimed at filling the second gap. Some British officers took the lead on their own initiative. After the aborted attempt made by Captain Rathborne in Hyderabad, Captain Preedy finally created the first English school in Karachi in 1846: “He founded the Karachi Free School, apparently at his own expense, and [...] entrusted it to a local committee on the express condition that all instruction, as far as the subject permitted, should be given through the medium of Christian religious publications and that these should include the whole Bible” (Aitken 1907: 473). In 1853, the school was handed over to the Church Mission Society. Captain Goldsmid started another school at Shikarpur.

Before moving forward, it is worthwhile to discuss the role played by the alliance between the British administration and the churches. In 1813, the British Parliament issued a renewal of the charter of the East India Company that encouraged the learning of Indian languages and allowed the activities of Christian missionaries by paying them one lakh rupees. The first printed text in Sindhi was a translation of the Bible, and the first books printed in Sindhi would be published by the Church Mission Society (CMS) in Bombay. Founded in 1799, the CMS began operating in Bombay in 1820. Nile Green gave details of how the CMS developed many activities to infiltrate the Muslim society of Bombay, along with their new modes of proselytizing distribution, which Muslim firms would later copy. Nile Green quotes a report of the CMS where various activities are mentioned, such as visiting shops, houses, “native” hospitals, the poor house, the gardens, the dockyards, and “native” hotels, as well as street preaching and translational works (Green 2011: 29–30).

The Era of Standardization: Language and Script[4]

The years between 1851, when Sir Bartle Frere issued the circular making colloquial Sindhi compulsory for British officers, and 1853, when the Court of Directors of the East India Company decided that the Arabic

[4] The issue of the selection of a standard Sindhi and an official script has already been dealt with, for example, by Hamida Khuhro (Khuhro 1978: 242–260). Nevertheless, my perspective is different and also, I have used archives that had not been used by this scholar, especially regarding the Khudawadi script.

script would be selected for writing Sindhi, were marked by intense debates between the British officers. But before turning to the issue of script, it is worth noting that there were already many ongoing discussions about the selection of a dialect for the official language. There were three parties advocating Sindhi, Persian, or Hindustani, but Sindhi was finally chosen because it was understood by the majority of the population, despite the opinion that it was in a "crude state."

Regarding the most important dialect of Sindhi, Burton's work is not without contradiction, since in the same book he claims that "the classical or literary language is that of Lar, or Southern Sind" (Burton 1851: 69) and, further on, speaks of Vicholi as a standard for the Sindhi dialects (Burton 1851: 364). Maybe this is because Lari was the dominant dialect in Shah Abdul Latif's magisterial poetry, the *Shah jo Risalo*. Burton proposed to gather a number of literary samples, with the idea that they would make the standard of the language (Burton 1851: 364). For Trumpp, Lari was not the purest dialect, and the Siraiki was for him the name of the northern dialect of Sindhi, which had "preserved the purity of pronunciation with more tenaciousness than the southern one" (Trumpp 1872: II).

However, there was a quick consensus among the Europeans that Vicholi, the dialect spoken in Vicholo, or central Sindh, should be transformed into the standard Sindhi, to be used by British officers in their current affairs. Aitken stated that the Vicholi was "pure Sindhi" and probably the most spoken dialect in Sindh. The consensus could have been enforced by the scholar considered to be the greatest authority in the matter, Dr. Ernst Trumpp (Aitken 1907: 189). Furthermore, the choice of Vicholi could have been prompted by a more political, or more diplomatic, factor: it was the dialect spoken in Hyderabad, the late capital of the kingdom of Sindh. Notwithstanding, the other dialects were considered less pure, or corrupted, either in the field of pronunciation of the letters, or in that of the numerous terms borrowed from non-Sanskritic languages, primarily from Arabic.

The language was a main tool for the British and Europeans to gauge the society whose members were using it. The first step was to decide if it was really a language, meaning they had to determine whether it could be considered a distinct language, or if it was a dialectal form of another language. The pre-Burtonian Orientalists had thought Sindhi to be a dialect of Punjabi, Hindustani, or even Marwari. In 1812, McMurdo was probably the first to give a kind of depiction of the Sindhi language. He observed that it is close to Sanskrit and that it has a greater number of

words from Sanskrit than Gujarati. He spoke of some affinity between Sindhi and Gujarati, but also added that there is a great portion of Punjabi in Sindhi and that "it is by many considered as only a dialect of this language" (Mubarak Ali 1994: 55). In 1829, Delhoste claimed that Sindhi was "a mixture of hindee, pushtoo and punjabi" (Mubarak Ali 1994: 114).

However, another question was related to the determination of its limitations. Several Orientalists raised the question of where it geographically began, and where it ended, and they often noted that it was not an easy task to, for example, identify the limitations found between Siraiki and Sindhi (O'Brien 1881: i). Nonetheless, in the mid-nineteenth century, the British quickly acknowledged that Sindhi was a language of its own, and they listed its characteristics in abundance. In the early twentieth century, Grierson observed that Sindhi was quite distinct from Rajasthani (Grierson 1919: 1). Despite these difficulties, a kind of consensus regarding the distinctiveness of Sindhi soon emerged. Burton is probably the first to have claimed Sindhi is a distinct language, although his work did not list its characteristics. And as mentioned before, Burton's opinion can be contradictory from one publication to another. However, he did claim Sindhi was remarkable and superior to most of the dialects of Western India (Burton 1851: 75).

For the British, another element related to appreciating the status of a language was the issue of copiousness. The issue here was to observe whether a language was rich or poor, this being related to the refinement of the language, itself a kind of mirror of the possible civilizational stage a society could have reached. In his preface, for example, Eastwick speaks of the sterility of Sindhi, namely the opposite of copiousness. And in the preface of his *Vocabulary of the Scindee Language*, which he had prepared before the conquest, the unknown author clearly states that such a work will help to "build up and to consolidate the influence and power of their country in the East, while they advance the cause of civilisation and the interest of humanity" (Eastwick 1843). On his side, O'Brien attributed this differently understood state of the same language to the cleavage between the rural and urban populations, arguing that the laborers (such as the "lugubrious Jats") had a vocabulary mostly restricted to this occupation as laborers (O'Brien 1881: xii).

The British officers did not agree about how the number of dialects within Sindhi. In fact, we can see the issue of dialects crosses over with the issue of their limitations. And the very nature of a dialect can arise from the fact it is mixed with another non-Sindhi language. For example,

Grierson claimed that the Thareli dialect of Sindhi, which is named Dhatki in Rajasthan, "is only one of the mixtures of Marwari and Sindhi" (Grierson 1919: 143). He also claimed that, in Baluchistan, both Sindhi and Lahnda are called Jatki, "and it is hence difficult to distinguish between them" (Grierson 1919: 138). Notwithstanding, a single main point was discussed by the Europeans regarding the dialects of Sindhi: that of the Siraiki. For Trumpp, "the Siraiki" is the name given to the Sindhi dialect spoken in Northern Sindh, as its very name, Siraiki from *siro*, north, attests. Grierson criticized Trumpp's wrong statement, and expressed that there was a northern dialect in Sindh, pretty close to the Vicholi, and that what was called Siraiki was nothing more than the Lahnda of South Punjab (Grierson 1919: 140). The Siraiki was thus not seen as a Sindhi dialect.

The characteristics of the Sindhi language are listed by the following European scholars, such as O'Brien, Trumpp, and also Grierson. In standardizing their outcomes, it should be noted that, according to them, they are significantly varying. For example, O'Brien mentions the use of many suffixes (O'Brien 1881: viii), while Trumpp quotes the passive voice (Trumpp 1872: vii). Furthermore, O'Brien states that Sindhi owns many grammatical forms, but for him, contrary to other British Orientalists, this signifies a characteristic of the inferior state of a language, and, consequently, of a society (O'Brien: viii). Grierson adds other peculiarities for Sindhi, as for example that every word must end in a vowel. When it is short, it is very slightly pronounced, so as to be hardly audible to a European word (Grierson 1919: 8). He writes that Sindhi is also fond of cerebral sounds, and often has them where other Indian languages have dental sounds. Another characteristic of Sindhi is that of inserting a vowel between two contiguous consonants, so as to aid the pronunciation. About the grammar, Sindhi has other cases, in addition to the oblique and nominative cases that are common to all of the Indo-Aryan languages. They are the ablative, the locative, and the vocative cases (Grierson 1919: 23–24).

Once it was firmly and academically established that Sindhi was a distinct language, there came the task of ranking this language. The purity of the language was a significant issue in the selection of a standard language, and in this context "purity" meant closeness with Sanskrit. In this respect, Trumpp's opinion, based on his thorough philological knowledge, was decisive. He claimed that Sindhi was a "pure Sanskritical language, more free from foreign elements than any other of the North Indian

vernaculars." For Trumpp, Sindhi was "much more closely related to old Prakrit than the Marathi, Hindi, Punjabi or Bengali."

Later on, Grierson would build the genealogy of Sindhi through the Aprabhamsa, as an Indo-Aryan language of the North-Western group. The Aprabhamsa is a term that refers to a set of dialects used between the 6th and 13th centuries in North India, before the emergence of modern Indo-Aryan languages. As we shall see below, it was through the issue of the grammar that the Europeans started to think in terms of purity and corruption in regard to the languages of India, with the prerequisite that Sanskrit was the original language of it all, if not of the whole of humanity. Once again, they were reproducing the last works devoted to the European languages to those of India. Sanskrit was the equivalent of Latin with the European Roman languages such as French, Italian, and Spanish, Sanskrit being Latin's equivalent for the Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi, Punjabi, and Bengali.

In the early 1850s, two British officers were seen as the best specialists in Sindhi: Captain George Stack (d. 1853) and Lieutenant Richard F. Burton (1821–1890). In 1850, Captain Stack had already published translations in Sindhi for abstracts of the New Testament, especially Saint Matthew (Blumhardt 1893: 3). But he was also the author of three most important books, and these works give him more relevance in dealing with the related issues: an English-Sindhi Dictionary and a grammar in 1849, and a posthumous Sindhi-English dictionary which was published in 1855. Interestingly, the three books were published in Bombay, "printed by order of the Government of Bombay," by the American Mission Press. We shall turn back to these books in the next section. In his grammar, Stack provided a chart with 17 alphabets that were used for writing Sindhi. Burton gave only eight alphabets, of which four were advocated in the selection process for Sindhi: the Devanagari, the Khudawadi, the Gurmukhi, and the Naskh.

Before exposing the discussions between the British rulers, we have to know the opinions and arguments of the two main protagonists, Stack and Burton. George Stack advocated the use of the Khudawadi, although he did print his three books in the Devanagari. The Khudawadi script had originated from the Brahmi (Boivin 2015), although in the early twentieth century, some British still spoke of it as an adaptation of the Devanagari characters (Aitken 1907: 481). Stack provided some explanations in the preface of his grammar published in 1849, where the first chapter is on the letters. According to the preface of both the grammar and the English-Sindhi dictionary, we know that Stack completed first the grammar, on 1 March 1847, and after that the second book on 1 May 1849. The introduction of the grammar began with Stack claiming this issue was primary,

as which characters he would write in was the first thought he had in commencing this work. His choices lay with the Sindhi (or Khudawadi), the Roman, the Persian (or Nastaliq), the Gurmukhi, and the Devanagari (Stack 1849-1: no page).

According to him, the first three were inaccurate for representing the Sindhi sounds, except the Khudawadi, which was weak because of its total absence of vowels. Stack's choice was thus between Gurmukhi and Devanagari. The Gurmukhi had the advantage of being more known to the Hindus of Sindh, since they were in majority Nanakpanthis, and as such it could be used to read the Guru Granth in that same alphabet. His final choice of the Devanagari is explained as follows: it has a character with which the Europeans are more acquainted, and "as being the foundation of Sindhi itself, it (the Devanagari) seemed more appropriate where a different character was required, to write in it than in any other, although cognate and generally similar" (idem). Nonetheless, he had to add six characters for sounds, which do not exist in Devanagari, some of which have no equivalent in any Indian or European languages. He could have taken them from Khudawadi (Stack 1849-1: 9–10).

Burton advocates the Naskh script for writing the Sindhi language. He also criticized the transliteration for Oriental languages proposed by both William Jones and John Gilchrist (Burton 1851: 70). He nonetheless confessed it is not an easy task to choose. As claimed by Stack, the choice was for him between Devanagari, Khudawadi, Gurmukhi, and Naskh. Burton was convinced the Khudawadi was a kind of corrupted Gurmukhi, and that, while this alphabet is perfect for Punjabi, it is imperfect for Sindhi. Furthermore, and contrary to Stack's statement, he claimed it was little known to the people. On the other hand, the Khudawadi was confined to "a particular, though influential, caste of Hindoos, and even among them is only known to the traders, and generally neglected by the Moonshees and Amils" (Burton 1851: 154). He understood that the Devanagari would be excellent for books intended solely for the purpose of teaching the language to the Europeans, but that it had many imperfections and, above all, was utterly unknown to the local people.

Interestingly, we could find some convergence between Stack and Burton. For example, they agreed that the Devanagari would be the best choice if it were only to be used by the Europeans. But, for Stack, that was nevertheless the priority, while Burton appears to have been thinking first of the Sindhis. Finally, Burton did not argue for Naskh on the basis of philology. As he expressed it, it was due to "circumstances" (Burton 1851:

155). He praised the ability of Arabic script to adapt to so many different languages, as well as its "elegance"—a very subjective argument indeed. Beyond this point, he summarized the three main reasons for advocating the Naskh characters: all of the literature of Sindh had been written for ages in Arabic script; all educated Muslims could read it; knowing the ability of the Amils to read nastaliq through their knowledge of Persian, they would learn it very easily (Burton 1851: 156).

Burton and Stack were acknowledged as the best specialists of Sindhi among the Europeans. Trumpp is also quoted in such discussions, but he did not belong to the East India Company. Other British officers are also quoted in Frere's correspondence, such as Captain Goldsmid. In a letter written by the Government General of India in Council dated 12 December 1852, Stack and Burton's positions are summarized, and already the selection of Naskh is recommended. It is nevertheless added that Frere should proceed "with great caution in effecting the proposed change of language." We can consider that the significant argument was that of the number and history: the Muslims were in majority and they had ruled Sindh for centuries using the Arabic script. The Muslims were in large part the majority, and also, nobody could deny that the vast majority of Sindhi literature had been written in Naskh.

However, the most surprising piece of information that we find in the archives is that, despite the selection of the Naskh alphabet for writing Sindhi, Frere still planned to use Khudawadi as a kind of second official alphabet, especially for Hindus. In a letter he wrote to the deputy collectors on 8 January 1855, he clearly expressed the aim to find "a Hindu equivalent of the Arabic letters." Unfortunately, we do not have the details regarding the incentives, but Frere ordered all British collectors throughout Sindh to collect the Sindhi alphabets in use in their areas. Nonetheless, in a report he sent to Lord Elphinstone, Governor-General of the Bombay Presidency, dated 9 April 1855, Frere explained that the issue of Arabic Sindhi had already been solved, but that: "For the Hindoos who form about ¼ of the population, it will be necessary, as in Hindoostan, to have Hindoo characters they may be taught to use for their own private correspondence and account instead of the various systems more resembling cypher of short hand than an alphabetical character of which almost every town and large caste has a different and peculiar form" (*Sindhi Language and Books* 1855: 227).

A lot of investigations were obviously directed by Frere to improve the Khudawadi, especially regarding the difficult issue of the lack of vowels. Thus, the archives of Sindh, Clifton, provide a number of samples of what the British still used to call the Sindhi alphabet—or, better, the Hindu Sindhi alphabet. For them, it was the original alphabet used by the Sindhis before the Arab invasion. In case of a lack of letters, it was recommended to use those from Devanagari, Gurmukhi, Gujarati, or Modi.[5] Furthermore, it is said in a letter dated 2 May 1855 that Stack had sent his alphabet as early as 1848 to the commissioner—this being the same one that he had included in his grammar book, but it had been criticized by Trumpp who had identified four mistakes. Finally, four versions of the Sindhi alphabet, or Hindu Sindhi alphabet, were on the table: (1) Stack's version, which I shall name as Stack the Khudawadi, (2) the one in use in Hyderabad, (3) in Shikarpur, and (4) in Larkana.

The British immediately observed the great flexibility of the Hindu Sindhi alphabet, and B. H. Ellis, the Assistant of the Commissioner who supervised the investigation for standardizing the Hindu Sindhi alphabet, explained that what Trumpp had called errors in Stack's alphabet came from the many variations in the scripts the Hindus of different towns used. Also, Ellis was quite annoyed because he was sure it would be difficult to impose a version of the Hindu Sindhi alphabet on those who did not already use it: "The Shikarpoor people will probably be the most difficult to convince for they will be reluctant to adopt the Khudawadi character, several letters of which differ from their own" (*Sindhi Language and Books* 1855: 89–90).

Among the collectors, Captain Goldsmid, the then Collector of Upper Sindh, was very keen to solve the issue, with the help of his two *munshi*s, Munshi Vitaldas and Munshi Fujdari. As for Stack, Goldsmid was convinced that the various Sindhi scripts had been taken from the Gurmukhi; he naturally used this script to improve the Khudawadi. He also adopted the Gurmukhi system of vowel points and marks (*Sindhi Language and Books* 1855: 64). Another British officer was given the special duty of harmonizing the different Hindu Sindhi scripts, and he had to investigate for this purpose all over Sindh, in Karachi, Thata, Hyderabad, and Upper Sindh.

[5] The Modi was a script coming from Brahmi, as the Khudawadi and the Khojki. It was used in different parts of India, especially in Maharashtra. See Sohoni 2017.

Translating, Printing, and the Making of the Sindhi *Munshi*

As we saw above, the issue of translation and the search for collaborationist agents was not new in the Indian subcontinent. As soon as the eighteenth century, the British understood the need, first, to teach Persian, the then official language of North India, and to recruit indigenous people to help them. In 1767, Benjamin Kennicott (1718–1783) made a proposal to establish a professorship in Persian at the University of Oxford, only to serve the interests of the East India Company (Auer 2014: 3). Therefore, the British had a century's experience in the matter. In this initial phase, before the suppression of Persian in 1837, their endeavors were turned toward the knowledge and mastering of Persian, for which William Jones had published a grammar book in 1777.

Regarding the help of native scholars, the British employed the court scribes responsible for official correspondence in the Mughal Empire, known as *munshi*s. The word *munshi* comes from the Arabic word *insha*, meaning to produce, create, or compose. The *munshi* is thus the one who masters the art of writing for correspondence. With the British, the *munshi*'s role was transformed into that of a "cross-cultural interlocutor," to quote Blain Auer. Later on, he would be described by John Platts as "an author, a composer; a writer, scribe, secretary […]; (in India, chiefly among Europeans) a tutor, a teacher of Persian or Urdu, language-master" (Platts 1884: 1077). In the Sindhi-English dictionary published in 1879, the *munshi* is simply labeled a secretary, a scribe (Shirt et al. 1879: 796). In 1919, in his books on the Amils, Bherumal Advani stated that the *munshi* was doing exactly the same job as that of the clerk and that they were both Hindus and Muslims (Advani 1919: 2).

Who was the Sindhi *munshi*? What constituted the making of the Sindhi *munshi*? The sources to address these queries are scarce and undetailed. The word *munshi* is used in most of the sources by the British, but before Frere's decision regarding the compulsory use of Sindhi in administration, the *munshi*s were hardly mentioned in the archives. According to them, the first mention comes in relation to translation: the *munshi* is thus mostly a translator to Sindhi, from three main languages: English, Hindustani, and Persian. Contrary to what we know of North India, we do not know a lot about their training in any particular language, how they learned English, and so on. We can only use their names, as given both by the letters exchanged between the British officers and the first books of

translation that were printed in Sindhi, to determine what we can. Let us start by focusing on the 1850s, and the second half of that decade. With the importance given to printing and translation, the Sindhi *munshi* became a key figure in British colonial policy.

In fact, he was the symbol of modernity, gradually replacing another key figure of knowledge, the *akhund*. The *akhund* was both a priest, who performed rituals during funerals, and also a teacher. For example, the Amils themselves learned Persian through an *akhund*, while he also taught the Quran to Muslim boys (Burton 1851: 149). It is tempting to state that the *akhund* was a specialist of old and traditional knowledge, since the compilers of the 1879 Sindhi-English dictionary paid tribute to one Akhund Abdul Rahim of Karachi who rendered considerable assistance "in finding the meaning of obscure poetical words" (Shirt et al. 1879: iv).

We can list four *munshi*s who accomplished the larger part of the translations during the decade under discussion: two are Hindu, Nandiram Navani and Udharam Thanvardas Mirchandani; and two are Muslim, Ghulam Ali and Muhammad Shah. It would be interesting to decipher their social backgrounds and especially to learn if they belonged to families traditionally involved with knowledge and its transmission or not. Because of the scarcity of sources, though, we are compelled to turn to the onomastic. Starting with the latter individuals, the first was a Shia Muslim, while the second was a Sayyid, an alleged descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, as his nickname "shah" indicates. About the Hindus, we know a little bit more. Nandiram Navani, whose dates are not known, belonged to an Amil family from Sehwan Sharif, and his ancestors had been associated with the worship of the Sufi saint, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (d. 1274), for centuries. The Navanis were, as a matter of fact, one of the Hindu families who performed the *mendi* ritual during the annual fair, the *urs* of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.

Udharam Thanvardas Mirchandani (1833–1883) belonged to an Amil family, which is listed in Bherumal Advani's book on the Amils. According to him, the Mirchandanis came from Multan and settled in Khudabad during the Kalhoras' rule, thus in the eighteenth century. Being Khudabadi Amils, they thus belonged to the higher group among the Amils. Advani stated that some families of the Mirchandani migrated to Hyderabad and worked as surveyors, canal supervisors, with the *mir*s. When the British came to Sindh, they concealed their surveying instruments, thinking that they would submit to the *mir*s (Advani 1919: 32–33). In the case of the Sindh, there is a clear shifting of the *munshi* from being a translator, as is

the case with Nandiram Navani, to being an author, as is the case with Udharam Thanvardas Mirchandani.

As a matter of fact, Nandiram Navani was only a translator: he did not author books of his own, except maybe a Sindhi primer in 1869; while Udharam Thanvardas Mirchandani started as a translator, hence the nickname Munshi put before his name. In a second phase, he was himself an author of books whose aim was still to teach Sindhi to British officers. In 1857, Thanvardas published one of the first grammars of Sindhi in Sindhi, and he was one of the three authors of the first comprehensive Sindhi-English Dictionary (to be published in 1879), with Reverend G. Shirt, missionary of the Church Missionary Society, and S. F. Mirza, Sindhi translator to the Educational Department. But before turning to the publishing of grammars and dictionaries, we have to focus on the first printed books and on the issue of translation.

The translational policy as implemented by the British in India was the cornerstone of their will to control the population. In their conception, translation would play a key role in their civilizational project. The main issue was that of transmitting science, which was the main proof of the superiority of European knowledge over Indian knowledge. Their endeavors were oriented to finding a way to dispatch European science into Indian knowledge, and they thought it would be accomplished through a vast enterprise of translation. Since the British had been controlling Northern India since the second half of the eighteenth century, the first large-scale translation and publishing of Western scientific texts aimed at the "intellectual and moral improvement" of north Indian society (Dodson 2005: 818). Sanskrit could be of great help in forging new words for translating English scientific words, but on the other hand, the British were convinced that the transmission of Western knowledge should be undertaken throughout the vernacular languages.

The middle of the nineteenth century saw a veritable explosion of Urdu-language textbooks prepared in Delhi. Influential British officers had finally convinced the government that Urdu was the more able language for translating Western scientific literature. As soon as 1835, Brian H. Houghton characterized Urdu as possessing "great resources" on account of historical connections with the more powerful languages of Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit (Dodson 2005: 824). Later on, in the 1850s, a substantial number of Hindi textbooks incorporated highly Sanskritized vocabularies, these being first published by leading British Orientalists such as Ballantyne, to be followed by those works published by *pandit*s employed at the Benares College, on Ballantyne's model (Dodson 2005: 830).

The Sindh archives of Clifton provided the letters exchanged by a number of actors regarding both the translation and the printing of the first Sindhi books in Karachi that were to be used for teaching. A list of 12 books is offered, and they display a mix of different subjects. About 1000 copies were printed for each of them. Two among them are directly related to the language itself, Sindhi. There is the Sindhi alphabet as prepared by Captain Stack, and another one prepared by Nandiram Navani on the spelling of words. Two others are more technical, and concern representation since they are focused on topography and drawing. Several books fall under the moral field, put in the shape of tales and coming both from India and Europe. For example, *Aesop's Fables* are translated from English to Sindhi. A last category is made of history, the history of Hindustan. In fact, the majority of the books are translated from Hindustani to Sindhi. The list provides a bird's eye view of the burgeoning scientific knowledge with a focus on mathematics, history, and geography.

Last but not least, we find books for learning Sindhi. One *Bab Namo*, a Sindhi Primer also called *Spelling Book*, was prepared by Nandiram Navani, and it was mainly designed for learning Stack's alphabet, which was listed as number two. Furthermore, although it is not listed here, Captain Stack's grammar was highly recommended for teaching the Sindhi language to British officers (Stack 1986). Regarding history, a main body of knowledge for shaping the modern European nations in the nineteenth century, it is noticeable that, in the list, it is a book on the history of India that is translated and lithographed. It would be in 1860 that Nandiram Navani would translate a book on the history of Sindh from Persian into Sindhi, with the title of *Sindhi ji Tavarikh* (Bhakari 1860). Mir Masum Bhakari (1538–1606), the author, devoted his study to a limited period in the history of Sindh, that of the Arghuns and the Tarkhans. These were two Central Asian dynasties who ruled Sindh from 1507 to 1593. Bhakari was thus a witness of the annexation of Sindh to the Mogul Empire under Akbar in 1593.

During the 1850s and the 1860s, most of the books were translations from English or Hindustani to English. One can observe that there were a few translations from Sindhi to English. In this respect, one of the earlier books was Goldsmid's translation of Sassui and Punhun from Sindhi to English in "metrical verses" (Goldsmid 1863). According to Memon, 67 books were printed in Sindhi from 1862 to 1875 (Memon 2005: 214–217). The list he provides is probably not exhaustive, but it offers a good survey of what kind of colonial knowledge the British wanted to give to the Sindhis.

Grammar and the Dictionary

Michel Foucault has convincingly shown the meaning of the thinking, the writing, and the publishing of the first grammars in the making of the classical European episteme (Foucault 1966 and 1972). Grammar was essential for learning the language, but in the colonial period, it was also a main tool for getting the discourse on and the representation of the world as expressed by non-European people into the European system. The idea of general grammar implied that the grammar of all languages was built on the same model and therefore Indian languages had to fit into this mold. In Europe, the nineteenth century was a turning point in the evolution of grammars. After the construction of the "general grammar," the scholars were to build a "comparative grammar" whose final aim was a "universal grammar." This means that they stated that all of the languages could be put into a number of categories, which were similar for all languages all over the world. More and more, grammar was central to the understanding of a population: people were similar to how they spoke, and how they articulated the language and the discourse they built from it.

Regarding language and grammar, the primary landmark was set by the *Encyclopédie* written under the supervision of Denis Diderot (1713–1784). Foucault himself quoted Diderot's article when he started dealing with the issue of language: "The language of a people gives us its vocabulary, and its vocabulary is a sufficiently faithful and authoritative record of all the knowledge of that people; simply by comparing the different states of a nation's vocabulary at different times one could form an idea of its progress. Every science has its name, every notion within a science has its name too, everything known in nature is designated, as is everything invented in the arts, as well as phenomena, manual tasks, and tools" (Foucault 1970: 86–87).

In South Asia, the evolution of the knowledge of grammar followed the same evolution as in Europe. It was tightly related to the birth and spread of a new science, Orientalism. As stated before, it is said that William Jones was at the vanguard of this development when he published a grammar for Persian as early as in 1771. In fact, he was a pioneer in the interest that he held for Persian grammar without having himself composed a grammar of Persian. Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi convincingly shows how Jones relied upon a team of Indian scholars for all of his achievements. He states that Jones had already met an Indian scholar in Persian when he was in London, and it was this scholar who started helping him with the translation of a Persian dictionary (Pollock 2011: 271).

Indeed, it is still an extremely neglected field of knowledge regarding the extent to which Europeans not only looted the material culture of the people, and the most beautiful artifacts they were dominating, but also the intellectual heritage. Notwithstanding, the interest the British gave to the vernacular languages resulted from the debate between the Orientalists and the Anglicists, but it took some time after the decree of 1813 for them to publish grammars. A number of Sanskrit grammars were nevertheless published in the first decade of the nineteenth century. These grammars of Indian language published by the British were based on a European model.[6]

Ernst Trumpp published his grammar of the Sindhi language in 1872, and John Beames praised it quite a bit, speaking of "the inestimable labours of that sound scholar, Dr. Trumpp, whose grammar of Sindhi is the only grammar of any of our seven languages which has as yet been written on correct philological principles" (Beames 1875: 43). John Beames, the scholar who applied the comparative grammar developed by Franz Bopp to the Indian languages, took seven languages all together: Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Oriya, and Sindhi.

Before turning to Trumpp's *Grammar of Sindhi Language*, it is necessary to start with the first publication to have been named a grammar of the Sindhi language. It was published by W. H. Wathen in 1836, but as Trumpp would state, it "does not deserve the name" (Trumpp 1872: 9). In his report published in 1837 in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, James Prinsep (1799–1840) claimed that Wathen cannot be (Fig. 2.3) blamed for having "romanized" the Sindhi grammar since it was intended for European students (Prinsep 1837: 351).[7] Wathen's grammar included one of the first samples, if not the first, of the Khudawadi alphabet, which he named Sindhi alphabet. Nonetheless, regarding the alphabets, Prinsep is critical because Wathen selected the Persian alphabet for Sindhi instead of the Devanagari. The same criticism is expressed by Captain Stack in his *Grammar of the Sindhi Language* published in 1849 (Stack 1849: i). While Trumpp acknowledged that Stack's work was "an accurate and meritorious work" (Trumpp 1872: 9), Beames spoke of the "deficiencies which strike one at every step" (Beames –I 1872: 17).

[6] On the relation between colonization and the development of the study of grammar in Europe, see Said 1978: 97, 160, 246.

[7] James Prinsep was the founding editor of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, and he is known as having deciphered the Karoshti and the Brahmi scripts.

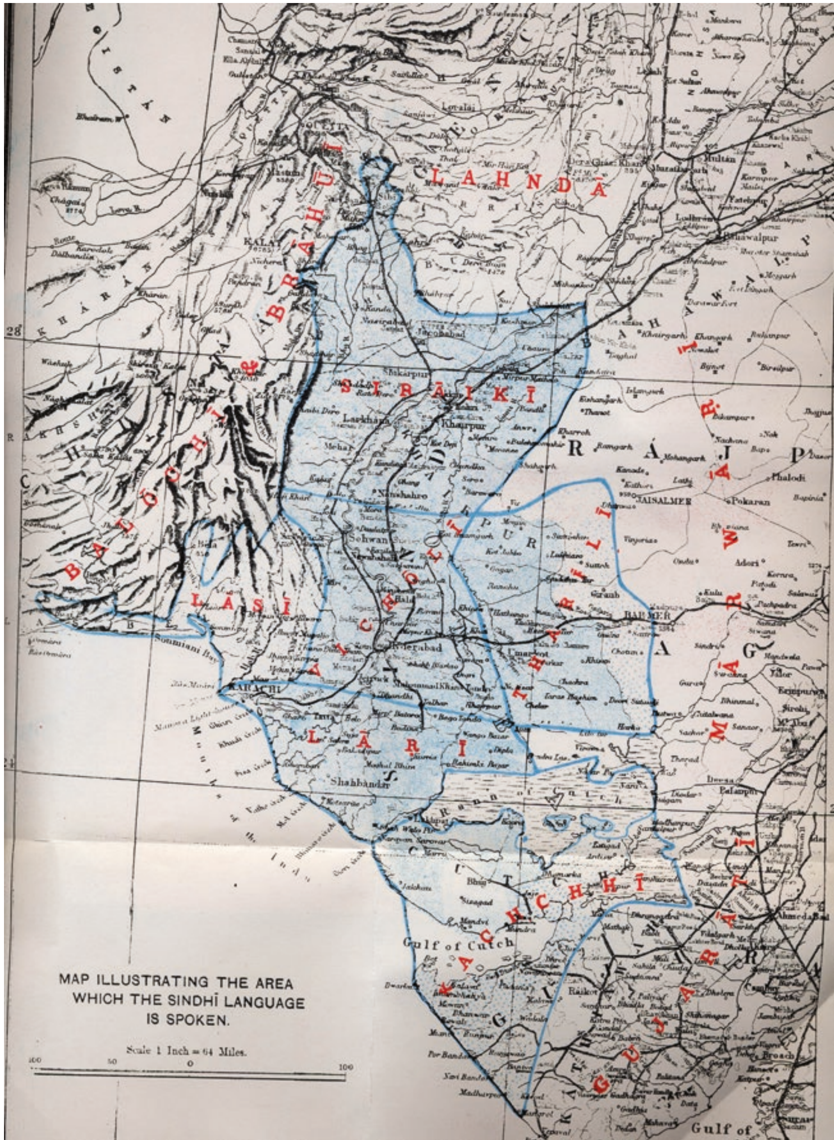

Fig. 2.3 Map of the Sindhi speaking area, 1919

Stack's grammar was published in 1849 at the American Mission Press in Bombay. In the introduction to his work, he thanked Lieutenant Burton (Stack 1849: vii). Labeled by Trumpp as the first Sindhi scholarship (Trumpp 1858: ii), the grammar is divided into ten chapters, dealing respectively with: letters, the parts of speech, adjectives, numerals and cardinals, pronouns, pronominal affixes, verbs (these taking up two chapters), moods, adverbs and others, and derivatives and compounds. The book ends with several appendices, including alphabets, Sindhi months and eras, and two stories for the purposes of exercise. Beyond the issue of the selection of the best alphabet for Sindhi, Stack also underscores the high variety of forms of speech, so that the ones he has given may not be condemned as incorrect, though this is a point, which will be highly criticized by John Beames. Stack's explanation is very common: "A dialect in which there is no literature, and by a few books of any kind, must necessarily be spoken with some slight diversity in different neighborhoods, and by different classes" (Stack 1849: vi).

Stack here makes a most important distinction in nineteenth-century Europe, between "written society" and "oral society." Such a cleavage was a primary distinction made for evaluating a society as civilized or not, and if appropriate, savage or barbarous. Thus, literacy was a significant criterion to locate the stage reached by a society. Regarding the issue of civilization, the British commonly used the expression "half-barbarous" for ranking, so to speak, the Sindhi society. This phrase echoes Beames' statement about the relationship between literature and civilization in India, speaking of "a country which has so recently emerged from semi-barbarism; but civilization, or a curious imitation of it, is a plant of fast growth in India" (Beames 1872: 28). Interestingly, Beames does not deny the right of India to be civilized, but he lessens it in speaking of a "curious imitation."

Turning back to Stack and to the issue we are dealing with in this book, the most amazing point of note is Stack's ignorance of literature, especially regarding Sufi literature, and moreover the poetic work by Shah Abd al-Latif. Consequently, Sufism was not an issue for the British in the most important 1850s decade after the actions undertaken by Sir Bartle Frere. In fact, two main individuals would be at the vanguard regarding the raising of Sufism as the core of Sindhi literature: Richard F. Burton and Ernst Trumpp. Before them, the final phase of the shaping of a new Sindhi episteme had been Trumpp's *Grammar of the Sindhi Language* published in 1872. As we shall see, in nineteenth-century Indian studies, his work on Sindhi was a landmark in the studies of Indian languages. John Beames is

explicit in this respect, as we saw above: he claims that Trumpp's Sindhi grammar was a pioneering work in the study of Indian languages.

But, before turning to it, it is worthwhile to mention the first grammar of Sindhi published in Sindhi. The author was a well-known Sindhi scholar, Munshi Udharam Thanvardas Mirchandani, whom I have claimed was the first to belong to a new category of *munshi*s. His work was published in Kotri in 1857, this being a lithographed book from a handwritten script, it being 45 pages long. In 1868, it would come under a third edition in Bombay with 134 pages, although it would still be titled in English, *Elementary Grammar of the Sindhi Language*, with "additions and corrections"—which is rendered into Sindhi via *Sindhi grammar yani Sindhi zaban ji sarf*. It is a very basic introduction to the grammar of Sindhi, and it does not appear the author was inspired by the recently published grammar produced by Stack two years earlier. In fact, Thanvardas was the first Sindhi to take a significant interest in the grammars. His work in this field was republished a number of times under different forms, and he was also the author of a guide to students, *Mufid al-Taliban*, still in relation to grammatical rules, but with many illustrations taken from stories. This book was also lithographed in 1861, but in Karachi (Blumhardt 1893: 15).

It was Bartle Frere who had ordered a grammar of Sindhi language to be produced by Ernst Trumpp. Ernst Trumpp (1828–1885) was a kind of atypical scholar since he was a German who became a missionary of the Anglican Church. Some scholars introduce Trumpp as a monument of Indian Orientalism, as a translator of the Granth Sahib in 1870, and of a grammar of the Pashto language in 1873. Around 1854, he arrived in India as a missionary sponsored by the Ecclesiastical Mission Society in order to study the languages of India and to prepare grammars and glossaries for use by Christian missionaries. There, he was initially stationed at the Karachi mission, where he learned the Sindhi language. Later, he was stationed at Peshawar, where he studied the Pashto language. He went back to Germany in 1860 and was subsequently summoned to return to work in the subcontinent, focusing specifically on translations of Sikh scripture in Lahore. He returned to Würtemberg, Germany, in 1871, and in 1874, he began working as a professor of Oriental languages at the University of Munich.

Trumpp's work is to be located in the field of comparative grammar as initiated by Franz Bopp (1771–1867). The subtitle of his Sindhi grammar book is explicit in this respect, since after the title of *Grammar of the Sindhi Language*, it adds the explanatory note: "compared with the

Sanskrit, Prakrit and the cognate Indian vernaculars." The work is meaningfully dedicated to Sir Bartle Frere as "a token of highest regard and esteem." In the preface, Trumpp detailed the grammar, which had been compiled for years, but there was no means for printing it. Finally, it was Her Majesty's government, which granted the printing expenses. Trumpp's summary is not that different from Stack's. Nonetheless, there is a major shift, and this is the importance given to the syntax. Syntax is the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language. Syntax is divided into two aspects: the analytical and the synthetical. In the first, it deals with constituent parts that are to be considered in relation to their signification, intrinsic value, and application. The second aspect regards how the different parts of the speech are linked together in order to form a sentence.

Through the writing and printing of the grammar of the Sindhi language, Trumpp turned the Sindhi language into a reference in the field of Indian philology since, as stated by Beames, no such grammar following the philological rules had been written before. However, while acknowledging the role played by Trumpp in the field, Beames expressed many criticisms of the grammar. Firstly, he pointed out a wrong translation from Sindhi to English (Beames 1875-II: 17), and he furthermore mentioned a number of wrong interpretations or understandings implemented by Trumpp, and even omissions, and finally he detailed many false opinions, especially where he saw Trumpp to be building statements without any philological evidence. As a matter of fact, Trumpp's grammar of the Sindhi language, despite its shortcomings, was a landmark in the field of grammatology, as a kind of pattern of the subsequent grammars of Hindi, Telugu, and other Indian languages. As Beames claimed, Trumpp's grammar guided him in studying the other Indian languages (Beames 1875-II: 13).

Besides the grammars, which describe the rules of language as if they mirrored the rules of the society, the second major tool built for allowing the British to control the society, and the knowledge it produced, was the dictionary. The first dictionaries of vernacular languages published in India were, like the grammars, focused on the issue of the language's relationship with Sanskrit. William Carey's dictionary of Bengali published in 1815 provided an etymology of all of its words and included an appendix that listed the entirety of Sanskrit roots (Dodson 2005: 817). The dictionaries were bilingual and also came with a number of multilingual and technical vocabularies. Two streams appeared from them. On the one side, the

authors underscored the dependence of the vernaculars upon Sanskrit, and on the other side, they showed how the languages lacked any sort of vocabularies in comparison with English (Dodson 2005: 817).

For many years, the dictionaries of the vernaculars, authored by both British and Indians, would especially highlight the importance of the Sanskrit components, as seen with the trilingual English-Urdu-Hindi dictionary published in 1856 by Mathura Prasad Misra (Dodson 2005: 830). This trend would remain dominant also in the 1860s and the 1870s. It was a very common idea that a dictionary should reflect the greatness of a language, and that without such tools, its strength would be lessened. In Gujarat, for example, such an idea was quite widely shared among the native literati, hence the numerous dictionaries which were published (Isaka 2002: 8).

But once again, before Frere's action, a dictionary had been published: Stack's English-Sindhi Dictionary. George Stack was the collector of Hyderabad, but he was also, and chiefly, a tireless student of the Sindhi language. He passed away at an early age, and, according to the editor of the Sindhi-English dictionary, B. H. Ellis, his death was mostly due to the intensive labor he engaged in. However, the English-Sindhi dictionary was prepared and published shortly after the grammar. Interestingly, it shows Stack's priority, as well as that of the British rule in Sindh, since it is printed "by order of the Government of Bombay." As a matter of fact, an English-Sindhi dictionary was a priority conceived for the English people.

Sir George Clerk (1800–1889), the Governor of Bombay, visited Sindh in February of 1848 and, after having a look at Stack's dictionary, he recommended it be published on the account of the Government of Bombay. Stack's main inspiration was Vans Kennedy's English-Marathi Dictionary published in 1824, which was in fact a simple dictionary of vocabulary. Apparently, Stack followed the vocabulary as put forth by Vans Kennedy (1784–1846), who was admired as a scholar by Lord Elphinstone, who gave him the appointment of being the Marathi and Gujarati translator of the regulations of government. Stack was proud to state that his dictionary had doubled Kennedy's, in terms of the number of words. Once again, he acknowledged the difficulty of fixing the spelling of words, especially since there was no standard Sindhi yet and the regional variations were numerous. Also, he did not wish to give the etymology of the Sindhi language since, as with Hindustani, it had borrowed many words from Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian.

The Sindhi-English dictionary is much more copious than the English-Sindhi one, with more than 400 pages. As in the first one, Stack used the Devanagari script for Sindhi, and it was also printed by "order of the Government of Bombay" by the American Mission Press. For Ellis, Stack was the first Sindhi lexicographer, and he was convinced that all future authors of Sindhi dictionaries would be indebted to Stack's labor. Last but not least, the first sentence in Ellis' preface acknowledges that Stack took assistance from two *pandit*s, Brahm Suchananad and Jeshta Brahm, both from Hyderabad (Stack 1855: vi). Their surnames obviously show they belong to the Brahman caste.

Stack's dictionaries were the sole reference for learning Sindhi until 1879, when a new Sindhi-English dictionary was published. Between 1855 and 1879, many changes occurred in India and in Sindh. The first to be mentioned is the departure of Sir Bartle Frere as commissioner in Sindh. This marks the end of the great enterprises undertaken in the field of knowledge. Also, between the publishing of both dictionaries, a major upheaval had occurred with the Indian Mutiny of 1857, which had led to a reframing of the British administration of India after the suppression of the East India Company. Regarding the 1879 dictionary, it is not a coincidence that no mission press was involved: it was published by the Commissioner Printing Press. Also, the printing press had been shifted from Bombay to Karachi. The dictionary had been copiously enlarged, to about 920 pages, more than double the page count of Stack's. Thus, obviously, the 1879 dictionary opened a new era in the field of the building of colonial knowledge in Sindh.

This said, the influence of Christian missions is not to be discounted when we see that the dictionary was printed under the supervision of Reverend George Shirt (1843–1887), who was officially labeled as a missionary of the Church Missionary Society in Sindh. He was well known for having translated a number of abstracts from the New Testament into Sindhi. Notwithstanding, his name is followed by two other names: Udharam Thanvardas, Assistant Translator to the Government of Sindh, and S. F. Mirza, Sindhi Translator to the Educational Department in Sindh. While we already covered Udharam Thanvardas in the earlier passage devoted to the *munshi*s, I could not find any clues about S. F. Mirza. Only, we can deduce from his patronym that he was a Muslim, and probably belonged to an aristocratic family, if not that of the Talpurs, as his honorific Persian title of *mirza*, or prince, attests.

However, the dictionary is one of the few products resulting from a collaboration between a European, a Hindu, and a Muslim in the field of knowledge. In the preface, it is stated that the dictionary has been compiled at the request of the government and that the editing work was entirely completed by S. F. Mirza. The preface also claims that "there is not a page [...] that does not owe something to Captain Stack's Dictionary" (Shirt et al. 1879: iv). The Sindhi language is introduced as a living organism absorbing many rich treasures of the languages and literatures. Last but not least, the compilers of the dictionary make a distinction between colloquial Sindhi and literary Sindhi, highlighting the idea that the first was evolving much more quickly than the second. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the use of the adjective "literary" implicitly claims that there is a Sindhi literature and, therefore, that the society should be able to be more civilized.

Shirt and *alii*'s dictionary would stand as the standard Sindhi-English dictionary until the one prepared by Permanand Mewaram in 1910, about 30 years later. Shirt's dictionary is said to have 21,450 words, and Mewaram's includes 25,140. Shirt's dictionary was the first to be published after the standardization policy implemented by Sir Bartle Frere, and thus the Arabic Sindhi script was used without any discussion since the majority of the Sindhis had accepted it. As a matter of fact, the compilers do not justify their choice, contrary to Stack. Furthermore, if we wish to enlarge the topic to the whole Indian subcontinent, Shirt's dictionary was contemporary to other landmark dictionaries of Indian languages, like for instance, Platts' Urdu and Hindi Dictionary published in 1884. Regarding the grammar, we have Trumpp's Sindhi Grammar published in 1872, while Platts published his *Grammar of Hindustani* in 1874. There is thus a meaningful simultaneity for publishing basic tools regarding vernacular Indian languages.

While it is remarkable to observe that the studies of the Sindhi language worked as a kind of pioneer in the field of Indian languages, we can only surmise this to be the result of objective factors since the progress achieved by philology in Europe certainly had an impact on India, where the British people employed by the Indian administration had been trained in the Orientalist institutions of learning in Europe. Also, Sindhi language as a vanguard in the philological field was due, sometimes, to the endeavors of a single individual. It is not my intention to praise Trumpp's work here,

however, because I am not able to approach matters related to linguistics.[8] Also, it is well known that Trumpp was firstly a missionary. Already, we saw that his work on the Sindhi language was challenged by John Beames, but Trumpp had been strongly criticized for other works he had completed, as for instance his translation of *The Granth Sahib of the Sikhs* (Oberoi 1994: 247). Notwithstanding, throughout these Orientalist works devoted to philology, the Sindhi language had been given a place among its "cognate" languages, such as Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi.

All the achievements in the field of language had been the result of the policy as implemented by the colonial power, at different scales, be it in Delhi, Bombay, or Karachi. Most of the printed books had been ordered by these colonial institutions as priorities following Frere's circular, meant to teach Sindhi to British officers, and incidentally, to teach "pure" Sindhi, the word "pure" or "true" here signifying a language following, in Beames' words, the philological principles. Only they could provide an authentic language, keeping in mind that, as stated by Beames once again, "Sanskrit, a divine invention, is the only true and correct Indian language and [...] all deviations from Sanskrit observable in the conversation of the masses are corruptions arising from ignorance, and [...] to purify and improve the vernaculars [...] every word should be restored to its original Sanskrit shape, and the stream be made to run upwards to the source" (Beames 1872: 13).

Beames' abstract is a compendium of the colonial ideology as served by the newly born philology. One can find the key words that underlie the scientific approach then known as philology. There are: *true*, *corruption*, *ignorance*, *purify*, and, not to be forgotten, the *masses*. Last but not least, the whole representation of the societies is wrapped in a vision rooted in an evolutionist conception of history, according to which societies are born to evolve from the stage of savagery, barbarism, and finally, thanks to the colonial power, to civilization. Following this theory, sometimes called social Darwinism, it can be understood that the societies were purer in ancient times, with the newly born period of Antiquity.[9] Also, this discourse implicitly states that the masses are the main responsible party for

[8] On this aspect of Trumpp's contribution, see the recent study by Arvind Iyengar (Iyengar 2017).

[9] The period of Antiquity appears with eighteenth-century European authors like Montesquieu and Gibbon. They wanted to underscore that after Pre-history, associated to a savage period of humanity, a new period marked the birth of civilization, especially with the Greeks and the Romans.

the suggested decadence of the language that mirrored the decadence of the components of the whole culture, including religions. "The masses" as an expression refers to the dominated groups in a society, as opposed to the dominant groups themselves, also known as the elite.

After the two pillars built for the knowledge of the Sindhi language, namely Trumpp's grammar in 1872 and Shirt's dictionary in 1879, the publications related to the same topics came in a different format. I would say they were, firstly, more portable, by which I mean that they did not aim at being exhaustive works in philology. Furthermore, and this is the true reason why they were written and published, they were designed for the practical use of the Sindhi language. In other words, they contended to help non-Sindhi speakers to learn Sindhi as well as possible, and as quickly as possible. This new type of booklets, rather than books, often joined the two different approaches in summarizing both lexicological and grammatological information, although there were specific ones titled "Vocabulary" (Eastwick 1843) and "Glossary" (O'Brien 1881). New terms were nonetheless used to designate this new shape of knowledge of the Sindhi language, such as manuals or instructors.

Two booklets belonging to this new category were published in 1904 and 1905 by two Hindu individuals. The first one, titled *A Manual of Sindhi*, is very clear regarding the recipients, as put in the subtitle: "for the use of European officers, missionaries and others studying the Sindhi language." The author was a librarian at the European General Library in Hyderabad. It is dedicated to the Reverend Father A. Hegglin, a professor of Sanskrit at St. Xavier's College in Bombay. In the short preface, the author is keen "to point out that this is not merely a grammar, but a 'Manual.'" He is also very clear regarding the object of the book, which is "to enable the European student of Sindhi to learn the language in the shortest and easiest way." The author aimed not at exposing and explaining the whole set-up and use of the language. Thanks to his ten-year experience as a teacher of Sindhi, he knew well "what are the special difficulties which present themselves to the European student of this language." For him, here lies the distinction between a grammar and a manual. Furthermore, the book is arranged to cover successive lessons, and while the intrinsic grammatical peculiarities of the language are not fully depicted, another main element of distinction is made of the exercises, which can be found at the end of the manual.

Notwithstanding, the book is divided into two parts. The second is made of the exercises in Sindhi, and the first is very close to a grammar,

despite the denials of the author. The plan he followed is that of the grammars, with the alphabet, the formation of words, the nouns, genders, and so on. The second part is totally in Sindhi and it is introduced by the author in the conclusion of the first part. He selected short texts, and he also recommended that readers read the leading articles of the *Sindh Sudhar*, a weekly periodical published in Karachi. It was the first newspaper published in the Sindhi language, which started in 1884. Initially published by the Education Department of Sindh, it was put out later by the Sindh Saba, with Sadhu Hiranand being its first editor, from 1884–1887.

The short texts deal with a variety of topics, especially historical and geographical. Furthermore, the author recommended the readers read nine other texts, from which we observe that some dated back to the first printed books in Sindhi, half a century before. For example, there is the translation of *Aesop's Fables*.[10] The book also includes a treatise on female education, the story of Columbus, a tale on Muslim life, and another on Hindu life. Also, there are translations from English books, as for example that of Philip's history or the history of the Ethiopian prince, Rassalas, a quite popular book written in England by Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) and published in 1759. The recommended texts were selected "for simple, natural and eloquent Sindhi" (Bulchand 1904: 232). We do not know who translated them into Sindhi.

The second booklet is called an instructor by its author, Anandram Shahaney (Shahaney 2000). We can surmise it was much more popular than the previous one, since it is still reprinted both in Pakistan, by the Sindhi Adabi Board, and in India by the Sindhi Academy. In both countries, the work was revised. In India, the transcription of Sindhi in the Devanagari script was added, with Arabic-Sindhi. In the Indian edition, the original preface written by the author has disappeared. In both, the author is introduced as a "qualified and gazetted teacher of language with fifty years' experience." Interestingly, although both the manuals were published in Hyderabad at intervals of one year, Shahaney does not seem to know Bulchand's work: "At present there is not such a book which meets all […] requirements" is what Shahaney expressed in the preface. However, Shahaney's instructor is still more pragmatic and pedagogical than Bulchand's manual.

[10] *Aesop's Fables* were a part of the classical legacy of the European knowledge. Thus, there were used for being translated in Indian languages, as for example in Bengali (Ghosh 2006: 82).

The instructor is divided in two parts: grammar, exercises, and colloquial sentences, and selected exercises. Also, it is made for the European "gentlemen qualifying for the Lower and Higher standard examination in Sindhi." In the third part of the second section, one finds different types of colloquial sentences, such as general, judicial, greetings, and conversations. These could not be found in Bulchand's manual. Nevertheless, the most innovative element is the last section of the second part, which is devoted to the "list of official and technical Sindhi terms." This very much targets the readers for whom the instructor was written—namely, the British officers dealing with revenues and justice. As a matter of fact, those 15 pages are probably the reason why Shahaney's was more popular than Bulchand's. These lists are very technical, giving in Sindhi the different words used for the different taxes and different types of land (as for irrigation, crops, and cattle), as well as the different categories of people having authority, colonial or indigenous. The *mukhi* is the head of a Hindu community in a village, a *wadero* is the headman of a village or of a tribe, and a *kardar* is a judicial officer in a *taluka* (Shahaney 1905: 120).

Conclusion

In the late nineteenth century, the British were able to catch up on colonization, since they had conquered Sindh only in 1843, almost a century after Bengal came under their rule. They felt sure they had taken the benefit of the experiences of other parts of the empire. As we saw, the stalwart of the knowledge of Sindhi had finally been conceived in the same period as central territories of the empire, such as Delhi for Urdu. Furthermore, the Sindhi studies could even be seen as a precursor in the field of comparative grammar, since Beames praised Trumpp's *Sindhi Grammar* in this respect. Nonetheless, the works accomplished by Trumpp and Shirt, among others, were mainly directed to help the British and other Europeans master Sindhi so that, as rulers, they could be more efficient in their works, these works also including those of the missionaries.

In Europe, education was finally constructed as being the key to general improvement of life, and this idea was one of the cornerstones of, for example, the French Revolution, even if education would not be compulsory for all French citizens until 1882. Nonetheless, the idea of education was closely related to that of democracy. Because, if one wants the people to rule a country via elections, the people should be educated to be able to think about and select between the different political proposals

expounded on by parties. Education thus became a major stake in nineteenth-century Europe, as well as representing a main feature of the civilized world.

The British were interested in the Sindhi language and education in the context of the policy of colonization. Nonetheless, there was an interesting evolution regarding their statements about Sindhi. First, they saw it as a dialect, and finally as an independent language. This shift was mainly due to the spread of philology, especially of comparative philology. Regarding the selection of both a dialect as standard Sindhi and of an official script, it is striking to observe that the debate only occurred among the British. We cannot find any mention of a Sindhi who was involved in it. Of course, the British themselves had probably discussed the topic with their usual informants, like the *munshi*s, but no trace of any such discussion remains in the archives. The British were not willing to associate Sindhis with decisions whose impact would be crucial to the colonial policy.

As in other parts of the British Empire of India, the British needed collaborationists to implement their linguistic policy, particularly after Bartle Frere declared it compulsory to learn colloquial Sindhi when it came to the British officers. The *munshi* was the key figure in this process. In this context, he was mainly a translator from Sindhi or to Sindhi, working on the translations of a number of books related to a variety of contexts. But here again, it should be kept in mind that the final goal was colonial: to teach Sindhi to the British officers so that they could deal more easily with the Sindhis in their everyday work, as judge, deputy commissioner of whatever, and so on. The coming of a press to Karachi in the 1850s also allowed the British to have their own policy in the issue of printing, despite the fact that funding had to be approved by Bombay.

In the 1850s, printed books were mostly aimed at spreading colonial knowledge, and also undertook to apply this knowledge to Sindh as a country and as a society. Printing books for the British to read Sindhi also needed to be coupled with the publication of grammars and dictionaries, the two pillars of nineteenth-century Orientalism and learning Oriental languages. But it was not before the last 30 years of the nineteenth century that reference works would be published in this respect. Nonetheless, reference works for other Indian languages such as Urdu were sometimes published later on, and Ernst Trumpp, the author of the *Sindhi Grammar*, would be treated as a precursor by John Beames, himself a specialist of Indo-Aryan languages and comparative grammar. However, the colonial

knowledge as built in the 1850s did not address Sufism at all: Sufism was non-existent in the representation the British had constructed.

In this first phase, we nonetheless see the emergence of a new class with a new professional specialization: translation. While the Amil section of the Hindus obviously played a leading role, the Muslims were also main actors. They would mostly belong to low groups of literati, such as the *akhund*, or to decayed social class, possibly related to the former ruling family. In any case, while the Hindus were the heirs of the scribes cast already working for the pre-British State, the Muslims did not belong to the traditional Muslim elite, the Ashrafs, who had had a near monopoly of knowledge, be it in Persian or in Sindhi: here was a real breakup. Thus, unlike the Muslims in Delhi, the Ashraf culture was not a model for them. It should be noted, however, that in the decade of the 1850s, these new specialists were far from being a homogeneous group, let alone a social class. In addition, their original status remained unchanged in the British system, which was still based on the Brahmanic vision of society.

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CHAPTER 3

The Transmission of Colonial Knowledge

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study of colonial knowledge clearly shows that it mainly focused on the language. This conclusion does not mean that the British were not interested in other fields of knowledge because, obviously, knowing the language was not sufficient for ruling a country. Furthermore, it was useful to get some knowledge about how the society was organized, and through what mechanisms it functioned. This chapter will therefore start with a survey of how the British did represent the society of Sindh. Already, though, before the conquest, another category of colonial writing also deserves to be mentioned. These are related to the roads, the river, and numerous data related to commerce.

Once the colonial knowledge had been built up by the British, it had to be transmitted and spread among the British, but also to the educated Sindhis, especially those who fell into the category of the collaborationists. The books translated and printed by the British and their collaborationists required structures to display the colonial representation of Sindh. In this respect, a first step was the settlement of educational institutions. The first schools were created by independent British individuals, most of them officers. But the commissioner as well as the Bombay Presidency quickly decided to develop education, which was seen in nineteenth-century Europe as one of the ways of moving toward civilization.

The next step was to formalize colonial knowledge, and the start of the census provided a meaningful opportunity for this endeavor. The census, which had been organized from 1871–1872 onward, provided innumerable data on the country and society of Sindh. This very detailed information was classified under the shape of different genres of publications, such as the "tribes and castes" and the gazetteers. No "tribes and castes" work was to be published on the Sindh, maybe because Burton's book published in 1851 had already provided the requisite data. A first gazetteer was published in 1872, and then another in 1907, and a last was published only in 1968 from data mostly collected in the 1931 census. We have also to take into account the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, which was first published in 1881, and which includes many notices on Sindh, but using data that could differ from that given in the *Gazetteer of Sindh*.

The Colonial Knowledge of the Society

How did the British represent the society of Sindh? Furthermore, how did they relate the Sindhis to any religion? Let us start by looking at what the British of this time regarded as Muslim populations. Like elsewhere in the Indian subcontinent, Muslim society in Sindh was segmented, as we saw above, according to ethnic criteria that distinguished Ashrafs and Ajlafs. Considering the Talpurs' political domination, the Baluchis were at the top of the social hierarchy. Since the eighteenth century, they had made up the bulk of their predecessors, the Kalhoras. Once in power, they strengthened their rule by distributing *jagir* to clan leaders. Their domination was therefore double the norm, their having dominion as both warriors and landowners.

The second dominant group in Muslim society was the Sayyids. Their superiority was due to the fact that they were recognized as the direct descendants of the prophet of Islam, Muhammad. This status automatically gave them a sacredness and hence an innate religious authority. They were the most prestigious group among the Ashrafs, and the British would soon see in them the equivalent of the Brahmins. In Sindh, Sayyid had two specificities. The majority of them were *zamindar*s, landlords, but also *pir*s. They were thus responsible for managing the sanctuaries where the Muslim saints were buried. We are talking here not only about material management but also about charismatic management. The Sindhi *pir*s played the roles of mediators between the tribes as well as between the rulers and the ruled on the other hand. The *pir*s had created a new system

of social relations, which, although inspired by the tribal system, was based more on association than on the blood relationship (Ansari 1992: 28–29).

There was, in fact, a close interweaving of tribal power, feudal power, and charismatic power that reflected the region's turbulent history. In the Indus Delta, the *malik* of the Jats was not a Jat but a Baluch. Yet, it was he who exercised the power of chief over the tribe, a community of blood. But although the Jat did not consider him a pir, he was for many of his dependents more than a tribal chief: he was also a spiritual leader (Westphal-Hellbusch and Westphal 1964: 22). Additionally, the *malik* exercised a feudal power over those of the Jats who resided on his *jagir*.

Apart from a few groups of Afghans and Pathans in the northwest, most of the Muslims were Sindhi, and they were mostly landless farmers known as *hari*s. There were also traders and craftsmen among them. Although trade was dominated by Hindus, three Muslim groups exercised this occupation: the Memons, the Khojas, and the Bohras. Finally, at the very bottom of the social ladder were excluded groups that almost reproduced the situation of the untouchable Hindus. These groups specialized in degrading tasks that had a relationship either with dirt or with death. Shikaris, for example, were not allowed to enter a mosque without undergoing a cleansing ritual (Burton 1851: 308). Slaves of African descent known as Shidis could, despite their status, gain access to high positions. Hoshu Shidi, the general commanding Mirpur Khas' troops at the battle of Dabbo, was a Shidi. His heroic resistance to the British and his final sacrifice are still celebrated today.

The knowledge of Hindu society is often limited to mercantile castes. Two points are to be noted, however: the absence of a caste system and the weak role of the Brahmins. The largest Brahman caste was the Saraswats. They accepted food from the Lohanas, to whom they were spiritual guides. The Saraswats ate meat and drank alcohol (Aitken 1907: 182–183). The Lohanas, who accounted for half of the total Hindu population, specialized in wholesale and retail trade. In East Sindh, the Rajputs had retained their feudal prerogatives under the Talpurs, and the British had renewed them in exchange for their loyalty. Contrary to popular belief, there were many untouchables in Sindh. They lived outside the villages and their members were never allowed to enter the houses of the village (Thakur 1959: 70).

The main untouchable castes were the Bhils, the Kohlis, and the Menghwars. Part of their devotional literature was in Sindhi. It is certain that these populations were established in the east of the province, which

is none other than the ultimate extension of the great Thar Desert. Not only were Sindhi outcasts well established in rural Sindh, but they also sometimes gave the British a hard time. In May of 1859, British troops had to address a rebellion led by the Kohlis, who had allied themselves with Parkar's *rana* for the occasion (Hughes 1874: 585). Here, it is necessary to be careful because it is probable that the myth of Sindh being without untouchables was transmitted by Hindu Sindhis after they migrated to India from 1947 onward. The very recent book published by Rita Kothari is edifying in this respect (Kothari 2007). The first census indicates that they had time to migrate from Gujarat or Rajasthan between 1843 and 1872. On the other hand, what is certainly true is that these untouchables were engaged in agricultural activities for the most part. There is hardly any trace of untouchables in the craft industry. Rumor has it that the untouchable Hindu craftsmen had all converted to Islam, and it is true that craftsmanship was largely in the hands of Muslims.

The *panchayat* system was prevalent among Hindu Sindhis. In rural Sindh, the *panchayat* of the Lohanas could have authority over other castes which, because of their small number, did not have one. This was, for example, the case with the Sonaras (goldsmiths) or the Brahmans. Comparably, when the Brahmans were small in number, they constituted a "territorial unit" with the Jajiks and the Bhat governed by a council known as a *mastan* (Thakur 1959: 73). The functions of the *panchayat* were social and religious. It set the taxes for weddings and other rites of passage. On the other hand, the *panchayat* had to provide for the maintenance of the temple, to pay the wages of the Brahmans, and to give alms to the religious orders. It had the power to punish violators for their injunctions, up through excommunication (Thakur 1959: 74–75).

Muslims were divided between Sunnis and Shiites. Sunnis were the majority, but the rulers, the Talpurs, were themselves Shiites. What relationship did the Muslims have with the canonical sources of Islam, and with the Arabic language? Richard Burton (1821–1890) laconically asserted that Arabic was known only to Muslim scholars, as Sanskrit was only known to Hindu scholars (Burton 1851: 58). Arabic was taught in the madrasas that had to train different categories of religious professionals, such as *qadi*, *mufti*, and *faqih*. The teaching was divided into religious sciences (*manqulat*) and rational sciences (*maqulat*). At the end of the seventeenth century, there were 400 madrasas in the city of Thatta, which was compared to the great cities of Iraq (Burton 1851: 341).

Manuscripts owned by the India Office Library, most of which do not go back beyond the eighteenth century, complete this information. For example, the *Faraiz al-Islam*, a treatise that was composed in Arabic by Makhdum Muhammad Hashim, was translated by the author into Sindhi in 1731 (Blumhardt 1905: 35). It is a manual on the Muslim faith that describes the most important ceremonies. Other manuscripts are treatises in which Quranic verses are written in Arabic and commented on in Sindhi. Another manuscript entitled *Muqaddimat al-Salat* was composed by a Naqshbandi Sufi,[1] Mian Abul Hasan (d. 1711). He exhibited for the first time in Sindhi issues related to ritual practices and basic duties of Islam while at the same time combating emotional devotion (Blumhardt 1905: 37; Schimmel 1974: 18).

On the other hand, other manuscripts composed in Sindhi refer to the prophet and his miracles, at birth or at marriage. Finally, one notes that several manuscripts are devoted to the martyrdom of Hasan and Husayn, or that of the family members of Husayn as Ali Akbar (ibidem: 37–39). A special mention must be made of the treaty composed by Husayn Vaiz Kashefi (1436–1504), with the title of *Rauzat al-Shahid*. This is an eighteenth-century manuscript in which the text is translated into versified Sindhi. This treatise is considered to be a synthesis of the *maqtal nama*, the stories of the revenge martyrs of Karbala under the leadership of Muhammad al-Hanafiyya.

Two lessons can be drawn from these elements. On the one hand, there are treatises whose objective is to determine orthodoxy and orthopraxy from Arab sources. The use of sources in Arabic is, de facto, the authentication of true Islam. These texts, however, are either translated into Sindhi or commented on in Sindhi. If the Naqshbandi reaction of Sindh is to be placed in the more general context of the decline of the Moghul Empire, followed by the reformative enterprise led by Shah Waliullah in Delhi, the need to make known the ceremonies and basic duties of Islam indicates that Islam was unknown to the greatest number. The second category of manuscripts of the India Office Library provides another track: the devotional literature of Shiite origin. It consists mostly of funeral elegies (*marsiya)* that are sung during the Moharram celebrations. In Sindh, this devotional poetry is prized by Muslims as well as Hindus, who compose

[1] The Naqshbandis belong to one of the most influential Sufi order in South Asia. Usually, they strictly follow the *sharia*, and ban music. For an introduction to Sufism in Sindh, see Boivin 2016.

them themselves. The other important element of religious knowledge is a set of practices and beliefs related to magic and divination.

Among the Hindus, it is necessary to distinguish three categories of cults: those practiced by the Hindus of the mercantile castes like the Lohanas, those practiced by the Rajputs, and finally those practiced by the untouchables. Among the Lohanas, two main cults were practiced in association: the Nanakpanth and Daryapanth. The Daryapanth is in all likelihood the oldest. It is based on the deification of the Indus River. According to tradition, Udero Lal emerged from the river to help Hindus persecuted by a Muslim ruler in the mid-tenth century.

The Daryapanth was run by a priestly caste, the Thakur. Most of the rituals were related to variations in the course of the Indus during the year. Although there are several small temples dedicated to Udero Lal, the main center of the Daryapanth is Udero Lal, which is the name given to the village that shelters a vast sanctuary dating back to the seventeenth century. The Nanakpanth would have been added later. It is possible that the Aroras, a Hindu caste, imported it from Punjab during their migrations to Sindh in the eighteenth century. It is about a form of Sikhism that does not recognize the authority of the Khalsa.[2] The Lohanas also practiced animal sacrifices on several occasions. One of them was the celebration of Navratri, the feast of Bhavani, a figure of the goddess: a kid goat was then sacrificed. The second occasion was the festival of Khetrapal, a disciple of Shiva: a kid goat was sacrificed to the *dargah* of a *pir* (Thakur 1959: 158 and 175).

The Rajputs followed neither the Nanakpanth nor the Daryapanth: they were like the devotees of Shiva and Devi elsewhere. The untouchables worshiped the Devi, but also a specific category of deities that Christopher Fuller has described as "deified heroes" (Fuller 1992: 49–50). In Sindh, the most revered deified heroes were Rama Pira (Ramdeo or Ramdev), Pithoro Pir, Pabuji, and Guga Pir. The organization of these cults could reproduce the relations of domination between Rajputs and untouchables. In the case of Pithoro Pir, for example, the cult was in the hands of the Pithoropir Potas, the Rajputs who pretend to be the descendants of Pithoro Pir. The bulk of the disciples are made up of Menghwars.

About 1815, Lieutenant Delhoste made a significant remark: "The original Hindu tribes who were the masters of the soil," he wrote, "are

[2] The relationship between the Nanakpanth and the Khalsa and its evolution will be studied in the ninth chapter.

now all under the banner of Mohammed, or have been assimilated to his disciples, while preserving their names, their clothing and, to a certain extent, the customs and prejudices of their origin, which frequently leads them to remove the distinction that religion has introduced" (Mubarak Ali 1994: 54–55). This commentary shows that, beyond more or less explicit affiliations, Muslims and Hindus shared a religious base of beliefs and practices. Notwithstanding, the classifications of the British referred to essentialist conceptions as Muslim and Hindu, which had many disadvantages. If we refer to the denominations that the people claimed, the only Muslims were the Sayyids and those who conformed to the orthodoxy stated by the Naqshbandi reaction. Identification with a caste or tribe prevailed over identification with the sect, and one cannot in that case discover a religion constituted like Islam or Hinduism.

Education for Transmitting Colonial Knowledge

After the 1843 conquest, education was not a priority of British policy. In this first step, General Napier, the conqueror, and his army ruled Sindh, although they could also rely on indigenous categories of learned people. After Napier's departure in 1847, Sindh was incorporated into the Bombay Presidency. For the whole British Empire of India, there were at least two main sequences of time in relation to education: the pre-1854 period and the post-1854 period. As a matter of fact, in 1854, the Despatch of the Courts of the Directors initiated a new turn in education. They wanted the elite policy to be cut off, moving in contradiction to Erskine's policy in the Bombay Presidency since it had aimed at providing a high standard of education for a small number of natives of India—"what would be called in England the higher classes" (Hunter 1883: 181). The change was in their asking that education be directed to the great mass of the people. Thus, the schools should exist in every district "whose object should be (..) to provide more opportunities than now exist for the acquisition of such an improved education as will make those who possess it more useful members of society in every condition of life" (Hunter 1883: 181).

In the Bombay Presidency, the period prior to 1854 was, as stated by Hunter's report of 1883, "a record of the work of missionary societies."[3]

[3] In North India, Pernau also shows the closed link between colonial power and the missions (Pernau 2013: 306–307).

In Bombay City, the American Missionary Society had created the first school for boys as soon as 1814. And, in 1824, they opened the first girls' school in all of Western India. Nevertheless, the most active missionary society was the Church Missionary Society, whose operations were much wider "even in the distant province of Sindh" (Hunter 1883: 11). After the 1854 Despatch, there was an extension of the primary and elementary schools, but with the priority of those using English as medium, though the Despatch also included the vernacular schools.

The first interest the British devoted to education was due to the need to educate British and European children whose fathers were employed by the East India Company. In this initial phase, the creation of schools was always undertaken by the individual initiatives of British officers. Captain Preedy, the collector of Karachi, founded the Karachi Free School in 1845, "apparently at his own expense," to quote Aitken (Aitken 1907: 473). In 1845, he entrusted it to a local committee on the express condition that all instruction, as far as the subjects permitted, should be given through the medium of Christian religious publications and that these should include the whole Bible. Later on, in 1853, it came under the control of the Church Missionary Society. At Shikarpur, Captain Goldsmid started another school.

When Sindh was incorporated into the Bombay Presidency, a Board of Education had already been created in 1840. From 1843 to 1852, the President of the Board was Erskine Perry, who was a strong advocate of English schools. Perry was convinced that "it was better to concentrate the higher education of a few the strength of a grant that was quite inadequate to make any impression on the masses" (Hunter 1883: 90). Already in 1793, the Permanent Settlement had recognized in perpetuity the rent-free grants of land enjoyed by the Sanskrit *tol*s (schools) and the Muslims *maktab*s alike. Then, in 1864, an education cess (tax) was levied on the lands, on a voluntary basis. In Sindh, the collection was legalized by Act VIII of 1865, and in 1869 in the rest of the Bombay Presidency. On the other hand, the appropriation of municipal funds to education was legalized in 1864. But according to the 1883 report, Sukkur was the only municipality in the entire Bombay Presidency to fund elementary education (Hunter 1883: 153).

In Sindh, a second step in the development of education was reached when a Department of Education was created in Karachi by the Bombay Board of Education. From this development, many new schools were opened in Hyderabad, Shikarpur, and about 12 other towns. The main

problem was the lack of teachers, and consequently, a normal school was opened in Karachi as early as 1854, and later on, it was shifted to Hyderabad. The students were instructed by old pupils of Elphinstone and Poona College who happened to be in government service in Sindh. After a decade, there were 4 high schools, 3 middle schools, and 56 primary schools, as well as 1 Training College in Sindh. They were all funded by the government, with the exception of only three. The year 1853 saw both the creation of a Government School and a Vernacular School in Karachi.

In 1863, the commissioner in Sindh, Samuel Mansfield (1815–1893), decided to develop education in rural Sindh by establishing a local fund with the devotion of one-third of the cess on land. After a decade, there were 230 recognized schools in Sindh, with 14,300 pupils (Aitken 1907: 475). Also, the British decided to extend recognition and assistance to indigenous schools, of which 728 were registered. In fact, a full-time Educational Inspector was appointed in 1872, though he had no educational experience. It was only from 1887 onward that the Educational Inspector was experienced in education. The first one was Mr. Jacob, a nephew of General John Jacob.[4] The decade during his duty was marked by an immense development of education in Sindh. The number of recognized schools rose from 375 to 1,611, and the assisted indigenous schools from 51 to 978. Another important evolution was related to the number of educated girls. The schools devoted to girls' education increased from 2 to 137, with 4467 pupils spread among them (Aitken 1907: 476).

The next step in the development of education in Sindh was the creation of the first college in 1887: the Arts College created by Dayaram Jethmal, Dayaram Gidumal, Alumal Trikamdas, and Pestonji Byramji Kotwal. In the Bombay Presidency, Sindh was a little late to take this step since several colleges in different parts of the territory had already been created, such as the Poona College in 1821, the Elphinstone College in 1856, and finally the University of Bombay in 1857. Until the creation of the Arts College, Sindhi students were compelled to go to Bombay, to the point that two special scholarships were restricted to them (Hunter 1883: 285). In 1882, a number of native gentlemen of Sindh addressed a memorial to the Educational Commission in Calcutta. They urged the institution to create an Arts College in Sindh. They could announce that the

[4] John Jacob (1812–1858) was Commander of the Sindh Irregular Horse from 1841 to 1856. See Cook 2016.

Endowment Trust had been able to secure Rs. 100,000. The Government of Bombay, the Sindh Municipality, and the Sindh District Local Board therefore accepted the need for a college and the duty to provide additional funding. The college was opened by Lord Reay, the Governor of Bombay, in 1887. Different fields were taught, such as mathematics, sciences, logic, moral philosophy, history, and political economy, as well as three languages: English, Sanskrit, and Persian (Baillie 1890: 164).

After Dayaram Jethmal's death in 1884 at the early age of 42, his son and his brother made a substantial donation of Rs 25,000 and arranged to have the college named the Dayaram Jethmal Sindh College. After a full-fledged science section was established, its name became the D. J. Sindh Government Science College.[5] In the beginning, it was opened in a bungalow in Thaitai Compound situated on Bunder Road. Later on, it was shifted to the present building in 1892. The college was by then a full-fledged institution with faculties of Arts, Sciences, Engineering, and Law. The D. J. Sindh Government Science College began primarily as an Arts college, with only 28 students and 5 staff members. In 1922, with the establishment of a separate Engineering College, engineering classes were dropped from the D. J. College. With the establishment of a Law College in 1925, the Law classes were also dropped. The separate establishment of the Engineering and Law College necessitated certain changes in the constitution of the Sindh Arts College Committee. These were purely administrative changes. Consequently, a board was formed to look after the affairs of the expanded college.

According to the 1907 gazetteer, there was a single college in Sindh—the Arts College with 65 students—and 11 high schools, 20 middle schools, 1345 primary schools, and 15 training or technical schools. The government was providing aid for them all, at different levels, except for two schools of the last category (Aitken 1907: 476). Throughout the nineteenth century, the curricula went through a number of changes, following the evolution of Western knowledge. In the early twentieth century, the primary school curriculum began with the numerals and the letters of the Arabic-Sindhi alphabet.

In the first standard, reading, writing, and the rudiments of arithmetic were taught, to which was added in the second standard the general geography of the *taluqa*. The third standard introduced children to the

[5] In 1948, the Jai Hind College was created in Bombay by professors of the D. J. College who had had to leave Pakistan. They wanted to duplicate it in India. See Bhavnani 2014.

physical and political geography of their district, and in fourth standard, children started studying grammar, the history of Sindh, the general geography of India, and the physical, political, and industrial geography of Sindh. Children were also able to start the study of English at this point. The fifth standard carried pupils further into the subjects already being studied, and children studied Euclid and sanitary and elementary science in the sixth standard and seventh standard. The completion of the course qualified a boy for admission to the Public Service Examination, through which he could enter the government service (Aitken 1907: 477).

Another aspect related to the issue of education is to be scrutinized here: the distribution of educated people according to communal belonging. This is a major concern of the 1883 report, and according to it, one of the chief reasons why the Muslims set aloof from English schools is "the indolence and improvidence common among them" (Hunter 1883: 483). Notwithstanding, in the Bombay Presidency, General Governor of Bombay Lord Reay (1839–1921) dealt with in the Educational Department after a representation submitted by the Honorary Secretary of the Anjuman-e Islam complained that so little had been done to secure for the Muhammadan population its proper share of public patronage. The Anjuman-e Islam had been created by Badr al-Din Tyabji (1844–1906) in 1876. Inspired by Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Anglo-Muslim College of Aligarh, the Anjuman created its first school in Bombay in 1880. The Anjuman and Tyabji were at the vanguard of the development of education among the Muslims of India (Green 2011: 34–37).

In Sindh, the imbalance surrounding education was addressed by a notification published in the *Sind Official Gazette* in December of 1892. It was said that the Muslims were under-represented in administration because they were "backward in education." It is about the collector of Shikarpur who had to fill up the vacancies in the post of *munshi*. He wanted to have an equal number of Hindus and Muslims as applicants. Consequently, he decided that the Hindus would only be admitted upon producing certificates for having passed a second grade examination certificate, while the Muslim applicants would be admitted on producing a third grade examination certificate.

In this report, the commissioner in Sindh H. E. M. James added that, when he had arrived three years before, he had met the Muhammad Association, which complained to him that the Muslims "were so unfairly treated in the matter of first appointment and promotions, owing to the overwhelming preponderance of Hindus in the Public Offices, that they

were disheartened, and education was discouraged" (*Educational Tests for Hindus and Mahommedans in Sind* 1894: 3).

Education was thus an important matter in British policy and, in fact, a determining means for spreading the colonial discourse and its corollary, Western knowledge. The British were totally convinced it would bring the indigenous closer to civilization, this being what Hunter summarized with the expression of "Western modes of thought" (Hunter 1883: 257). Also, it was a means to dealing with the nascent boom of communalism in India, a topic to which I shall return in Chap. 8. As a matter of fact, in the same report just mentioned, the commissioner in Sindh explicitly wrote that "several influential families of Hindu Amils had obtained a practical monopoly of appointments in some quarters (…) (*idem*)."

The Formalization of Colonial Knowledge Through Gazetteers

Nicholas Dirks claimed that, by the second half of the nineteenth century, the colonial state in India was about to undergo several major transformations—but, for him, the most important of these was the process through which the colonial state would become what he called an "ethnographic state." Especially from 1870 onward, colonial ethnography took the caste as the primary object for classifying and understanding the Indian society (Dirks 2001: 43). Despite the fact that some more local censuses had already been arranged, the first census of India took place between 1871 and 1872, and the most obvious concern was that the British wished to introduce some kind of poll tax (Dirks 2001: 200). In the official discourse of the European states, the census was meant to allow the government to better serve the people, and give a more appropriate answer to the needs of its citizens, while, as in India, it was firstly a tool to collect more taxes.

The first census was quickly followed by a kind of new literary genre which reflected the new interest the British had for ethnography: the "tribes and castes" genre. As soon as 1872, the Reverend M. A. Sherring published a three-volume work entitled *Hindu Tribes and Castes*. If not all, many provinces of India were granted such books. Among the neighboring territories of Sindh, there was one for Gujarat and one for Punjab. In fact, even if they had not been titled as such, a number of previous books looked very similar to the new genre, like James Tod's (1782–1835)

work on the Rajputs, despite its title, *Annals and Antiquities*. Maybe the lack of the "tribes and castes" publication on Sindh is due to the work of the pioneer who called himself an ethnologist: Richard Burton. Burton did not follow the methodology of the "tribes and castes," books which would often be organized as a kind of thematic dictionary since there was no systematization in them, but he introduced and gave a description of all of the groups that inhabited Sindh.

Another genre that resulted from the census flourished in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, this being the gazetteers. The gazetteer was initially considered a geographical dictionary or encyclopedia, sometimes put as an index to an atlas, and in the eighteenth century could designate a newspaper. In the nineteenth century, the meaning was finally an alphabetical descriptive list of anything. The special situation of Sindh, which had been a province only from 1843 to 1847 before being attached to the presidency of Bombay, probably explains why little work had been done by the British administrators. Censuses were regularly conducted from 1872 onward, but only three gazetteers were published in relation to Sindh. The first was issued after the first census, and it was published in 1873 by Hughes. The second was published after the 1901 census, but in two parts. The first part presented the general topics of Sindh as a whole. It was born under the direction of Aitken in 1907. The second part was published in 1919 by Smyth and it was attached to the local description. The last gazetteer was published by Sorley in 1968, although the materials had been collected before Partition.

In Sindh, two directories of Sindh had been published by a private individual—one in 1857 and the other in 1862. For the compiler of the gazetteer, A. W. Hughes, such an enterprise looked like a kind of statement of knowledge on the province of Sindh: "(…) it has been the object of the compiler to make the Sind Gazetteer as complete as the means placed at his disposal would admit (…)" (Hughes 1874: ix). He nonetheless confessed that the gazetteer was "an imperfect and preliminary work" since, for example, geology was not included. Furthermore, he added in the preface of the first edition that the population returned had been given in the census of 1856 because the returns of the census of 1872 had not yet been compiled. Though, in the preface of the second edition he put in the information that the population returns were those according to the 1872 census.

Hughes' gazetteer is made of the following parts: a copious introduction (116 pages), including a description of the country, history, and the

population which is mostly borrowed from Burton. The gazetteer proper follows, arranged according to the alphabetical order of the towns and cities as well as the administrative units, such as collectorates, talukas, and districts. Then there are six appendices, the fifth being "An explanatory vocabulary of vernacular words, some of them being of frequent use in the province of Sind" (17 pages) (Hughes 1874: 882), this being followed by the days of the week and the months of the year in Sindhi. Finally, an index (16 pages) is placed at the end of the gazetteer. If compared with later gazetteers, the main difference is that Hughes' one is organized according to the alphabetical order of places, especially administrative units. For example, Campbell's *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, published in 1899, focused on populations instead of places (Campbell 1990).

For each notice, Hughes provides information regarding its geographical location, hydrography, climate, soils, animals, productions, population, establishments, revenue, export, tenures, municipalities, educational institutions, commerce, fairs, and communications. For Hughes, the population of Sindh was divided into two great classes: the Muslims (Muhammadans) and the Hindus. When he came to the issue of the language, he abundantly referenced Burton and Trumpp, using his *Grammar of the Sindhi Language*, which he has published four years earlier (Hughes 1874: 88). Hughes mimics Burton's distinction about the people, whom he deals with in the last part of the introduction, named "Miscellaneous." However, he uses a renovated vocabulary. He differentiates the Sindhis "properly so called" and the "naturalized" Sindhis (Hughes 1874: 87). This last category coincides exactly with the "foreign tribes" of Burton. Throughout this nomenclature, we find the classical divide among the Muslims of South Asia, placed between the Ashrafs and the Ajlafs.

As discussed by Chris Fuller, the organization of the census from 1871–1872 onward gave a new impetus to the colonial knowledge of the populations of India, with a focus on the ethnographical approach. Furthermore, the pioneer in this respect was Denzil Ibbetson (1847–1908), the superintendent for the Punjab, whose *Punjab Castes* (published in 1883) is for Fuller "the foundational text for official anthropology" (Fuller 2017: 605). Introducing the chapter on religion, Ibbetson observed that most of the books already published had failed to describe the everyday religion as practiced by the people. For him, it was extremely difficult to classify the people by religion, and defining Hindu was impossible. Ibbetson wrote: "Creed is rather a social than a religious institution"

(Ibbetson 1883: 101). He added that popular religion was lax and eclectic, and very similar among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs.

Two other main points in Ibbetson's vision are related to the issue of the social stratification of India. The first point is that the theory of castes was predicated on evolutionism, the dominant paradigm of social theory. The second point is related to the racial theory, according to which the speakers of Aryan or Indo-European languages belonged to a common Aryan race, and that, in ancient times, fair-skinned Aryan tribesmen from Central Asia had invaded India in order to subjugate the dark-skinned, indigenous peoples, predominantly Dravidian, who became their hierarchical inferiors (Fuller 2016: 227). Lastly, for Ibbetson, the primitive societies were divided into tribal groups and no diversity of occupation existed. In more advanced societies, occupations became differentiated and tribal groups almost disappeared. In Europe, for example, the tribes were replaced by the guilds.

Other British officers who were the heralds of "official anthropology" were in touch with founding scholars of both anthropology and Indology. For example, Herbert Risley (1851–1911) corresponded with E. B. Tylor, one of the founders of anthropology, as well as with Max Müller, a leading scholar of Indology. In his report, Ibbetson included a detailed ethnographic survey of the tribes and castes of Punjab, classified primarily by occupation, and he developed a theoretical argument that the caste system was fundamentally a product of the evolution of the division of labor. From the 1881 census onward, caste was most intensively investigated. Caste was a key category because it was seen as the most important of all of India's racial and cultural identities. For Dirks, anthropology in India became "the principal colonial modality of knowledge and rule," and by the late nineteenth century, "the colonial state … can be characterized as the ethnographic state" (Dirks 2001: 43).[6]

Thirty years later, after Hughes' gazetteer, Edward Hamilton Aitken (1851–1909) from the Bombay Salt Department published the first part of the second *Gazetteer of Sindh*, following the 1901 census. The son of a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland in India, Aitken was an M. A. from the Bombay University and he had taught Latin in the Deccan College. He entered the Customs and Salt Department of the Government

[6] In his listing of colonial ethnographic works, Fuller did mention census reports, handbooks of tribes and castes, and the gazetteers, but he did not really deal with the gazetteer, in his study of the building of colonial knowledge on India (Fuller 2016: 221).

of Bombay in April of 1876. In 1903, he was appointed Chief Collector of Customs and Salt Revenue at Karachi, and in November of 1905, he was made Superintendent in charge of the District Gazetteer of Sindh. Aitken took interest in natural sciences and explored the Bombay area trying to classify the different vegetal species. He would eventually become popular for his humorist writings.

Aitken put in the preface that a new gazetteer of Sindh had been planned earlier, but due to bad financial conditions, it had not been possible to publish it earlier despite the efforts of a commissioner in Sindh, Evan James, from 1891 to 1900. In 1904, some materials had been collected from the six district gazetteers of Sindh, by B. A. Brendon (1872–1928), in connection with the revision of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. Brendon had been posted in Sindh as Assistant Collector and Magistrate a number of times in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The making of the new gazetteer of Sindh was thus the combined result of both internal and external factors. However, Aitken already had the stalwarts of official anthropology at his disposal. In fact, one can surmise that the results depended on the author's bias regarding anthropology. As a matter of fact, the heralds of the official anthropology were all non-professional anthropologists, and they were priority administrators, mostly high-ranked, of the British Empire of India.

Consequently, regarding the organization of the gazetteer, there is a huge shift between Hughes' work and Aitken's work. Firstly, the late gazetteer was published in two parts, these being published within 12 years of each other. The first part, or Part A, was made for all Sindh, while the second part, or Part B, was published in six small volumes corresponding to the six districts of Sindh, containing "matter of local rather than general interest" (Aitken 1907: i). Also, in his preface, Aitken mentioned that Brendon had been informed on the subject of native castes and customs by consulting Rao Bahadur Kauramal and Mirza Qalich Beg (Aitken 1907: ii). The first gentleman, born in Hyderabad as Kauromal Chandamall Khilnani (1844–1916), had been trained at Elphinstone College in Bombay. A member of the Brahmo Samaj, he had been a translator for the Education Department and had published many textbooks in Sindhi. Nevertheless, his main achievement was the first edition of Sami's *Slok*s, to which I shall return in Chap. 7. He made the edition from a manuscript written in Gurmukhi script that he had transcribed into Arabic Sindhi script (Sami 1885).

The main change between the two gazetteers of Sindh is related to classification. Let us start with Part A, edited by Aitken. Part A of the gazetteer is divided into 15 chapters and an appendix devoted to the Khairpur State, the only princely state of Sindh. The chapters deal with a number of topics, such as description, productions, history, agriculture, economics, trade, revenue, justice, local and municipal matters, education, health, and administration. The most copious chapter is the one devoted to irrigation, and the second most copious is the population chapter. I shall focus on the fourth chapter, which is that of populations. Beyond the different vocabulary which could be "updated" since Hughes' gazetteer, and following the evolution of official anthropology, it contains the exposition of religions, then that of Muslim tribes and castes, and finally Hindu tribes and castes.

For Aitken and Brendon, religion was the most relevant cleavage among the Sindhis, contrary to what Ibbetson had stated about Punjab, and each religious community was then subdivided into other categories such as castes and tribes. But regarding the discussion between Ibbetson and Risley, regarding identification of the key unit of Indian society, there is no mention of any of their works in the bibliography. In fact, the whole bibliography concerns works on Sindh, except a book on *sanads*,[7] and another one on archeology. Consequently, after a general introduction for the population chapter—including census figures, and distribution or migration—Aitken turned to Islam, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, "recent sects," and Christianity. Another part is then devoted to the Muslim tribes and castes, then the Hindu tribes and castes, after which mixed issues are addressed; these include language, occupations, dress, daily life, amusements, festivals, and customs.

Let us focus on the part devoted to Islam and Hinduism, and on how it is articulated in relation to the castes and tribes, examining how Aitken deals with these categories in comparison to Ibbetson and his detractors. For each religion, there is a kind of general introduction where the main schools are introduced. But for unknown reasons, groups such as the Bohras and the Khojas are already discussed in this part, after Ismailism has been introduced. Below, the same groups of Bohras and Khojas will be studied in the part on Muslim tribes and castes. The organization of Islam is as follows: Sunnis and Shias, Ismailis, Bohras, Khojas, Zikris, and Sufism. This first part gives a brief summary of the history and the beliefs of each group. Before analyzing the representation of Sufism, it is interesting to

[7] A text having the force of an edict or ordinance in India.

observe how Aitken perfectly fits in with the Imperialist discourse. First comes the obsession of the origin, and finally of who is the true, and pure, Sindhi.

Some comments on the Khojas as a case study will serve to be very informative. In the 1907 gazetteer, the Khojas are seen as the descendants of the Hindu Lohanas of Sindh who converted to Ismaili Shiism in the fifteenth century, "to which refugees from Persia were probably added" (Aitken 1907: 176). The Jats and Memons appear as authentic Sindhis. That said, for unclear reasons, they are distinct from the rest of the Sindhis. With this term, Aitken refers to "any native of Sindh, although it is agreed to exclude all those, such as Baluchi, Brahuis, or relatively recent immigrants from Cutch, who are still considered foreigners" (Aitken 1907: 179). It also includes Burton's information on Baluchis, henna, and so on. Apart from his direct references to Burton, it is clear that Aitken is indebted to him for many other areas. In the gazetteer published after Partition, on the other hand, Sorley does not hesitate to continue quoting from Burton, although the data goes back a century. This is the case for the description of the Memons (Sorley 1968: 275). Note, however, that the material, which makes up the gazetteers, has evolved. The place held by the economic data increases.

In Aitken's gazetteer, three lines are written on Sufism: "The mystic doctrines of the Sufi sect are followed by an uncertain number not only of Musulmans, but also Hindus, who do not on that account abandon the practices of their own religion" (Aitken 1907: 162), while in the index, Sufism is described as "a minor sect of Islam" (Aitken 1907: xxxvii). As usual, in the British publications of the nineteenth century, with the exception of Burton and, to some extent, Trumpp, Sufism is mostly visible throughout the literature. In the part on literature, Aitken starts by stating that "Until near the end of the eighteenth century […] there was scarcely such as thing as vernacular literature in Sind," adding that "the Sindhi language could scarcely, in fact, be called a written language at all: it has no alphabet except the adaptations of the Devanagari character used by Banias for their accounts" (Aitken 1907: 481). And finally, Aitken reasserts the theory of the foreign and indigenous in claiming that no Hindu, "or even a native Sindhi in the strict sense," has composed literature, and all the authors "were all descendants of invaders, or immigrants, from Persia, Afghanistan, or Central Asia" (Aitken 1907: 482).

Turning to poetry, Aitken mentions Shah Abdul Karim as the first "vernacular poet of any note," his poetry being the model for all subsequent

aspirants to poetic fame. Aitken is more than cautious about the *Shah jo Risalo*, in terms of authenticity of the text and of its interest. Not knowing the Sindhi language, he carefully speaks of the pieces that "are said to be exquisite in their beauty of thought and expression" (Aitken 1907: 484). While stating that the Sufis give a spiritual interpretation to his verses, he is more interested by the folkloric aspect of Shah's poetry. The end of the part on Shah Latif is thus a summary of the different tales and legends that form the core of the poetry. Although this is the major component of Shah's poetry, no reference is made to Sufism. The corpus probably, according to Aitken, originated among the Rajput races of Sindh before they converted to Islam.

It is to be noted that, contrary to other British officers, there is nothing related to Sufism as popular religion. It should have been located in the part on the Muslim festivals, but Aitken only deals with the Sunni "orthodox" festivals, and Moharram, to which the more important part is devoted. Moharram is clearly associated with the carnivalesque fair, as described in Bombay by other British officers. There are but a few details on Sindh, except to notice that the *mir*s and the Sayyids are lavish in their expenditures for making the *tabut*s (Aitken 1907: 204).[8] The other Muslim festivals are Id-e Mawlud, Shab-e barat, Ramazan, and Bakri id. Therefore, no mention is made of any Sufi festivals, though we know from other sources that the Sufi festival arranged at Sehwan Sharif for the death of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar was attended by thousands of people. But, as we shall see below, it is possible that Aitken wished to center his gazetteer on Karachi and Hyderabad, and so all other events occurring in other places were considered as minor, and local—and, as such, they were to be mentioned in Part B compiled by J. W. Smyth.

On the other hand, the ethnographical works could have had an impact on Aitken's report on the customs, although he does not mention any publication by Ibbetson or Risley. As a matter of fact, Aitken writes some lines about a custom performed in a *dargah*. According to him, the influence of the deceased *pir*s is strong in the society of Sindh, and on all the classes. A mother who has lost a previous child will take her infant to the tomb of some saint, shaving it there, and leave its hair as an offering: "A tree near the tomb at 'Muggar Pir' is hung thick with little bags of hair"

[8] A *tabut* is a replica of a coffin that is paraded during the Moharram celebrations. It symbolizes the people of the Prophet family through his grandson Husayn who were killed during the battle of Karbala in 680.

(Aitken 1907: 219). It is clear that, from the 1872 gazetteer to the 1907 gazetteer, no objectification of any form of Sufism had been implemented. The work accomplished by Trumpp, and then by the Sindhi intelligentsia starting with Mirza Qalich Beg, did not find any echo in Aitken's gazetteer.

The issue of Sufism is thus relegated to Part B. Part B was compiled by one J. W. Smyth, from the "Indian civil service" and published in six small volumes in 1919 and 1920. Only the first one on the Karachi district came with a short preface, where Smyth explains that the materials of the volume had been collected by Aitken in 1907. Part B is organized like Part A, but of course on a smaller scale, that of the district. The main difference is that each volume ends with "Places of interest." Here, some details can be found, but they are not treated as an issue related to Sufism where it could apply. The main Sufi shrines of Sindh are nonetheless mentioned: Shah Inayat at Jhok Sharif in the Karachi district, Shah Abdul Latif at Bhit Shah in the Hyderabad district, and Lal Shahbaz Qalandar at Sehwan Sharif in the Hyderabad district.

Let us have a look at how J. W. Smyth deals with these sacred Sufi places. In the case of Sehwan, Sufism is of interest in that it can be seen as an antiquity. As a matter of fact, in the four pages devoted to Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's shrine, Smyth focus mostly on the medieval inscriptions in Persian—those which are in the shrine as well as others which were brought to Karachi by a British officer and deposited in the Victoria Museum, now the National Museum. They are related to the presence of Sultan Firuz Tughluq who was buried there in the fourteenth century. Ethnological details are very few, and related to two relics of the saint—the annual fair and the fact that the Hindus call him Raja Bharthari. We learn that one of the three days of the annual fair is reserved for the Hindus, and finally: "The custodians of the shrine are the Lakiari sayyids" (Smyth 1919: 50). Amazingly, only a few lines are devoted to Shah Abdul Latif's shrine in Bhit Shah. Smyth speaks of the tomb that could have been built in 1753 with the description, "of burnt bricks on a stone foundation, with floor and decorations of glazed tiles" (Smyth 1919: 37–38).

The volume on the Karachi district includes a brief description of the *dargah* of Shah Inayat located in Jhok Sharif, in southern Sindh. The description of the building is very brief: "a domed tomb faced with encaustic tiles and inscribed with Arabic scrolls of the holy names" (Smyth 1919: 56). The rest of the text is devoted to the story of Shah Inayat, and how he had so many disciples "both among Hindus and Mussalmans," that his neighbors, the Sayyids of Bulri grew jealous of him and wrote to the

emperor in Delhi, who commissioned Nur Muhammad Kalhoro to destroy him. But his army of *faqir*s was too strong and he made peace. Afterward, Kalhoro had him assassinated in 1717. His head was sent to the emperor of Delhi, Jahandar Shah, a great-grandson of Aurangzeb, and all along the way, it is said that it was reciting poetry. Smyth adds that he narrated the story of Shah Inayat according to the *Tuhfat al-Kiram*, the eighteenth-century work in Persian authored by Mir Ali Sher Qani (1725–1798) of Thatta.

In summary, the issue of Sufism is not integrated in the vision of knowledge which the gazetteers produced. All of the elements related to Sufism are introduced as curiosities or as antiquities. This result comes from the fact that the gazetteer was supposed to present the walk of Sindh toward civilization. In the early twentieth century, to be civilized meant to be modern. The gazetteer was made to exhibit how modern the British creations related to technology and economics had made Sindh. In this vision, religious practices and people as involved in the Sufi shrines could hardly find room. They were rather seen as superstitions, themselves being undisputable proof of the backwardness of the people of Sindh. The only room the representation of Sufism could find was as an antiquity, an issue to which I shall return in the last part of the fifth chapter.

Conclusion

Although the British did rule Sindh only after the 1843 conquest, they had already established important experience in ruling the Indians, going back about a century. Thus, the shaping of the colonial knowledge of and on Sindh has to be understood both from the British experience in other Indian territories as well as with specificities that made Sindh, what it was. Among the latter, the issue of language immediately became an issue due to the edict of 1835 prompting the relinquishment of classic languages such as Sanskrit and Persian, and the adoption of English and vernacular languages. However, the issue of language to be addressed in Sindh had some particular characteristics.

Nonetheless, a number of problems were to be tackled regarding the vernacular in Sindh. The initial question was: is Sindhi a language of its own, or is it a dialect of another one, for example, Punjabi? And is there a major dialect to be considered as the standard language? The first point to be marked is that, officially, the debate was among British officers only. We never see the names of any Sindhi scholar mentioned in this regard. A kind

of consensus soon emerged on the Vicholi among these British officers. The second step was more difficult: the selection of a unique alphabet with which to write the Sindhi language. Here, there were two main actors involved, both of them British: Captain Stack and Captain Burton.

The first advocated Hindu alphabets, Devanagari or Khudawadi, arguing that Sindh as an Indo-European language should be written in Devanagari, in which Sanskrit was written, or a kind of derivative of the same. The other British officer, Captain Burton, developed another argument. For him, the Muslims formed the large majority of the population of Sindh. According to this demographical situation, they were to use the script used by the large Muslim population all over the world: the Arabic Script. A major argument for this side was that it was already used for writing most of the Sindhi literature. The Government of Bombay finally decided that Burton's argument was more convincing than Stack's. Consequently, the Arabic script was used, and augmented as needed to allow specific Sindhi sounds to be written.

Afterward, the commissioner in Sindh, Sir Bartle Frere, was able to start his printed policy. After he decided the British officers should know colloquial Sindhi, the next step was to provide books for the teaching and, therefore, the learning. This task could not be undertaken without collaboration from indigenous learned people. The *munshi*s played a cardinal role in this process and, gradually, their function and capacity shifted. While they were initially a kind of scribe, they gradually become key actors in the spread of the new knowledge the British wished to develop. The starting of the printing process occurred in the 1850s; very soon after that, the students of Sindhi were granted books, these mostly being translations from English or Hindustani.

Because of a complex array of motivations, the Europeans also initiated thoughts of improving their knowledge of the language, even if it was not seen as being fundamental for the British officers who wanted to learn Sindhi. The 1870s were marked by two major publications in this respect: a grammar of the Sindhi language and a Sindhi-English dictionary. In the Orientalist conception, this was the foundation for the study of the Sindhi language, and consequently of the literature which was related to it. These publications were true scholarly works, which are still references in the field. Simultaneously, they were proof of the superiority of Western knowledge, in that they reinforced a number of European theories, such as the relation of European and Indian languages, as well as Sanskrit as the mother language of Northern India.

Besides the development of a scholarly knowledge of the Sindhi language, the relationship between the Indian languages and the knowledge of India went through a number of changes. Mostly, the developments were due to a shift in the British policy toward India. The main goal was no longer to educate the elite, but to provide basic education for the masses. For sure, this shift mirrored the debates that were spreading all over Europe. In this aspect of education, Sindh was perceived as a backward province by the British officers. Nonetheless, numerous schools were created from the late 1840s onward. The creation of elementary and primary schools was a main tool to dispatch the colonial knowledge of Sindh. Gradually, the government went on to fund most of the schools and, therefore, to impose the curricula, in which the Western sciences were a major part. Regarding higher education, Sindh was nevertheless late if compared with other parts of the Bombay Presidency, and the first college would only be created in 1887.

The last phase for the shaping of the colonial knowledge of Sindh was completed through the publication of the gazetteers. Sindh was not perceived by the British to be an important province to which detailed studies of the population were to be devoted, contrary to Punjab, the densely populated province located north of Sindh. Thus, one cannot find any "Tribes and Castes" or other kind of "Glossary" of the populations of Sindh. A first gazetteer would be published in 1872, reflecting the results of the first census. Though, it would not provide a deep reflection on the populations of Sindh, as would be accomplished after the 1881 census by Denzil Ibbetson for Punjab. It may be that the apparent lack of interest expressed by the British officers can be explained by the pioneering work completed by Richard Burton. As we shall see in the next chapter, Burton was a real precursor in the ethnographical study of the populations of India, taking Sindh as a case study. Notwithstanding, Sufism was not an issue yet for the British since, as we saw above, the British simply note it is followed both by Muslims and Hindus.

It is totally unknown whether the Sindhis were able to play a role, apart from being informants, in the debates that led to the selection of a standard language and an official alphabet. Similarly, the knowledge sums on Sindh, especially the gazetteers, are always compiled by British people. However, the educational institutions that are being created first by the missionaries and the British allowed Sindhis destined to work in the colonial administration to acquire new tools and knowledge that would allow them to found the first college in 1887: the Arts College. Furthermore,

there was till the late nineteenth century an unbalance between Hindus and Muslims regarding education, as in the entire Bombay Presidency. While the so-called reluctance of the Muslims toward education is yet to be documented, this situation led to a domination of the Hindus in some administrations, especially justice.

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CHAPTER 4

Knowledge, Sufism, and the Issue of a Vernacular Literature

Introduction

In the early twentieth century, the colonial knowledge of Sindh was completed. Its result was a work mostly achieved by British officers, with the help of European or North American missionaries, and finally of Sindhi intellectuals who were mostly employed by the British administration. In this construction, Sufism was non-existent. Yet, and even if the British policy of publication ignored it, the importance of Sufism had been underscored by the groundbreaking work completed by Richard Burton in the middle of the nineteenth century. His chapter devoted to Sufism in his book published in 1851 can rightly be seen as the first stone in the making of a Sufi paradigm in Sindh—for example, in stating the crucial importance of the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, the *Shah jo Risalo*. The process would nevertheless not be built immediately after the publication of his work.

A second important step would be completed by a German missionary, Ernst Trumpp. Funded by Bartle Frere, he would confirm Burton's statement about the *Shah jo Risalo* in publishing it for the first time in 1866. The endeavors undertaken by Burton and Trumpp cannot be separated from the issue of literature being one of the most relevant features for stating that a society is civilized or not. In this respect, Burton was the first to clearly state that the Sindhi language had a distinct literature, and that in the field of literature, the major part of this was Sufi literature. As a

colonial officer, however, he was still caught in the prejudices of the West toward the East. Thus, he can be contradictory—for example, when he spoke of Sindhi as a "demi-barbarous" language, or of Shah Abd al-Latif's verses as being chiefly made of puns.

In this initial phase of the construction of colonial knowledge, one of the most debated issues was that of the role played by literature in the process of civilization. Most of the Orientalists and linguists of the mid-nineteenth century claimed that the existence of a literature, especially a written and published literature, was a significant tool for gauging the stage of a society, ranging between the stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilization. This point of view was, for example, clearly expressed by John Beames. In neighboring Gujarat, a Gujarati Vernacular Society was founded in 1848, and it was an attempt to define the literary tradition (Isaka 2002: 2). The process was started by a Scottish judge, Alexander Forbes (1821–1865), in collaboration with Gujarati literati. The first definition of Gujarati vernacular literature was based on the Brahman conception of literature. This means that it rejected folktales and legends, as well as non-Brahman productions, such as Muslim and Parsi ones.

Thus, in Gujarat, the attempt at building a Gujarati literature was not the result of the efforts of the British colonial institution. It is true that Gujarat was a part of the Bombay Presidency, as was Sindh. And as for Sindh, the final decisions were taken in Bombay, whereas a kind of Marathi coterie looks to have influenced the British in claiming there was no Gujarati literature, or that Gujarati was but a dialect of Hindi. However, the situation was quite different from that seen in Sindh, where the colonial enterprise did not pay any attention to the issue of literature per se—this being a literature I propose to call the vernacular literature, not only because it was expressed only in Sindhi, but because this literature used Sindhi literary genres, themes, and tools. After the phase of the translations, from English but also from Hindustani to Sindhi, it took time to see the publication of Sindhi literature, which did not come from translations from other languages.

Once again, it is always informative to compare the process of the objectification of Sindhi literature with that of the vernacular literature of neighboring territories. Very early in Gujarat, grammars written by Gujarati literati were published, as were Gujarati-Gujarati dictionaries. There was an early attempt in this province to build a regional identity, distinct from those of other parts of India, with a fundamental aspect of such an identity being the vernacular Gujarati literature (Isaka 2002: 7).

In Sindh, the first grammars and dictionaries were published by Europeans, while the 1879 dictionary was published by three authors belonging to three distinct communities: European (Shirt), Hindu Sindhi (Thanvardas), and Muslim Sindhi (S. F. Mirza), a configuration which can hardly be found in Gujarat. In the end, the first Sindhi-Sindhi dictionary would not appear before the twentieth century.

In this chapter, I argue that Richard Burton's impact on the British knowledge of Sindh goes far beyond the issue of the script to be selected for writing Sindhi. As a matter of fact, he was one of the first Europeans to consider the possibility that there was a literature in Sindhi, and above all, the first one to provide samples of Sindhi literature which he translated from Sindhi into English, in his famous book published in 1851. Burton certainly met Ernst Trumpp, who was himself the first European to publish an academic paper on Sindhi Sufi literature, which appeared in German in 1863. Trained as a philologist, Trumpp would publish his first papers on Sindhi classical literature, focusing especially on the *Shah jo Risalo*, but his conception of Sindhi literature encompassed the folktales and legends of Sindhi, which were of course part of the oral tradition. To summarize the situation briefly, Burton and Trumpp thought there were three categories of Sindhi literature: folktales and legends, Sufi literature, and other religious literatures. And while it is true that Burton focused more on the authors, he also offered many details about the different literary genres.

Richard Burton, or the Orientalist Ethnographer

In the interest of providing background information, Burton's training and career should be outlined. Richard Francis Burton was born in England in 1821, with a father who was a Protestant Irishman and an officer in the British army. During his childhood, his family traveled a great deal between England, France, and Italy. As a child, he therefore quickly mastered the languages of French and Italian. Back in England, he matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford University, where he started to learn Arabic. But because he had attended a steeplechase without asking permission from the university, he was expelled from Trinity College. He thus decided to enlist in the army of the East India Company and reached India in 1842. After being posted in Bombay and Gujarat, he was sent to Sindh, where he stayed from 1844 to 1849.

While the aim of this section is to focus on Burton and Sindh, it is noteworthy to add here that he was one of the first Europeans to perform the

hajj in Mecca, and later on, he was an explorer for the Royal Geographical Society of London, looking for the sources of the Nile River in East Africa. This information provides a kind of bird's eye view of the man's character. Burton left the subcontinent in 1849, but these notes make it clear that his adventurous life continued. In 1853, he entered Mecca disguised as a pilgrim. He later set out to discover the source of the Nile twice, in 1855 and in 1857–1858. In 1860, he traveled across America to visit the Mormons in Salt Lake City. After his marriage in 1861, he became a diplomat and he would be posted at Fernando Po, Santos, Damascus, and Trieste. In 1863, he was the cofounder of the Anthropological Society of London. Burton died in Trieste, Italy, in 1890.

Burton was posted in Sindh a few months after General Napier conquered it. One of the rare Orientalists who was found, thanks to Edward Said's eyes,[1] Burton devoted four books to Sindh, a total of some 2000 pages, this not counting his reports on behalf of the East India Company. Compared to his predecessors, Burton deployed an approach that he himself called ethnological (Burton 1851a, b: 172). He mastered the Sindhi language very quickly and did not hesitate, early on, to resort to subterfuges to access prohibited areas, such as the *zenana*, a woman's apartment.

The works of Richard Burton are, of course, marked by their time: the imperial ideology of Great Britain. This is the case, for example, with the terminology he uses to designate communities. He speaks of "honorable castes" and "vile castes," the latter term referring to outcasts and untouchables. In spite of this, one feels that he is often divided between his colonialist prejudices and a genuine interest in the culture of Sindh. This may be the basis for his expressing paradoxical judgments on the mystical poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif (d. 1752). Burton celebrates his "marvelous verses" (Burton 1852: 57) and his "magnificent specimens of kafis" (Burton 1852: 79). He mentions Shah Latif just after Hafiz and Ibn al-Farid, while stating in his defense that he had "the disadvantage of being faced with the difficulties of a barbaric dialect, elaborated for a people without imagination." However, he is still more critical of the literary quality of his work: "His ornaments are mainly alliterations, puns and other puns" (Burton 1852: 203).

Burton does not often communicate the nature of the sources he uses to describe Sindh communities. He knows colonial literature surrounding

[1] Said is almost laudatory about it. It's true that what he admires most about him is that he is not an institutional orientalist (Said 1980: 224–225).

Muslims and in this respect he does not hold William Jones in high esteem, preferring works based on fieldwork, such as the book published in 1832 by Herklots and Jafar Sharif (Sharif 1832). Regarding Sindh, some of his footnotes indicate that his informants are usually the leaders of the communities about which he is writing. But, if a community is divided, he will inquire with the different parties. When he is not objective with a character or a group, his subjectivity appears in the excessive terms he uses, and he may sometimes explain his position. This is precisely the case with Hasan Ali Shah, the first agha khan. He describes him as a condottiere transformed into a feudal tyrant who is led only by his greed. His words can therefore be controversial, but the hardness with which these judgments are expressed is then the obvious sign of his subjectivity.

After reaching Bombay, Burton was then assigned as an assistant—an interpreter for the Sindh Survey to General Napier, the conqueror of Sindh. His function required him to move around the province and to meet very different categories of the population. He drew from this experience a first report, which he submitted in December of 1847 to the British Government.

It is said that Burton knew 25 languages and dialects, and regarding the Indian subcontinent, he mastered: Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Sanskrit, Balochi, Jatki, Multani, Panji, Lahnda, Persian, and, of course, Sindhi. Richard Burton was certainly not the first British individual to write about Sindh, but he surpasses his predecessors with the ethnographic approach he achieved. How was he able to penetrate Sindhi culture to such an extent? To answer this question, we must be content with the little information he gives us in what is called his "autobiography," consisting of 15 pages placed in the post-scriptum of his study on falconry in Sindh.

He confesses that the first difficulty consisted in masquerading as an Oriental: "After having tried several characters," he confides, "the easiest to adopt, I found, was that of an Arab half, half Iranian, of those that can be found in the thousands along the northern coast of the Persian Gulf" (Burton 1852: 66). In this fashion, the Sindhi attributed Burton's foreign accent to its Arab-Persian origin. Burton pretended to be a Shiite who traded calicoes, muslins, and other products very popular with women. When he arrived in a village, Mirza Abdullah from Bushir was looking for a house in the bazar or nearby to be able to participate in the evening conversations. The second step was renting a shop that provided dates, tobacco, ginger, onions, and other sweets. Burton also succeeded in integrating into Sindhi society through strong friendships he had built locally.

He makes some allusions to a prince of the Talpur dynasty, and to another *mirza* who would have been the brother of the agha khan Hasan Ali Shah.

Of the 40 or so works attributed to him, Burton published only a few reports and four books on Sindh, three of which were published in 1851–1852. The first remained famous thanks to its title: the *Sind or the Unhappy Valley*. This is a description of the main localities and sights that Burton had visited. The same year, Burton published his most important book: *Sindh and the Races that Inhabit the Indus Valley*, hereafter *Sindh*. To date, this book is a primary source on the population of Sindh in the nineteenth century. The following year, in 1852, Burton published a small book on falconry in Sindh. The anecdotes occupy an important place, but one also observes his thirst for the ordering of knowledge, for classification, which never leaves it. Thirty years after his departure from Sindh, Burton returned for a short time. He would record this visit in his *Sindh Revisited*, published in 1877, expressing his new impressions along with useful comments on the evolution of the province.

Although Burton was an atypical Orientalist, he was still an Orientalist. In this regard, a formula he put in the preface of his Sindh is meaningful: "And it would be difficult to supply a better illustration of the popular idiom 'Knowledge is power', than the conduct of Orientals towards those who understand them, compared with their contempt felt, if not expressed, for the ignorant" (Burton 1851a, b: preface). This reference to "Knowledge is power" needs to be explicated. In fact, the formula refers to W. C. Taylor's address on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He declared that it was the British who in the last decades of the eighteenth century had been responsible for "the literary treasures of Hindustan being opened up to the wonder and admiration of the world" (Cohn 1996: 45). He went on to appeal for funds to support continuing research and publication, and clinched his argument by citing the aphorism.

This relation between knowledge and power goes back to Warren Hastings, who had already explained in 1784, the year when the Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded, how British rule could benefit from it. In a letter he wrote as part of the introduction of Charles Wilkins to his translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* published in 1785, he exposed the advantages the British could gain from knowledge, hereby understood as knowledge of Indian literature. Hastings' main argument was that the interest the British take in the literature of the Indians would give birth to a sense of

obligation among the British, and it would lessen the weight of the chain by which the natives were held in subjection.

Turning back to Burton, it is a real issue to understand why he did refer to the expression "Knowledge is power." We know how distant he could be from British power, and sometimes he quotes official formulations with a sarcastic tone suggesting disagreement on his part. However, there is no doubt that, despite the sometimes contemptuous vocabulary he used, Burton admired the literature, when he included in the same aforementioned preface: "the splendid mine of Oriental literature." It is probably that Burton was much more under the influence of the official Orientalists than he thought himself to be. It is especially obvious from the fact that he situated, as William Jones had before him, Persian as the final paradigm of Oriental literature. Consequently, all of the other Oriental literatures, especially the vernaculars like Sindhi, were to be gauged according to the Persian paradigm. And like other official Orientalists, Burton felt that the vernacular languages were corrupted versions of a pure original language, as were French or Spanish in relation to Latin.

Burton's Ethnography of Sindh and His Principle of Intercession

If knowledge is power, the British conceived it as classification. As we saw above, the second half of the nineteenth century was marked by another debate among the British Orientalists, questioning whether the most efficient criterion for classification was religion or social organization, mainly the caste. This issue is still a dividing object of knowledge among present specialists (Fuller 2016: 219). Nonetheless, they all agree that the British administrators were simultaneously good anthropologists. Fuller adds a new interpretation when he argues that if anthropology was important for the colonial state, the anthropologist-officers of the colonial state failed to influence the policy of the Empire of India, especially of its viceroys. This did not prevent the spread of an "official anthropology" published throughout census reports, "tribes and castes" handbooks, and gazetteers.

One of the most remarkable anthropologist-officers was Denzil Ibbetson (1847–1908), who was the lieutenant-general of Punjab for some years, and his report published in 1883 contains a clear description of social structure, "which was informed, as stated by Fuller, by his

knowledge of contemporary anthropological theory," as for instance E. B. Tylor[2] (Fuller 2016: 224). This report became a fundamental text for the anthropology of British India. One of the most salient aspects of his work comes with Ibbetson claiming that religion is not the determining factor for organizing the local society of Punjab. Ibbetson clearly states that social organization was much more significant for the people of Punjab, regardless of their religious belongings. In the late nineteenth century, the works published by British officers intended to illustrate that the caste system was the basic organization method for all the inhabitants of India. Fuller rightly underscores that, according to the ethnographical works achieved by British officers such as Ibbetson, "Hindus and Muslims had mixed religious beliefs and practices, [and they] did not identify themselves in religious terms, and did not belong to two distinct, bounded communities." On the other side, he accepted that the census as well as the "official anthropologists" contributed to objectifying religious differences and sharpened boundaries between Hindus and Muslims. (Fuller 2016: 257)

Anthropology thus became the main knowledge base used to understand and control its subjects. The "official anthropology" as named by C. J. Fuller reached its climax in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when caste rather than religion was the main tool for exercising colonial power in India (Fuller 2016: 221). But despite the importance of anthropology as knowledge, Fuller convincingly argued that its influence was not significant on the government of the Empire of India.

In the context of the official anthropology of India, it is relevant to introduce Richard Burton as a precursor. As a matter of fact, Burton had always had an ethnographic ambition. He uses the word several times in his *Sindh*, and he was the cofounder of the Anthropological Society of London. In the preface to his work, Burton spoke of "his intention to write a work interesting to the linguist and the ethnographer." Last but not least, his book *Sindh* was published in the same year as the *League of the Iroquois* by Lewis Morgan (1818–1881), which was one of the founding books of anthropology. It is not possible to know if Burton was aware of it, although he mentions in his book the "American aborigines" (Burton 1851a, b: 284). However, throughout his ethnographic ambition, Burton

[2] E. B. Tylor (832–1917) is one of the founders of cultural anthropology, and his groundbreaking study was published in 1871 with the title *Primitive Culture*.

can be seen as a vanguard-like figure of the "ethnographic state" studied by Nicholas Dirks (Dirks 2001: 43).

In the previous chapter, we already dealt with the birth of the ethnographic state, to quote Nicholas Dirks, and the first official anthropologists, to quote Chris Fuller, these including men such as Denzil Ibbetson. Burton presented his data on the populations of Sindh about 20 years before the establishment of the census. Also, he did not have at his disposal numerous civil servants to investigate the populations. Of course, he did use informants, but it is not an exaggeration to claim Burton was a precursor of the new trend that would spread after the first census of 1871–1872, for other British or Europeans would not be able to undertake the work Burton had implemented and to the extent that, many years after his books were published, he was still quoted copiously in regard to his descriptions of the traditions of the different sections of the society of Sindh.

Burton gave but a few details about his ethnographical method. He confessed in a note that he was not always able to have a look at certain pieces of literature, and that he consequently talked "on the authority of the natives" (Burton 1851a, b note 16 p. 385). The first attempt Burton undertook in the field of anthropology is a report he submitted to the government in 1847, with the title of "Notes Relative to the Population of Sind; and the Customs, Language, and Literature of the People; &. &." (Thomas II 1989: 637–657). This would be the core of his forthcoming *Sindh*. This is nonetheless a very basic report on the different categories of the population living in Sindh: the Muslims, who he divided into Sindhis proper and "naturalized" Sindhis; language and literature; and the Hindus. Already, his interest in the Hindus can be observed since more than half of the report is devoted to them.

Although the part devoted to language and literature is very brief, Burton makes two important statements: first, that Sindhi is a quite distinct language from any others in India, and secondly that the literature can be divided into two categories, these being religious and poetical (Thomas II 1989: 643). The general framework of the report would be enlarged in his book *Sindh*, published in 1851. Each part is more developed, but the general economy of the book is the same. An important part is devoted to the Hindus, this making up two chapters. There are other chapters on the history of Sindh and on the Sindhis proper, which is the name he gives to Sindhi Muslims. His ethnographical depiction of the society is inspired by the Brahmanical caste system, in which all the groups

would be seen as entering one of the four *varna*s, to which the outcastes do not belong. Regarding knowledge, the chapters display a different organization if compared with the report. One chapter is devoted to the language and script, two others to legends and tales, another one to knowledge and education, and yet another to Sufism.

In the preface, Burton explains he provided long descriptions of religion and ceremonies, the first specimens of the language, notices of the printed literature, "and what is of more consequence, a detailed account of native habits and customs, manners and ceremonies." Like other British officers in the Indian Empire, he adopted a classification based on religion rather than on ethnicity or language. In his book on the people of Sindh, he separated Muslims and Hindus, and when he studied the customs of "Sindhi proper," it is actually Muslim Sindhi being discussed. In the context of Sindh, the term "race" was used for the first time by Alexander Burnes in 1837, and then taken up by Burton in 1851. Burnes saw it as the best instrument for describing the people of the province. Although the linguistic factor is often decisive, other referents can be taken into account. It is true with both Burnes and Burton that the term "race" is used more or less synonymously with "populations."

As a matter of fact, what he called "populations" in 1847 became "races" in 1851: the object did not vary as Burton planned the study of their customs, language, and literature. Note that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the term "race" was gradually abandoned in the works on Sindh. It was replaced by those of "castes" and "tribes"—more technical terms that echoed the recent developments of anthropology. The use of these terms, which undoubtedly reflects the author's desire to better reflect the complexity of society, would never be systematized in Sindh. Indeed, in the book he published on the question in 1901, Sadik Ali uses the term "races" (Sadik Ali 1901). This peculiarity can be seen as a reflection of the specific situation of Sindhi society, namely that it is neither the tribal system nor the caste system that predominates. This would also explain why no volume of the "castes and tribes" type was ever produced.

Among the most interesting aspects of Burton's work is his ability to grasp the whole social fact: no aspect of Sindhi life escapes him. Burton looks at this life from birth to death, with an inflection on the rites of passage. What would be called popular religion occupies a large place in his writings. His descriptions of marginal or dissident phenomena are undoubtedly due to an innate interest in these subjects. Apart from its

place in popular literature, Burton's book on the races of Sindh offers about 20 pages on the occult sciences, the topics ranging from demonology to magic and alchemy (Burton 1851a, b: 174–194).

Burton was the first to draw distinctions among Sindh residents who were Sindhi speaking. Language was no longer the determinant of Sindhi identity. Describing the Sindhis as "semi-barbarians," Burton differentiates three components among the Sindh-speaking populations: (1) "foreign tribes established in Sindh," (2) Hindus, and (3) "Sindhis proper." The "foreign tribes" are, according to him, eight in number: the Sayyids, the Afghans, the Baluchi, the Jauts, the Memons, the Khojas, the Mohanas, and the Shidis (Burton 1851a, b: 232). Burton claimed their dialect, the Jatki, was a Punjabi dialect, and consequently the Jats should be Punjabi. Although the majority is Sindhized, some of these populations have kept the memory of their origins. This is the case with the Sayyids, Afghans, Baluchis (who are more or less Sindhis), and the Shidis, who are the descendants of African slaves and are totally Sindhis. Burton seems unaware that some "foreign tribes" claim Sindhi origin, these including "tribes" such as the Jauts, Memons, and Khojas. In the case of the Jauts, Burton relies on the fact that Jatki is a Punjabi dialect (Burton 1851a, b: 246). The Khojas are, according to the information he collected, of Persian origin (Burton 1851a, b: 249).

The category of Hindus occupies a special place. Burton regards them as foreigners: "[They are] of Punjabi origin," he writes, "as their characteristics and customs, ceremonies, and religious opinions, as well as their names, plainly indicate" (Burton 1851a, b: 309). In his presentation, the Hindus divide themselves into seven so-called tribes: Brahmans, Lohano, Bhatio, Sahto, Waishya, Panjabi, and Sonaro. Then Burton takes back the Hindu components by placing them in the four *varna*s, to which he adds the outcasts.

The eleventh chapter of Burton's master book takes as its subject "Sindhi properly so called." In a note, he gives the following explanation: "[This expression] designates the Sindhis established in the plain. The nomadic tribes of Sindh, as well as those established in the hills, like the Jokhias near Karachi, are difficult to distinguish from Balochis" (Burton 1851a, b: 416). Therefore, the way of life plays a determining role for the definition of Sindhi identity in the strict sense of the term. In the appendix, Burton enumerates the main clans (*qawm*) of "pure Sindhis" while pointing out that, among the most ancient tribes of the province, the clan system does not exist (Burton 1851a, b: 369). Indirectly though, Burton considers this population "semi-barbaric" as a nation. He uses the adjective form

"national" on several occasions, particularly in the expression "national faith." But what is this "national faith"? It takes the form of worship of the saints.

In his book *Scinde or the Unhappy Valley*, Burton seems to distinguish Saints and Sufis. The saints are those who perform miracles such as provoking the birth of children, healing all kinds of diseases and sufferings, commanding the forces of nature, changing women into men, and appearing simultaneously in many places and others (Burton 1851b: 113–114). On the other hand, Sufis are a tribe of mystical devotees whose beliefs are similar to those of the Gnostics of primitive Christianity (Burton 1851b: 117). The ideas they develop in their poetry are based on the opposition between the negative entity represented by the world of matter and the positive existence of the human soul as a particle of the Eternal Spirit. The difference between the saint and the Sufi is therefore very clear. One is part of the popular religion while the other is an intellectual. A priori, nothing seems to connect them.

In the eighth chapter of *Sindh and the Races That Inhabited the Valley of the Indus*, Richard Burton presents what remains the only comprehensive exposition of Sufism in nineteenth-century Sindh. His presentation is composed of information gathered in the field (after he conducted real investigations) and readings on Sufism, which at that time became a necessary locus of European Orientalism. Proof of this is that the chapter begins with a reference to the description of Sufism made by Sir William Jones (1794), which does not prevent Burton from noting a translation error on the part of Sir William Jones (Burton 1851a, b: note 1 p. 405). On the other hand, he notes that the Sufi practices are still in the greatest ignorance.

His presentation is a mixture of a kind of fairly classic image of Sufism and a more popular Sufism, this being known as the cult of the saints. The first sentence offers a taste of how Burton tackles the problem: "There is nothing more remarkable in Sind than the number of holy men which it has produced, and the extent to which that modification of Pantheism, called Tasawwuf through the world of Islam, is spread among the body of people" (Burton 1851a, b: 198). Therefore, for Burton, Sufism or Tasawwuf is associated with the holy men, as well as with Pantheism. The chapter is divided into the following sections: Sufi poets, the *pir*s or religious teachers, the divide between the Jamalis and the Jalalis, and the most celebrated saints of Sindh.

He quotes several Persian authors, but claims to use only one treatise composed by a Sindhi, in Persian, to present the outstanding figures of the saints buried at Makli, a necropolis located in Sindh near Thatta. It is not necessary to go into details regarding this section, but the most important points to be noted here are the following: (1) Burton quickly built a bridge between Sufism and Vedanta, to which I shall return, and (2) he came back to Shah Abd al-Latif. As a founder of this representation of the Sufism in Sindh, Burton would be highly influential when it came to the Europeans' vision of Sufism in Sindh.

One of the most innovative parts of the chapter on Sufism is the part related to the social function of Sufism. Burton was quite aware that Sufism "under the native governments, was as formidable a political engine as most of the secret confraternities recorded in history" (Burton 1851a, b: 203–204). His subsequent reference to the Old Man of the Mountain should highlight that this statement was borrowed from a famous Orientalist, Hammer-Purgstall.[3] In the first half of the nineteenth century, the legend of the Assassins spread all over Europe in the wake of the book published by Hammer-Purgstall. It was about a religious master, whose orders followers would obey in their entirety, including the murdering of an enemy. According to Burton, the figure of the *pir*, or "religious superior," in Sindh has the same authority as the Old Man of the Mountain.

Burton was always keen to reveal bribed inclinations of the people. For the Sindhi *pir*s, rather than drawing on their spiritual training, he stated that they were mostly the descendants of the Prophet of Islam, but above all that "even the most religious women would consider it an honour to intrigue with holiness" (Burton 1851a, b: 205). The *pir*s could openly transgress the orders of their faith. He mentioned a *pir* who allowed his followers to marry from 20 to 30 women, while the Quran prescribes four. In his estimation, they were so confident of their authority that they never rose up to any of the *mir*s, and they were allowed to levy taxes from one-eighth to one-half upon the income and the produce of followers (Burton 1851a, b: 207). Finally, he noted that the coercion exercised by the *pir* convinced the

[3] Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856) was an Austrian Orientalist. He translated many texts from Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. In 1818, he published in German the History of the Assassins, translated into English in 1835. Obsessed by the European Free masons who would want to destroy Christianity, Hammer-Purgstall framed the Assassins, a derogatory name given to the Ismailis, on the same pattern, as nihilists who plan to destroy Islam, under the leadership of the "Old Man of the Mountain." His work was very successful in nineteenth-century Europe.

follower that he was the door-keeper of Paradise. The ignorance in which the people of Sindh were kept largely resulted from the domination of the *pir*. Burton thought his political importance should be done away with, as much as possible, the superstitions opposed by the diffusion of knowledge.

It is, however, in the twelfth chapter devoted to the Hindus of Sindh that Burton elaborates upon a most interesting hypothesis: religion in Sindh is characterized by tolerance, the latter coming from an identical conception of intercession. How does he proceed with this argument? Burton starts from a finding that the Hindu religion does not exist in a state of purity in the province: "Here Hinduism is mixed with heterogeneous elements of Islam," he notes, "as well as 'to the faith of Nanak Shah'" (Burton 1851a, b: 324). He goes so far as to point out that a Hindu frequently becomes a follower of a Sufi and that in some cases the opposite happens. Burton's explanation of this situation is not original: Sindhi Muslims, who were mostly Hindu, would have retained some elements of their ancient religion when they became Muslims. Evidence of this, Burton states, is that Muslim saints are worshiped under a Hindu name by Hindus. The shared worship of the saints concerns primarily the *panjpir*s, the five saints: Shalbaz Qalandar/Bhartari, Pira Patho/Gopichand, Khwaja Pira/Jenda Pira, Mangho Pira/Lalu Jasraj, and Shaykh Tahir/Udero Lal.

Hindus and Muslims jointly venerate these intercessors, and they consensually identify with poets like Shah Latif. To the Sikhs, Hindus in Sindh have borrowed a monotheistic form of religion: they believe in only one God, whom they call Khuda, Thakur, or Baghwan. But to which converge all these religious traits that the Sindhi have amalgamated is intercession: "The male and female avatar of, whether Vishnu, Shiva, Lashmi or Devi," writes Burton, "is held in the same position as the the *pir*s or holy men are revered as sub-intercessors, and their exceptional piety has enabled them to follow their disciples on the spiritual path" (Burton 1851a, b: 325). In this second work on Sindh, the distinction between Sufis and saints has almost disappeared.

On the possible coalescence of Sufism and Hinduism, Burton makes a penetrating remark, but while remaining prudent: "There is certainly a wonderful ressemblance between the tasawwuf and the Vedanta system" (Burton 1851b: 199). This point of view would be the basis of the Sufi culture theory of Sindh, a concept that would explain the Hindu-Muslim harmony that prevailed in the province before 1947. Finally, Burton notes that the higher the status of a group in the society, the clearer its religious

affiliation. In return, the lower its status, the more religious affiliation would be indeterminate. The outcasts, for example, do not know for themselves whether they are Hindu or Muslim.

Literatures as a "Weapon in Our Hands"

As we already saw, literature was a major issue in the context of ranking Indian society, and in fact how to evaluate how civilized the Indians were. Here again, we have to face different statements made by the Europeans regarding the issue of literature in Sindhi. As late as 1919, Grierson claimed that "Sindhi has but a small written literature, and little of that has been printed" (Grierson 1919: 12). Yet, Burton and Trumpp's opinions had been the opposite half a century before. Amazingly, Grierson referred to Trumpp, and to his edition of the *Shah jo Risalo*. About Shah Abdul Latif, he extensively quoted Burton. He added that Trumpp mentioned some authors of much less importance in his *Sindhi Reading Book* (Grierson 1919: 15–16). Let us turn to Burton and Trumpp's opinions about Sindhi literature.

First, it is necessary to deal with what Burton considers literature and especially literature in the Indian context. In the wake of the popular saying "Knowledge is power" he included in the preface, he wrote an interesting sentence in the conclusion, it being almost the ending statement: "We are not likely to derive much amusement or improvement from the literary effusions of a semi-barbarous race, but as means of power they are valuable weapons in our hands" (Burton 1851a, b: 364). This brutal statement is nevertheless contradicted by many other statements he made at various points. Since Burton was the first European to have some interest in Sindhi literature, we have to investigate his complex representation, especially because he would be the reference point for years to come.

Burton dealt with Sindhi literature in the third chapter, after he dealt with the language and dialects. Interestingly, what he wrote about Sindhi literature is in whole contradictory to the quotation above, borrowed from his conclusion. As a matter of fact, he is pretty laudatory: "… it may safely be asserted that no vernacular dialect in India, at the time of our taking of the country, possessed more, and few so much, original composition" (Burton 1851a, b: 75). Quickly, he balanced his opinion by adding that the literature was mostly religious, and mostly from translations from Arabic. According to him, between 200 and 300 manuscripts could be collected. He added that there should be much poetry throughout the

country, which had not been collected, and probably never would be. However, in the nineteenth century, manuscripts were considered to be books, and Burton did not address the issue of printed books. For him, so many manuscripts clearly attest to the idea that the Sindhis had a body of literature.

Burton distributed the manuscripts in two parts: those for the learned, mostly made of imitations of Arabic and Persian works, and those for the vulgar. After this kind of introduction of Sindhi literature, Burton reached what he saw as the core of the literature: the poetry. He asserted that it was "much more various and valuable than the prose, [...] and yields not in importance either to the Mahratti, or the original compositions in the Hindi and Braj dialect" (Burton 1851a, b: 77). It is no exaggeration to claim that Burton was sensible to both the Sindhi language and the Sindhi literature. His discourse on Sindhi literature carried on with the principal kinds of Sindhi poetry.

He started in quoting four kinds, which are according to him derived from the classical language and common to the whole Muslim world. They are the *madah* or praise, the *munajat* or hymn, the *marsiyah* or elegy, and the *kowar* or satirical composition. Furthermore, he added that there are four more kinds of poetry which "are more original": the *fath-namo* or songs of the battle; the *kafi* or *wai*, a song from eight to a dozen verses; a *bait* or couplet; and a *sanyaro* or amorous message (Burton 1851a, b: 79). In addition to these several kinds of composition, he mentioned other pieces, such as jeux d'esprit, riddles, puns, puzzles, and other enigmas. He ended his discourse on the different literary genres as follows: "In this province [...], the poetical literature of the vernacular is, at present, fresh, idiomatic, and sufficiently original, copious, and varied in words and expression, at the same time simple and natural" (Burton 1851a, b: 80).

In fact, Burton was more interested in the authors than by the literature as a topic, despite the pages he devoted to it. The next and fourth chapter in his book is a kind of mixed chapter presenting the major authors, as well as legends and tales. The chapter starts with the "Biography of the three most celebrated Sindhi authors." In fact, two of them, Makhdum Hashim and Makhdum Abdullah, had written treatises on Islam in Arabic or Persian, which was sometimes translated by them into Sindhi. The third one is Shah Abdul Latif, and it is incredible indeed that Burton devoted no more space to him than to the two previous ones, not even a single page, although he stated that the Sindhis considered him the Hafiz of

Sindh, and that they had almost all read or heard his pathetic verses (Burton 1851a, b: 85–86). However, the most significant point to be made here is that Burton made no mention of the fact that the three authors were Sufi. It sounds as if, for Burton, the question of religious should not interfere with literature. Therefore, for Burton, Sufism was not an issue as such regarding the Sufi authors, a point that is nonetheless challenged by the eighth chapter, whose title is "Tasawwuf, or Sufyism, in Sind."

Burton's representation of the Sindhi literature is dependent on his own training as well as on his informants. How did Burton select the "Three Most Celebrated Sindhi Authors"? Also, it is amazing that he did not mention other works composed in Sindhi, while he quoted Arabic works composed by Sindhis. In fact, most of the fourth chapter is devoted to legends and tales. Shortly after the few lines that he wrote on Shah Latif, he turns to a satirical composition produced by one Mihru, who is a minstrel, a Manghanar. The piece is related to how foolish were the *mir*s to trust the British, as well as the numerous treacheries that had occurred between one party and the other. Burton provided a translation of a portion of it. Next comes the story of the Samois, here again ornamented with many Sindhi abstracts with English translations.

Burton also included a piece of oral literature that was most popular in the Indus Valley: Sassui and Punhun (Burton 1851a, b: 93–113). Once again, there are Sindhi abstracts with English translations. As we saw before, this famous tale would be translated from Sindhi into English by F. J. Goldsmid and published in 1863. Here again, Burton did not mention Shah Abdul Latif's version in his *Shah jo Risalo*. The last tale of the chapter is another classic of the Indus Valley: Umar Marvi. The following fifth chapter is still devoted to tales: Ramo Mumal, Sohni and the Mehars, Dodo Chanesar, Hir Ranjha, Dulha Darya Khan, and Mall Mahmud.

Conclusion

Before Richard Burton's writings, Sufism did not attract the interest of the British colonizers. Burton was influential in three fields. First is the selection of the Arabo-Sindhi script as official script for writing and printing the Sindhi language. Second, Burton was the most active in providing evidence that there was a Sindhi literature, although it was mainly oral in the 1840s–1850s. Before, and even after him, many Europeans would still claim there was no Sindhi literature, up to the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*

published from the 1870s onward.[4] Third, and lastly, Richard Burton would be the first to devote a capital interest to Sufism.

For him, the birth and the development of Sindhi literature were inextricably linked to Sufism. He was also the first to recognize the vital importance of Shah Abd al-Latif and his poetry, the *Shah jo Risalo*, which will later constitute the matrix of the Sufi paradigm. Moreover, another most interesting point is that, contrary to William Jones and his successors, Burton would not lock Sufism into the sole field of literature. The main innovation in his work is the ethnographical approach he used toward Sufism in Sindh. Two other books had already been published on the Muslims of India in 1832,[5] but despite the kind of sociological depiction they contained, Burton went further in providing many details, as, for example, in relation to the rituals of initiation performed in Sehwan Sharif.

Another remarkable approach in Burton's work is how cautious and balanced he was when dealing with important issues. For instance, there is the issue of the relationship between Sufism and Vedanta, or even Hinduism at large. It was common among the European Orientalists to state that Sufism was not Islamic-originated, but that it came from either Greek philosophy (Suf would have come from Sophia) or Hinduism. Another scholar played a role in starting to objectify Sufism, so that the process of forming the Sufi paradigm could begin. Ernst Trumpp is well known for having implemented the first edition and printing of the *Shah jo Risalo*. But yet, he was also one of the first Europeans to claim there was a Sindhi literature, and that it was located in Sufi literature. Nonetheless, Trumpp did not go beyond the field of language and literature, contrary to Burton, who had an ethnographical interest in Sufism. Notwithstanding, Trumpp found Sindhi literature to be of great interest before turning to other literatures, such as the Punjabi, the Pashto, the Baluchi, and the Brahui. He would be the main actor in the process of the making of the Sufi paradigm, as the printer of the *Shah jo Risalo*.

[4] In 1908, the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* still wrote "Sindhi literature consists mainly of translations from Arabic and Persian, chiefly theological works, and few rude national ballads" (*IGI* 1908: 406).

[5] See Sharif (1832) and Ali (1832). Both are mentioned by Burton.

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PART II

Social Mobility and the Making of the Sufi Paradigm

The second part of this book will primarily study the relation between the birth of a middle class and the development of a section thereof into an intelligentsia, two related phenomena, which I want to distinguish, still, from the outset of the formation of the Sufi paradigm. Also, we will have to deal with the intricate issue of the entanglement between the process of objectification of Sufism and that of the building of the Sufi paradigm. This part opens with a chapter dealing with "the archeology of the Sufi paradigm." It describes how the conditions of possibility of the paradigm were implemented through two main processes. The first one resulted from an order of the commissioner in Sindh, Bartle Frere, to print the *Shah jo Risalo*. The printing would trigger a process of objectification of Sufism, this happening among the Sindhi intelligentsia. The objectification of Sindhi Sufism would allow them to slowly depart from the Persian pattern and to build the early stage of the Sufi paradigm.

In her book devoted to the shifting of Ashrafs into the middle classes, Margrit Pernau clearly relates the identification of the Muslim with religion in the late nineteenth century with the creation of a middle class whose members described themselves as Ashrafs. Pernau soon observes that the term "middle class" is far from being homogenous (Pernau 2013: XXX). Nevertheless, in this second part of the book, and contrary to Pernau, I do not aim to illustrate how the Sindhi middle class and intelligentsia were to build a community, sharing interests, ideals, and ways of life. Also, Pernau deals a great deal with the concept of identity, which

seems to have played a key role in the shifting from Ashraf to middle classes. This concept is also one, which I do not reference. Notwithstanding, I share her point when she examines "which knowledge was communicated in concrete terms and how, which translation processes underlay this communication, and how it was reflected in individual concepts and the way they changed over time (Pernau 2013: 439).

On the other side, European historians have long associated the development of a bourgeoisie with the process of democratization and secularization. But another episode is less known: the process through which the peasants were colonized by urban people. The historian Eugen Weber wrote that we should think of the process of the modernization of the peasant in late nineteenth-century France in order to help us understand what did happen (Weber 1976: 486). He writes of a "process of acculturation" through which civilization was given to the French by urban France, the disintegration of local cultures by modernity, and finally their absorption into the dominant civilization of Paris and schools. Also, Weber reminds us that the urban elite of France spoke of the rural people as they did of the colonized, with condescension. Since conquered people were not people, having no culture of their own, they could only benefit from the enrichment and enlightenment brought by civilizers.

Another meaningful point to bear in mind is that the territories of France had not been conquered, but they had been annexed by the French without the consent of the local people, who challenged the central power located in Paris even after centuries of annexation. Furthermore, the "provinciaux" benefited from the modern technologies, such as roads and railroads, electricity, and the telegraph, just in the same period as the far away colonies did. In France as in Sindh, the "forces of order ignored and scorned the logic of the societies they administered" (Weber 1976: 493). Nonetheless, a main cleavage is to be highlighted between France and Sindh: the issue of religion. In France, secularization was at work, while in Sindh, the spread of colonial knowledge did not implement a secularization process. Notwithstanding, it is amazing to observe that both processes, in France and in Sindh, were at work during the same period.

The impact was of a different nature, after which new conceptions of religion and new forms of religiosity were born. The Sufi paradigm was part of the reshaping of a vernacular knowledge based on religiosity. In this regard, Mirza Qalich Beg was a leading actor whose writings work at a multi-level scale. He was the first to compose a biography of Shah Abd al-Latif, and to talk of the *Ilm Tasawuf*, "Sufi knowledge." Furthermore,

in the early twentieth century, he worked at publishing the Sufi *kalam* of Shah Abd al-Karim, and also the *kalam* of Sabit Ali Shah, the leading Sindhi Shia poet and the champion of the *marsiyya* genre, this being the dirge devoted to the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and his family at Karbala in 680. Other Sindhi literati contributed to enlarging the Sufi paradigm beyond Shah Abd al-Latif and his *Shah jo Risalo*.

The success of the Sufi paradigm could be evaluated when some of its features were dealt with by non-Sufi writers: in fact, this is the very act through which it would become a paradigm. One of them was an Ismaili Khoja who praised the concept built by Sachal Sarmast, the *haqq mawjud*. Thanks to it, he was able to bridge *tasawuf* with Vedanta, what he calls the divine light, the *illahi nur* and the *ishvari jot*. Through this construction, Hashim Lalu was keen to find evidence of Khoja participation in the Sufi paradigm. On the other hand, a number of Hindu literati were the heralds of the Sufi paradigm, most of the time through a new interpretation of Sufism framed by a Theosophical reading. In this regard, the leading scholar was Jethmal Parsram, who was a prolific writer and publisher.

A last addition to the Sufi paradigm resulted from the spread of printing in relation to oral literature. Since the time of the precursors to Burton and Trumpp, British and European scholars had noticed Sindh was very rich in tales and legends. From the second part of the nineteenth century on, the British started to publish some abstracts, but it was in early twentieth century that the *qisso*, the vernacular term for the tale, was printed en masse, thanks to lithography. The most popular *qisso* was "Sasui Punu," a most famous tale reinterpreted by Shah Abd al-Latif in his *Shah jo Risalo* as the symbol of the mystic Sufi quest. But before analyzing how the Sufi paradigm deploys beyond Sufism and even Islam, first we have to scrutinize the archeology of the paradigm, meaning how the printing created a process of objectification of Sufism.

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CHAPTER 5

The Archaeology of the Sufi Paradigm

Introduction

The study intends to scrutinize the building of a vernacular knowledge in a country, which was colonized by the British. After the conquest, the British in general did not have any interest in Sindhi knowledge, and among it, in Sufism. The very event, which would have a profound impact on the idea of knowledge the Sindhis had was not made for reaching such a goal. The printing of the *Shah jo Risalo* should be understood in the wake of the production of Sindhi texts for the British officers and other Christian missionaries. This chapter intends to deal with the circumstances that led up to printing the *Shah jo Risalo* and, above all, address the multi-level impact this first printing of a Sufi work in Sindhi would have on the new generations of Sindhi literati.

The manuscripts we have of Sindhi literature do not reach beyond the eighteenth century. Among them, there are some manuscripts of the *Shah jo Risalo*. Nonetheless, we do not really know how the *Shah jo Risalo* circulated before the British colonization, nor how it was incorporated into Sindhi knowledge. Notwithstanding, the collection of manuscripts kept by the Institute of Ismaili Studies shows that abstracts of the poetry were included in the *pothi*s, but as a piece among many others. Burton clearly states that all of the Sindhis, whatever the class, creed, or caste they belonged to, knew the *Shah jo Risalo*. But, unfortunately, there is a

scarcity of sources regarding how it was used by the *faqir*s of Bhit Shah, the keepers of the tradition, the Sufis at large, and well-wishers.

In other words, it is not possible to address the crucial issue of the transmission of the *Shah jo Risalo* before it was printed. Knowing the organization of the society of Sindh, one can surmise that there were two categories of transmitters: the Sufis themselves and the *Manganhars*, the caste musicians who roamed from *dargah* to *dargah* to sing. It is difficult to believe that the latter had a written form of knowledge. Probably, it was by oral transmission, and evidence of that very conclusion is that many additions had been made in the *Shah jo Risalo*—these being abstracts, which had not been authored by Shah Abd al-Latif. To date, there has been no real consensus on a princeps edition, the first printed edition, of the work. The lack of clarity on this issue is also due to the custom of such poets to imitate their masters, and to be included by their followers in their own masterpiece.

Consequently, the printing of the *Shah jo Risalo* would be a major step in the formation of the Sufi paradigm. There is the possibility that this work was the most popular Sufi work in all of Sindhi society, despite the fact that there are some issues regarding its accessibility in terms of language and meaning. More than one scholar in the colonial Sindh, both Sindhis and Europeans, indeed stated that the text was especially difficult to understand for different reasons. If that was the case, this is a major issue that leads us to wonder whether it was really popular among all of the classes of the society of Sindh. However, there was a process, originated among the Europeans, to build upon the *Shah jo Risalo* as a matrix of Sindhi knowledge, which led to its shaping the core of the Sufi paradigm.

The Printing of the *Shah jo Risalo* and Its Aftermath

Ernst Trumpp was born in 1828 in Wurtenberg, a then independent kingdom of Western Germany.[1] He grew up in a modest family practicing the Lutheran branch of Protestantism. He began to study in a theological college where he started learning Hebrew since his parents wanted him to be a Lutheran minister, and also studied Arabic and Sanskrit. His studies were nevertheless interrupted by the 1848 revolution and finally he decided to go to London to improve his skills in Indian languages. In

[1] For this part on Trumpp's life, I draw mostly upon the paper written by Annemarie Schimmel (Schimmel 1985: 19–53).

England, he probably converted to the Anglican Church and, in 1849, he was sent to Eastern India as a missionary of the powerful Church Missionary Society. There, the bishop of Bombay asked him to go to Sindh, after he had been made a priest of the Anglican Church. He reached Karachi probably in 1854. He finally spent a short time in Sindh, its brevity because he was ill and had to leave India in 1856. When he came back in 1858, he was posted in Peshawar. There, he was highly interested in the language spoken by the so-called Kafirs, presently known as Kalash, and published a paper in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1862. But in 1860, he fell sick and left for Germany. In 1870, the British government asked him to translate the *Adi Granth*, and he thus went back to India, where he spent some months in Lahore. Finally, in 1873, he was appointed Professor of Semitic Language at the University of Munich.

His work is impressive, and regarding the issue of the book under present discussion, Trumpp was especially interested in translations and grammars. As a matter of fact, he was able to publish four grammars. As we saw, he published his Sindhi grammar in 1872, followed by a grammar of Pashto published in 1872, and finally a grammar of Brahui, which was first published in German in 1881, then translated into English in 1885. Additionally, he was also the author of a grammar of Arabic and completed several translations from this language. He also learned the Ethiopic language.

In a recent paper, Christopher Shackle worked at rehabilitating Trumpp's edition of the *Adi Granth*. In fact, he makes a distinction between Trumpp as a philologist and Trumpp as an Orientalist. For him, Trumpp's introduction to the *Adi Granth* made him a pioneer of Sikh Studies (Shackle 2015: 15) since it was based on the English translation of two *janam sakhi*s, accounts of Guru Nanak's life. In adopting this organization, he established the double format of presenting both the scripture and the sacred history of the Gurus, which is familiar from many subsequent presentations of Sikhism in English. Later on, Trumpp did publish a book on Guru Nanak, and another one on Sikh beliefs.

Trumpp is highly praised by Annemarie Schimmel: "… There is no German or European scholar of his time who can be compared to him as regards the sober grammatical analysis of modern Indian languages" (Schimmel 1985: 28). In 1858, he published *The Sindhi Reading-Book in the Sanscrit and Arabic Character*. In the preface, Trumpp explained that he wrote the book for "the use of the Missions in Sindh…. and in any further translation of the Holy Scriptures, or other religious books." He explained that the Bombay Government had an agreement with the

Church Missionary Society of Bombay to publish a Sindhi Reader with a grammar of the Sindhi language. But, eventually, these publications had to be postponed because of a lack of funding and the Mutiny of 1857. The book owes its origin to Reverend Henry Ven, Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Society in Bombay.

In the preface of his *Reader*, Trumpp's main concern is for the alphabet, and for the difficulties involved in restoring some original sounds of the Sindhi language. The distribution between the abstracts of literature of the Arabic part, and those of the Hindu part, is also significant. It starts with the Hindu part. Both include some biblical passages taken from the end of the Ten Commandments, the Psalms, and the Genesis. The Hindu part also includes the story of Lal Udero, or Udero Lal, the Sur Sassui, and two other tales. The Arabic part contains a selection of moral stories and poetical works, such as Majnu Laila and the *slok*s of Mengho Bhagat. It is thus interesting that Trumpp balanced prose and poetry. Unfortunately, he did not elaborate more in this book on the issue of Sindhi literature. His only comments are regarding the poor state in which he has found the manuscripts.

"Sur Sorath" is a much-acclaimed chapter of the *Shah jo Risalo*. It depicts a confrontation between a king and a musician. Many words are used for naming the musician, and it is obvious that Shah Abd al-Latif attributes a kind of magic power to him. "Sur Sorath" comes across as an allegory for music's all-powerful sway over human beings and nature. The strength and power possessed by the musician's lyre echoes that of the trumpets in the Jericho story of the Bible. Such an echo could not have escaped the priest Trumpp. "Sur Sassui" offers a vernacularized version of the story of Romeo and Juliet. Sassui was the daughter of a poor washerman who was in love with a prince, Punhun. The story of Sassui and Punhun was a popular folktale in Sindh, and in referring to it, Shah Abd al-Latif follows an important principle of the Sufi poetry of Sindh: He represents the female as a metaphor for the soul's quest for God.

Though Trumpp was publishing "Sur Sorath" and "Sur Sassui" for people wishing to learn Sindhi, he did not choose the easiest pieces of Sindhi literature. Shah Abd al-Latif's family was from Southern Sindh, where the Lari dialect is spoken, which is said to be more archaic than Vicholi, the standard Sindhi. The *Shah jo Risalo* is consequently not easy to understand for non-Lari speakers, particularly given that the poet uses language that is often abstruse and at times very compressed. The 1858 editions of "Sur Sorath" and "Sur Sassui" were nevertheless the first pieces of Sufi poetry ever printed in Sindhi.

It is in the first academic paper devoted to the topic that Trumpp focuses on Sufi literature in Sindhi. Published in 1863, Trumpp started to pay tribute to Richard Burton in stating that Burton had been the first to claim that no other part of India had such an important literature as Sindh, despite the many opponents he had (Trumpp 1863: 245). After the introduction, Trumpp provides the text in Arabic Sindhi, with a German translation, along with copious notes for explicating almost only philological issues. However, things need to be made clear here: Trumpp's first interest is in language and literature, and Sufism is not an issue as such in his work. First, this point is made obvious from the very few assumptions we can find in relation to Sufism, except in the introduction where he introduces Shah Abd al-Latif as a master (*mashaykh*) in Sufism (*tasawuf*), and second in that, when there are, they are not very benevolent toward Sufism.

For example, in the notes following an abstract, Trumpp writes that "the poet's feeling heart for a moment gains the upper hand over the deafening haze of Sufism" (Trumpp 1863: 285), or speaks of the incredible miracles the *pir*s are supposed to perform, obviously with some sarcasm in his tone (Trumpp 1863: 301). In the fourth chapter of *Sorath*, Trumpp nonetheless gives some explanations about the third verse, where there is the expression "Sacrifice all and become a Shahbaz, then you will get the thing." He then depicts Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's grave as "One of the biggest oddities in Sindh." Lal Shahbaz was the head of the Sufi order of the Jamalis. He added that the *murid*s are initiated in the order through the *khalifa* of the *qalandar* and the *mujawir*s (Trumpp 1863: 305). Obviously, and without quoting his name, Trumpp repeats what Burton put in his book, word for word, when he turns to the ritual of initiation where the *murid* has his face blackened, and the young woman from the Khunbati caste is "married" to the Sufi for a year.

In 1866, Trumpp published a first edition of *Shah jo Risalo* in Leipzig, Germany, with an introduction that was mainly borrowed from his previous article. This publication was sponsored by Frere. He was not very vocal regarding how he selected the text, only talking about "two good manuscripts, which have been carefully compared by a learned native" (Shah Abd al-Latif 1866: x). He did not feel it necessary to name the "learned native." Interestingly, the first title of the book is *Sindhi Literature*, and Trumpp clearly stated that the poetry could be used as "a pattern of language" and that it is made of "the purest Sindhi" (Shah Abd al-Latif 1866: vi). He added that one cannot find any Arabic or Persian

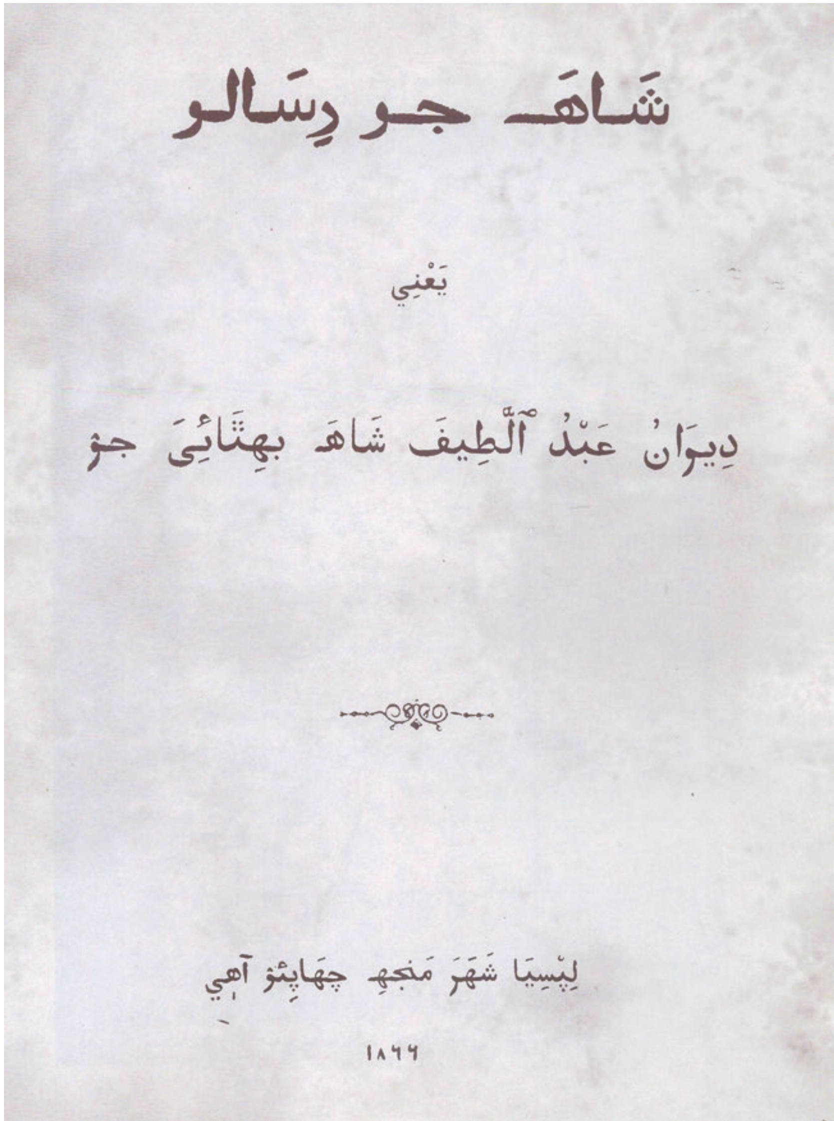
meters in the poetry, as the works are all of typical Sindhi meters, especially in the *doho* form (Shah Abd al-Latif 1866: ix).

Like most other scholars, Trumpp claims that Sufism is a derivation of the Vedantic system, but he gives this depiction of the *wahdat-e wujud*: “In order to understand the *Risalo* correctly, the reader should devote particular attention to the Sufi doctrine that the human soul is a particle of the Divine breath.” Although he believed that Indian Islam is very corrupted by Hinduism, he conceded that “the persevering student will be amply repaid for his labours by the many beautiful passages he will meet with everywhere.”

In his preface, Trumpp still references Burton in order to say a few words on the *Risalo*: “His poetry is the delight of all that can understand it. The learned praise it for its beauty [… and] even the unlearned generally know select portions by heart, and take the trouble to become acquainted with their meaning.” Trumpp goes further in explaining that the attraction to the *Risalo* comes from the fact that Shah Latif “has chosen as substrata of his Sufic effusion popular tales and stories which are known through the length and breadth of the country.” In other words, the reader or the hearer already knows what Shah Latif is talking about. The *tour de force* is that the poet inculcates the Sufic doctrines into the mouth of his heroes and heroines. Lastly, Trumpp associates Shah Latif’s doctrine with “the mystic doctrine of pantheism.”

According to N. A. Baloch, another version of the *Shah jo Risalo* was printed in the same year, 1866, in Bombay, but in fact this was probably the lithographed version published by the Haidari Press in 1876 that he referenced (Gidumal 1882: 4). Businessmen from the Memon community of Kathiawar set up printing presses in Bombay and employed scribes from Sindh to copy out Sindhi manuscripts for print. Unfortunately, it is not known whether there was any interaction between the Orientalist approach and the vernacular one. From Trumpp’s side, we can presume that he was not aware of the Memons’ publishing; otherwise, he would certainly have mentioned it. A careful comparative approach has yet to be applied to both editions. Despite the lack of information, it is fascinating to observe that a process of objectification of Sufism through the printing of Shah Abd al-Latif’s *Risalo* started the same year (Fig. 5.1).

Trumpp and Frere selected the *Shah jo Risalo* as the first Sufi work to be edited and published for teaching Sindhi to the British officers. Trumpp had a deep knowledge of the religious culture of Sindh, and Trumpp and Frere were obviously aware of Shah Abd al-Latif’s fame among the Sindhis.



شَاهَ جو رِسَالو

يَعْنِي

دِيوَانُ عَبْدُ ٱلَّطِيفَ شَاهَ بهِتَائِيَ جو

لِپْسِيَا شَهَرَ مَنجهِ چهَاپِئو آهِي

١٨٦٦

Fig. 5.1 The first edition of the *Shah jo Risalo*, 1866

Nonetheless, Burton had emphasized that the *Shah jo Risalo* was not understood by many and a similar situation prevailed in North India.

Trumpp's edition of the *Shah jo Risalo* had a number of consequences for the process of objectifying Sufism. On the one hand, it sanctioned the *Shah jo Risalo* as the primary official text in Sindh, one that incarnated Sindhi culture. This does not mean that the edition made by Trumpp was accepted by Sindhi literati. For example, it was criticized by Dayaram Gidumal as being "neither correct nor complete" (Gidumal 1882: 4). Though an abstract of the *Risalo* was published in Karachi in 1883 by Qazi Haji Ahmad (or 1873, according to Sorley), new editions were to be published in the early twentieth century. On the other hand, the *Shah jo Risalo* went on to obscure other Sufi poetry in Sindhi. For example, Sachal Sarmast, who is acclaimed as being the second most important Sufi poet of Sindh, would not deserve interest before the twentieth century. His poetry would be transmitted orally, and probably restricted to his region, the northern part of Sindh, until its edition and printing in 1902.

After the first printing of the *Shah jo Risalo*, there was a gap during the 1870s. Notwithstanding, several books were published during the 1880s, these being mostly devoted to the life of Shah Abd al-Latif. The first Sindhi to publish a text on Shah Abd al-Latif was Dayaram Gidumal, in English, with his famous *Something about Sindh* in 1882. Half of the small book is devoted to the Sufi poet, this section being divided into three chapters that make up the first three in the work. As stated in the preface, his objective was to provide "some reliable record of the great poet's life" to the teachers, since parts of the *Risalo* were prescribed for the sixth standard taught in the high schools. Every chapter is devoted to a part of Shah Latif's life: his origin and infancy, followed by his love story with a Moghul girl, and finally his initiation into Sufism.

Dayaram underscores the fact that Shah Latif made "numerous allusions to the several sects of the Hindu Fakirs in the Rassalo, and especially of the Samis" (Gidumal 1882: 18). He also claims that, in the 1876 Bombay edition of the *Risalo*, there is mention of Guru Gobind Singh.[2] He notes that Shah Latif had "profound knowledge of the Yogi doctrine and discipline, while allusions to the Vedanta philosophy are largely

[2] Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708) was the tenth and last of the Sikh gurus. He was the founder of the Khalsa in 1699, as well as of the standardization of the Adi Granth. He claimed that he was the last guru and that after the Adi Granth would be the next and eternal guru. He fought many battles against the Mughals, especially when Aurangzeb was emperor.

scattered throughout the work," commenting that it has often been remarked that Sufism is based on Vedanta philosophy (Gidumal 1882: 22). Gidumal, writing for an English and Westernized audience, is also keen to locate the Sufis in relation to the Greek philosophers. The Sufis, he argued, went farther than the Stoics.

After some years, the second Sindhi to write on Shah Latif was a member of the literati, Mirza Qalich Beg. The role he played in the making of the Sufi paradigm will be scrutinized in the sixth chapter. The third writer was a Talpur prince born in exile, in Calcutta: Mir Abd al-Husayn Khan (1851–1924), or Sangi, which was his nom de plume. His work titled, *Lataif-e Latifi*, or *Anecdotes on Shah Abd al-Latif*, was published in Persian in 1888. It is the first book wholly devoted to the life of Shah Abd al-Latif. Already, Mir Ali Sher Thatai had included a part on Shah Abd al-Latif's life in his *Tuhfat al-Kiram* in the late eighteenth century, followed by Burton in his 1851 *Sindh*. Nevertheless, the main trend arising in the 1800s was the interest the Sindhis had for Shah Abd al-Latif's life. But why this interest for this particular life, for this living saint? Why was there a concern for the biography rather than the hagiography?

Sindhi intellectuals could have been aware of the publication of *The Life of Jesus* by the French scholar Ernest Renan in 1863, given that we know leading Muslim reformists, such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Sayyid Amir Ali, did use it. Both of these very influential Muslim reformists had published a biography of Prophet Muhammad, partly to counter the pamphlets issued by Christian missionaries which claimed that Muhammad was a false prophet, making his religion a fake one. Such a genealogy is not easy to trace because the Sindhi intellectuals did not refer to it. However, the relationship between Muslim reformists of Sindh with both Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Sayyid Amir Ali, who visited Sindh, do not leave any doubt about the affiliation.

Nevertheless, the most notable point to be highlighted is that the first biography of a Muslim religious figure was devoted to an indigenous Sufi poet: Shah Abd al-Latif. Biographies of Prophet Muhammad in Sindhi would be published in the early twentieth century, about 20 years after the ones on Shah Latif. In this respect, a groundbreaking study would be published by Mirza Qalich Beg in 1887, first in English and then, after ten years, in Sindhi in 1897. We shall return to this work in the sixth chapter, where a section is fully devoted to Mirza Qalich Beg's work.

The Sufi Paradigm and the Issue of a Persian Pattern

In this second section, I wish to deal with an issue which can be followed like a red thread in all the works devoted to Sindhi literature: It is the role played by Persian language and Persian literature in the birth and development of the Sindhi vernacular literature. Sorley spoke of the "tyranny of Persian models" (Sorley 1940: 208), and, for Schimmel, there was a Persianization of vocabulary and poetic forms from the late eighteenth century onward (Schimmel 1974: 25). According to Asani, the Persianization of Sindhi was the condition that allows the Sindhi Ashrafs to accept Sindhi as a literary language (Asani 2003: 629). L. H. Ajwani agreed with them all when he claimed that Persian language and literature were together a catalyst in the formation of Sindhi literature (Ajwani 1970: 40–41).

Not being a specialist in South Asian literature, my aim is not to address the issue of the possible Persianization of Sindhi literature. Of course, the issue is in itself far out of the scope of the present study. My immediate interest in Persian language and literature, in the context of this study, is in examining whether or not they had an impact in the makings of the Sufi paradigm. In other words, I shall not try to analyze the Persian vocabulary nor literary genres as expressed in Sindhi, but rather I wish to determine whether Persian mysticism provided a significant impulse for the making of the Sufi paradigm. Also, I have to note that the above-quoted scholars mostly worked on pre-colonial Sindh, when the political conditions were very different and the holders of literary culture were the traditional groups. As we already saw, the entrepreneurs of the Sufi paradigm did not belong, for the most part, to the traditional holders of knowledge, such as the Sayyids, the Ulamas, or the pandits.

The historical role played by Persian in the Indian subcontinent is well known, and until 1835, Persian was the official language used for administration. In Sindh, we already know that the shift from Persian to Sindhi occurred in 1851, following Sir Bartle Frere's edict. On the side of the historical sources, the corpus was written in Persian, from the famous *Chahchnama* to the eighteenth century's Mir Ali Qani Thatawi (1728–1788), a Naqshbandi from Thatta who composed reference writings on Sufism in eighteenth-century Sindh. But besides the use of Persian, the development of the literary use of Sindhi started in the eighteenth century with a triple impulse: first, it came from the Naqshbandi reaction, whose authors wrote in Sindhi and Arabic; second, it came from the first Shia devotional literature; and third, it came from the *Shah jo Risalo*.

It is said that Shah Abd al-Latif always had three books with him: the Quran, the *masnawi* of Jalal al-Din Rumi, and the *kalam* of his great grandfather, Shah Abd al-Karim. The issue of the influence of Persian Sufi poets is constantly addressed by the specialists of the *Shah jo Risalo*, and the very good reason for this is that Shah Abd al-Latif himself makes explicit reference to the authority of Rumi, for example, in "Sur Yaman Kalian" (2.73):

> The multiplicity of creation is in search of God
> And its origin is his beauty – this is what Rumi said
> (Shah Abd al-Latif 2018: 49)

However, the issue shall be addressed in analyzing the relationship the Sindhi literati had with Persian literature during British colonization in the second half of the nineteenth century. A number of Persian *kalam*s were composed by well-known Sufi poets from Sindh, up to the early twentieth century. The relationship between the Sindhi literati and Persian mysticism would be focused on throughout the work completed by Mirza Qalich Beg. As we already know, he was himself a pioneer in the field of Sindhi literature, but he simultaneously produced a lot of works in Persian, including mystic productions.

A number of Sindhi literati wrote Persian works in relation to Sufism. But, for the majority, Persian was a language they used among others. Some Persian works are still unpublished, as for example the *kalam* completed by Dalpat Sufi. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Persian was still a primary language used to write Sufi poetry by the major *tariqa*s of Sindh. For example, Bedil (1814–1872) completed 18 works in Persian; among others, he had composed in Sindhi, Siraiki, and Urdu. As a Qadiri Sufi, he wrote a commentary in Persian on Abd al-Qadir Jilani's *qasida*, with the title of *Rumuz al-Qadiri* (Sadarangani 1987: 244). Other Sufis who wrote in Persian belonged to other *tariqa*s. Makhdum Muhammad Ibrahim (1827–1899) was born in a Naqshbandi family from Thatta. In his *Muffarih al-Qulub*, he praises the Naqshbandiyya as the best *tariqa* (Sadarangani 1987: 286). Another Sufi poet wrote in Persian, this being Maulvi Baha al-Din Bahai (1833–1936). He was a Chishti and claimed to be a follower of Farid al-Din Ganj-e Shakar.

Mirza Qalich Beg was very prolific in writing Sufi books, and also in translating some Persian Sufi works into Sindhi. But, amazingly, most of them were not published and are still in manuscript form. I have not been

able to find any explanation. We could think of the funding issue, but Beg published so many books that we can hardly conceive that he could not have found funding for printing, for example, his abridged translation of Rumi's *Masnawi*. According to the *Chronological Lists of Works*, Mirza Qalich Beg wrote several anthologies of Persian poetry, with several hundred pages, that were never published. Furthermore, he in 1924 completed a *Masnawi tarkib al-insan*, or an abridged translation of Rumi's *Masnawi* made up of 138 pages, as well as Nizami's *Masnawi* with the title of *Masnawi Makhzan al-Asrar* (124 pages). Both were never published.

Apparently, Mirza Qalich Beg published three translations in Sindhi from Persian Sufi works. Although the figure of Omar Khayyam (1048–1131) is surely unrelated to Sufism, he translated his famous *Rubayyat* in 1904. Regarding other translations, the first to be translated, in 1924, was the *Gulshan-e Raz* by Mahmud Shabestari (1288-1340), titled *Masnawi Kashf-e Aijaz*, or the *Treasure of the Mysteries*. The second was Jami's *Masnawi* translated and published in Sindhi translation in 1927. Two other Persian poets were translated into Sindhi in the early twentieth century. In 1910, Pahlajrai Lilaram Vaswani published the Sindhi translation of the first five odes authored by Hafiz (1325–1389), and in 1928, a partial translation of Sadi's *Gulistan* was completed by Ramchandas Thalram.

It can seem amazing that no more Persian poets were translated into Sindhi. Rumi would be translated only in 1940, and he was, with Hafiz and Sadi, one of the three Persian authors who were taught in *maktaba*s up through the early period of British rule (Sadarangani 1987: 237). Taking the above elements into consideration, we can hardly state that Persian mysticism was influential in the building of the Sufi paradigm. It does not seem to be relevant to take notice of the fact that Persian prosody had been used, or not, in this process, since the paradigm is not strictly attached to a formal literary expression. As a matter of fact, its contents are made of two parts, one being shared with the Sufi principles at large, starting with the *wahdat-e wujud*, for example, and another one which is centered on local and regional components, such as the matter taken from the folk stories.

It is therefore impossible to demonstrate that the Persian pattern played a leading role in the building of a Sufi paradigm. I do not want to argue that Persian literature did not feed Sindhi literature, however. As I expressed earlier, this issue is beyond my aim and my ability. I can only state that the Sindhi literature never references Persian literature in the building of the Sufi paradigm.

The Sufi Paradigm at Its Earliest Stage

The work completed by Burton and the publishing of the *Shah jo Risalo* accomplished by Trumpp served as the first phase for the setting up of the Sufi paradigm. Burton claimed Shah Abd al-Latif's work was a highly praised piece of Sindhi literature. But before 1866, it belonged to the realm of oral tradition,[3] and the huge paradox with oral tradition is that we can know it only through written and printed sources. Thus, Burton's statement is the only source we have for knowing the tremendous importance of the poetry in the society of Sindh, supposedly through all the classes Burton observed. Now, at this point, we have to depict the meaning and the contents of the Sufi paradigm at its earliest stage: what was it made of?

In this period, the Sufi paradigm is made of the contents of the *Shah jo Risalo*. There are four major topics: the woman as a symbol of the soul longing for God; the *jogi*, or the importance of the Hindu ascetics, especially the Nathpanthi ascetic; music and the minstrels; and the Shia narrative of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and his family at Karbala in 680. One of the most common themes in the classic Sindhi poetry of Sufism is to employ Sindhi folk heroines as symbols of the human soul seeking God. One cause of the huge success of this work lies in the fact that it employs motifs of popular registry in order to teach the mystical way. The characters, themes, and narratives are part of a legacy shared by any Sindhi—rich or poor, powerful or weak, Muslim or Hindu.

The legend of Sassui and Punhu is a comprehensive case study. Sassui was adopted by a washerman, washermen making up a group of very low status in local society. Punhun, a Balochi prince, came to Bhanbore, a town located on the banks of the Indus, where Sassui resided. He fell in love with the beautiful Sassui. He did not hesitate to work as a launderer before marrying Sassui. Punhun's father was enraged, and he sent his other sons to try to reason with him. While Sassui was asleep, they got Punhun drunk and kidnapped him. Upon awakening, Sassui embarked on a frantic quest to find him. Sassui reached an oasis where a shepherd was tending his flock. Seeing her, he decided to seduce her. Sassui implored God to preserve her honor, and in response, the ground opened and

[3] The *dargah* of Shah Abd al-Latif keeps a manuscript known as *Ganj*, which must have been written by a close follower of the Sufi poet. I shall deal with the issue of the relationship between oral/manuscript and printed knowledge in the last chapter.

swallowed Sassui, leaving some of her personal belongings behind. The shepherd, stunned by this miracle, decided to build a mausoleum in her memory and then became its guardian. Meanwhile, Punhun had gone mad to the point that his father finally let him return to Bhanbore. En route, he passed through the oasis and recognized Sassui's belongings. The shepherd told him what had happened to his loved one. Punhu implored God until the ground opened and swallowed him also.

The parable is an allegory: The quest for Sassui is actually the Sufi quest, whose goal is to find unity with God. The outcome is certainly dramatic and beyond the mystical interpretation of two souls longing for God, but the legend also helps one understand social rules, that intermarriage between different classes is impossible. But is it not when love is impossible that it is the strongest? What would have been the story of Romeo and Juliet if their love had been possible? In his poem, Shah also provides many references to the everyday lives of ordinary people. His parables and allegories draw from the gestures of daily labor—take the wheel of the spinner, for example—but Shah transcends their traditional symbolism by giving them a spiritual purpose. One of the *surs* of *Shāh Jo Risālo* is entitled "Sur Kapaiti"—or, the chapter of the wheel. Shah draws a parallel between the woman who spins the wheel and the soul that is in meditation.

It is remarkable that the main characters in Shah's poetry are usually women. His female characters are consistently used to symbolize the human soul in search of the divine Beloved. Shah also reuses a literary motif common in the Indian subcontinent: the *virahini*, the amorous woman separated from her beloved. This is a particularly significant literary figure in the literature related to the shepherdesses (*gopis*) awaiting the return of Krishna. The vernacularization of Sufism that Shah induces in his poetry should not obscure the fact that his poetry also utilizes quotations from the Qur`an. There is hardly a developed theme which is not rooted in a chapter of the holy book. In this way, Shah integrates into his poetry the symbolic language of the local with the more universal language of Islam.

The Hindu ascetic, known as a *jogi*, has been a main feature of Sindhi classical poetry since Qazi Qazan. Once again, it is through Shah's poetry that the topic is fully exposed. He claims that the *jogis* are the best ascetics; in other words, they are the models of asceticism. They are the ones "who follow the path of submission to God." According to tradition, Shah Latif spent time with *jogi*s. In their company, he is said to have visited some sites of Hindu pilgrimages, like Dwarka and Hinglaj—places to which he

himself refers. Shah uses many words to describe the *jogi*s. He often refers them as *nanga* (sometimes *nanga*, naked). In his verses, he sometimes frames himself as dependent on them. For instance, he writes:

> Let us visit the abode of these ascetics who are in trance.
> O sisters! I am particularly beholden to these lobed jogis.
> Their patronage has reformed my heart.

In one of his most amazing verses, Shah alludes to Hinglaj and Dwarka before stating that the *jogis* are the best followers of Ali:

> These naked (holy) men, the followers of Shiv, left for the Nani Devi in Hinglaj.They were indeed happy to have visited Dwarka.I would certainly not live without those whose leader (in austerity) is Hazrat Ali.

In a single verse, Shah Abd al-Latif uses different words to name them, and this reflects the role played by the Nathpanthis in eighteenth-century Sindh. Furthermore, among the numerous words used by Shah Latif for the *jogis*, here is maybe the first occurrence of *kapata*, expressed as *kanphata* in other North Indian languages and as *kanphar* in present-day Sindhi.

The importance attributed by Shah to music continually appears in his literary work. In "Sur Sorath," we find the minstrel Bijal defying Rao Diyyach, the king of Junagarh. The power of his lyre (*chang*) is such that the queens start crying and the forts eventually fall. The many terms used by the poet to describe the minstrel—as *charan*, *mirasi*, *jajik*, or Manganhar—reflects his own interest in music, but also the role played by the musician in regional society. "Sur Sorath" is a much-acclaimed chapter of the *Shah jo Risalo*. It depicts the confrontation between a king and a musician. It is obvious that Shah Latif attributes a kind of magic power to him. "Sur Sorath" comes across as an allegory for music's all-powerful sway over human beings and nature. The figure of the mendicant minstrel, the *charan*, is dominant in Shah Latif's poetry. Regarding the instruments, although the *chang* is the most quoted, one can also find references to others, such as a traditional stringed instrument called a *kamach*.

In the *Shah jo Risalo*, there is another *sur*, which is of special interest: "Sur Kedaro, the Song of War." The whole chapter is devoted to the martyrdom (*shahadat*) of the third Shia *imam*, Husayn, who died in 680 at Karbala in Iraq. A thorough study has yet to be made on the reasons for which Shah Latif introduced a Shia topic in his poetry. However, this is

something, which distinguishes him from his predecessors in classic Sindhi Sufi poetry. It is possibly due to an influence from Persia, where the dirges devoted to the martyrdom of Husayn and his family, known as the *marsiyya* in South Asia, was booming. Shah Latif was the first Sindhi poet to write a *marsiyya* in Sindhi, and after him, the genre was adopted by many, including Shias and Sunnis, and eventually Hindus. The best exponent of the genre was Sabit Ali Shah (1740–1810), to whom I shall return in the ninth chapter.

The tragedy of Karbala, as featured in Shah's poetry, did not strictly follow the shape of the Persian dirges, despite its potential derivation from them. "Sur Kedaro" is divided into four parts. First comes the coming of Moharram, the month of mourning the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali, a trial of their love. Second is the apparently helpless state of the *imāms*. The third part is about their bravery in fighting, and the fourth part deals with their union with God after death. Shah Latif's depictions of the different episodes of the battle are made very vivid with precise details:

> With blood his beard became crimson red;His teeth appeared red like a rose, as they profusely bled. Like the full moon on the fourteenth night,His majestic turban shone, clear and bright.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the contents of the *Shah jo Risalo* made for the sole reservoir of the building of the Sufi paradigm. The major feature to be noted here is that the data goes beyond religious persuasions and belongings. The *Shah jo Risalo* worked as the core of the Sufi paradigm, in that it established four pillars: the core motif of the *wahdat-e wujud*, the themes quoted above (*virahini*, *jogi*, *sama*, *shahadat*), a technical lexicon centering of the *ishq*, and poetic forms with the prevalence of the *kafi*. Nonetheless, the Sufi paradigm was still deeply rooted in the Muslim matrix at this point, with the numerous quotations and references to the Quran. Furthermore, the most meaningful datum is the translation of the folktales, especially "Sassui Punhun," into a mystical narrative which epitomizes the Sufi quest to be merged with God.

Conclusion

The 1850s were to be crucial in the process of building the Sufi paradigm, because two necessary conditions for its realization were to be completed. In fact, Burton and Trumpp would be the first and last Europeans to take

interest in Sufism, mostly as a literary production. Their works initiated the start of the objectification of Sufism, especially through the publishing and canonization, of the *Shah jo Risalo*. The social aspects of Sufism as dealt with by Burton would be forgotten for many years. Nevertheless, Sufism as an issue was framed in the broader context of the shaping of a colonial knowledge on Sindh, but the main effect to be seen was the undertaking of a slow and gradual process of objectification. However, it is to be noted that there was a gap of about 20 years between the publishing of the *Shah jo Risalo* in 1866, from the spread onto the literary stage of Sindhi intellectuals, to the publication by Mirza Qalich Beg of his work on the life of Shah Abd al-Latif in 1887.

Regarding the making of a Sufi paradigm, it should be clearly stated that the first works achieved by Burton and Trumpp had no effect at all on the British policy in Sindh. At least, one can surmise that the expertise of Burton, when he talked of the "beautiful verses of Shah Abdul Latif" (Burton 1851: 57), was influential in the selection of the *Shah jo Risalo* to be printed by Trumpp. Still, Sufism was a non-issue, and even a non-object. Except for that centering on the *Shah jo Risalo*, no European conducted any work in relation with it until Sorley's work on Shah Abd al-Latif, which he completed in 1938 and published in 1940 (Sorley 1940).

Despite the almost averse behavior of the British, Burton and Trumpp unconsciously worked at building the first step of the Sufi paradigm. The printing of the *Shah jo Risalo* had multiple effects on the vernacular knowledge in Sindh. In a first time, the impact only reached the new elite, and those who were able to read. But maybe for the first time, with the development of the teaching of Sindhi using poetry as a manual, there was a unique version circulated all over Sindh, despite and beyond the barriers of the different Sindhi dialects. This could have contributed significantly to shaping a common feeling that the poetry was the matrix of the culture of Sindh, and its proclivity to including non-Muslim traditions aimed at reaching the whole population.

Furthermore, the policy implemented by Sir Bartle Frere in various fields related to the economic development of Karachi and Sindh caused a remaking of the urban society of Sindh. Once again, two external factors should not be underestimated: the broader Indian factor and the European factor. The Indian intellectuals were quite aware of what was happening in Europe, and the new European ideologies which were to be born in the second half of the nineteenth century would soon have an impact in India. New projects and new programs highlighted new ideals based on a universal fraternity, or the importance of social work focusing on helping the

poor. From the 1870s onward, a new world would seem to be born, and the new elite of Sindh wanted not only to be a part of it, but also to be among the main actors for promoting it in their native province.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, all the necessary elements for the deployment of the Sufism paradigm were in place. A text embodying the paradigm had been selected and printed. A new intellectual elite had formed. The phase of appropriation of the Sufi paradigm by this new elite could therefore begin. The very constitution of this elite of Hindus and downgraded Muslims made it impossible to adopt another religious pattern, whether borrowed from the scriptural texts of Islam or Hinduism. The most remarkable thing is that, therefore, it is not a particular religious group that aims to homogenize itself, but rather intellectuals who put the literary legacy before religious affiliation.

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CHAPTER 6

Social Mobility and the Set-Up of a Sufi Paradigm

Introduction

Despite the interest that Burton showed for literature, it would be far-fetched to state that he underscored the importance of Sufism in the development of a Sindhi literature, with the exception, of course, of Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry. As a matter of fact, this point raises the question of why Burton did not mention any other Sufi poet of importance, for example, Sachal Sarmast. Burton—like Trumpp, in fact—gave a key role to the literary category of tales and legends. Indeed, it is interesting to see that Trumpp quotes in his *Sindhi Reading Book* the story of Sassui, but does not do so in the version of Shah Abd al-Latif, although he would include it in his edition of the *Shah jo Risalo*. Consequently, in the late 1850s, after many books had been published in Sindhi, most of them being translations, Sufism was not an issue for the British and the Europeans. As we saw in previous chapters, until then, the Sindhis were not themselves actors in the field of knowledge, but rather agents, like the *munshi*s.

The fundamental role played by Bartle Frere as commissioner in Sindh has already been underscored in the field of knowledge. Nonetheless, his impact went far beyond that field since he was the real modernizer of the economy of Karachi and Sindh. Thus, the economic transformation of the urban society should also be outlined, inasmuch as, simultaneously with the spread of new education, economic development would give birth to a "new" middle class, and above all to an intelligentsia. Gradually,

new groups of literati would be born with new conceptions and new values, and especially a new religiosity. Nevertheless, a specific major event can be seen as the starting point of the process which would make Sufism a paradigm for the knowledge in Sindh.

In 1866, the famous philologist, missionary, and priest, Ernst Trumpp would publish the *Shah jo Risalo* thanks to the funding provided by Frere. This long Sufi text was considered by the British Orientalists as the most representative sample of Sindhi literature. The consequences of the printing of this Sufi text would be numerous, but the printing would not impose a standardized text since other versions would also be printed. The main impact would be inaugurating a process of the objectification of Sufism. This ideological process would be strengthened by the involvement of the Amils in the practice of Sufism, and even the patronage of the main *darbar*s during the same period. The objectification of Sufism would shape a kind of new representation of Sufism, but the final step of the construction of Sufism as a paradigm would occur at the turning point of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

Sufism as a paradigm would nonetheless fail to absorb all of the representations of Sufism as constructed by the British and the Sindhis. Some authors would refer to fields other than literature for expressing another view of Sufism. For example, although peripheral, the Sufi architecture would be used by the British for this construction although it would be always seen as a kind of tributary of royal architecture. In Sindh, the mausoleums built by the kings, especially the Kalhoras and the Talpurs, would be of most interest for the British, and the Sufi shrines would be understood as being a subcategory of the royal mausoleums.

The Spread of the Middle Class and the Issue of Progress

While Bombay did deserve much academic attention (Green 2011), the case of Karachi as such did not yet deserve the same, despite the existence of pioneer studies (Khuhro and Mooraj 1997). My aim is to focus on the role of merchants and the birth of a middle class in order to highlight the roles they played in the global urbanization of the city, starting with the policy implemented by colonial power and extending furthermore to social mobility. I also plan to disentangle this category of merchants, which implies they constitute a monolithic group, in examining their ethnic and religious backgrounds as well as their caste belonging. It is well known

that the prominent merchants in Karachi belonged to minority groups like Parsis, Memons, and Khojas. The common factor was that they were dominated by Gujarati-speaking groups. The fourth dominant group was the Lohanas, for whom the picture is slightly different since they were Sindhi speaking, and they constituted the bulk of the Hindu community of Sindh.

The category of the middle class was already used by Richard Burton. Among them, he included jagirdars, traders, and ryots (Burton 1851a, b: 363). Thus, it was a kind of loose category for naming very different groups of Sindhi society.[1] In this understanding of the middle class, one can claim the grouping gathered all the Sindhis except the very apex—maybe the princes and other relatives—as well as the lowest groups, the poorest. While the category of the middle class is still a flexible category, some attempts to define borders have been completed. Since such definitions have been expressed pretty recently, however, it is difficult to transfer them to people living more than one and a half centuries ago. Consequently, it would be more relevant to speak of new middle classes, if one starts from Burton's understanding of it. This category of the new middle classes would include two main groups, which were far from being homogenous. First come the government civil servants, and second the traders.

British sources give insights about trade in Karachi before the conquest. British who visited the town spoke of a small harbor inhabited by Balochis and Sindhis. Regarding the merchants, Captain McMurdo[2] observed: "The mercantile classes, both Hindu and Muhammadan, are a different race of people. They are industrious as the former (other Sindhis) are indolent, and seem to think of nothing but their professions" (Mubarak Ali 1994: 43). Although he died in 1820, his paper was published in 1834 in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* with data he had collected in the 1810s. He stated that commerce by sea was almost exclusively carried out by the Hindus of the Bhati and Lohana castes. He added that there were also some Muhammadans called Memons.

Interestingly, McMurdo mentioned the Multanis as being the principal bankers: "Their command of money gives them a place of the first rank" (Mubarak Ali 1994: 37). For him, the Multanis had control over trade networks reaching Kabul and Kandahar. In the 1830s, Lieutenant Delhoste

[1] For a summary of the issue of the middle classes in colonial India, see Sanjay Joshi's introduction (Joshi 2010).

[2] James McMurdo (1785–1820) was the first British Political Resident in Bhuj, Kutch. He also traveled into Sindh.

participated in a journey from Kutch to Sindh. In the section of his writing devoted to the survey of commerce, he pointed out that the commerce was totally controlled by the Hindus, "a most despised, and degraded race of people" (Mubarak Ali 1994: 127). After providing the main products and trade roads, he focused on the Hindus: "The hindoos of Sinde are chiefly lohaunas being a class below that of the cassaras or coppersmiths and above that of the mooches, they are principally traders and agriculturists…" (Mubarak Ali 1994: 128).

The pre-conquest British reports depicted a scene where the trade of Sindh was dominated by the Hindus. As such, they are obviously interested in giving some insights about their religion. McMurdo divided the Hindus into two main categories: the Lohanas and Bhatias on the one hand, and the Brahmans on the other hand. He quickly observed that the Bhatias were not restricted to a vegetable diet. Even the Sarsat Brahmans, who were the priests of the Lohanas, ate fish and flesh, and drank spirituous liquors. They worshipped the goddess. McMurdo said the Lohanas' customs admitted polygamy, but amazingly, nothing was said regarding their religion. Delhoste is no more informative about the topic.

The situation of the Hindu merchants improved with the Talpurs, who provided facilities for trade after they took Karachi in 1795 (Aitken 1907: 368). Since the time of the Kalhoras, a subcaste of the Lohanas had appeared: the Amils. They were specialized in administration. The other Lohanas came to be known as Baniyas or Bhaibunds, and they were engaged in trade. The Hindu merchants were reluctant to work with the East India Company. According to anthropologist Matthew Cook, they had been traumatized by their experience with the Portuguese. A wealthy merchant nevertheless decided to collaborate with the company, this being Seth Naomal (d. 1878).

He had already established a commercial empire during the Talpurs, through his family firm, the Daryanomal Brothers. His power was such that General Napier, after the conquest of Sindh, decided to cut him off: "In short, these men thought they would rule Sinde instead of me ruling it" (quoted in Cook 2016: 72). Naomal was *kardar* and Deputy Collector of Karachi. He was accused of causing suffering to the inhabitants of Karachi since he had bought all fuel-wood, and also of making "improper gains from the transfer of Company revenue from Sehwan to Karachi" (*idem* 76).

In summarizing the scene of trade before the conquest, it is to be noted that, according to British sources, trade was controlled by Sindhi

communities. There is no mention of Gujarati-speaking groups. It is interesting to observe that the British officers had adopted a representation of Hinduism following the orthodoxy of the Calcutta Brahmans, according to which an idealized picture of the Hindu was elaborated upon. The figure of the Hindu is generally vegetarian; if he is not, he is corrupted and perverted, or in other words, a fake Hindu. The British nevertheless agreed that this "race" was an industrious one, while others, namely the Muslims, were "indolent."

Matthew Cook argued that the company did not need the Bhaibands as bankers and brokers (Cook 2016: 95). This would have caused the Bhaibands' departure from Sindh. They would have followed British colonial expansion into the Western Indian Ocean, and also into the East, up to Singapore and Hong Kong. Nonetheless, it is difficult to state that no Sindhi merchant was then involved in Karachi trade. Even if they were weakened after Naomal's episode, they were still active in the economic growth of Karachi; but it is also obvious they were not the only actors, and probably not the most prominent ones. In the meantime, other communities had started to collaborate with the company, including the Parsis, the Khojas, and the Memons. Interestingly, they all started by supplying the British army in Karachi. The Khojas were, for example, those who supplied it with hides and skins.

During Bartle Frere's tenure, which ended in 1859, he succeeded in transforming Karachi into a modern metropolis. The transformation was based on providing infrastructure and on organizing economic events. For example, the first fair was arranged in Karachi in 1852. As of 1857, the British thought to develop Karachi as an alternative to Calcutta. The economic soaring of the city went through a first spurt of growth with the American Civil War (1861–1865), which caused a strong demand for cotton exports. The event occurred simultaneously with the creation of the railways. Karachi was linked to Hyderabad in 1861, and then to Lahore in 1865. On its other side, growth was reinforced by the opening of the Suez Channel in 1869. In about 15 years, the volume of importations and exportations was multiplied by 15. Such a quick development attracted new traders' castes, both Hindu and Muslim, from neighboring provinces like Gujarat, Rajputana (present day Rajasthan), and Punjab.

Another issue is related to the balance between the Sindhi-speaking groups and the Gujarati-speaking groups. It is interesting to observe that the Gujarati-speaking castes were Parsi, Muslim, Memons, Khojas, and Bohras. On the other side, the Hindus were the majority of those speaking

Sindhi, although we also find some Marwari and Punjabi groups among them. Such a cleavage was obviously a major feature of cosmopolitan cities like Karachi and Bombay. In Bombay, the Gujarati-speaking groups, including the Parsi, Muslim, and Hindu, made up about 40% of the total inhabitants. In interior Sindh, except in other trading cities like Shikarpur, the trade was mainly controlled by Sindhi Hindus, and mostly the Lohanas, at that. In Sindh, the mercantile castes were specialized. For instance, in imports, the Banias were the leaders in the clothe trade, the Bohras the leaders in iron, and the Parsis the leaders in spiritual liquors (Aitken 1907: 385).

Interestingly, the growth and thus the influence of the mercantile communities can be gauged through the buildings which were founded by the community. I shall start with the religious buildings, which, in certain cases, demonstrate the best expression of their community identity. For example, the Parsi temple of Saddar, otherwise known as Dar-e-Meher, was built in 1849 by a Parsi philanthropist, Hirjibhoy J. Behrana, and a new temple was constructed in 1875, with double-storied building (Haider 1971: 289). It is said that a temple had already existed in a bungalow as early as in 1812. The entrance was forbidden to non-Parsis. A Hindu temple was built in 1882 on Bandar Road, a main street of Karachi, and it faced the KMC building. Its name informs us of the Hindu orientation it had: the Swami Narayan Temple.[3]

Improvements were provided by Narsihma Dev in 1913, Seth Hari Bhai Pragji Karia in 1932–33, Magan Lal Nagji Bhai Bhojani in 1937, and Thakar Mahadev Vishram Bhai Bhojani and finally Shri Mehta Prabha Shankar in 1938. The structure of the temple reflects the ethnic diversity of the Hindus. There are three parts: the temple proper, two small ones where there are Hanuman's statues, and another room below which is devoted to Nanak Shah. All of the inscriptions in the first two parts are in Gujarati. Nanak Shah's shrine was obviously added by Sindhi Hindus at a later period, maybe after Partition.

Another old community building is the Kutchi Memons Mosque. It was built in 1900 with the official name of Masjid Qasaban in a somewhat Venetian-Gothic style, much praised by Victorian England. Unusually, the mosque has two floors, making it a very rare structure at that time, because

[3] Swami Narayan (1781–1830), a yogi and an ascetic, created one of the most influential movements of Hindu revivalism.

the area was much congested. The *minbar*, placed near the street, is the only element, which informs one that it is a mosque.

Still another community was to register its presence and its strength through buildings: the Khojas. Unfortunately, nothing remains of the oldest ones. Nevertheless, according to Khoja tradition, the first *jamatkhana* was built around 1850. Two or three buildings were destroyed and rebuilt, and most every time it was to build a bigger one. The size of the present day *jamatkhana*, especially those of Kharadar and Garden, still bear witness of the strength of the community. A smaller one that of Ranchore Lines is nevertheless a good sample of the oldest structure.

Karachi's growth was comparable to that of Bombay. In both cities, the Parsis were at the vanguard of the spread of the new social norms and values which were to be seen as modern. But, what did "modern" mean in late nineteenth century Sindh? How were the patterns for being modern built, and where? The initial step of this late nineteenth century becoming modern was born in Europe. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the huge growth and spread of the Industrial Revolution, whose impact was expressed throughout two fundamental processes. First came the tremendous growth of the economic benefits, both at the individual and nation-state levels. The technical progress resulting from this allowed for many varieties of progress that had great implications in everyday life—starting, for example, with electricity. The second impact of the Industrial Revolution was the de-structuring of European societies, with the massive migration of peasants to the towns and cities so that they could work in the factories. In this era of savage capitalism, the workingmen were the first targets of the successive economic crisis, and a new social class developed, this to be named by Karl Marx as the proletariat.

In Europe, the huge growth of the poor classes, coined as pauperization by observers, motivated men of goodwill to create charitable associations to help the destitute. In this respect, the most representative case was that of the Salvation Army, created in 1865 by William Booth (1829–1912), although the specific name of the Salvation Army was only given in 1875. As a Methodist priest, Booth was working in East-London where he had to face the great poverty of the population every day. He decided to help them as far as he could, starting by providing soup, soap, and salvation. The creation of the Salvation Army was one of the first movements that claimed to be reinforcing the social role of religion according to the new needs resulting from the Industrial Revolution. Following this, the idea of charity and charitable associations went through significant development.

The care of the poor and the destitute became a major goal for the beneficiaries of economic growth—those in the upper classes as well as the middle classes. They were the heralds of the new ethical values that were spreading, and they were also convinced that, as the economic elite of their society, they had a duty to help the people in need within their community, and even beyond. Both in Bombay and in Karachi, the precursors of this new social trend were the Parsis. As a very small minority, the Parsis had been quickly Westernized, and brought close to European norms and values. Also, they were at the vanguard of the economic growth of Bombay and Karachi, and as such, they were the first to be aware of the duty they had toward the poor, as well as to their country at large.

The cities were to be modernized, and in the late nineteenth century, the state was reluctant to bear all of the expenses required for this process. While the government was to provide the basic infrastructure, such as electricity and railways, other more superficial matters of progress—for instance, those related to education—were to be left to the philanthropists. The first philanthropists of Karachi reflected the structure of the mercantile groups, who belonged mostly to religious minorities such as the Parsis, the Hindus, and heterodox Muslims, including the Khojas and the Bohras. A number of individuals are quite interesting in this respect since, among others, they clearly demonstrate how the intellectual milieu had begun overlapping the economic milieu.

As we can see, the philanthropic activities of the merchants concerned two main branches: sanitary works and education works. One of the most important of these charitable institutions was the Nadirshaw Eduljee Dinshaw Charitable Dispensary, created by a Parsi philanthropist in 1881. According to Baillie, it treated 13,000 patients in a single year (Baillie 1890: 1553). Nadirshaw Eduljee Dinshaw (d. 1914) made his initial fortune during the Second Afghan War (1878–1881) by serving as a contractor for the British Army. He then took his wealth and invested it in land and factories, which reaped huge rewards.

In this regard, two Khojas, Jafar Fadu (1867–1959) and Ghulam Husain Khaliqdina, are both relevant case studies. The Khojas belonged to a group made up of recent Muslim converts who had kept a number of Hindu customs, rituals, and beliefs. Most of them accepted the spiritual authority of Hasan Ali Shah, Aga Khan I, when he came from Persia to Karachi in 1843. Notwithstanding, a small group rejected his authority and claimed to be Twelver Shias like Jafar Fadu, who was one of the most wealthy merchants of Sindh. We owe to him the foundation of a

dispensary, located opposite the current Kharakar *jamatkhana*, which was the name the Khojas gave to their mosques. He edited two newspapers in collaboration with Harchandrai Vishandas, *Phoenix* and *Praja Mitra*, in which he set out his grievances against the aga khan. Another prominent Karachi figure, Ghulam Husayn Khaliqdina, was also a Khoja and a Twelver Shia. He was a prominent member of the Karachi Municipal Corporation and a founding member of the Sindh Madrasat ul-Islam office. He had created the Khaliqdina Hall and Library, which still exists on M.A. Jinnah Road. He was also the builder of the first public baths of Karachi, in Machi Miani.

This brief outline is aimed at providing a survey of the growth of the mercantile class in Karachi, and showing how their members were involved in the modernization of the city. One can observe that, although they were involved in trade, they started to take interest in education as well as in knowledge at large, since not only did they fund new institutions, but they also participated in making core decisions as members of the committees. Nevertheless, other groups were to specialize in the field of knowledge and its transmission, some of them being professional and others non-professional. However, the main actors in the objectification process of Sufism belonged to other social groups: the Amils and the declassed Muslims.

The Intelligentsia and the Objectification of the *Shah jo Risalo*

The impact of British colonization on the Indian subcontinent has been studied at length; nonetheless, the complex process through which new classes appeared in peripheral regions like Sindh has not yet received the attention deserved. An exception is related to the case of the domination of new Hindu groups in the rural areas of Sindh, which has been studied extensively (Cheesman 1997). The impact of British colonization on Sindhi society was not restricted, however, to the growth of mercantile castes. British policy regarding the Sindhi language also had a strong impact, such as in the second half of the nineteenth century when a new intellectual class was to be born—an intelligentsia. From a Polish word, the “intelligentsia” was the intellectual elite in the Russian Empire, whose efforts were to modernize the society before the term would be used in Europa at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Due to colonization, both the Muslims and the Hindus reevaluated their religious legacies and, for different and sometimes opposite reasons, they were convinced their religions should be reformed. Although this usually meant "purified" of alien accretions, a mainstream was process of rationalization through the suppression of superstitious or magic-like beliefs and practices. The "dis-enchanting" result was not the disappearance of religion, but rather a new discourse on what religion was. Among the Hindus, a main trend was to reshape Hinduism as a universal religion for a new humanity, as expressed by charismatic leaders like Ramakrishna (1836–1886) and his follower Vivekananda (1863–1902). Among the Muslims, discourse meant to establish the existence of a homogeneous Muslim community in India, which was itself a part of the Ummah, the universal Muslim community.

A Sindh Sabha had been created by Dayaram Jethmal (d. 1884). It aimed at fostering the unity of the Sindhis, and, a few years before the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, it was qualified as a "quasi-political association" (Gidumal 1904: 291). Nonetheless, the farewell address to Lord Ripon (1827–1909) presided over by Hasan Ali Effendi (1830–1895) was the last event before the break-up of the Sindh Sabha into two organizations: the National Mohamedan Association and the Sindh Hindu Sabha. As a matter of fact, multiple Muslim reformist movements pretending to modernize Islam were simultaneously at work in Sindh. The National Mahomedan Association created in 1877 by the Bengali Sayyid Amir Ali (1849–1928) was influential in this respect, and after he visited Karachi, Hasan Ali Effendi started a Karachi branch of the National Mohamedan Association. The Aligarh movement led by Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1896) was also influential all over India. Hasan Ali Effendi went to Aligarh to meet Sayyid Ahmad Khan and was quickly convinced of the key role that education had to play in uplifting Indian Muslims. It was concretized in the creation of the Sindh Madrassatul Islam by Hasan Ali Effendi in 1885 (Shaikh 2010).

Beyond the impact of colonial rule on local society, it is important to point out the role played by missionaries in organizing intellectual debates in Karachi. One of the most influential priests in this respect was Reverend Bambridge, who was the head of the Church Missionary Mission. In August of 1885, he started the "Literary Society for English speaking educated Indians." The main objective of the society was the "intellectual and moral improvement of its members," and its members included 74 Europeans and 207 Indians (Gidumal 1904: 290). Among them, six

Indians were graduates, as were five Hindus and one Muslim. The majority of the Indians were Hindu, and then Parsi and Muslim. A number of lectures were proposed on topics such as the prevention of child marriage and the re-marriage of widows. The lectures were published in the *Sindh Times*, edited by Hiranand Shahani, which was the official journal of the Sindh Sabha. The lectures organized by Reverend Bambridge mirrored the interest in comparative religions that was developing in the West. In Sindh, the lectures led to a revival of religious and theological studies.

The expression of "new elite" in this context refers to Sindhi gentlemen who were educated in the English schools in Karachi and Hyderabad before joining the civil service as judges, tax collectors, teachers, and so on. A number of them were from scribes' castes, such as the Amils, but others belonged to merchant castes or those of the small landowners. The new elite felt that it was necessary for the common people to understand the text of the *Shah jo Risalo*, where previously they had listened to it without understanding any but a very few verses. This difficulty in understanding the *Shah jo Risalo* gave rise to contradictions as instructors began to use the text very frequently when it came to teaching the Sindhi language.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the publication of works was meant to facilitate access to the *Shah jo Risalo*. In 1890, the Hindu scholar Lilaram Watanmal Lalwani published a book on Shah Abd al-Latif, and his work constituted a turning point in the construction of the Sufi paradigm in Sindh. On the way, he corrected some errors made by his "esteemed friend" Dayaram Gidumal, especially when the latter claimed there was a mention of Guru Gobind Singh in Shah Latif's poetry. Lalwani argued that in the 1876 Bombay edition, there was a *sur* (chapter) which was not from Shah Abd al-Latif, this chapter containing a collection of Hindi and other verses that included the words "Guru Gobind." According to him, the mention of these two words has nothing to do with the Sikh Guru Gobind Singh, and only references the spiritual guide or guru, and god, or Gobind. Lalwani devotes some pages to correcting what he sees as the wrong interpretations made by Gidumal, giving evidence that he is using a more scientific approach to Shah Abd al-Latif's life (Lalwani 1890: 15–17).

In his book, Lalwani displays an impressive method for explaining why his conclusions are more relevant than previous writings on Shah Latif. His writing drew upon sources in Sanskrit and Persian, and also used several manuscripts in Sindhi. Lalwani spent eight years writing the book

during his leisure hours. Two years were strictly devoted to the study of the Quran in Arabic to, as he wrote, "know myself the real meanings of the Arabic verses that occur so often in *Shah jo Risalo*" (Lalwani 1890: v). Also, he was helped by his friends, including the same aforementioned Dayaram Gidumal and Mirza Qalich Beg. But the person he thanked most was Akhund Ahmadi, "whose great grand-father was our poet's teacher." Especially, he had provided him rare documents, including a Persian genealogy of Shah Latif, as well as "explanation of many obscure passages of the Shah jo Risalo" (Lalwani 1890: vi).

In the first volume of Lalwani's work, the most significant chapter is the one that focuses on the religion of the poet. Most notable, however, is the content of the second volume of his work, which totals 223 pages. The first part of this volume is devoted to an explanation of all of the Arabic expressions used by the poet. The second part is a glossary of difficult words and phrases that Shah Abd al-Latif used in Sindhi. Last but not least, Lalwani provides all the Quranic extracts quoted by the poet. Lalwani was convinced that the *Shah jo Risalo* was living proof that the Muslims and Hindus of Sindh shared a unique culture: "The Sufism of the Muslims," he wrote, "is nothing different from the Vedanta of Hindus, the only real difference being in their terminology."

Five years later, in 1895, another Hindu scholar named Jhamatmall Narumall Wasanani published the official text of Shah Abd al-Latif's poem for the optional final examination in Sindhi at the University of Bombay. In the preface, he wrote that "the students are unable to understand" the text under study. Interestingly, he gives some details about this issue. First, he mentions the author's style and his use of archaic Sindhi words. The second difficulty is related to the mystic ideas that are the subject matter of the text (Wasanani 1895: preface). Wasanani's book is thus written especially to help the students of the University of Bombay in their final examination in Sindhi. Before the Sindhi texts, a few pages of work introducing both the life and the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif is summarized as: "The whole Risalo is […] a treatise on the soul's yearning after God" (Wasanani 1895: 8).

Like his predecessors, he addresses the issue of the relation of Sufism to Vedanta. He is nevertheless more cautious in doing so. "Sufism is said to be Vedantism in Musalman hands. But Vedantism though thus alleged to be the mother of Sufism, appears yet to have produced no Shah Latif or Hafiz, or Mansur or Mujadid alsani" (Wasanani 1895: 9). For him, Sufism cannot be an offspring of Vedantism since the latter is more

contemplative, and the first more emotional. On the other side, Wasanani fully acknowledges the affiliation of Sindhi literature with its Sanskrit origin. For example, the meter of the *Risalo* is *dohiro*, from the Sanskrit *doho*. Nevertheless, the Sindhi form is "mutilated" while, in Sanskrit and in Hindi, it is purest. Furthermore, the meter is not fixed but varies according to the fancy of the author, though it mostly consists of two or three verses. However, he writes that the language of the *Risalo* is "exquisitely beautiful, vigorous, forcible and sublime. The diction is on the whole pure Sindhi" (Wasanani 1895: 12).

Colonial Sufism as Antiquity

In the colonial environment, Sufism also had aesthetic characteristics because of the mausoleums which followers had built for the great saints, these usually being known as *dargahs*. On the other hand, following their obsession for surveys, the British were keen to list the "antiquities" of Sindh just as they had in other areas of India. In this part, I aim to observe how the British included Sufism, or did not include it, in the category of antiquities, doing so in the shape of Sufi buildings and other artifacts. Through this examination, we shall also see how a gap was gradually enlarging between the Sufi paradigm as built by the new elite of Sindh and the colonial representation of Sufism as antiquity.

The British had three kinds of approaches to Sufi buildings: first, they could provide a written description, as, for example, Burton's one; second, they could draw the mausoleum; and finally, thirdly, they could propose a summary of the antiquities, as Cousens would. We shall start by taking two examples and compare how the written depiction meets, or not, the painted depiction. Among the first religious mausoleums to attract British interest, we find the mausoleum of Khwaja Khizr, also known as Zinda Pir, located in an island of the Indus River near Sukkur. Another already mentioned mausoleum is that of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan Sharif. Already in the introduction, I have noted the unexpected representation of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's *dargah*. As a matter of fact, it is not central in the painting organization, since it focuses on a naked character, while the mausoleum is drawn to the extreme right, in a very fleeting perspective.

The representation of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's *dargah* echoes the colonial mind, according to which the British are primarily interested in the oldest remains—the "antiquities"—rather than more recent buildings.

The greatness of a people is related to the seniority of a civilization. In Sehwan, the saintly mausoleum cannot compete with Alexander's Fort, a ruined building made of bricks, which is said to have been built by Alexander the Great. Thus, it should date back to the fourth century B. C., while Lal Shahbaz lived in Sehwan in the thirteenth century. In 1838, before the Conquest, K. A. Jackson decided to represent the *Ruined Gateway of the Ancient Fortress of Sehwaun* (Jackson 1842: plate 12). This assertion of subject is corroborated by another drawing, very basic, where the mausoleum is well-represented, but in black and white, and without any details related to the architecture. Though we know Lal Shahbaz's mausoleum had been built by the Kalhoras, like Shah Abdul Latif's, the eighteenth century Sindhi architecture did not attract British interest.

Nonetheless, Burton coined this structure to be "one of the seven wonders of the Scindian world, for magnitude as well as magnificence," before arguing in his so sarcastic tone that it "would be a third-rate building in any semi-civilised part of India." His description of the mausoleum and of the whole city undergirds the idea of a glorious past, which has fallen into decadence: "… remark if you please the remains of splendour on the doors: anciently they were plates of massive silver, with gold locks, padlocks, and hinges; no wood is more extensively used" (Burton 1851b II: 223). Burton extends his vision to the whole city, writing: "At present nothing can be more miserable and dilapidated than the appearance of the town" (Burton 1851b I: 216). The Indus River had deserted Sehwan, and the climate was the most deleterious of Sindh.

The *dargah* of Khwaja Khizr, who is one of the Muslim figures of Udero Lal/Jhulelal, received a different treatment. It was located in the middle of the Indus River, between the city of Sukkur on the western bank and that of Rohri on the eastern bank. Khwaja Khizr is a somewhat mysterious character who can be associated on one side with Udero Lal, a Hindu deity who is an incarnation of the Indus River known as Varuna, and on the other side by Khwaja Khizr, who is associated with some Sufis from Multan, especially Baha al-Din Zakariyya. Khwaja Khizr's *dargah* was represented as early as the pre-colonial period, and by the same K. A. Jackson who had drawn Alexander's Fort in Sehwan. The view is quite romantic, drawn with pastel colors. A beautiful building is made of several elements, starting with a monumental entrance known as the *iwan*. One will also note the luxuriant palm trees which appear to provide shadow during the hot season. In the foreground, we can see boats with people, and the Indus River is particularly calm as there is not a single wave.

In 1859, the first Viceroy of India, Lord Canning (1812–1862), established the Archeological Survey of India (ASI). One of the aims of the ASI was to list and provide a basic description of the most important places of antiquity all over India. As underscored by Hussain Ahmad Khan, architecture, sculpture, and ancient treatises on the sciences and arts "were fundamental sources for understanding Indian civilization" (Khan 2015: 78). It also meant to organize excavations of the most important archaeological sites all over India. The first Director-General of the ASI was Alexander Cunningham (1814–1893).[4] In 1881, he named Henry Cousens (1854–1933) as Assistant and, after James Burgess (1832–1916) succeeded Cunningham as Director-General of ASI, Cousens succeeded Burgess as Head of the ASI for Western India. Cousens would be the first British individual to propose a summary of the antiquities of Sindh, which, according to him, "has been to a great extent neglected" (Cousens 1998).

In 1875, James Burgess published *Antiquities of Kutch and Kathiawar* (Burgess 1875).[5] Burgess TE QC: Please check the font style of the text-did not deal with the issue of Kutchi language as a Sindhi dialect. Neither did he give reasons why a part of his book was devoted to the coins of Sindh. This part is made of eight pages, which offer a depiction of the coins, as was the rule in nineteenth-century numismatic. A main point of focus was the deciphering of the Arabic inscriptions, and of their translation into English (Burgess 1991: 71–79). At the same time, it should be noted that Burgess used a kind of romantic rendering of the Arab conquest, speaking of the "chivalric advance of Muhammad bin Qasim" (Burgess 1991: 71). Cousens referred to explorations since, he added, funds for excavations were not available. While the book was only published in 1929, Cousens' explorations were conducted before the First World War, probably in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Another remarkable point of his preface is that Cousens mentions that, after him, further excavations were conducted, such as at Mohenjo-daro, but he does not quote the name of the scholar who is usually considered the founder of Indus civilization studies, John Marshall (1876–1958).

[4] On Cunningham and the Archeological Survey of India, see Cohn (Cohn 1996: 9-10) and Gottschalk's seventh chapter (Gottschalk 2013).

[5] I have not been able to find out the first edition of this report of the Archaeological Survey of India. The copy kept by the British Library is the same I have used, published by the Sindhi Adabi Board from Jamshoro, in Pakistan in 1991. Only we know it is a report of the 1874-1875 survey. The authors of the two prefaces of this volume refer to a previous publication, without providing any details. For easy use, I have selected 1875 as a date.

Although Marshall was Director General of the ASI from 1902 to 1928, when Cousens did his survey of the antiquities of Sindh, Cousens claimed that a special excavation officer and staff for Sindh were necessary. However, the discovery of Mohenjo-daro was a turning point in the issue of the antiquities in Sindh.

The only interest of the British was then to see how far the Indus civilization had reached, and their main concern was to find other sites related to the Indus civilization. In 1934, five years after Cousens' book, another volume would be published by Nani Gopal Majumdar (1897–1938), Assistant Superintendent of the ASI, with the title of *Explorations in Sind* (Majumdar 1934). Majumdar attributed the discovery of Mohenjo-daro to R. D. Banerji (1885–1930) in 1922, while he had himself worked on the site under the direction of John Marshall. Majumdar would go back to Sindh in 1938, but he was shot dead by bandits in Johi, near Dadu. With him, however, the concept of antiquities did not concern all of the old buildings, but only the remains dating back to the pre-Christian era.

Turning back to Cousens' *Antiquities of Sind*, I shall proceed in the wake of the previous study, focusing on both Lal Shahbaz Qalandar and his mausoleum in Sehwan Sharif, as well as Khwaja Khizr. My intention here is to give more relevance to my hypothesis that the British mostly considered Sufism as an antiquity, as already observed with Smyth's gazetteer. Consequently, I shall observe how Cousens dealt with these Sufi places, and how he related Sufism to antiquities. Cousens' *Antiquities of Sind* started with a historical outline, followed by the Hindu and Buddhist remains. The rest of the book is arranged site by site. A chapter is devoted to Sehwan. It is difficult to understand why Cousens did not focus on the shrine, which is depicted as follows: "The building is profusely decorated by coloured tiles" (Cousens 1929: 112).[6] While Lal Shahbaz Qalandar would have died in 1274, the mausoleum was built in 1356 and then adorned with new elements by several kings of Sindh. Otherwise, Cousens copiously quotes the description given by Burton in his *Sind Revisited*, published in 1877.

It is amazing that, contrary to Smyth, Cousens does not mention the inscriptions in Persian which can be found on Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's shrine. However, they are the principal matter of his depiction of the shrine of Khwaja Khizr, also known as *Khwaja ka Than*, or the shrine of

[6] Cousens displayed a great interest for the tiles, at a point he had devoted another book to the tiles of Sindh (Cousens 1906).

Zinda Pir in Sindhi. It is addressed in the chapter on the midstream fort of Bakhar in northern Sindh. Cousens observes the paradoxically built structure, given that the main building is the monumental gateway, while the shrine proper is a little domed structure, although he acknowledges it is "a remarkably plain square building" (Cousens 1929: 117). Most of the texts on Khwaja Khizr concern the various inscriptions in Persian, but Cousens is mostly interested in knowing how old the built structures are.

As a specialist of antiquities, Henry Cousens finally associated Sufism with antiquities. In other words, in the world of the British archaeologists, Sufism does not exist as such; it is an antiquity among others, such as the tombs of the kings of Sindh or the Buddhist stupas. In being an antiquity, Sufism is not a living thing, and to represent it as an antiquity makes it totally inoffensive. It is thus relevant to speak of a reification of Sufism, which is mostly relegated to the field of inscriptions, these being historical inscriptions dealing with powerful persons such as the emperor of Delhi or a powerful king of Sindh. Also, the beliefs and rituals related to Sufism are more or less represented as superstitions, which for the "enlightened" British signify an inferior belief of an inferior people.

Despite his lack of interest, Cousens provides three black-and-white photographs in the plates of the book. They are of interest for a number of reasons. The first and most fundamental is the general view of the site, titled *The Island of Zinda Pir near Bakhar*, since it provides an opportunity to observe whether it has been through changes since the painting made by Jackson (Plate LXXV). The second plate is a view of the shrine (plate LXXVI), while the last shows the door (plate LXXII). We can thus see the very simple but elegant small shrine, knowing it has since disappeared, and the door exhibits animal figures and floral decorations. One cannot see any major difference between Jackson's painting and Cousens' photo. The more remarkable structure is, in both, the monumental gateway. Cousens' pictures are thus precious because they allow us to have a pretty fair vision of the island of Khwaja Khizr, from before almost all of the built structures were destroyed by a huge flood of the Indus River.

A final point remains to be mentioned about Sufism as antiquity. Nobody among the British speaks of iconography in relation with Sufism. Different pictorial representations of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar are presently circulating, painted in different styles—ranging from eighteenth-century Moghul miniatures to more vernacular, colored pictures, where the Sufi is drawn dancing the *dhamal*. About Khwaja Khizr, there are similarly many pictorial representations, starting in India with the Moghuls, with many

different representations also being used for the Sindhi Hindu god, Jhulelal. In the surveys published by the British, there are many inconsistencies, especially in relation to how they selected "places of interest," but their priority was in relation to power and control, or in a word to imperialism. The second bias was the watertight divide they put into their representation of any population: the elite and the masses, two separate worlds that were not supposed to intermingle. In any case, what was of interest for the British was the antiquity of a thing, not its social function or religious meaning.

Conclusion

Many upheavals reframed the society of Sindh in the second half of the nineteenth century. The mercantile castes of Sindh, Hindu as well as Muslim, benefitted from the expansion of the British Empire all over the world. They enlarged their commercial networks so that they were at the vanguard of the birth of the middle classes. The expression of the middle classes is loose, but following Max Weber, we can nonetheless make a distinction among them: the merchants and the literati, the last group including the civil servants. Unfortunately, we do not have detailed data regarding how the literati related concretely to Sufism, and especially the Sufi practice. On the other side, we know merchants were more involved in providing basic facilities to the people, such as public baths or water works in the urban space, while the literati aimed at making a vernacular knowledge with the Sufi paradigm as axial pole. Of course, this statement can seem reductive, and obviously, it is. But this line of distinction did operate in most cases.

After the printing of the *Shah jo Risalo*, Sindhi literati worked at reinforcing the objectification of the poetry. Two trends are to be identified: the biographical one and the lexicographical one. Already, Dayaram Gidumal had written a chapter on Shah Abd al-Latif in his *Something about Sind* published in 1882. In 1887, Mirza Qalich Beg published the first book entirely devoted to the life of Shah Abd al-Latif, this appearing in English. The lexicographical trend is represented by two Hindu literati, Lalwani and Wasanani. They both incorporated a discussion of Shah Abd al-Latif's life, but their aim was mainly to make the *Shah jo Risalo* more accessible, for both general readers and for students since the text had been selected for the final examination in Sindhi at the University of Bombay.

The late years of the nineteenth century saw the accentuation of differences in the representation of Sufism between the Sindhis and the British. Sindhi intellectuals were committed to objectifying and democratizing access to *Shah jo Risalo*, which was still considered the alpha and omega of the paradigm. Meanwhile, the British continued not to see Sufism as a "living being," fossilizing it as an antiquity. This means that, for some time, and in fact after the publishing of the first gazetteer in 1872, they had a proclivity to consider the Sufi monuments as aesthetic pieces, just as they did other built structures such as the royal mausoleums or the forts and palaces of the past. For them, and especially for the members of the Archeological Survey of India, Sufism was not a paradigm; it was not even a living object of study. A major issue of interest is to know how the British selected antiquities for attention. Mostly, they had to be related to power or to powerful people. Thus, often, when they did deal with a Sufi-related building, it was not the main focus of their survey. Such a building was often a kind of additional, if not accidental, interest.

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CHAPTER 7

Sufi Knowledge (*Ilm Tasawuf*), Sufi Culture, and the Sufi Paradigm

Introduction

The making of the Sindhi intelligentsia resulted from both the education the literati had received in English schools and universities as well as the objectification of Sindhi literature, which for almost 20 years had been solely represented by the printing of the *Shah jo Risalo*. The Sindhi members of the intelligentsia belonged to different social milieus that did not match up with the old dominant classes of Sindhi society. In a Muslim dominated society, the Sayyids who were the descendants of Prophet Muhammad were at the apex of the social hierarchy, but it is difficult to find a single Sayyid among the main actors in the making of the Sufi paradigm. To summarize the social background of the intelligentsia members: They belonged to religious minorities, first of all, the Hindu minority, minor Muslim communities (mostly Shia), and other depressed Muslim groups. If we attempt to identify the most active individuals in the making of the Sufi paradigm, we find a number of people at the vanguard of the process.

Historians have often discussed how a single figure can embody a process that impacts the whole society of a country. Nonetheless, in the case of the intelligentsia of Sindh, there is a figure who played the first role in the spreading, modernization, and representation of Sindhi literature and culture as a whole, as well as in the formation process of the Sufi paradigm: Mirza Qalich Beg (1853–1929). Throughout numerous works which are

attributed to him, there is hardly a topic that did not attract Mirza Qalich Beg's interest. To understand how Mirza Qalich Beg related to Sufism, it is necessary to summarize his background and study, given that it is a paradigmatic case to know how the intelligentsia came to play a leading role in the Sufi paradigm's formation. The first section devoted to him will address this issue of contextualization.

The second section of the chapter will focus more on his general representation of Islam, and Sufism, abandoning all of his work in relation to the creation of a modern Sindhi literature. As an intellectual living at the turning point of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Mirza Qalich Beg was informed by the reformist understanding of Islam, as expressed by Indian Muslim leaders such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Nonetheless, he cannot be seen as a reformist *stricto sensu* since, for example, he was not fully involved in the creation of the Sindh Madressat-ul Islam, the Sindhi version of Aligarh. But, he did publish books to teach individuals how to learn normative Islam in relation to the *sharia*. Regarding Islam at large, as in many other fields, the numerous works completed by Mirza Qalich Beg sometimes make it difficult to identify relevant generalizations: his interests and curiosity were so varied that we can occasionally sense a kind of contradiction following his assertions in relation to Islam.

However, the main goal of the chapter is to scrutinize how Mirza Qalich Beg dealt with Sufism, and here also his statements are not always clear, even with the knowledge that he himself changed his opinion over a period, which lasted about half a century. Notwithstanding, after analyzing the place Mirza Qalich Beg gives to Sufism in his representation of Islam, we shall focus on a notion he built, that of *ilm-e tasawuf*, or Sufi knowledge. In 1916, he published a book with this title, in which he summarized his conception of Sufi knowledge, which he divided into foundations (*usula*), and creed or beliefs (*aqida*). But before studying this book, we have to trace the trajectory of his thought from the first book he devoted to Sufism to the last. Also, another issue should be taken into consideration: the fact that Mirza Qalich Beg did not focus only on Sufism in the field of Islamic knowledge. As a devote Shia, he was also keen to publish Shia devotional poetry, and he published the first edition of the Sindhi specialist of *marsiyas*, Sabit Ali Shah (Beg 1900). This work he completed was undertaken after works he had devoted to Shah Abd al-Latif, but before he published his edition of another giant of Sufi poetry, Shah Abd al-Karim, whose *kalam* he published in 1904.

Consequently, it will be of the utmost importance to understand how Mirza Qalich Beg dealt with the different regimes of Muslim knowledge,

as well as how he contributed in this context to the building of a Sufi paradigm. The last section of this chapter will examine the contribution of another member of the intelligentsia, who was very close to Mirza Qalich Beg: Jethmal Parsram Gulraj. Gulraj was a theosophist, but he also had a deep interest in Sufism and he authored books on Shah Abd al-Latif and Sachal. Nonetheless, he remains popular for the small book he published in 1924, titled *Sind and Its Sufis.* In this book, he elaborated upon the theory of the Sufi culture of Sindh, according to which Sufism is the matrix of religious culture in Sindh. We shall see that this theory of Sufi culture can be seen as the last evolution of the Sufi paradigm.

Mirza Qalich Beg, or the Exemplary Sindhi Scholar

An eclectic writer, Mirza Qalich Beg (1853–1929) authored 472 works in Arabic, Balochi, English, Persian, Sindhi, and Urdu, according to the catalogue composed by his grandson Mirza Aijaz Ali Beg, with scholars from the university of Sindh such as Nabi Bakhsh Baloch and Qasim Bughio (*Chronological List* n.d.).[1] As mentioned earlier, Mirza Qalich Beg was born in a "declassed" group. What does this mean, though? On his father's side were Georgian Christians converted to Islam, and on his mother's side, he came from quasi-Talpur stock. He was the third son of Mirza Faridun Beg and Sakina Khanum. Sakina Khanum was the daughter of Mirza Khusrow Beg, who had been adopted by the Talpur king, Mir Karam Ali. After the British conquest of Sindh, all the Talpurs and their relatives were at least deprived of any responsibility in administration, and the direct members of the ruling dynasty were exiled.

It is said that when he was a child, he spent his time writing poetry. He went to Bombay and joined the Elphinstone College, from which he received a degree in Arts. In the 1870s, it was in Bombay that he first came to be in touch with the Theosophical Society. For some time, he taught Persian in Bombay, but after his mother fell ill, he came back to Sindh and worked for the British as a civil servant. Mirza Qalich Beg was titled *Aftab adab*, the Sun of Literature, or *Shams al-Ulama*, the Sun of the Scholars, since there was hardly a topic that he did not cover. Drawing on Mirza Aijaz Beg's categories as used in his catalogue, we find botany, children's literature, economics, futurology, phrenology, public health, wonders of the world, and zoology, just to quote some few topics in addition to the

[1] I warmly thank Mirza Aijaz Ali Beg for allowing me to have a look at the catalogue, and to arrange a copy of it. For a biography of Mirza Qalich Beg, see Joyo and Laghari (1997).

majority of his works that was centered in the fields of literature, history, and religion. For example, he published three books on matters related to agriculture, including in 1899 a 316-page manual of agriculture.

Mirza Aijaz Ali Beg listed 42 fields of interest, but the most important categories are those of poetical works, with 44 items, and then English books (43), textbooks (40), dramas (31), Islam or Islamiyyat (31), novels (29), biographies (27), and finally Persian books (27). From this list, we can deduce his dominant interest was for literature at large. In the category of English books, we find English poetry composed by Mirza Qalich Beg, anthologies of English poets, translations from Persian or Sindhi into English, and even original historical works. Many of his books in English are devoted to Persian: grammar, poetry, prosody, and literature. The catalogue also shows that Mirza Qalich Beg was keen to deal with modern topics, such as female education, to which a dozen works were dedicated.

In this respect, his novel *Zinat* published in 1890 had a strong impact on local society (Schimmel 1964). It was the first novel ever written in Sindhi. He described the daily life of a Muslim family of Sindh and how the heroine, the young Zinat, fought to be freed from *purdah*. As a pragmatist, she evaluated her beliefs on the basis of their "usefulness" and "workability." Zinat, having realized the uselessness of the veil, rejects her staunch belief in the necessity of women's restrictions to domestic life. Her practice of discarding the veil for its lack of material and functional importance establishes *Zinat* as a pragmatist novel written at least a decade before pragmatism had taken the form of a movement in Europe and America. In the novel *Zinat*, in fact, Mirza Qalich Beg rebelled against the existing social taboos and endorses the social, cultural, political, and economic equality of men and women.

He was also involved in the translation of historical works on Sindh. In 1900, he published a translation from Persian into English of the famous *Chachnamah*, or *The Book of Chach* (*Chachnamah* 1900). It was supposed to be a thirteenth-century Persian translation of a lost Arabic work describing the Arab conquest of Sindh by Muhammad bin Qasim in 711. In the preface, he gave many details regarding how he had implemented a historiographical method based on a critical apparatus in order to remain as close as possible to the original text. He used no less than eight copies. The book was the first comprehensive study that was not only devoted to a key period in the history of Sindh, but also provided very useful descriptions of the different social groups with their names, occupations, and traditions.

In religious matters, Mirza Qalich Beg especially published works on Christianity (17 books), but in this respect we can observe that he did not write any text on Hinduism, although many of his friends were Hindu. Many of his books on Christianity are translations of the Bible, and also Bishop Joseph's sermons. His love for biographies is also echoed by several books on the life of Jesus Christ, sometimes in verses. There is also a book on Musa in the Bible, and another one through which he locates himself in the wake of the Muslim reformists: the refutation of the trinity, *Radd-e Tasalis*, published in 1916 in Hyderabad. Notwithstanding, we can observe that he was not keen to deal with theological issues in general. The three books on the Bahais, for example, which it would be better to speak of as booklets, include a translation from Persian to Sindhi of the *Haft Wadi*, "The Seven Valleys" composed by Baha Allah (1817–1892), the founder of the Bahai religion, published in Hyderabad in 1916.

The work completed by Mirza Qalich Beg shows the curiosity and open-mindedness he displayed intellectually, and it also reflects how the Sindhi intelligentsia was in touch with new trends of culture and interest in this fast-changing time—or, in other words, how they were keen to learn how to be modern. Though he was an exceptional literati, his work reflects an obvious wish to encompass the knowledge of his time as a whole, without forgetting his own belonging in regard to culture and religion. This said, his immense contribution to Sindhi literature and culture makes it difficult to focus on Sufism, and even Islam, but maybe the point to be made is that such a difficulty echoes his own reflection, and that we can finally see his hundreds of books as mirroring his own intricate relationship regarding this injunction related to the to-be-modern. In this circumstance, we have to proceed step by step. First, I shall summarize Mirza Qalich Beg's vision of Islam, and then I shall deal more carefully with the issue of Sufism in his work and its relation to the building of a Sufi paradigm.

Biography, Lexicography, and the Sufi Paradigm in Mirza Qalich Beg's Work

All biographers of Mirza Qalich Beg have underscored that he was a pious Muslim, belonging to the Isna Ashari Shia persuasion. His works on Islam reflect, like his work at large, his many interests in relation to religion. In short, one can also say he had three major interests in relation to Islam: the normative religion including law, the devotional religion including mostly

Sufism, and ethics. As mentioned before, Mirza Qalich Beg had little interest in theological discussions, but he did write an unpublished work on the arguments of the Shias, titled *Hujjat al-Shia*. One of his friends would have asked him to write a book for the refutation of the Sunni arguments against the Shias, and to show the relevance of the Shia arguments, all being made to end the enmity and to create a brotherly atmosphere between Sunnis and Shias.

Turning now to how Mirza Qalich Beg represents Islam, we can start by observing that he translated several pieces by a very important Muslim scholar, Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058–1111). For example, he translated from Persian to Sindhi his *Zad al-Akhirat*, *Provision for the Next World*, in 1906, but his main achievement in this regard was the several books devoted to the masterly work achieved by al-Ghazali: the *Kimiyyat al-Sada*, or *The Alchemy of Happiness*. The *Kimiyyat al-Sada* is the Persian version of his masterpiece written in Arabic with the title *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, or *The Revival of Religious Knowledge*. For this work and others, al-Ghazali is said to be a *mujaddid*, a renovator of Islamic thought, and hence he is considered one of the most important thinkers on the Muslim religion. Mirza Qalich Beg admired the *mujaddid* since he had been able to build a new interpretation of Islam. And, like many Muslims of the time, he wanted to find another al-Ghazali for the nascent twentieth century.

Regarding normative Islam, we find two categories among Mirza Qalich Beg's publications: the books related to the Quran, and the books dealing with law and ethics. He also wished to share with non-Muslims the contents of the Quran. For this purpose, he translated into English a compilation of the Quran. As soon as 1877, he published this work with the title of *Jawahir al-Quran*, or *The Gems of the Quran*, it being a selection of verses with the Arabic text and an English translation. Furthermore, he published *Usul Shara Muhammadi lai ya Musalmani Qaido* (*The Foundations of Muhammadan Law and the Muhammadan Beliefs*) in 1916. This book deals with how the principles of Islam should be used in courts. Another topic he was interested in was ethics. Among his publications on this issue, there is, for example, *Akhlaq al-Quran wa al-Hadith* (*Ethics in the Quran and in the Hadiths*) published in Shikarpur in 1915 (Beg 1915). He aimed at showing how these two scriptural sources of Islam could be used for the making of modern ethics.

In his books focusing on the Quranic teachings, there is a trend to enhance Shia-related topics, such as we see in a manuscript in which he

collected the verses of the Quran in praise of the progeny of the Prophet Muhammad. Like other Muslim reformists, Mirza Qalich Beg tried to show that some modern principles had already been expressed in the Quran or in other sacred sources of Islam—for example, those related to health and women. Some topics were also directly related to modern inventions such as photography, as in an undated book titled *Islam Men Tasvirun Jaiz ya Najaiz* (*Islam and Pictures, Prohibited or Not*).

As a Shia, Mirza Qalich Beg wrote some books on Shia topics, but usually for non-Shia readers. There are several books devoted to the family of the Prophet Muhammad, usually meant to provide evidence that the Shia imams were the legitimate heirs of the Prophet Muhammad. There is also a *Mukhtar Saqafi*, a text on Mukhtar's legacy published in 1919. Here, Beg depicted the life and achievements of Mukhtar al-Saqafi (c. 622–687), who wanted to avenge the martyrs of Karbala. All in all, Mirza Qalich Beg is thought to have written about ten texts on Shiism, including one in Urdu titled *Mazhab Tashayye ki Haqiqat aur uski Tarraqi* (*The Truth on the Shia Sect and Its Progress*). He also collected sermons he published as soon as 1907 under the title *Majalis Shuhada*, or *The Sermons of the Martyrs*, as well as some collections of *marsiyya*s.

Regarding Sufism, Mirza Aijaz Ali Beg's catalogue divides Mirza Qalich Beg's written works into two categories: mysticism (*tasawuf*) and *latifiyyat*. In other words, he makes a separate category for the writings on Shah Abd al-Latif and his poetry. According to the list, a third category should have been added: the books on the saints (*awliyya*), which are included with Islam/Islamiyyat in the catalogue instead, while in fact they are on the Sufi saints. First, let us have a look at the category *awliyya*. The *awliyya*, sg *wali*, is an Arabic-originated word which is usually translated as "saint." Most of the time, it is the generic term for the Sufis, who were the archetypes of sainthood in the Muslim context. Mirza Qalich Beg wrote three books on the *awliyya*s—in 1903, 1904, and 1905—the first being on their miracles (*karamat*), the second on their lives (*halat*), and the third on their sayings (*maqalat*).

Regarding the second category, that of *latifiyyat*, or the works devoted to Shah Abd al-Latif and his poetry, there are 13 books which were published from 1911 onward and which belong to three subcategories: the life of Shah Abd al-Latif, the edition of the whole *kalam* and abstracts of the poetry, and the lexicographical explanation and commentaries on the poetry. Of course, regarding the Sufi paradigm, it shows how the *Shah jo Risalo* was a main or even the core component. Mirza Qalich Beg did

publish this poetry under several forms. There are collections of selected hemistiches, as in his *Latifi Lat* published in 1912, and another in 1915 titled *Shah jo Risalo jo Bhago*, which is another selection with brief commentaries. In fact, several of his books deal with explanations and commentaries on a selected chapter (*sur*) of the *Shah jo Risalo*; these works were published between 1911 and 1922. Mirza Qalich Beg deals especially with "Sur Suhni," "Mumal Rano," "Sur Surag," and the five *sur*s dealing with "Sassui Punhun." His main interest is in "Mumal Rano," for which he published separate books on the narrative, the meanings and explanations of difficult words, and finally explanations.

Notwithstanding, the three main works Mirza Qalich Beg wrote on Shah Abd al-Latif and his poetry are the biography of the poet (1887), his edition of the *Shah jo Risalo* (1913), and the 982-page *Lughat-e Latifi* (1914), a dictionary which is still a reference book for students and specialists of the *Shah jo Risalo*. According to Mirza Aijaz Ali Beg, Mirza Qalich Beg worked for 13 years to publish what he considered to be the best edition of the *Shah jo Risalo*. For completing this work, Mirza Qalich Beg would have taken Trumpp's edition and compared it with numerous other manuscripts which all differed in various ways.

The copy kept by the British Library is named *Vado Shah jo Risalo* (Shah Abd al-Latif 1913), it being the same edition put together by Mirza Qalich Beg in Shikarpur. Beg here included 37 *sur*s in his *Risalo*, while there were 26 in Trumpp's edition of 1866. Today, in the most recent and last edition put out by Christopher Shackle, there are only 30 (Shah Abd al-Latif 2018). And again, this edition appears to have been commissioned or printed by Abdul Aziz Muhammad Suleiman at Victoria Press Sukkur. It has 912 pages of *sur*s beginning right after the book's front matter. Several of the pages have footnotes, which according to Mirza Qalich Beg state the words as they appear in the Bombay print of 1866 wherever they differ from his selections. He does not mention the words as they appear in Trumpp's edition (when/where they differ) because he found many flaws with that edition.

Additionally, he has followed the numbering of the *baits* in the Bombay edition and has marked all those left out in the Bombay edition with bracketed numbers; he also suggests that 846 *baits* have been added in his edition along with 15 *wais*. Here, we have to stop and examine, in comparing this work with Trumpp's edition, what the additional *sur*s in Mirza Qalich Beg's edition tell us regarding the making of the Sufi paradigm. Firstly, we have to remember that Trumpp had to leave out of his edition

some *sur*s, arguing they were “of small compass and of indifferent value” with one exception: “Umar Marui” (Shah Abd al-Latif 1866: X). He went further in explaining he had to leave out this important *sur* because it was too long, and therefore too costly to be printed. In Mirza Qalich Beg’s work, indeed, the *sur* is almost 80 pages, with the single title “Marui” (Shah Abd al-Latif 1913: 792–869).

There is another meaningful innovation introduced by Mirza Qalich Beg in his edition: the *sur* devoted to Hir Ranhja. This is by far the most noticeable addition among the other ten *sur*s. It can hardly be attributed to Shah Abd al-Latif. Yet, we can rather conclude that Mirza Qalich Beg attempted to incorporate in the Sufi paradigm as being under construction in Sindh some features belonging to the northern province of Punjab. Since long, and especially during the rule of the powerful Ranjit Singh, there was an active circulation of cultural patterns—literary as well as iconographical and architectural—between the Sindh ruled by Talpurs and Sikh Punjab. Harjot Oberoi himself clearly showed that the Hir Ranhja’s tale was quite popular among the Sikhs before the Khalsa imposed a new orthodoxy in the late nineteenth century.[2] And as we shall see in the next chapter, in the section devoted to the spread of the *qisso*s, the tale of Hir Ranhja was not really successful in Sindh, and as Farina Mir excellently demonstrated (Mir 2010), it would remain more attached to the emergence of a distinct Punjabi culture.

In the same year, 1913, Mirza Qalich Beg published another book titled *Shah je Risale no Maitriliyuleshan Imtiha Nalai*, which contains selected poetry from *Shah jo Risalo* that was prescribed for matriculation-level students; it includes meanings and explanations provided by Mirza Qalich Beg. It does not seem that Mirza Qalich Beg’s edition of the *Shah jo Risalo* became a reference work, however. It is not quoted by H. T. Sorley in his work on Shah Abd al-Latif and his poetry, though Sorley quotes three reference editions: Trumpp (1866), Tarachand Showkiram (1900), and Gurbakhshani (1923). Nonetheless, it is mentioned in the recent edition of the *Risalo* completed by Christopher Shackle (Shah Abd al-Latif 2018: xxxii).

Let us now turn to the two innovative books Mirza Qalich Beg authored in the field of *latifiyya*, namely his biographical work published in 1887 and the lexicographical one published in 1914. After Dayaram Gidumal

[2] On the understudied issue of the circulation of Sikh patterns in Sindh, see the section devoted to the Hinduization of the Nanakpanth in the ninth chapter.

included some chapters on Shah Abd al-Latif in his *Something about Sindh* published in 1882, Mirza Qalich Beg was the first to publish a book that was mostly devoted to the life of Shah Abd al-Latif. Mirza Qalich Beg was fond of biographies, and he did publish a lot of them indeed, from one of the Prophet Muhammad on to one on Napoleon Bonaparte and his own autobiography. Another interesting feature is that he first published Shah Abd al-Latif's biography in English, and it was only after ten years, in 1897, that he published it in Sindhi. The *Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai* introduces a new and major dimension in the Sufi paradigm. As a genre, the biography belongs both to the field of literature and to the field of history.

For the first time, a narrative related to a religious person, here a Sufi was not drawn according to the rule of the *tazkira*, the hagiographical narratives collected by the disciples of a Sufi saint. The *tazkira* genre highlighted the supernatural power of the saint. The issue was to deal with the reality of life, but while including exemplary actions that could teach people how to behave with virtue. It is not that the *Life* written by Mirza Qalich Beg did not have an educational agenda, but he only wished to deal with historical facts.

In Western Europe, the history of the biographical genre met a new impetus with the publishing by the French scholar Ernest Renan (1823–1892) of his *Vie de Jésus* in 1863. He claimed to be allowed to apply the philological rules to the Bible, through the study of Hebrew and Greek, just as the scholars of Arabic and Sanskrit did in their work, without dealing with any theological issues. They were not concerned with building, defending, or destroying the dogma of any religion.

In his book, Renan depicted a human Jesus, and in doing this, he is considered blasphemous since, in Christianity, Jesus is considered to be the Son of God. He furthermore claimed that the miracles attributed to Jesus in the Bible were not authentic, if only because no evidence could be found. Also, for him, the contents of the Epistles could not be taken as historical facts. They referred more to literary material such as the myths of the Greeks, to his view, and should be treated as legends by the scholars. Renan explains that the events, which are seen as supernatural are, in fact, related to psychological production. Contrary to the common opinion in nineteenth-century France, Renan did not think Hebrew was the primitive language of humanity and that it had been given over by God. The year before the publication of his book, Renan had his inaugural lecture at the College de France, where he initially unveiled some of his theories. Three

days after this engagement, he was fired. Yet, the book would be translated into dozens of languages.

In publishing his *Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai*, Mirza Qalich Beg was far from attempting to shock anyone. We do not know if he was aware of Renan's work, but Sayyid Ahmad Khan had already published a biography of the Prophet Muhammad, in Urdu, which would be translated into English by his son as well as by Sayyid Amir Ali (1849–1928). In fact, we also do not know if Sayyid Ahmad Khan was aware of Renan's work since he wrote his biography of Muhammad as a kind of answer to William Muir's *Life of Mahomet*, published from 1858 onward. The main aim of Sayyid Ahmad Khan was to write a refutation of Muir's work, which introduced, as was common in nineteenth-century Europe, the Prophet Muhammad as an epileptic. Consequently, the Quran was not the fruit of a divine revelation, but it resulted from the ravings of a mentally weak man. Also, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and after him Sayyid Amir Ali, wanted to benefit from philology in order to make a critical and relevant analysis of the sources pertaining to their immediate question.

In his biography on Prophet Muhammad, Sayyid Ahmad Khan refers to various British authors, but the most important among them is Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881)[3] because he was one of the first European writers to provide an inverse representation of what was Islam and its Prophet. Sayyid Ahmad Khan quotes Carlyle directly, especially when he urges Westerners to stop thinking of Muhammad was an impostor, and that his religion was "a mere of quackery and fatuity" (Sayyid Ahmad Khan 1870: xxiii). Further on, Carlyle is quoted as stating that Islam is the religion of sincerity: "Sincerity, in all senses, seems to be the merit of the Koran—what had rendered it precious to the wild Arab men" (Sayyid Ahmad Khan 1870: 38). Implicitly, Carlyle argues that the Quran has brought civilization to the Arabs. Such an argument should have pleased Mirza Qalich Beg quite a bit.

Three years after Sayyid Ahmad Khan's book on Muhammad appeared, Sayyid Amir Ali published his own *Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, which would be the basis of his much acclaimed *Spirit of Islam* that he first published in 1890 with a huge number of re-editions (see Bibliography) to come. It is most interesting to observe that

[3] Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) was a very influential historian of Victorian England. In his book published in 1841 titled *On Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, he states that every period is incarnated by a hero.

Amir Ali was quite aware of Renan's work, and that he refers several times to his *Vie de Jésus*. Looking to the third edition of 1863, we see that he drew on many parallels between Renan's vision of Jesus and his own work in order to accredit his own vision of Muhammad. He was also most grateful to him for having "given to the world" the great philosopher from al-Andalus, Ibn Rushd, known as Averroes in the West (Ameer Ali 1902: 356). Furthermore, he totally agreed with him regarding Renan's claims that the dogmatism of Islam had been given to this religion by a number of races (Ameer Ali 1902: 410). Lastly, Ameer Ali criticized Renan's opinion as expressed in his famous discourse delivered in 1883 at Sorbonne University, in which he stated that Islam was opposed to science (Ameer Ali 1902: 424).

Mirza Qalich Beg's most significant book in informing us about his relationship with the Sufi paradigm has two pillars: the biographical and the lexicographical approaches. Furthermore, his conception of the Sufi paradigm would finally be summarized in his small book titled *Ilm-e Tasawuf* published in 1916 in Hyderabad. As mentioned above, his biography of Shah Abd al-Latif was first written in English in 1887, and translated into Sindhi in 1910. The complete title is *Life of Shah Abdullatif Bhittai and a Brief Commentary on His Risalo with Selections Bearing on the Mystic Philosophy of Sufis*. In fact, more than half of the book is made up of abstracts of the *Shah jo Risalo* with explanations in English. The book also ends with three appendices, these being on the physical and spiritual genealogy of the poet, and the *raga*s in which the *sur*s should be sung. In the first page of the first chapter, Mirza Qalich Beg quotes Carlyle, but not in relation to Islam or Muhammad—rather, he quotes Carlyle's assurance that the prophet and the poet are not so different (Beg 1887: 1).

In his handwritten preface, he wrote: "His Risalo has already been published in three editions, but the detailed particulars of his life have never been given; either because no one considered it important or because no one could easily get any historical account about him" (Beg 1887: no page). Mirza Qalich Beg has already underscored two points: first, that it was time to focus light on the poet as an individual, and second, that his work followed the rules of historical biography since we understand he has been able to find out relevant sources. Therefore, knowing Mirza Qalich Beg's main aim was to write a biography of Shah Abd al-Latif, one could wonder why he felt the need to add a consistent part of his poetry, in Sindhi text with English commentaries. The answer stands in the fact that, in 1887, there was only Trumpp's edition of the *Shah jo Risalo*, that of

Bombay, to which we can add a compilation achieved in 1874 by Miyan Qazi Haji Ahmad and published in Karachi (Ahmad 1874).[4] In other words, the poetry was not accessible to non-Sindhi speakers. This is why Mirza Qalich included abstracts of the *Shah jo Risalo*, and it could be for the same reason that he started to publish this work in English.

As expressed in the title, the abstracts aim at introducing readers to the "mystic philosophy of the Sufis." In his preface, he also speaks of the "public interest" which had driven him to write the book. Here, given that we know he wrote the book in English, the "public" is made up of the British and the educated Sindhis. Sometimes, the commentaries are very brief, no more than a paragraph, and sometimes they can fill four pages, as, for example, in the case of "Sur Sohni," "Sur Kedaro," "Sur Abri," and "Sur Mumal Rano." Throughout this part of the book, Mirza Qalich Beg intended to show the British how Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry was of the highest level. The preface finally includes some details regarding his methods. He has collected "anecdotes and traditions handed down by his relations and followers." He did accept their information as true to the extent that they were not unreasonable. But, finally, he wished the reader to make his own conclusion in his own way after reading the book.

Two main issues related to Shah Abd al-Latif are addressed in Mirza Qalich Beg's biography: his life and his living, and his "mystic philosophy of Sufism." In the first, Beg dealt with giving two depictions of the poet, which can sound contradictory: he was simultaneously a humble and a simple man, but with supernatural attributes and qualities. Beg claimed that Shah Abd al-Latif had a "good nature" with supernatural powers. In this respect, he narrated the anecdote of when Shah Abd al-Latif changed a stone into gold, but threw it out as if it was still stone: the story encapsulates his two facets: that of the supernatural man and of the simple man (Beg 1887: 21). For example, he decided to build a mausoleum for his great grandfather, the Sufi poet Shah Abd al-Karim, with his own hands, and he did it (Beg 1887: 33–34).

It is tempting to see in these characteristics that Beg had learned from his informants a kind of mimicry for how the Muslim reformists depicted the Prophet Muhammad: both as a simple man with a simple living and yet with non-human power since he was selected by God to transmit the divine revelation. In this respect, Mirza Qalich Beg detailed the way that

[4] Several dates are given for this book, as often. Here, I follow the British Library online catalogue.

Shah Abd al-Latif died at the same age as Prophet Muhammad, at 63 years of age (Beg 1887: 25). Other features can be associated with the depiction of Muhammad as seen in the *sira*, the biography of the Prophet of Islam. I shall take two among many. First is that his charisma very quickly attracted the jealousy of his pairs, the Sayyids of different localities, and finally of the ruler of Sindh, Ghulam Shah Kalhora (d. 1772) (Beg 1887: 27). Second is that, after his death, there was a dispute over who would manage his succession. In other words, there were several pretenders willing to manage his *dargah* at Bhit Shah after his death, and by the way, there was a strong competition for the legacy of his authority.

Paradoxical as they can appear, the two aspects of Shah Abd al-Latif merge into a cardinal virtue of the poet, what Mirza Qalich describes as *muraqiba*, in fact *muraqaba*. It is the name given by Sufis to meditation as the main way to reach the ataraxy resulting from the taming of passions. Of course, a last aim of the *Life of Shah Abd al-Latif Bhittai* was to show off how modern the poet was—to the British, especially. In this respect, he underscored two qualities owned by Shah Abd al-Latif: he was a defender of the free will, and "sometimes he expressed patriotic feelings." As a defender of free will, Shah Abd al-Latif, though himself a staunch Muslim, did not compel anyone regarding their religious affiliation and practice. And, regarding his patriotic feelings, Mirza Qalich Beg means that he perfectly embodied the "soul" of Sindh, especially in using the folktales translated into Sufi symbols in order to reach whole classes of the local and regional society.

A last addition must be examined in the construction of Shah Latif's character by Mirza Qalich Beg: the iconographic representation. The edition produced by Mirza Qalich Beg of *Shah jo Risalo* in 1913 probably contains the oldest representation of Shah Latif that has come down to us. It was printed in black and white and nothing is said about its author. The edition produced by Mirza Qalich Beg of *Shah jo Risalo* in 1913 probably contains the oldest representation of Shah Latif that has come down to us. It was printed in black and white and nothing is said about its author. Shah Latif is in the middle of nature, which is mainly composed of trees of various sizes. The sky is full of birds. This preponderance of nature indicates that the Sufi preferred it to the company of humans. It is a redundant reason for the stories about the ascetic Sufi: they live in harmony with nature.

The character is represented in the center of the image and against the tree lies its musical instrument. Shah Abd al-Latif sits on the floor, unlike

the other sacred figures that are usually depicted sitting on a carpet. He has brown hair, as well as a beard and mustache. His legs are crossed, bent over, and held by his arms. His face is slightly turned to the west, and he is surrounded by the halo. Rather than being in meditation, he seems to be looking at something in the distance. Shah Latif's position is interesting insofar as it may seem to be a reminiscence of a representation of a famous Sufi: Ibrahim b. Adham (Boivin 2011: 110). Ibrahim bin Adham (718–781) would have been king of Balkh, in Khurasan, before receiving a warning from al-Khizr stating that being king was not compatible with the quest for god: thus, he decided to renounce the good of this world. As a result, he would have abdicated and become a renouncer. Ibrahim bin Adham still is one of the most famous models of renunciation in Sufism and Islam.

The miniature kept in the National Museum in Delhi comes from the Deccan and is dated in the middle eighteenth century. Ibrahim bin Adham is sitting on the ground near a tree, and his head is resting on a *bairagi*, the stick the Sufis used for meditation. He is wearing the *muraqa'a*, the patched dress, which is one of the symbols of renunciation. His legs are crossed, but it is as if he sat down in a suit, then put his left leg over his right. Shah Latif's position is slightly different: it is as if he sat in a tailor's chair, then raised his legs against him, holding them with his arms. Maybe that Shah Latif's position was that of the lotus (*padmasana*), before he lifted his legs up and pressed them against his chest.

One of the most interesting elements of the representation is the clothing he wears: it is the skin of a beast, that of a feline that is not easy to identify. Several hypotheses can be put forward on this subject. According to Indian miniatures, and if we focus on the universe of the Sufis, it is the *qalandar*s who have a tiger skin. For example, a *qalandar* is covered with a tiger skin in a sixteenth-century Indian miniature (Boivin 2011: 110). But Shah Abd al-Latif had no link with the *qalandar*s, who were antinomian Sufis, while he himself had always been a pious Muslim following the *sharia*. Anyway, even if it looks more like a leopard skin, it is a reminiscence of Shiva who often wore tiger skin as clothing. Gorakhnath, one of his most important disciples who founded the Nathpanth, is often depicted wearing a tiger skin as a garment or even a leopard skin.

As we already know, Gorakhnath's followers known as *jogi*s in Sindh are omnipresent in Shah Latif's poetry. In addition to that, it should be noted that no Islamic motive appears in this representation. The halo had been used since Akbar's time to indicate both the sacredness and power of the

character represented. However, apart from the instrument that testifies to the importance he attributes to music in the quest for God, the most significant element in the representation of the character is the leopard skin. By drawing it, the author of the image wanted to be in total adequacy with Shah Latif's poetry, namely to show the importance of the *jogi* as model for the mystical quest, which constitutes the finality of Sufism.

Sufi Knowledge (*Ilm Tasawuf*) and the Sufi Paradigm

Regarding his contribution to the making of the Sufi paradigm, we now need to investigate Mirza Qalich Beg's representation and understanding of Shah Abd al-Latif's "mystic philosophy of Sufism." His booklet titled, *Ilm Tasawuf* would be a completion of the first ideas on the topic he expressed in the biography. In a first step, Mirza Qalich Beg dealt with religion and Shah Abd al-Latif, but in a somewhat unusual way: "Shah Abd al-Latif's religion was a mystery" (Beg 1887: 38). In fact, he here references his religious affiliation: was he a Sunni or was he a Shia? Mirza Qalich Beg is maybe the first writer to quote, and for sure, the first to publish, the anecdote in which a follower asked him a question to which Shah Abd al-Latif would answer: "I am between the two." The follower said, "But between there is nothing," and the poet answered: "Thus nothing is my religion" (Beg 1887: 39).

Thus, Mirza Qalich Beg first attempted to discover Shah Abd al-Latif's religion—between Sunnism, Shiism, and also Hinduism—through the role the Hindu renunciants played in his religious training. Shah Abd al-Latif prayed five times a day and he observed canonical fasts, but he also performed the Muharram rituals, wanted to go to Karbala for the Shia pilgrimage, and never spoke against the three first khalifes of Islam. Last but not least, he spent years with Hindu ascetics and traveled with them to different Hindu pilgrimages. Once, a local Sayyid was to convert a Hindu to Islam by force. Shah Abd al-Latif asked him: "Would you thrust Islam on him, against his will?" (Beg 1887: 40) He then went straight to the man and dragged him out of the crowd. The Hindu became his follower, but the Sayyids and his followers accused Shah Abd al-Latif of being *kafir*. However, in conclusion to this discussion, Mirza Qalich Beg stated: "He was a perfect Sufi" (Beg 1887: 38). For Mirza Qalich Beg, Shah Abd al-Latif was the perfect Sufi in that he lived as a perfect Sufi, and he depicted perfect Sufism in his poetry.

Mirza Qalich Beg then aimed at proving there was no contradiction in Shah Abd al-Latif's life and religion. According to the mystic philosophy of Sufism, there are two sides, temporal and spiritual: what is named in Sufi terminology ascending or rising (*uruj*), and descending or falling (*nazul*). In Mirza Qalich Beg's words: "In the first stage, he was carried away by a sort of communion, from all the worldly concern to thoughts divine; and was then of no religion." Thus, for outsiders, he can look like a *kafir*: "He had, then, unity in sight and nothing else; he was one with God," a state that the author called *tariqa* in the highest grade. On the other side, the poet was a human being and a good Muslim, respecting the *sharia*. These two stages can also be called "union and separation, that, according to him, perfected a human soul" (Beg 1887: 41).

The seventh chapter of *The Life of Shah Abd al-Latif Bhittai* is a kind of transitory chapter between the part devoted to the life and that devoted to the poetry and commentaries. Here, Mirza Qalich Beg is keen to locate the Sindhi poet in the wake of Hafiz, Rumi, Attar, and Shams Tabrizi—in other words, among the galaxy of the greatest Sufi poets of the world. Beg states that the Sufi poetry is liable to two interpretations: the one is *haqiqi*, and the other *mijazi*. "One is primary, the other secondary; one allegorical and the other literal; one internal or esoteric and the other external or exoteric; one spiritual and the other temporal; one sublime and the other lively; one special and the other ordinary" (Beg 1887: 59). Beg qualifies the Sufi style as "ambiguity of style" and "duplicity of signification," and for him, the most significant example is that of Mansur Hallaj. The philosophy of Sufism can be named pantheism, and despite the opposition of the mullas and maulvis, the Sufis "quote passages from the Koran and the Hadis that exactly correspond to their principles" (Beg 1887: 60).

The other main contribution produced by Mirza Qalich to the Sufi paradigm is his *Lughat-e Latifi* published in 1914. Originally, it was a complement to his own edition of the *Shah jo Risalo* we have dealt with above. Beg was obviously not the first to be interested in the lexicographical approach to the *Shah jo Risalo*, and thus Sufism. Lalwani had already devoted a copious passage to the issue in his *The Life, Religion, and Poetry of Shah Abdul Latif* published in 1890. Later on, in 1907, Bherumal Advani published *Gharib al-lughat*, an explanation of the difficult words of the first three *sur*s of the *Shah jo Risalo* (Advani 1907). Mirza Qalich Beg's full title gives *Shah ji Risale ji Mushkil Lafzan ji Mana, Sur Dar*, meaning *An Explanation of the Difficult Words of the Shah jo Risalo, Sur by*

Sur. As expressed in the subtitle, the book is organized according to the *sur*s, which are 37 in number, and inside each section through alphabetical order.

The difficult words Mirza Qalich Beg wished to clarify belong to three categories, or more exactly three linguistic registers: Persian words, old Sindhi words, and Sufi technical terms. Incidentally, it is interesting to see that some words related to the basic tenets of Islam are explained, but these explanations should also have been understandable for Hindu Sindhis. Nonetheless, this pattern could also inform us about the state of the knowledge of Islam among the Muslims themselves. Among the latter, they can be related to the Islamic creed or the legal terms. For example, it is interesting to see that Beg gives an explanation, in the shape of the translation in Sindhi, of the Bismillah (Beg 1914: 17), or of *qazi* (Beg 1914: 33).

In the category of the technical Sufi lexicon, Beg gives the meaning of *pan khudi*, the self and the Self, and of *rendi* from the Persian *rend*, which he translates as *mast* (Beg 1914: 26–27). These words were used in Sufi literature to refer to antinomian Sufis, those who did not pay respect to the *sharia*. Many words are used by Shah Abd al-Latif for naming the Sufis. There is, for instance, the word *taleb*, which Mirza Qalich translates as *sail*, *moored*, and *Faqir*. The term *lahuti* is also translated into *faqir*, *sadhu*, and *sufi* (Beg 1914: 37). Obviously, the format selected by Beg did not allow him to provide long developments. And when he went to explain *suluk*, he offered it as an equivalent of *tasawuf* and *tariqat* (Beg 1914: 262). For *shariat*, the notice is relatively long. We cannot deduce that the Sindhis did not know what *shariat* is because Beg aims at locating it in the Sufi path. He explains that *shariat* is the first station of the path, and that the *salik* has to follow God's order (*Khoja ji hukum*) and Prophetic Law (*Muhammadi shara*).

Nonetheless, it is interesting to observe the nature of the terms that are explained, given that their inclusion suggests that common educated Sindhis may not have known them. There is, for example, *khadim*, translated as *khidmatgar* and *murid* (Beg 1914: 258). When Beg has to deal with technical Sufi terms, such as *jabarut*, he explains that that this is one of the stations the *salik* has to go through for reaching the *haqiqat* (Beg 1914: 255). One of the longest notices, being about 15 lines, is the one devoted to *fani*. This is a main concept of Sufism, *fana* in Arabic, and Beg is keen to provide a clear and complete explanation of the meaning. Generally, he says it is *wisal bi'llah*, or the merging with God (Beg 1914:

265), and then he quickly gives a reference to the Quran (Surat 5). Fairly long explanations are also given when the issue of the *wahdat-e wujud* is addressed. About a Quranic quotation from the poetry, *Qul Hu Allah ahad*, Beg writes: "God is One (Surat 112), the Sindhi rendition is literal: *Khoda hekro ahe*" (Beg 1914: 266).

Sometimes words and names are very technical, such as *irfan*, and sometimes we find names of characters like Ali. Here, the notice gives: "Ali Shah: Mawla Ali mushkil kusha," or "The Master Ali, the one who relieves the difficulties" (Beg 1914: 264). Regarding the old Sindhi words, they can be for naming God, such as *mandi* (Beg 1914: 40). Beg also translates non-Sindhi words and gives the original language such as Siraiki, Hindustani, or Baluchi. Many explanations are related to Arabic quotations from the Quran. In these cases, Beg gives the reference of the quotation in the Quran as well as a Sindhi translation. For example, in explaining the Quranic expression *Allah Latif*, he gives the original Quranic reference, here Surat 42, followed by the translation in Sindhi (Beg 1914: 249). When the poet uses a "Hindu" term, such as *tirath*, the pilgrimage, Beg translates with *ziyarat* (Beg 1914: 253). Not all of the explanations provided by Mirza Qalich Beg are clear, however. For example, in "Sur Ramkali," he uses the word *janjir*, with the explanations/translations: *zanjir*, *hijab*, *purdo* (Beg 1914: 255).

A last publication on Sufism completed by Mirza Qalich Beg is the *Ilm Tasawuf*, published in 1916. The use of the word *ilm*, knowledge, looks relevant for the task undertaken in this study. Beg also used it for another topic, *Ilm Adab* (Beg 1914). Thus, he looked like being formulating the very idea of knowledge that can be produced by and from different fields. The production he devoted to Sufism, the *Ilm Tasawuf*, seems to be the final addition, and also a kind of summary of the previous publications. According to the subtitle, *Sufiyyan jo Usal ain Aqida*, it deals with the foundations (*usul*), and the beliefs (*aqida*). This is the most common way of exposing a topic in the field of the Islamic studies. In fact, these are the two main divisions of the *Ilm al-Kalam*, Islamic Theology.

The book is divided in 45 sections, which deal with many issues related to Sufism. Since it is only 66 pages, Beg wanted to provide a large summary of what Sufism is rather than go into deep explanations. It is worth noting that he gives a tableau of Sufism in the early twentieth century Indus Valley. In the preface, he argues that there are many books on Sufism in Arabic, in Persian, and in Urdu, but not in Sindhi (Beg 1916: 1). And, as a matter of fact, it is true that Beg is here once again a pioneer in the

field of Sufi studies. The book proceeds very methodically, and it is obvious that Beg wishes to write a book as comprehensive as possible: it is the first book published on *tasawuf* in Sindhi. For once, Beg attempted to expose the theology of Sufism, and not the practice related to the Sufi worship as performed in the *dargahs*.

The book is so detailed in such a few pages that it is difficult to summarize all of the issues Beg addresses. Nevertheless, they reflect a very classical representation of Sufism with the following topics: *fana* (*fana fi'l shaykh*, *fana fi'l rasul*, *fana fi'llah*), the merging (in the Master, in the Prophet, in God), *wahdat* and *tawhid* (Unity and Unicity), *zahiri* and *haqiqi ilm* (exoteric and esoteric knowledge), *fana ain baqa* (merging and renaissance), *nafs ain ruh* (soul and spirit), *faqr ain faqir* (poverty and poor), and so on. The work starts with the presentation of the *maqam* (station) and *hal* (state). The first category includes the *shariat*, *tariqat*, *marifat*, and *haqiqat* (Beg 1916: 4–5). The second introduces the *nasut*, the *malakut*, the *jabarut*, and the *lahut* (Beg 1916: 6–7). In the section on the *awliya*, Beg deals with the organization of the Sufis, which mimics a government—with a *badshah*, or in Sufi parlance the *qutub al-aqtab*, the pole of the poles, *vizir* and others, a classical vision of Sufism.[5] Nevertheless, he offers a very interesting piece of information when addressing the ranking of the Sufis: *Qalandaran jo darjo qutub kan be mati ahe*, the rank of the *qalandars* is superior to that of the *qutub* (Beg 1916: 9).

It may be that here we can see a regional reference since the most popular Sufi saint in Sindh was Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. Otherwise, in classical Sufism, we cannot find in any treatise that the *qalandar* is superior to the *qutub*. In the section on *Shaykhan ya piran ji tariqa*, we learnt the candidate should take an oath (*bayat*) with his master (*murshid*) to become a Sufi, a *murid*, who would teach him how to perform meditation (*zikr*). An interesting section is the one devoted to *sama*, musical audition. In the context of Sufism in Sindh, it deserves special attention since Shah Abd al-Karim claimed *sama* was the *zikr* par excellence. Beg explains that the *sama* is the music (*rag*) that the "Sufi dervishes" perform as "exoteric knowledge," *zahiri ilm* (Beg 1916: 50). It is sung by singers he names *mughani* and *qawwal*. No reference can be found to the ecstatic dance, the *dhamal*, which was already very popular in Sindh. The Sufi poet Bekas

[5] I use the expression classical Sufism as an intellectual construction which was completed around the thirteenth-century and which serves as accepted norms of later Sufism. In his book, Mirza Qalich addressed all these core issues.

praised the *dhamal* performed at the *darbar* of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in the late nineteenth century.

With *Ilm Tasawuf*, Mirza Qalich Beg displays a classical representation of Sufism, referring to the dominant trend of Sufism with no reference to the regional poets and poetry, or to rituals. It is a de-territorialized Sufism where the vernacularization process it could have implemented is non-existent. Another remarkable point is the lack of references, as the whole book deals with generalities. Only at the end of the book does Mirza Qalich Beg speak of the five main Sufi *tariqa*s: the Qadiriyya and Jilaniyya, from Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani; the Naqshbandiyya, from Khwaja Baha al-Din Naqshband; the Bukhariyya, from Jalal al-Din Husayn al-Bukhari; the Faridiyya, from Farid al-Din Ganj-e Shakar; and the Nizamiyya, from Nizam al-Din Awliya. He also provides information related to their localization. In fact, despite its sound title, the *Ilm Tasawuf* is not Mirza Qalich Beg's book, which is more in line with the Sufi paradigm.

It is striking to see Mirza Qalich Beg's will for speaking of Sufism as a Muslim production, even while he acknowledges that the *uruj* puts the Sufi beyond any religious belonging. In classical Sufism, the *uruj*, the ascension or progress on the path, is ascending travel in the different planes of Sufi spirituality. After he has reached the highest levels, he is beyond any form of religion. Nonetheless, Beg did not talk of the Hindus who are Sufis—at least not other than to speak about the vanguard work they did regarding the building of the Sufi paradigm, at least in the step concerning Shah Abd al-Latif and the *Shah jo Risalo*. It is probably that he was more attracted to the new and modern-looking spiritual ideologies that were spreading throughout the world. In this context, the Theosophical Society was influential in South Asia and Sindh, and Mirza Qalich Beg wrote some books on the topic between 1912 and 1926. In the first one published by the Theosophical Society in Hyderabad, he dealt with the history, the principles, and the teachings of the Theosophical Society.

He also translated books from English on the same topic, now published by the Blavatsky Press in Hyderabad. In titling one *Kamil Insan*, or *The Perfect Man*,[6] in two volumes published in 1926, with 192 pages and

[6] The concept of *insan kamil* was borrowed from a *hadith* and developed by Ibn Arabi. The person who has reached perfection was later on elaborated by Abd al-Karim Jili (1365–1409), who composed a whole treatise on the issue, the *Al-insan al-kamil fi-l-marifa*, The Perfect Man in the esoteric knowledge.

180 pages respectively, Beg interestingly used a most important Sufi concept to show how the Theosophical Society aimed at building the perfect human being freed from all evils (such as sex and sins), when the world would be filled with universal peace and love. With this title, he also obviously wished to communicate that, first, universal love as expressed by the society was already included in Sufi poetry, and secondly that it could be useful to reuse Sufi data with a theosophical reading in order to update this golden legacy. In 1919, Mirza Qalich Beg translated from English a book he titled *Alim jo Ustad*, or *The Master of Knowledge*, amazingly translated as *The World Teacher* with, as subtitle, "Why we Believe in the Coming of the World Teacher."

Helena Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, coined the notion of the "world teacher." In her master book, *The Secret Doctrine* published in 1888, she wrote: "Maitreya is the secret name of the Fifth Buddha, and the Kalki Avatar of the Brahmins—the last Messiah who will come at the culmination of the Great Cycle" (Blavatsky 1888: 385). After her death, when Annie Besant was the president of the society, a young Hindu was identified as being Maitryea: Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986). Krishnamurti left the society in the 1920s, and it was said that there was no Maitreya in this period. Mirza Qalich Beg would not adhere to this messianic ideology, and probably, as a Shia, he believed in the Imam Mahdi, the twelfth imam who would come at the end of times. Notwithstanding, the idea of universal brotherhood and the idea that nothing is higher than truth would have pleased him.

In this respect, he was a pillar of the Theosophical Society in Hyderabad. On 27 February 1927, he delivered a lecture at the Besant Hall in Hyderabad on the "universal religion" (*alamgir mazhab*), another one on the *Suhl-e Kull*, on 26 April of the same year, and published in 1923 a booklet to show how there are bridges between Sindh and theosophy. Nonetheless, his will to spread a normative form of Islam also appeared when he wrote a book titled *Islami Risalo*, or *Handbook of Islam*, in which he compiled daily prayers and huge quotations from the Quran. Furthermore, Mirza Qalich Beg started to write a biography (*sirat*) of the Prophet Muhammad, though apparently only the first part was published, this coming out in 1918.

In Mirza Qalich Beg's approach to the Sufi paradigm, there is therefore also an attempt to go beyond Sufism. In one of his books, Mirza Qalich Beg praised the *suhl-i kull*, the "concordance of religion," or better, "universal tolerance," a concept which was the core of the Moghul emperor

Akbar's *din-e ilahi* (Chandra 1992). The complete title of the book published in 1927 is *Suhl-e Kull ya Mazhaban ji Muwfaqat*, or *The Universal Peace and the Reconciliation of Religions*. The *wahdat-e wujud* as expressed in the Sufism of Sindh was not far from *suhl-i kull*. Mirza Qalich Beg obviously thought that such Sufi poetry as the *Shah jo Risalo* was but a local expression of *suhl-i kull*.

Mirza Qalich Beg's main contribution to the building of the Sufi paradigm was a double attempt to root it in the Sufi legacy of Sindh: first in Shah Abd al-Latif's *Shah jo Risalo*, and also reshaping it through the reuse of the data in an early twentieth-century modern ideology with the help of the framework provided by the Theosophical Society.

Jethmal Parsram Gulraj and the Sufi Culture

Among the most efficient Hindu exponents of the Sufi paradigm is a scholar who was very close to Mirza Qalich Beg: Jethmal Parsram (1886–1947). He published a number of books authored by Mirza Qalich Beg, and Jethmal Parsram was himself a prolific author who was trained as a journalist. According to his biographer, Parsram published 17 books in Sindhi and four in English, and he also completed 27 translations (Belani 1990: 104–106). Three works are devoted to Shah Abd al-Latif, the first regarding the anecdotes contained in the *Shah jo Risalo*, and after a few years more, he published a biography of the poet. He also published a book on Mira Bai[7] in 1926, and another one the same year on the *Jap ji sahib*, the prayers for the meditation of the Sikhs. Among the books in English, there is one devoted to Rohal Faqir which I was not able to locate.

In 1914, he established the Sindh Sahitiyya Society (Sindh Literary Society), and he was a staunch theosophist; the printing house he founded in Hyderabad was named the Blavatsky Printing. Parsram translated many famous theosophical books into Sindhi, including *Shabd Anahat* from *The Voice of Silence* by Helena Blavatsky in 1925 and five books by Annie Besant, such as *Upanishad Gyan* from *Wisdom of the Upanishad*. Another of Besant's books which he translated under the title of *Jagat ja Netaun*, or *The Ethics of Purity*, is interesting since the author introduced the different *satgurus*, the "True Guides," who came in different ages. They are Manu, Zarathustra, Buddha, Krishna, Jesus, and Muhammad (Belani 1990: 82–84).

[7] Mira Bai (1498–1546) was a poet from the Bhakti who authored many *bhajans*.

The first books authored by Parsram were nevertheless devoted to Shah Latif's work, but not to his poetry. He was more interested in detailing the moral values of the folktales (*akhaniyyun*) used by Shah Latif. After publishing two books on the topic, he wrote a book on Sachal Sarmast in 1922, and finally a biography of Shah Latif in 1926. Meanwhile, in 1921, he had published with Lilaram Premchand a book titled *Sufi Sagora*, to which I shall return in the eighth chapter of this work when I discuss the enlargement of the Sufi paradigm.

That said, his main contribution to the field was his *Sind and its Sufis* published in English in 1924, three years after the previous one (Parsram 1924). This was the first book devoted to the Sufism of Sindh ever published in English. After a first section on historical contextualization, the second one is on the Sufi culture of Sindh, the third on Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, and the last on "three great Sufi teachers," which is probably a reference to the theosophical concept of the word teacher—here, he discusses Shah Inayat, Shah Abd al-Latif, and Sachal. The small book is a perfect summary of how the new middle class of Sindhis represented Sufism. Interestingly, it was published by the Theosophical Society in Madras, where the headquarters of the organization remain even today. Like Mirza Qalich Beg, and maybe more than him, Parsram read Sufism through the lens of theosophy since he spoke in his book of "what the Sufi calls Tasawuf or Theosophy" (Parsram 1924: 127).

Parsram was one of the first Sindhi literati to speak of the Sufi culture of Sindh. He started by summarizing the many religions that have flourished in Sindh, like Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism. More recently, he added two other religions that had been dominant: Sikhism and Sufism. He wrote that the mysticism of the Sufis of Sindh contains "the threads of both Indo-Aryan Sanatana Dharma and the Arabic-Persian mystic culture. In fact, there is hardly a country in the whole of Asia, including India, in which the mystic thought of two great civilizations, the Indian and the Arabic-Iranian, is seen as in so beautiful a union as in Sind." Interestingly, Parsram confirms that the Amils are among the key actors since they "are the main supporters and advisers of both the devotees of the Sufi pirs and holders of the Gadi" (Parsram 1924: 83–84).

In the part devoted to Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Parsram provides a summary of what he calls the mystic doctrine of Sindh. He explains that Sufi poetry is a powerful tool unifying all the classes of the society. Although the book was written for a large English-speaking audience, he also offers technical explanations—for example, why the Sufis used the word "I" and,

furthermore, that the meaning is the very expression of Sufism, "All is he." For him, it is the *ism-e azam* of the Sufis and the *mantra* of the Vedantists (Parsram 1924: 119–120), this meaning the expression/word on which meditation is performed. For the former, it is *hu hu*, and for the latter *om*, before specifying that Shah Latif himself referred to the "one curved word," namely *om*. He finally explains that, through meditation on this word, the Sufi achieves the identification of the Universal Soul with the individual soul.

As of the 1920s, Parsram was much more influenced by the Theosophical Society's ideology than Mirza Qalich had been. For example, he went so far as to translate *tasawuf* as theosophy. As a matter of fact, while Beg called for a universal religion and a "Master of Knowledge," or a "World Teacher" in terms of the theosophical lexicon, Parsram was convinced that Sindh was the seat of the universal wisdom that the theosophists had been looking for in remote areas such as Tibet: "The author of this book has been led to believe, after much contact with many descendants and followers of the great Sufis of Sind, that a great occult centre existed in Sind which was the fountain source of Atma Vidya, or what the Sufis call Tasawuf…" (Parsram 1924: 80). He added that he had met a very old Sufi, Qutub Ali Shah, who used to say that in Sindh, in the Kohistan, there was a place in the mountaintops where great yogis came and taught the universal wisdom.

Qutub Ali Shah[8] himself claimed to have been taught in this place: "Kutub Shah used to say that at this place there existed no difference whatever between Islam and Hinduism" (Parsram 1924: 81). Parsram surmises it is the same place Shah Abd al-Latif named Nani, where the *jogi*s lived, and which he had himself visited in their company. Parsram did not mention the name of Hinglaj, a very important place of pilgrimage which is today located in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, but in the Sindhi-speaking part. It is very close to Sindh. Until recently, Hinglaj belonged to the category of the shared pilgrimage center, where Hindus and Muslims used to come. Since then, Hinglaj has been restricted to the Hindus, and it is managed by the Hindu Panchayat of Pakistan, settled in Karachi (Schaflechner 2018).

[8] Qutub Ali Shah (1810–1910) was a Sufi master from Tando Jahaniyya, now in Hyderabad, Sindh. He had many followers, Muslims as well as Hindus. He was a *wujudi* and his poetry is dotted with references to Hindu concepts and characters. For instance, he uses the word *darshan* for vision as much as *didar* (q.v.). One of his most important followers was Rai Rochaldas whose *darbar* is located in Ulhasnagar, Maharashtra (Boivin 2019).

Parsram's contribution to the Sufi paradigm is also related to the fact that he included new Sufi poets, especially nineteenth-century Sufis who were more or less considered to be minor poets. This is the case, for example, for Dalpat Sufi, Bedil and Bekas, and also Sadik. However, Parsram also tries to summarize the last expression of the Sufi paradigm—what he called in his words "Sufi culture," the title of section II of the book. The first part is amazingly titled "The State of Negation in Sind." He first explained how the very unique culture of Sindh resulted from the numerous conquerors that had dominated Sindh. He called it a state of negation because Sindh could only be characterized by negation: it is neither Indo-Aryan nor Arabian; it is neither (orthodox) Hindu, nor (orthodox) Muslim (Parsram 1924: 49–50). Thus "the individuality" of Sindh is "a conglomeration of many elements," contrary to other Indian provinces such as Maharashtra.

The second part highlighted the fact that the "individuality" of Sindh is rooted in two pillars: Sikhism and Sufism. Regarding the first, he observed quickly that the Sindhi Sikhs, who he classed as Hindu Sikhs, "have very little in common with the Punjabi Singhs" (Parsram 1924: 53). He added: "But the influence of Sufism in Sind both on the Hindus and the Muslims has been tremendous." The influence of Sufism is due to two factors. On one side, the Sufis go beyond the Islamic shaping, and on the other side, the mysticism of Sufism matches the mysticism of the Vedanta "and in the latter-day saints of India" (Parsram 1924: 54). For Parsram, the main characteristic of the Sufi culture of Sindh is that it is far from, if not actually against, orthodoxy and bigotry, both of Islam and Hinduism. Furthermore, the main effect produced by the spread is the production of a Hindu-Muslim union that "is a marvelous phenomenon in Sind" (Parsram 1924: 55).

Conclusion

At the end of the nineteenth century, Sindh was a hub where many intellectual debates flourished. The main focus was the issue of the modernization of religious spirituality. Modernization was understood as being both a process of rationalizing religion—for instance, through a critical approach to the sacred sources—but also incorporating a number of technical tools like printing (Boivin 2015b). Among the Sindhi intelligentsia, Sufism was more and more represented as incarnating Sindhi cultural identity. In this context, the literati wanted all of the classes and creeds of the province to

have access to the "message" of Sufism as expressed by the *Shah jo Risalo*. A new phase of the exegesis of Shah Latif's work thus started with publications devoted to the lexicography of the poetry. Furthermore, the message of Sufism was read through a new lens.

The intelligentsia of Sindh was the main actor for the building of the Sufi paradigm from the 1880s onward, thus about 20 years after the first printing of the *Shah jo Risalo*. A main trend was that of democratization through the publication of commentaries and glossaries. Nonetheless, a Sindhi scholar played a leading role during the period from the 1880s to the 1920s: Mirza Qalich Beg (1853–1929). Since he wrote all of his works on Sufism in Sindhi, excepting one, we can rightly deduce that they were composed for the Sindhis. He wanted to convince the Sindhis of the modernity of Sufism, and in the process, he caused a shifting in the representation of Sufism. The intelligentsia no longer wanted to publish only *diwan*s and *kalam*s. They now published biographies, and Beg's books echoed the then current debates about the status and nature of Sufism in the religious culture of Sindh.

In general, Mirza Qalich Beg was a prolific author interested in almost all topics. His approach to Sufism is consequently varied, and sometimes difficult to grasp. Mirza Qalich Beg was also very much interested in the current debates that were developing among the Indian Muslims. The reformist thought expressed by such literati as Sayyid Ahmad Khan brought about a rationalization of the approach to the religious field. Sayyid Ahmad Khan himself wrote a biography of Prophet Muhammad in 1842, in which he wished to restrict the part of popular belief and fantasy as well as superstitions (Baljon 1949: 46). To some extent, Mirza Qalich Beg followed him, and with Shah Abd al-Latif, he was keen to provide details on the life of the poet. The poet's life was in the same way a complement to the poetry for the building of a *honnête homme*. In 1887, he published in English the first biography devoted to a Sufi of Sindh—of course, it focused on Shah Abd al-Latif—and he translated it into Sindhi ten years later in 1897 (Beg 1980).

Mirza Qalich Beg's contribution to the Sufi paradigm was not a result of his book titled *Ilm Tasawuf*. Amazingly, this book is not concerned with the Sufism of and in Sindh, but rather aims at demonstrating how Sufism is a high-level mysticism. On the contrary, his interest for vernacularized Sufism is included in his *Lughat-e Latifi*, where he provided explanations and translations in modern Sindhi of the *Shah jo Risalo*. Furthermore, he was a main contributor to the Sufi paradigm in

publishing for the first time, if we do not include Sami, Sufi poets other than Shah Abd al-Latif, as we shall see in the next chapter. This work considerably enlarged the Sufi paradigm because of the accessibility which came thanks to the printing of the Sufi *kalam*s by Shah Abd al-Karim (Shah Abd al-Karim 1904), as well as to other devotional poets such as Sabit Ali Shah (1900). Nonetheless, he was still stuck on the *Shah jo Risalo* and, in 1913, he published what he considered to be the best edition of the *Risalo*, though other specialists would not share his opinion and his edition would quickly be superseded by Gurbakhshani's edition published from 1923 onward.

It is relevant to see Jethmal Parsram as a successor of Mirza Qalich Beg. His interest was of course more restricted, but as such, he focused more on Sufism. Also, he was more involved in the theosophical project and more inclined to determine the "World Teacher" in Sindh, who was, of course, a Sufi named Qutub Ali Shah. This contribution was probably a decisive step of the making of the Sufi paradigm: providing evidence that the Sufism of Sindh was the medium of the primordial wisdom the scholars, and especially the Europeans, had been looking for years. Consequently, with Parsram, the Sufi paradigm underwent on its last extent as universal wisdom. In framing it, Parsram also underscored an element, which had been a main component of the Sufi paradigm since the beginning: the opposition to orthodoxy and bigotry.

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CHAPTER 8

The Deployment of the Sufi Paradigm

Introduction

The influence exercised by the *Shah jo Risalo* on the making of the Sufi paradigm was long-lasting. Before 1902, all of the publications on Sufism, which in fact were not so many, displayed two characteristics: they were on the *Shah jo Risalo* or its author, Shah Abd al-Latif, and the authors were Sindhi—Hindu first, and Muslim second. In this chapter, I intend to show that the printing of another work of Sufi poetry in 1902 was the beginning of the second step in the making of the Sufi paradigm, this in the manner of an enlargement. It is no coincidence that the second Sufi poet to be published was Sachal Sarmast, and it is remarkable that two other Sufi works were printed in 1903 and 1904. The places of printing also give evidence of the intellectual domination of the northern cities of Sindh, although Hyderabad, and to a lesser extent Karachi, were still active in this respect.

Thus, while the domination of Shah Abd al-Latif lasted many years, the change of the Sufi paradigm occurred very quickly, namely in three years. The main characteristic of the second step was an incorporation of three new Sufis into the Sufi paradigm: Sachal, we have already mentioned, and in addition to him there are Rohal Faqir and Shah Abd al-Karim to be discussed. In the early twentieth century, no books on Sindhi literature had been published yet, but according to the ones published on the eve of Partition, Sachal was the number-two author in the galaxy of Sindhi

authors, just after Shah Abd al-Latif. Also, it is interesting to observe that the first editor of Sachal's Sindhi *kalam* was Mirza Qalich Beg's brother, Mirza Quli Khan. I shall propose several hypotheses to suggest why Sachal was the first to be published and printed after Shah Abd al-Latif.

Contrary to Shah Abd al-Latif and Sachal Sarmast, the fame of Rohal Faqir, the third to be printed, did not reach beyond the borders of Sindh. Consequently, it can be seen as amazing, but the fact that the editor was a Hindu gentleman can provide a way for explanation. Also, Rohal belonged to the far northern part of Sindh. Last was the printing of Shah Abd al-Karim, who was Shah Abd al-Latif's great-grandfather. In the early twentieth century, he was considered the oldest author in Sindhi literature until the "discovery" of Qazi Qazan's *kalam*.[1] With him, we go back to southern Sindh and, to some extent, to the frame of Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry since there is similarity to be seen in the genres and themes addressed by both these Sufi poets.

Another evolution of the Sufi paradigm inside the second step came when it left the field of Sufism. As a matter of fact, non-Sufi Sindhi intellectuals appropriated the Sufi paradigm and attempted to include their own regime of knowledge inside the paradigm. In this regard, two main attempts occurred in the early twentieth century: the Ismaili one, the Ismailis being Shia Muslim, and the Hindu one, the Hindus of course being non-Muslim. The main aim of these Sindhi intellectuals was to include their own tradition in the Sufi paradigm, and to finally show that the paradigm was subsuming the whole Sindhi religious tradition, as well as the quintessence of it. Two case studies are to be introduced in this discussion. First is Lalu, an Ismaili Khoja who published several books to demonstrate the similarity of the concepts of Sufism with those of the Vedanta. A second case study is Sami, a Hindu poet from northern Sindh. Here, I aim to show how the first edition of his work manages to provide evidence that Sami participated in the building of the Sufi paradigm through his *slok*s.

Along with the intellectual construction of the Sufi paradigm, the democratization process that aimed at making the Sufi paradigm more accessible was at work. The last step was the publishing of many books of *qisso*s. The *qisso* was a ballad, a folk narrative sung by professional

[1] Qazi Qazan's poetry was known only through a few verses quoted by Shah Abd al-Karim, before Hiro Thakur discovered in the early 1970s his *kalam* kept in a Dadupanthi monastery near the Himalayas, in India (Boivin 2016: 256–257).

musicians, the Manganhars, and transmitted orally from generation to generation. From the early twentieth century on, oral literature in Sindhi entered the Sufi paradigm through printing. The most printed *qisso* was that of Sassui Punhun, which was, from the time of Shah Abd al-Latif's *Shah jo Risalo*, the very pattern of a folktale that incarnated the Sufi finality of merging with God, the woman (here Sassui) representing the longing soul.

The chapter will end with a survey of the market of printed knowledge in early twentieth-century Sindh. I will summarize the identities of the main printers and editors, both in terms of social backgrounds and religious belonging as well as geographical location. Another important point to address is the question of the technical tools that were available in Sindh. Finally, the different ways of dispatching knowledge and the Sufi paradigm will come under study; this includes the libraries, bookshops, and literary societies.

The Sufi Paradigm Beyond the *Shah jo Risalo* (or the Second Step of the SP)

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the books related to Sufism were all devoted to Shah Abd al-Latif or the *Shah jo Risalo*. As we saw above, three steps can be identified in the process of objectifying the *Shah jo Risalo*. The first step was the editing and printing by Ernst Trumpp. The second step was made up of books devoted to the life of Shah Abd al-Latif. And the third step centered on the text of the poetry, where the aim was to make it understandable for the whole of the Sindhi-speaking population of Sindh. This last step can be seen as a process of the democratization of the poetry. Another interesting feature is made apparent when we have a look at the language used in each of these steps. Persian was still used only in the second step, while English and Sindhi dominated the first and third steps. We also observe a climax of the use of English in the 1880s and 1890s.

Throughout the years, Sindhi became the only language used for publications related to Sufism, although, as usual, one can find a few rare exceptions, however rare they are. Sindhi language nonetheless dominated the entire field. Beyond the languages, which we will return to below, other fundamental changes occurred at a point that it is quite relevant to discuss another salient change in the process of the objectification of Sufism. From the early twentieth century onward, and although poetry

was still published, we observe a shift in the representation of Sufism, from Sufi works to the figures of the poets, as well as to other categories such as anthologies and syntheses or general works related to Sufism. Also, the authors' personal profiles moved slightly since the Muslims became more and more numerous as authors and publishers, while the Hindus had been more numerous in the nineteenth century.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw a double and apparently paradoxical process. On the one side, there was the birth of proto-political parties, such as the Indian National Congress in 1885 in Bombay. Furthermore, as of the 1870s, the creation of new organizations clearly showed a wish to build a separate and distinct Muslim community and identity, as expressed for example by Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Thus, the aim of the actors in this field was to harmonize and to homogenize the religious communities, the Muslims, and the Hindus, as well as the Sikhs. But, simultaneously, we observe a readjustment of the boundaries—in that a process of communalization as well as sectarianization also operated. Sometimes, the same actors could be at the origins of both processes, one of homogenization and another of fragmentation.

In relation to Sufism, the twentieth century was marked by the addition of new components to the Sufi paradigm in Sindh. They can be organized into three categories. First is the editing and printing of Sufi poetical works other than Shah Abd al-Latif's *Shah jo Risalo*. The second category is made up of the spread of Sufi biographies, highlighting the transition from the traditional *tazkira* genre to that of modern biography. These hagiographical biographies were devoted to Sindhi Sufis as well as to non-Sindhi Sufis. The third category is related to the attempt to present a general outlook of Sufism, through anthologies or syntheses. Some of these attempts were focused on the Sindhi legacy of Sufism, while others aimed at including the Sufi legacy of Sindh inside a broader body of Sufi knowledge that could reach beyond the scope of the province.

The first decade of the twentieth century quickly challenged the first step of objectification centered on the *Shah jo Risalo*. In the three following years, different publishers—two of them from Sukkur and the last from Hyderabad—published three new Sufi works. Three new Sufi poets were thus introduced as part of the Sufi paradigm: Sachal Sarmast in 1902, Rohal Faqir in 1903, and Shah Abdul Karim in 1904.[2] Here, my aim is not

[2] According to the Gul Hayat Institute (gulhayat.com), a first edition of Shah Abd al-Karim's work had been published as early as in 1876 in Bombay. Since I was not able to find it out, nor have cross-checked this information, I consider the 1904 edition to be the first one.

to begin a study of their respective poetry, since their works were already known through oral transmission, but rather to investigate what the editors wanted to build into the Sufi paradigm via editing and printing this new Sufi poetry.

Their aim was to enlarge the knowledge of the public in relation to the Sufi paradigm, to show both its diversity and its local roots. Also, this expansion means that these Sindhi literati did not want the *Shah jo Risalo* to subsume the whole Sufi paradigm, although it would always be seen as the climax of Sindhi literature. In other words, the development obviously means that these intellectuals wanted to add a new dimension to the Sufi paradigm in Sindh. Last, this gesture shows a great deal when it comes do deciphering the social and religious background of the editors. Two of them were brothers, Mirza Quli Khan and Mirza Qalich Beg, who belonged to a declassed group of the Muslim elite. And the third one, Golasingh Parcharam, was a Hindu; according to his name, he was a Nanakpanthi.

The first book on Sufism unrelated to Shah Abd al-Latif or his poetry was Sachal Sarmast's Sindhi *kalam*. Sachal Sarmast (1739–1825) is introduced by all the specialists of Sindhi literature as the "number two"—or, the second greatest poet of Sindh after Shah Abd al-Latif. Thus, it is not surprising that he was the first after Shah Abd al-Latif to attract the attention of the Sindhi intellectuals. In 1902, 36 years after the first edition of *Shah jo Risalo*, Mirza Quli Khan edited and published the *Risalo Miyan Sachal Faqir jo* at Sukkur in northern Sindh. Mirza Quli Khan, also known as Mirza Ali Quli Beg, was Mirza Qalich Beg's brother, but, as L. H. Ajwani puts it, he had "not the industry or critical acumen of his brother" (Ajwani 1970: 122). The work was a selection of Sachal's *kafi*s in the Sindhi language, given that Sachal had also composed poetry in Siraiki, Persian, and Urdu. And despite its weaknesses, Mirza Quli Khan's edition of Sachal was recently reprinted in 2008 by the Department of Culture and Tourism, Government of Sindh.

However, the work completed by Mirza Quli Khan enriched the Sufi paradigm in introducing Sufi poetry other than the sole *Shah jo Risalo*. Furthermore, the expansion of territory it produced was mostly in terms of the approach to what made up Sufism. A relevant question to be raised is: were the editing and printing processes operating a shift in the making of the Sufi paradigm? Was Sachal's Sufi work already known among the Sindhis? According to the sources, Sachal was not well known over all of Sindh. It is significant that Burton did not mention him at all, and none of

the British or Sindhis of the nineteenth century referenced him. We can thus deduce that his influence could have been restricted to his area of northern Sindh, and probably to the territory of the *mir*s of Khairpur.

Notwithstanding, the editing and printing of a first work authored by Sachal had an obvious sound effect. While Shah Abd al-Latif had expressed a kind of classical Sufism, Sachal was much more controversial, unconventional, and even anti-conformist, although he belonged to a well-established Sufi family from Daraza, a village located south of Khairpur. His family was of Faruqi lineage, their ancestor being the second Caliph of Islam, Omar (c. 581–644). They were therefore members of one of the higher strata of Muslim society, but below the Sayyids, who were the direct descendants of Prophet Muhammad.

Beyond the differences pertaining to the nature of the language, there are three main distinctions between Shah Latif and Sachal's poetries.[3] The first one is related to the reference he made to the Hindu deities,[4] as well as the use of some kind of technical lexicon borrowed from Hinduism. The second distinction is his harsh criticism of the religious specialists, especially the Muslim ones. The third is his strong focus on the ideology of *wahdat-e wujud*. This is not to say that this concept was not pregnant in Shah Abd al-Latif's work, but Sachal went so far as to create a new expression for it as a process of vernacularization in the context of the religious culture of Sindh.

Sachal's expression is *haqq mawjud*, or literally "the very truth of existence," meaning the final reality of life, knowing that *haqq* is one of the names of God. Interestingly, in the expression of *haqq mawjud*, the word *wahdat* is replaced by that of *haqq*, while the form *wujud* has become *mawjud*. The "Truth" or *haqq* is one of the 99 names of God, but it is very commonly used by the Sufis for naming the Creator. Furthermore, it is an implicit allusion to the sentence *Ana al-haqq*. The story of Mansur Hallaj (857–922), who was hung in Baghdad after he shouted *Ana al-haqq*, or "I am God," is one of the most widespread in the Islamic world. In Sindh, Hallaj is a very popular figure and many Sufi poets mention his name in their verses.[5] Sachal Sarmast, usually nicknamed *Mansur Sani*, "the Second

[3] For a comparative perspective on Shah and Sachal, see Matlani (2003).

[4] On this aspect of Sachal's poetry, see Boivin (2019).

[5] Al-Husayn b. Mansur Al-Hallaj (c. 857–922) was a Sufi who was hanged down because he was considered as a heretic, after he had said "Ana al-haqq," I am the Truth, truth being a name of Allah. Hallaj is the symbol and best exponent of ecstatic Sufism. On the figure of Hallaj in Sindhi Sufi poetry, especially in Sachal's verses, see Schimmel (1985: 96–149).

Mansur," was a staunch admirer and devout of Hallaj. In his Sindhi poetry, there are many references to him. Furthermore, though, what is the implication of replacing the word *wujud* with *mawjud*?

The word *mawjud* reinforces the immanence of God since, in Arabic, *mawjud* signifies the very presence of God, as in the expression *hu mawjud*, "and He is here." The expression had already been used by Arab Muslim philosophers like al-Kindi (801–873) and al-Farabi (872–950). It is a clear statement of the omnipresence of God. On the other hand, Sachal usually uses the expression *haqq mawjud* coupled with another—*sada mawjud*, meaning always (*sada*) omnipresent. For example, in a *kafi*, one finds this as a refrain. Among Sachal's followers, these formulae are used for salutations. When they write to each other, they put *ishq mawjud*, and last but not least, the inscription written on the main gate of Sachal's *dargah* is *haqq mawjud*.

A year after Sachal's Sindhi *kalam* was published for the first time, in 1902, another Sufi work went to press: Rohal Sufi's poetry, edited by the Hindu gentleman Golasingh Munshi Parcharam. Like Sachal, his work was printed in Sukkur, the great city of northern Sindh, which had overpassed Shikarpur as economic capital of the area. I was not able to collect any information on the editor, but thanks to his name, we know that he or some of his ancestors had been *munshi*.

The most interesting point in this respect is that Rohal Faqir (1734–1804) is not considered to be a stalwart of Sufi poetry in Sindhi, although he was the fountainhead of the so-called Kandri School. He belonged to a family who had been in courtly offices since his own father was a minister of the Kalhora kings and Rohal was himself the ministry of the royal treasure of Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoro (d. 1772). He was also ambassador in a number of the Rajput states. After some years, he decided to give up his mundane affairs and went to Jhok Sharif to be initiated to Sufism. The maharaja of Jodhpur was so impressed by his spiritual power that he became his disciple.

As a staunch *wujudi*, he authored poetry in Sindhi, Siraiki, and Hindi (Bhatti 2012: 86–87). In his *History of Sindhi Literature*, L. H. Ajwani states that the main feature of the period between the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century "was the impulse given by Hindi and Vedantist literature to Sindhi poetry. Sami was the Master who could claim to have rendered the 'speech of the Vedas' in the vernacular of the Sindhis, but there were several others, like Rohal and Dalpat" (Ajwani 1970: 110). Rohal's poetry is replete with references to Hindu gods,

especially Rama, and for Motilal Jotwani, Rohal belongs to the *jnan-margi* school of poetry, this being another expression for Vedantist (Jotwani 1996: 125).

The third book which came as part of the second step of the extension of the Sufi paradigm is the work of Shah Abdul Karim, which was published by Mirza Qalich Beg in 1904.[6] Shah Abd al-Karim (1536–1623) is a major Sindhi Sufi poet who was born in Matiari. In the 1907 gazetteer, Aitken claimed he was "the first vernacular poet of any note" who composed "a religious Risalo in couplets which are said to have become the model for all subsequent aspirants to poetic fame" (Aitken 1907: 482–483). His family traces its lineage to Herat, and his ancestor Sayyid Hyder had come to Sindh in 1398 with Timur Leng. As shown by his *laqab* (honorific title) "shah," they belong to a Sayyid lineage and thus were the direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad; as such, they belonged to the higher strata of Muslim society.

As a child, he was fond of *sama* and loved to sit with the *faqir*s. As an orphan, he was brought up by his elder brother, Sayyid Jalal, who pushed him to get married. After his brother's demise, Shah Abd al-Karim had to work as a laborer in order to support his family. His mystical experiences were so strong that sometimes he would remove even his *godri*, the robe of the wandering dervishes, and remain naked in nature. Later, he came in close contact with Makhdum Nuh[7] and eventually became his *murid*, or follower. Makhdum Nuḥ's teachings tempered Shah Abd al-Karim's mystic fervor with a newfound focus on *sharia*. The *malfuzat*, his collected sayings, stated that he traveled a lot, up to Ahmadabad in Gujarat. Shah Abd al-Karim spent the last days of his life in seclusion, singing his *bayt*s.

Shah Abd al-Karim is the oldest Sufi of Sindh to whom a *malfuzat*, including his poetry, was devoted. It would be published in the following edition in 1909 (Vasi 1909). It was compiled by his follower Miyan Muhammad Raza, alias Mir Daryai Thattawi, and published six years after his death under the title of *Bayan al-Arifin*. It includes his sayings, which

[6] In his book devoted to Shah Abd al-Karim, Jotilal Motwani speaks of a first edition completed by one Makhdum Abd al-Samad ibn Haji Muhammad Muquim Nawrangapota in 1874 in Bombay (Jotwani 1979: 14).

[7] Makhdum Nuh Halai (1505–1589) was an influential Sufi belonging to the Sohrawardiyya. According to local tradition, he was a descendant of Abu Bakr al-Siddiqui, the first caliph of Islam. As a Sufi, he considered *zikr* to be a high priority. A main achievement of his is the first translation of the Quran in Persian, although it is spuriously ascribed by many scholars to Shah Wali Allah.

are reported in Persian, and his *bayt*s in Sindhi. In his verses, Shah Abd al-Karim clearly states that, while other people were reading religious books, he learnt only the *sama*, the musical spiritual performance. His love for *sama* is also made apparent through his references to the minstrels, the Manganhars. He was the first Sindhi Sufi poet to use the folk characters as allegories of the divine quest, like Sassui, Sohni, or Marui. Last, Shah Abd al-Karim was a staunch *wujudi* and he was one of the first Sindhi Sufi poets to express Sufi concepts in the Sindhi language. For example, he refers to the remembrance of God, usually known as *zikr Allah*, with the Sindhi formula of *sanbhari ki sanjanin*. He was also the great-grandfather of Shah Abd al-Latif Bhittai.

In three years, the Sufi paradigm as based on Shah Abd al-Latif's *Shah jo Risalo* was enriched and enlarged. It is remarkable indeed that, in such a short time, three new components were added to it. In 1927, a new Sufi *kalam* would be published in Sukkur by Hindu literati: Bedil and Bekas (Mankani 1927). Qadir Bakhsh Bedil (1815–1873) and his son Bekas (1859–1882) are among the most acclaimed Sufi poets. Bedil was born in Rohri and he was a Qadiri. In his teens, he went to Sehwan Sharif, where he is reported to have been vouchsafed spiritual visions. He also visited Jhok Sharif and Daraza since he was a staunch follower of Sachal Sarmast. He wrote copiously on mystical topics in Persian, Sindhi, Siraiki, and Urdu, and was the author of 18 works, mainly in Persian and in Sindhi. Most of his writings are devoted to Sufism, and he has described numerous Sufi concepts in prose and poetry. He also wrote a commentary on Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's *qasida*s.

After a year, in 1928, the poetry of Budhal Faqir (1865–1929), a Qadiri born near Shikarpur, would be published in Jacobabad. His poetry mostly focused on devotion toward the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, but he had himself thrown his work in well, claiming it would turn the Muslims away from the *sharia*. It is worth observing that he is the only one whose poetry was published during his lifetime (Budhal Faqir 1928). Like many Sufi poets of northern Sindh, he also wrote a *kalam* in Siraiki, which is yet unpublished.

Let us now summarize the most meaningful components of the new step of the Sufi paradigm. The dominant orientation is that this Sufi poetry aimed to build a bridge between Islam and Hinduism. As we saw before, the Sufi poets involved used Hindu referents abundantly, be they notions, concepts, figures, or mythological events. Furthermore, another key factor is that these Sufi poets were writing in a language much more accessible to the

general public of Sindhi-speaking people. Nonetheless, Shah Abdul Karim cannot be included in this category. We can reasonably think that the publication of his *kalam* was a part of the vast program implemented by Mirza Qalich Beg to provide a comprehensive picture of the literature of Sindh.

As a part of the enlargement of the Sufi paradigm, there are the works on Sufis belonging to peculiar Sufi traditions, such as the Qalandariyya. The Qalandariyya was an antinomian group of Sufis who, since the Middle Ages, have been considered provocative for not strictly following the *sharia*. They would travel from *darbar* to *darbar*, from graveyard to graveyard. They were not organized like other Sufi *tariqa*s, which had a head, and they were not supposed to have followers. They did not accept the relations of other *tariqa*s with political powers, especially during the Delhi sultanate. In Sindh, the most famous *qalandar* was Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (d. 1274), whose shrine is in Sehwan Sharif. As in other parts of the Indian subcontinent, the Shahbaziyya branch of the Qalandariyya he founded was absorbed by the dominant *tariqa*s, although the affiliation of local *sajjada nashin*s with them was rather loose. Nowadays, the word *qalandar* refers to a high-level Sufi, and a number of them took it as a *laqab* or honorific title, or to show their link with Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.

In this respect, one of the main actors in the process was a native of Sehwan, Hakim Fateh Muhammad Sehwani (1882–1942). Sehwani wrote dozens of books and among them is a biography of Prophet Muhammad in Sindhi, published in 1914. Another book, published posthumously, was devoted to Sindhi literature. These two books are still much acclaimed. In 1904, Sehwani also published the first book on Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, the great saint of the medieval period who is venerated at Sehwan Sharif in central Sindh. Lal Shahbaz Qalandar was born Usman Marwandi in Western Persia around 1170 (Boivin 2012). He was initiated to the Qalandariyya by Jamal al-Din Sawi and, after touring in the Middle East, he traveled in the Indian subcontinent at the time of the Mongol threat. He finally settled in Sehwan Sharif in the southern Indus Valley, where he died in 1274. His tomb and mausoleum gradually became a place of pilgrimage.

Sources that address the beginning of the site's importance as a place of pilgrimage are scarce. In the mid-fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta stayed for some weeks in Sehwan, and though he mentioned Lal Shahbaz's *qubba*[8], he did not say anything about it as a possible site for pilgrimage. Even so, when the powerful Sultan of Delhi, Muhammad b. Tughluq,

[8] The *qubba* is the name given to a small mausoleum with a dome that serves as the tomb of a saint.

died near Thatta in 1351, he was buried in the precincts of Lal Shahbaz's *dargah*. But why did Sehwani publish his book on Lal Shahbaz? He was fond of biographies, especially those devoted to religious figures, and because he was born in Sehwan, it was natural for him to think of writing a book devoted to Lal Shahbaz.

The title of Sehwani's book on Lal Shahbaz is *Makhzan Tazkira Lal Shahbaz urf Qalandar Namo Sindhi*, or *The Treasure of the Tazkira of Lal Shahbaz*. It is otherwise known as *The Book of the Qalandar*. As suggested by the title, Sehwani followed the traditional *tazkira* form of hagiography. Sehwani also provided a framework for studying Lal Shahbaz, which was used by subsequent authors. For example, he distinguished between Lal Shahbaz's spiritual affiliation (*silsila*) and his affiliation with a Sufi order (*tariqa*). He depicts Lal Shahbaz as a master of exoteric sciences (*zahiri ilm*) and ethics (*sitara*). The complexity of the figure of Lal Shahbaz is expressed through his honorific names (*laqab*s), but the most innovative part of Sehwani's book relates to the *dargah* through the role played by successive amirs—from the Tughluq sultans of Delhi to the Talpur kings of Sindh.

The last chapter of Sehwani's book is devoted to the dance that is here referred to as *nawbat*: he was the first Sindhi author to introduce a vernacular ritual in an ethnographical manner. The *dhamal* is the ecstatic dance performed in his *dargah*, and his followers think it is the genuine *zikr*, where the aim is to allow the performer to merge with Lal Shahbaz, and through him, with God. Until Sehwani spoke of this un-Islamic ritual, according to the Shariati ulamas, no Sindhi literati had mentioned a popular, if not folkloric, ritual in relation to Sufism. The *dhamal* can be performed in many ways, under the guidance of a *faqir* or a *murshid*, but it can also be performed freely, without any rules except the shared goal of reaching ecstasy. For the first time, a very popular ritual was added, after the Sufi poetry and the life of the Sufi saints, to the Sufi paradigm.

But instead of using the word *dhamal*, Sehwani preferred to speak of the *nawbat*, the *sama*, or the *raqs*. Although *raqs* is largely used in the *ghazal*s attributed to Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, the word *dhamal* was mainly used in Sindhi in reference to the ecstatic dance performed by the Qalandar and by his devotees. For example, a Qadiri Sufi Bekas (d. 1882) wrote, during the second half of the nineteenth century: "We express our pain to stay at your door performing dhamal" (Channa 1973: 10). It seems that Sehwani wished to locate Lal Shahbaz in the mainstream of Sufism, far from its popular and uncontrollable expressions. It is true that, in North

Indian languages, *dhamal* means "noise" and "to make dhamal" means "to make noise." The word thus implies a confused practice without any control. However, Sehwani's book on Lal Shahbaz Qalandar is a good example of the shifting of representations of Sufism. Although he still used the word *tazkira*, as a Sehwani, he also gave a lot of vivid descriptions of life in the *dargah* and around it.

Sehwani tried to associate the classical representation of Sufism with a more vernacular approach. The classical is illustrated by his bio-hagiography of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, which fits quite well with the narratives of standard *tazkira* works. It depicts the *karamat* (miracles), and Sehwani also devoted pages to the Persian poetry of the Sufi. On the other hand, Sehwani allowed other actors to enter the scene of Sufism—the *murid*s. This is a major change in the making of the Sufi paradigm in the early twentieth century since, in introducing the *murid*, Sehwani confronted the Sufi literature, which was the core of the Sufi paradigm, to practiced Sufism, involving new representations of Sufism as a social set-up.

Through his description of the annual fair (*melo*), he incorporated the common people as a whole within the scope of Sufism. *Murid*s are not literati; they are neither Sayyids nor members of any social elite. They are mainly peasants from Sindh, whether Muslim or Hindu. Sehwani also mentioned the ecstatic dance, for which he preferred to use the classical Arabic word *nawbat* rather than the vernacular *dhamal*. For Sehwani, there was no disjunction between Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, with his Persian origins, and the poor peasants from Sindh who walked barefoot for days to attend the *melo*, the annual fair.

The Sufi Paradigm Beyond Sufism and Islam (Third Step of the SP)

The second step of the formation process of the Sufi paradigm started in the early twentieth century with the publication of Sufi works other than the *Shah jo Risalo*. Another part of the process was the shifting of the hagiographical genre known as *tazkira* into a biographical genre, or *hayat*. The last part of the process was the publication of anthologies or syntheses related to the Sufis of Sindh. In this category, the first publication was probably the fruit of collaboration between a Hindu literati, Palihalraj Lalwani Vasvani, and a Muslim literati, Muhammad Sidiq Musafir. The latter was a well-known and eclectic Sindhi author to whom 120 books are attributed. Unfortunately, the author was unable to see the book titled

Sufi Sunhara, or *Illustrious Sufis*, which was published in 1907. Muhammad Sidiq Musafir (1879–1961) was born in Tango Bago in southern Sindh in the Shidi community. He was a prolific author who wrote on varied topics, from history to the grammar of the Sindhi language. He spent most of his life as a schoolmaster in Hyderabad.

After 14 years, in 1921, two Hindu literati published another book on the same topic, with the title *Sufi Sagora*, *Propitious Sufi*. The authors were well known Sindhi literati: Lilaram Premchand and Jethmal Parsram. As we saw in discussions of the early twentieth century, Parsram was among the most active individuals in the process of making a Sufi paradigm in Sindh. The book *Sufi Sagora* can be seen as one of the first attempts to locate Sindhi Sufism in the wake of Sufism at large (Premchand and Parsram 1921). But, simultaneously, it introduces an attempt to consider Sufism as a specific spiritual path, and without any direct link with any institutionalized religion. As a matter of fact, the authors speak of the *Sufi mat*, a Sindhi word with the meaning of "religion, faith, sect" (Shirt et al. 1879: 761). It appears that the authors wanted Sufism to be a religion, or a faith *per se*. Nevertheless, the first part of the book is on the history of the Sufi *mat*.

The authors start by explaining the Arabic origin of the word Sufi, from *suf*, wool, and they mention that the first Sufis were often persecuted by the official Muslim institutions, such as Abu al-Hussain al-Nuri (d. 908). Of course, Mansur Hallaj is also included in the history of Sufism as a main participant. The second chapter of the book is titled "Sufi Mat." Interestingly, while the authors clearly show that the Sufis were Muslims, and used Quranic references to elaborate their spirituality, the authors are also keen to show the deep rooting of the Sufi paradigm in Sindh. Like all of the Sindhi intellectuals, they had a deep reverence for Jalal al-Din Rumi, but their demonstration finally tends to show that the Sufi paradigm goes beyond Sufism and Islam. As a matter of fact, they provide quotations from Sachal, Rohal, and also Dalpat and Sami. Among the other chapters, there is one devoted to the life of Shah Latif, probably borrowed from Parsram's own publication on the same topic, and another chapter on Jalal al-Din Rumi.

As a paradigm, Sufism provided a reservoir of notions and concepts that were borrowed by religious traditions which were not within the scope of Sufism, some being Muslim and others not. As a case study for the Muslims, we shall focus on a community whose members are Shia, but not Twelvers: the Ismaili Shias. Another Sindhi writer plays a particularly

important role in the development of this theory of the mixed religion of Sindh, he being Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Lal Muhammad alias Hashim Lalu (1880–1961). Hashim Lalu, an Aghakhani Khoja born in Hyderabad, published several books in the aftermath of the First World War. Some titles are very revealing, like *Ilahi Nur ya Ishwari jot*, which implies that the concept of divine light, *ilahi nur* for Muslims and *ishwari jot* for Hindus, is the same in both Islam and in Hinduism (Lalu 1926).

His most important work, however, remains a book published in 1917 under the title *Haqq Mawjud. Tasawuf ya Vedanta*, that is, *The First Truth of Existence. Sufism or Vedanta*. Already, we know that the formula *haq mawjud* was a concept built by Sachal Sarmast from the *wahdat-e wujud*. For Hashim Lalu, Hinduism and Sufism had the same origin, as they had similar practices and identical concepts. The most crucial point of his demonstration rests on the equivalence, which he establishes between the Muslim practice of *yad ilahi* and the Hindu practice of *samaran* (Lalu 1917: 41).

It is important to note that the references used by Hashim Lalu are very eclectic. The *ginan*s of Pir Shams and Pir Sadr al-Din are not the most numerous.[9] The references to Shah Latif are numerous, but there are also quotations from Kabir and Guru Nanak. The argument of his first work *Haq Mawjud* is to demonstrate the universality of religions. Ismailism is de facto assimilated to Sufism, and the Ismailis are presented as Sufis. Much of the book consists of a long series of quotations. The little book he published nine years later under the title *Ilahi nur ya Ishwari jot* is more concise and more technical. Quranic references are largely predominant in showing that Islamic concepts have their strict equivalent in the Hindu *sanatan*. The use of this term indicates that the author refers more to conservative Hinduism than to the reformism of the Arya Samaj that was yet active in Sindh.

Hashim Lalu's demonstration is based on the concept of the manifestation of divinity on Earth. God became known to many intercessors, the *payghambar*s and the *mazhar*s. These terms of Arabo-Persian origin are for the author more or less the equivalent of "Sanskrit" (this being the term he uses). He can say that Vishnu is a *mazhar* just as the Imam is. Lalu enumerates the ten avatars that the Hindus recognize. He specifies that the tenth, named Nikalank, is Ali, the one who must save mankind, just as

[9] Two Ismaili preachers who would have come from Iran in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and converted Hindus to Ismailism.

for the Twelver Shiites, it is the *Mahdi* who must perform this mission (Lalu 1926: 5). All religions come from one and the same God who has adapted His message through His various envoys to a time and a place. On the basis of this idea, Muslims and Hindus come from the same fraternity (*Hindu musalman baradaran*) and each religion is compatible with the other through an equivalent technical lexicon. Lalu establishes lexical equivalences between Arabic and Sanskrit (Lalu 1926: 11–12): Allah is the equivalent of Brahman, *rasul* of Brahma, *imam* of Vishnu, sharia of *kriya karma*, *tariqat* of *surti shabar*, *haqiqat* of *yug marg*, *ishq* of *bhagti*, and *ashiq* of *bhagat*.

Another step taken by the Sufi paradigm came when it reached a field that was not only beyond Sufism, but also beyond Islam. From the nineteenth century, we know Sufism was also informed by Hindus, but two different situations should be distinguished here: the Hindus who were Sufi, and the Hindus who referred to the Sufi paradigm without claiming to be Sufi themselves. Notwithstanding, my aim is not to examine the Sufi works of Hindu Sindhis but to analyze how works composed by Hindus did enlarge the Sufi paradigm. In this respect, there is the case of Sami's *slok*s (verses) to be discussed.[10] Between 1885 and 1892, thus during the Shah Latif period of the Sufi paradigm, Kauromal Khilnani published Sami's work in three volumes. As we saw before, Khilnani was a pivotal actor in the spread of British knowledge in Sindh, as a translator as well as in the direct building of a vernacular knowledge. It is to be noted that Sami's work was published with explanations of the difficult words and expressions, as Lalwani would do for the *Shah jo Risalo* in 1890. It thus confirmed the trend among the literati to make the Sufi paradigm more accessible to the Sindhis.

Sami was born in 1743 as Chainrai Bhachomal Lund in a well-to-do family in Shikarpur. After getting married when he was about 30, he got in touch with Swami Meghraj, who taught him Vedanta in original Sanskrit for about ten years. He was the most influential Sindhi author of the *bhakti*, with a strong devotion toward the god Krishna. He was also the author of a huge Sindhi poetical work known as *Sami jo Sloka*, which went through several editions, including one recently published in Karachi in 2002 (see Bibliography). Interestingly, he wrote them in the Gurmukhi script, one of the scripts used by the Sindhi Hindus. It is quite fruitful to

[10] There is a lack of academic studies devoted to Sami's work, with the exception of a PhD prepared at the University of Mumbai. See Ramwani (2010).

compare the lexicon as provided by Khilnani in his 1885 edition with that of Abd al-Karim Sindilo which was put in the 2002 edition made by the Prem Sagar of Karachi, although the latter is much more copious than the first.

If we focus on the basic technical lexicon of Sufism, we observe two main differences, first in the selection of the vocabulary and second in their explanation. Let us take a meaningful example, that of *ishq* and its derivatives. The semantic field of *ishq* is one of the most important in Sufism, which designates the mystical love that is the bond uniting the believer with God (Boivin 2015: 161). This lexical field was not included by Sindilo in his lexicon, while it was by Khilnani.

Interestingly, Khilnani "translates" Ashiq as Ishwar.[11] In other words, Ashiq means the Beloved, and the Beloved is God (Sami 2002: 320). Another meaningful example is how both treat the word *dust*, a Persian originated term which is of high relevance in Sufism. Literally, the *dust* is the friend, itself a Persian translation of the Arabic word *wali*. It suggests the closeness of the Sufi with God. It is not included in Sindilo's lexicon, while Khilnani gives the translation as *pyaro*, *mahbub*. All of these terms belong to the lexical field of the one who is loved (by God) (Sami 2002: 317).

A last example of a Sufi word used by Sami is the Sindhi term *bhoro*. Khilnani translates it as *mast*, which means *intoxicated*, another main concept of Sufism (Sami 2002: 252). The Sufi is intoxicated with divine love. Such a notion does not appear at all in Sindilo's explanation. The different approaches to Sami's work taken by Khilnani and Sindilo clearly show they differ in regard to introducing Sami's relationship with the Sufi paradigm. In the late nineteenth century, Khilnani wished to include Sami as a reference of the Sufi paradigm, hence his inclusion of Sufi terms in his lexicon. My aim here is not to state whether or not Sami can be considered as a Sufi or not, but only to observe that, for a late nineteenth-century Hindu literati, he was among the builders of the Sufi paradigm.

As a matter of fact, it is quite obvious that Khilnani wanted to introduce Sami's poetry as a part of the Sufi corpus of Sindh, although the references to Hinduism are prevalent in his *sloka*s. Furthermore, it is of interest to

[11] I use the word " translates," because Khilnani only provides a word as synonymous for the one used by Sami, while Sindilo provides an explanation throughout a sentence. I have used Khilnani's lexicon which has been reprinted at the end of the 2002 edition of Sami's *sloka*s, located after Sindilo's one (Sami 2002: 314–322).

observe that the attempt made by Khilnani occurred in the phase of the set-up of the Sufi paradigm when reference to Shah Abd al-Latif was dominant and, in fact, unique. It may be that we can see this as a will to include Hindus as well as Sindhis representing the north of Sindh since Shah Abd al-Latif was from the south. But these are only hypotheses.

In 1938, the work of a major Hindu Sufi would be published for the first time—Dalpat Sufi (1769–1842). The work was published by Mulchand Thakur in Shikarpur. Dalpat belonged to the Mirani family, whose members performed the *mendi* ceremony during the *urs* of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar before Partition. As an Amil, Dalpat was a high-ranking officer in the Talpur administration; he was therefore posted in different localities of Sindh. Once he toured near Bubak, where he met a guru named Asardas who soon became his follower. After some time, Dalpat resigned from his job. Later on, he got close to the *murshid*s of Jhok Sharif before establishing an *astano* in Hyderabad where he could meditate. The place was known as "Sipahimalani Ghitti, Hyderabad," and the Talpur *mir*s looked after it.

Dalpat Sufi composed a number of *kalam*s in different languages, such as Sindhi, Hindi, and Siraiki. Only the Sindhi *kalam* was published, and this one through three editions; we saw the first one in 1938, before Partition, and two others after Partition and in India in 1956 and 2009. In the first edition, the editor Jhamandas Thakur gives an introduction in which he explicitly locates Dalpat in the wake of Sufism, using the word *tasawuf*. Furthermore, he gives a number of Dalpat Sufi's verses, locating them as being equivalent with those of Hafiz and Rumi (Dalpat Sufi 1938: 7). Thakur was a professor of Persian in a local college of Shikarpur, but it is a common pattern that, when some Sindhi scholar wants to give evidence of the importance of a poet, he locates his work in the wake of the greatest Persian poets.

Thakur's introduction can be seen as a sign of the good state of the Sufi paradigm nine years before Partition, as composed by a Sindhi Hindu scholar. But despite the success of Dalpat's Sindhi *kalam*, the most quoted of his verse were composed in Siraiki even though his Siraiki *kalam* has not been published yet. Dalpat Sufi's Siraiki verses are titled *Sufi so jo Sachu Pachhani*, or *The Sufi is the One who Knows the Truth (God)*. This means the work was not devoted to the common worshipper, to the simple follower of the path, the *murid*. It was written for someone who had already been initiated into the Sufi path.

Thus, the poem does not deal with daily problems, with smoothing the pains of life, or with being granted a direct vision of God. It rather deals with the importance of taming the Ego, the absolute prerequisite for merging with God. This issue is the most addressed issue throughout the poem. It is about "burning the Ego" (*jani*), or to "transform the Ego into the Self" or "find the self in the Self." Dalapt used different words for naming the Ego and the Self. They mostly belong to the Sindhi root *pan*, but in different shapes, such as *ap* or *apna*. Throughout this poem, it is said that the Sufi is beyond common human nature in terms of seeing or happiness. Another major message is also expressed: the Sufi is the one who "knows no religion, sees One in all." Nevertheless, Dalpat's poetry was and still is much appreciated, both in India and in Pakistan, and Dalpat's style was shaped by his knowledge of Persian and Sanskrit. He is venerated by the Hindu Sindhis in India. In Colaba, Mumbai, a descendant of his brother is running a *darbar* dedicated to him (Boivin 2019). His poetry is sung in many other places, including Jhok Sharif, since Dalpat Sufi was a staunch exponent of *wahdat-e wujud*.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Hindu literati were at the vanguard of the editing and printing of Sufi texts. As Hindus, they emphasized the similarities between Islam and Hinduism as they were interpreted in Sindh. For them, the *wahdat-e wujud* (unity of being), also locally known as *haqq mawjud*, was the exact equivalent of the Vedanta (the monist school of Hindu philosophy). They were convinced that Shah Abd al-Latif, who had spent time with *jogi*s, had been deeply influenced by Hinduism. One question is whether these Hindu literati were influenced by the Orientalist conception, which argues that Sufism is a vision of Islam that has been corrupted by Hinduism. It was probably the case that they were influenced by this idea, although the sources do not provide clear evidence either way. In the early twentieth century, Sufi poetry became a symbol of the culture shared between Hindus and the Muslims of Sindh.

A number of hints clearly show that the new elite of Sindhi literati were attracted by a number of recent spiritual movements coming from Europe. The first to reach Sindh was the Freemasonry movement since the conqueror and first governor of Sindh, Sir Charles Napier, built a lodge in 1843 in Karachi. Three other lodges were founded in the following years, including, in 1873, an association for the relief of distressed widows and orphans (Hughes 1874: 395). Social issues were thus incorporated into

Freemasonry. Spirituality was often related to Occultist or Esoteric traditions, as well as nurtured by new lecturers of Oriental philosophies or wisdoms. The most influential in this respect was the Theosophical Society.

The *Theosophical Society* was founded in *New York City* in 1875 with the *motto*: "There is no Religion higher than Truth." The main objective of the society was to build a universal brotherhood rooted in a universal wisdom. Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891) was the main actor in spreading the ideology of the Theosophical Society. She believed that Hinduism was the closest religious tradition to the original wisdom of humanity. Another leading figure of the Theosophical Society was Annie Besant (1847–1933). A Marxist and a feminist in the first part of her life, she met Helena Blavatsky in 1890 and became a member of the Theosophical Society. In 1893, she visited India for the first time and was quickly interested in local education. Consequently, she created the Central Hindu College in 1898. In 1907, she became president of the society.

Besant was very active in Indian politics and she became a member of the Indian National Congress. In 1916, she created the Home Rule League with Tilak and then was finally arrested by the British in 1917, to be freed after a few months. She became president of the Congress for a year. Besant published many books, including a translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. One of her last publications was *The Life and Teaching of Muhammad* published in 1932.

In Karachi, the society was founded in 1896 after Annie Besant (1847–1933) visited Karachi and Hyderabad to deliver a number of lectures. When it was created, the Parsis were the most active, but the society attracted other gentlemen belonging to different creeds. After Annie Besant's visit, Dhunjishaw, Jamshed Nusserwanji, and Dayaram Jethmal decided to create a branch in Karachi. They started to meet in the new Dayaram Jethmal Science College. Later on, an Englishmen gave his residence to the society. Jamshed Nusserwanji decided to build a new building with an auditorium, a library, and a lecture room.[12] A Montessori school, one of the earliest in the city of Karachi, was opened on the third floor. Many members of the intelligentsia were attracted by the work of the Theosophical Society. According to Aitken, who published his *Gazetteer* in 1907, the Karachi branch had 40 members (Aitken 1907: 167).

[12] It is noteworthy that the activities of the Society stopped after the assassination of the president in 2007, late Dara Feroze Mirza (1937–2007).

The Sufi Paradigm Beyond Sindh (Fourth Step of the SP)

Many Sindhi scholars were also keen to show that the Sufism of Sindh was located in the wake of Sufism from an Arabic speaking country and a Persian speaking country. The authors had different opinions about the relationship between the Sufis of Sindh with their predecessors in "central" Muslim countries. Sometimes, they could use their *silsila*, or spiritual chain, to go back to their spiritual ancestors. Also, this reconstructed genealogy depended on whether the author focused on literature, by which I mean Sufi poetry, or on the way of life—most of the time, asceticism. It may be that a third category would include only one sample: the link with Mansur Hallaj, to whom we shall return.

If we have a look at the chronology of the publications related to non-Sindhi Sufis, we are amazed to find that one of the earliest publications in Bombay in 1874 was devoted to Bayazid Bistami. Abu Yazid Tayfur, born Isa b. Surushan al-Bistami (849–874), is considered to be one of the pioneers of the concept of *fana*, the notion of passing away in mystical union with the deity. The ecstatic Sufi is the one who openly expresses his love for the deity while neglecting social customs and consequences. Many ecstatic utterances (*shathiyat*) have been attributed to Bistami, which led to him being known as the "drunken" or "ecstatic" (*sukr* or *wajd*) school of Islamic mysticism. Also, Bistami built the spiritual ascension on the pattern of the Prophet Muhammad's *miraj*. The *miraj* of Bistami seems as if he is going through a self-journey; as he ascends through each heaven, he is gaining knowledge.

Another very popular Sufi from the Middle East was Mansur Hallaj. Abu'l-Mughit Al-Husayn bin Mansur al-Hallaj (858–922) was a major source of inspiration for Sachal Sarmast, who, as we saw before, was called the Second Mansur. Two biographies were devoted to him, the first published in 1915 by Deumal Arumal Sehwani, with another being published in 1917 by Lalichand Jagtiani, both authors being Hindu scholars. Jagtiani's *Shaykh Mansur Hallaj* was a biography of the famous Sufi. He was the secretary of the Sindhi Sahit Society in Karachi. Nonetheless, I am not aware of any translation of his Arabic poetry into Sindhi. Hallaj is best known for one utterance: *Ana al-haqq*, or "I am the truth," *haqq* being one of the 99 names of God in the Quran. Consequently, the utterance can be translated as "I am God."

He was considered as being a *kafir* in Baghdad, the then seat of the Abbasid caliphate. He was brought before a court and condemned to the

death penalty. Apparently, the real reason was that he was suspected to be Qarmati, an Ismaili Shia who had seditious plans against the Abbassids. As we already saw, Hallaj was mentioned by Sachal many times in his poetry, while there is only a single reference to him in the *Shah jo Risalo* (Shah Abd al-Latif 2018: 184–185).[13] In 1918, a book was published in Karachi on Rabia al-Basri (717–780), one of the earliest Sufi ascetics, and a woman. The author was Muhammad Valai Halai, and the last part, "Halai," would suggest he was from Hala in central Sindh. Rabia was born as a slave, and she is usually depicted as having created the Sufi notion of *hubb*, which is the mutual love between God and man as expressed in the Quran (Quran 5. 51). She is mentioned by Ibn Arabi (1165–1240). About Ibn Arabi, one of the most influential Sufis of all time, it is striking to observe that no book was ever published on him or his work, when one knows he was the contriver of the *wahdat-e wujud*.

Still another very popular Sufi from Baghdad was Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1177–1166), the founder of the most widespread Sufi order in South Asia, the Qadiriyya. al-Jilani's death anniversary is still celebrated every month all over Sindh, and known as Yarhen, the Eleventh, since he died on the 11th of Rabi al-Sani. In 1910, Makhdum Moulvi Mahomed Usman translated from Arabic the *Bahjat al-Asrar*, and Al-Jilani's classical *manaqib* was written by Ali ibn Yusuf al-Shattanufi (1246–1314) (Shattanufi 1910). The *manaqib* is one of the classic Arabic words, which can be translated as hagiography. Similarly, as early as 1878, another Arabic Sufi master had already been translated into Sindhi; this work is *Dalail al-khairat*, or *Waymarks of Benefits*, a classic composed by Muhammad b. Sulaiman al-Jazuli. It included the Arabic text with an interlinear translation in Sindhi and was published in Bombay (Jazuli 1878). Jazuli (d. 1465) belonged to the Shadili *tariqa*, a Sufi order from Maghreb, and he completed the first compilation of blessings and prayers upon the Prophet Muhammad.

Also, Sufi poets from Punjab were very popular in Sindh. Farid al-Din Ganj-e Shakar (1175–1266) was a famous Sufi from Punjab as one of the "Four Friends," the *char yar*. He is said to have traveled with Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Baha al-Din Zakariyya, and Jalal al-Din al-Bukhari. He belonged to the Chishtiyya, a very influential Sufi order all over India, but which did not spread throughout Sindh. Also, it is generally accepted that verses composed by Farid were inserted in the *Adi Granth*, the sacred book of the Sikhs.

[13] On the figure of Mansur in Sindhi poetry, see Schimmel (1985).

Two booklets on Farid reflect this double side of his character. The first one was published in 1925 and it is a biography titled *Shaykh Farid Sahib jini ja Charitra* (Advani 1925). Published in Gurmukhi script, it also includes a selection of Shaikh Farid al-Din's work with Sindhi translation. The second booklet is titled *Shaikh Farid Sahib ja Slok*, or *The Verses of Shaykh Farid*. Published in 1928, and also in Gurmukhi, it contains the verses of Farid as included in the *Adi Granth* with Sindhi explanations offered by one Shrimati Sati Bai in Hyderabad (Farid al-Din 1928). Interestingly, Farid's poetry was published only in relation to the *Adi Granth*. Thus, we may state that the publishers would likely have been Nanakpanthis. Other Punjabi Sufi poets attracted the interest of the Sindhis, these including the famous Bule Shah (1680–1757), whose abridged poetry was published in 1924 by Hotchand Manghumal (Bule Shah 1921).

New Trends in Early Twentieth-Century Knowledge: The Spread of the *Qisso*

In the wake of the building of the Sufi paradigm, consultation of the *Catalogue of Sindhi Books* shows that new trends appeared in the early twentieth century. Here, I want to turn to the spread of a literary genre for which it is no exaggeration to say it went through a real boom: the *qisso*. From the Arabic, the word *qissa* already covers a large semantic field with the meaning of fable, epic narrative, or folktale. In the thorough study she has devoted to the issue, Farina Mir writes *qisse* (plural in Panjabi for *qisso*) "were among the earliest published Punjabi books, and among the most popular late in the century" (Mir 2010: 15). The narratives had already been included in the works of eighteenth-century Sufi poets such as Warris Shah (1722–1798), but the printing process gave a new impetus to the genre.

Initially, the *qisso* was an oral performance, although manuscripts already existed. Punjabi *qissa* texts had been epic-length compositions with hundreds of stanzas and hundreds of folios. With the spread of printing during the colonial period, the *qissa* became both an oral and a written literary tradition. Furthermore, for Punjab, the *qissa* was always a trans-religious literary genre as well as a performance. As such, it was sung with musical instruments and could be performed in a *dargah* or in a *gurdwara*. Many performers belonged to occupational groups associated with

music, dance, and singing. For Mir, the *qissa* was the core of what she calls the "Punjabi literary formation," that is, "a group constituted through its members (that) shared practices of producing, circulating, performing, reading, and listening to Punjabi literary texts, qisse in particular" (Mir 2010: 97).

In Sindh, the *qisso* shared some features with the Punjabi one, but it was also distinct. Among the shared features, there is the fact that some *qisso*s had already been included in Sufi poets' works. In his poetry, Shah Abd al-Latif dealt with seven of them: Umar Marvi, Sohni Mehar, Lila Chanesar, Nuri Jam Tamashi, Sorath Rai Dyach, Momal Rano, and last but not least, Sassui Punhun. If compared with Punjab, we find that one of the most popular *qisso*s is absent from Shah Abd al-Latif: Hir Ranjha. Otherwise, the name given to the tales is always that of a woman and a man since they are all love stories, which are most of the time dramatic. In Punjab as well as in Sindh, the first *qissa*s were printed in the 1880s. For example, in 1885, the second edition of *Qisso Hir Ranjha jo* was printed in Karachi. Other Sindhi *qisso*s were printed in Bombay, such as *Qisso Jamjamah jo Sindhi Ilhaj*, apparently a translation made in 1890.

Still in the 1880s, we note the publication of *Qisso Kamsen ain Kamrup jo*, published by Udharam Thanvardas in 1881 in Karachi. The script used for it was the Khudawadi, wrongly identified by the British Museum as Khojki (Blumhardt 1893: 8). In the same Karachi, there is also *Qisso Konro Chanesar jo*, published in 1883 by one Moriyya Faqir, and *Qisso Saif al-Muluk ain Badi al-Jamal jo* in 1884 (3rd edition). The burgeoning success of the *qisso* was mirrored by the fact that Sindhi literati turned to the publishing of the *qisso*s—for example, Udharam Thanvardas who also published *Galhi Dodi Chanesar ji* in 1881 in Karachi. Another proof of the success was that Englishmen started to translate them into their language. We already know that Captain Goldsmid translated from Sindhi to English the *qisso* of Sassui Punhun as early as 1863. Later on, in 1881, Thomas Hart-Davies (1849–1920), an educational inspector and judge who served in Sindh, published a book titled *Sind Ballads* in Bombay, "ballad" being the word which the British usually used for translation of *qisso*.

Notwithstanding, the publications of *qisso*s were booming by the early twentieth century. Between 1904 and 1927, about 60 books of *qisso*s were published in Sindhi, with a large majority of them being from Sukkur, and also Shikarpur, Karachi, Hyderabad, and even Lahore for two *qisso*s. While some books were translations, such as the *qisso* of Taj al-Malik published in

Shikarpur in 1915, the *qisso*s usually mirrored the diversity, if not the fragmentation, of the vernacular knowledge in Sindh. As a matter of fact, we find *qisso*s devoted to Mahmud Ghaznawi, the famous sultan, one being published by a Talpur prince, Mir Gul Hasan Khan Talpur, in Sukkur in 1905. Several *qisso*s narrated the story of Suhni Mehwal, another tale Sindh shares with Punjab. Also, we find the *qisso* of Laila Majnun, and that of the poet Firdawsi. Nonetheless, despite the diversity of the addressed topics, the *qisso*s were mostly devoted to the heroine par excellence of the *Shah jo Risalo*: Sassui, with her half Punhun.

The *qisso* of Sassui Punhun is in majority in the most spread *qisso*s of the early twentieth century. They are printed in two different alphabets, the Arabic Sindhi and the Gurmukhi. For example, in 1914, Lal Heman Das published an edition of the *qisso* in Gurmukhi in Sukkur. The success of this *qisso* was manifold, but two among them were dominant. First, the story takes place in Sindh since the hero, Punhun, belongs to the raja of Bhambore's family. Banbhore is a well-known city located in southern Sindh, where archaeological teams have excavated an important Shivaite temple. Secondly, Sassui is the heroine par excellence of Shah Abd al-Latif, and he devotes several chapters to her in his *Shah jo Risalo*. According to Abbas, "Sufi bards have based entire sections of their compositions […] on the Sasui-Punu myth" (Abbas 2002: 87). In Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry, Sassui is the epitome of the lover who seeks the beloved conceived as the Divine Being.

The *qisso*s of Sassui Punhun which were printed in the early twentieth century were inspired by five chapters in which Sassui appears in Shah Abd al-Latif's *Shah jo Risalo*. It worked as a kind of matrix for the *qisso*. Sassui is referred to in no less than five chapters. In the Sindhi context, the tale of Sassui is inextricably related to Sufism. In the Sindhi context, the story of Sassui symbolizes better than any other, the mystical quest of the Sufi to meet his beloved, here with Punhun symbolizing the Beloved, or God. Once again, the majority of the *qisso*s of Sassui Punhun were printed in the north of Sindh, especially Sukkur and also Shikarpur. In the context of the continuous making of the Sufi paradigm, it clearly shows a process of democratization in that, under the shape of the *qisso*, it could reach people who were not necessarily directly involved with Sufism. Consequently, the spread of the *qisso* can be seen as the last step of the making of the Sufi paradigm. However, one more time, it should be underscored that in the history of the Sufi paradigm, there is a huge gap of knowledge related to how the oral tradition was performed, expressed, and also transmitted. No

sources focus on these issues in terms of contents or even the actors involved.

Yet, as we saw before, the two best European connoisseurs of Sindhi literature, Burton and Trumpp, both stated there was a crucial corpus of legends, tales, and other narratives making up the oral tradition. Thus, it is paradoxical that we cannot know about the oral tradition, while the transmitters, in majority those falling into the category of the Manganhars or professional caste musicians would have played a leading role in this facet of the making of the Sufi paradigm. We shall return to the issue of oral knowledge in the tenth chapter. For now, we can only state there was a major spreading of the printing of the *qisso*s in the early twentieth century, and especially of those devoted to Sassui Punhun, this folktale being closely associated with Sufism because of Shah Abd al-Latif's *Shah jo Risalo*. Yet, as expressed by Laffan in the context of the makings of Indonesian Islam, though it can be demonstrated that local romances had indeed absorbed many Sufi teachings, it is doubtful whether most listeners would have perceived these recondite messages (Laffan 2011: 37).

The Sufi Paradigm and the Printed Knowledge Market

In her book on popular publishing on colonial Bengal, Anindita Ghosh wrote that the appearance and spread of printing in the province implied standardization processes, but "did not carry with it any implications of an automatic closure of the text and the imposition of dominant cultural forms" (Ghosh 2006: 188). This is the core of our problem: to gauge to what extent the appearance of printing did cause a shifting in the shaping of knowledge, especially devotional knowledge. It is true that a number of works devoted to the printing culture in a colonial society claim that it imposed a fixation of the texts, if not of the corpora, which the oral manuscript tradition had been unable to achieve. Consequently, this part of the chapter deals with the role played by the transfer of technologies from Europe to South Asia.

On another side, in their groundbreaking work devoted to printing and Sufism in the nineteenth century, Chih, Mayeur Jaouen, and Seesemann also stated that the printing caused a standardization of the Sufi doctrine, but they were not convinced it had played a role in the new topics that appeared in the same period, like for example, the new emphasis on the

Prophet in Sufi thought (Chih et al. 2015: 11). In this section, I aim at depicting the Sindhi market of printed knowledge in relation to the Sufi paradigm, and to show that its solid rooting allowed it to resist the spread of new ideologies broadly constructed on nationalism. As in the rest of the British empire of India, two nationalist ideologies developed in early twentieth-century Sindh: the secularist one embodied by the Indian National Congress and the Muslim one embodied by the All India Muslim League.

The Sindhi knowledge rooted in the Sufi paradigm had a structure built in the nineteenth century, with three main pillars: the printing press and the distributing institutions, such as libraries and bookshops; the entrepreneurs, actors, and agents; and finally, the audience. The printing press was not imported to Karachi until the 1850s, and a number of books were not printed in Bombay until the late nineteenth century. Due to the scarcity of sources, it would be difficult to retrace in detail the growing of the printing press in Sindh, although, in 1908, the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* stated that there was such printing in Karachi and in "numerous other towns" (*IGI* 1908, vol. 22: 431). Nonetheless, it is possible to identify a shifting from Christian printing presses to private indigenous ones, knowing that many writers did publish works on author's accounts.

The enterprise of printing resulted both from the work achieved by printers and scholars, sometimes professional and sometimes amateur. The location of the printers provides a geography of the makings of the printed knowledge, with a kind of competition between southern (Karachi and Hyderabad) and northern (Shikarpur and Sukkur) Sindh (see Appendix D). I will attempt to provide a likely profile of the editors in terms of castes and social classes. This endeavor allows us to draw a depiction of Sindh as distinct from other areas of India, such as Bombay and Bengal. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe how the identity of the entrepreneurs can be related to the shape taken by knowledge, and how they relate to the people who had traditional authority over knowledge. For example, it is a relevant question to wonder why the traditional bearers of Sufism, such as the *pir*s, played almost no role in the makings of the Sufi paradigm.

As we can see in the chart included in Appendix A, the climax of the publications devoted to the Sufi paradigm, as well as to other devotional traditions, was located firstly in the 1910s, and secondly in the 1920s. These two decades coincide with the accelerating phase of the spread of

communalism and nationalism,[14] which was first marked by an alliance between the Congress and the Muslim League, and then by their divorce. Eleven books related to Sufism were published in the 1900s, 19 in the 1910s, and 12 in the 1920s, for a total of about 50 books published between 1866 and 1928. This means that a total of 43 books out of 50 were published in these decisive three decades. It is thus important to look for a relationship between the developments of communalism and nationalism, and the reinforced spread of the Sufi paradigm throughout printing.

It is not easy to know when the first printing press was imported to Karachi. According to Allana, this only happened in 1885 (Allana 1990: 50). This would mean that the previously published books were printed in other cities, such as Bombay and Lahore. It is true that, in 1886, Trumpp had to have the *Shah jo Risalo* printed in Germany. Regarding the language, the books are almost all published in Sindhi, with only three exceptions—one in Persian and two in English. It is important to highlight that the targeted readership was Sindhi, not European. The first publications were printed by missionary associations, and then by the Bombay Presidency or the Government of India. In this first phase, the books were mostly printed for use in schools. Thus, they were freely distributed. Later on, the books were dispatched through three mediums: bookshops, libraries, and literary societies.

Regarding the libraries, the Karachi General Library was founded by Bartle Frere in 1851, with a museum (Hughes 1874: 52). It was first settled in Stall Lines and, in 1870, it was shifted to the newly built Frere Hall. It is said that the library had about 7000 books. Allana claims that a literary society named Sudhar Sabha was created in 1884 (Allana 1990: 50), but this was not confirmed by other specialists of Sindhi literature. One of the first clearly attested societies in relation to the spread of knowledge was the Amateur Dramatic Society which was created in 1913. Later on, in 1914, a Sindhi Sahit Society was founded by L. A. Jagtiani and Jethmal Parsram, but in 1929, Muslim literati created the Sindh Muslim Adab Society (Schimmel 1974: 33).[15] Indeed, due to the lack of sources, it is not easy to investigate the possible role played by such societies. Yet, another institution did play a role which is clearly attested to in its own sources.

[14] See the last section of the eighth chapter.

[15] It is very difficult to find concurring dates for the foundation of these societies. For the Sindh Muslim Adab Society, Ajwani gives the date of 1931 (Ajwani 1970: 201).

The Theosophical Society (TS) did a great deal to spread the message expressed through the Sufi paradigm. Despite the irregularity of the sources kept by the TS in Karachi, the interest the members had in Sufism is obvious. Furthermore, a number of main actors in the spread of the Sufi paradigm were themselves key actors in the TS. Jethmal Parsram was probably the most involved agent, to the extent that he was the editor of the TS' review *Ruh Ruhani*, or *Spiritual Fragrance*—a very Sufistic title.[16] The review was one of the media through which the TS spread the Sufi paradigm. Another medium was *Sufi Samagam*, or Sufi Meetings, which the members organized regularly. Certainly, we should remember that the TS' approach was pluri-religious, but the Sufi paradigm was given a core place.

Many articles of the *Ruh Ruhani* deal with the Sufi paradigm. Unfortunately, they are rarely listed with authors. In the issue from March 1944, there is a paper on Shah Latif, maybe authored by Jethmal Parsram. However, the paper underscores the concept of Oneness as expressed by Shah Abd al-Latif as *hekrai*. Furthermore, regarding the *Sufi Samagam*, we have a program; it is unfortunately not dated, but it was organized at a time when L. A. Jatiyani was Hon. Secretary of the T. S. Federation (sic). The program was organized over four days. On the Friday, it started at 9.30 p.m. with three parts. The first part was made up of welcome speeches, the second of *kafi*s sung by *faqir*s, and the third a short speech on the Sufis of Sindh. On the Saturday, there were four parts: instrumental music with *ektara*, *rabab*, *dilruba*, *tabla*, and so on; vocal music including *sant bani*,[17] Tukaram, Nanak and others; recitation from Rumi, Hafiz, Ghalib, Iqbal, Latif, and other Sindhi poets; and finally the *kafi*s. The details of the program are not given for the Sunday and the Monday, for which only the places are detailed, which means the other sessions were organized at the Theosophical Hall on Bandar Road.

The present study has mainly dealt with the Sufi authors who were utilized in the making of the Sufi paradigm. Most of them were Sufis of the past. Now, I wish to turn to the entrepreneurs who put together the printers, as well as the editors. I consider the printers agents, while the editors and writers were the actors involved. In a previous chapter, we

[16] Ajwani claims that Parsram "founded Ruh Rihan to keep the flame of Sufism burning" (Ajwani 1970: 197). He forgot to mention it was the review of the Theosophical Society.

[17] The expression *sant bani*, or the songs of the saints, designates the devotional literature composed by saints who were mostly belonging to the Bhakti movement in Medieval India, such as Kabir (c. 1440–1518).

dealt with the Sindhi *munshi*s, observing that they were not restricted to the Amil caste since some of them were also Muslims. Furthermore, some *munshi*s were at first only scribes, while at a second stage, they were writers. For highlighting this shift, I have focused on Nandiram Navani and Udharam Thadvani. I wish now to study the sociological background of both the agents and the actors, including their religious affiliations.

About 60 books were published in the relevant span of time. Among the editors and authors, there was one European, Ernst Trumpp, along with nine Muslims and 18 Hindus. Regarding the Muslims, only Mirza Qalich Beg wrote or published ten books devoted to Sufism, and his brother Mirza Quli Beg another one. Among the other Muslims, we find a Talpur prince, Mirza Abd al-Husayn Khan Sangi (1851–1924), and as for the others, we can learn about their background only through onomastics, and even so, the data is very poor. One editor of an abstract of the *Shah jo Risalo* was a *qazi*, a *makhdum*, and a Muslim from Hala authored two biographies, one on Mansur Hallaj and the other one on Rabia al-Misri. Also, there is only one single book which resulted from a collaboration between a Hindu and a Muslim, P. L. Vaswani and M. S. Musafir. Although the sample is made of only nine Muslims, we can confirm they belonged mostly to what I have called “declassed groups” in previous chapters. As a matter of fact, it seems like very few Ulamas, as holders of normative Islam, were involved in the process of the making of the Sufi paradigm.

Among the authors and/or editors, we find 18 Hindus, which amounts to two-thirds of the group. The Muslims published 18 books, and the Hindus 42. In regard to the Hindus, the Amils were widely predominant. Most of them belonged to well-known families from Hyderabad, such as the Advani, Gidwani, Gulrajani, Gurbakhshani, Jagtiyani, Lalwani, Shahani, Vaswani, and others. Bherumal Advani explained in his book on the Amils the intricacy of their relationships, all Amils’ families coming from Punjab or Rajasthan. Some families were offspring of others, who had become separate. For example, the Jagtiyanis had previously been Ajwanis before becoming a distinct lineage (Advani 1919: 20). The motivations of the Amils in being the forerunners of the Sufi paradigm can be given different explanations, but all are almost impossible to be informed.

At this stage, it is thus better to speak of hypotheses. Already, we know the Amils shifted from being scribes and clerks to literati thanks to the education opportunities offered by colonial institutions. A second

hypothesis as given by Sala Narsain is that Sufi worship could be performed by them as individuals, thus fitting well with their modern way of life, in a somewhat Weberian approach. As I have already expressed, the issue then is, why did they not focus on other spiritual paths, which could provide the same flexible framework, such as the Daryapanth or the Nanakpanth? This issue can be addressed and settled through a third hypothesis. The Sufi paradigm was close to their other religious persuasions and belonging, especially the two already mentioned above, the Nanakpanth and the Daryapanth, as well as the ideologies of neo-Hinduism and the Theosophical Society. It came from the fact that all of these spiritual paths had the same ideology about the Oneness of God, and the finality of religion as merging with God. In a Muslim-dominated province, and with the spread of a Muslim nationalism in the early twentieth century, the Sufi paradigm was seen as being the most capable reference for preserving religious and communal harmony.

Let us now examine whether a geographical approach of the Sufi paradigm confirms the hypothesis regarding the Amils and other literati. The greatest proportion of books were published in Hyderabad—making up about 20 out of 44 among the places of publications which are known, 16 being left unknown. In the second place, we find Karachi (9), this to be followed by the northern cities like Sukkur (5) and Shikarpur (4), and finally, places outside of Sindh such as Bombay (2), and then in Europe we have Leipzig (1) and London (1). A last element for understanding the making of the Sufi paradigm should have been scrutinized: the audience. Unfortunately, the available data does not allow any further investigation and we are thus compelled to surmise only that it was made up of the middle class that was growing in early twentieth-century Sindh.

Conclusion

This chapter has been devoted to the different processes involved in completing the Sufi paradigm after the printing of the *Shah jo Risalo*, which amounted to the initial step. In other words, it intended to understand how the Sufi paradigm was enlarged, and how it informs us about the making of a vernacular knowledge in Sindh. The printing of the masterpiece of Sufi poetry in Sindh worked as a first process of objectification, focusing on the text of the poetry. After less than 20 years, an interest in the life of the poet was initiated by Mirza Qalich before accessibility of the

text was facilitated by Sindhi scholars, especially with the help of the making of lexicons for the difficult words and expressions used by Shah Abd al-Latif. When the twentieth century started, the Sufi paradigm centered only on the *Shah jo Risalo*, the text itself as published in 1886, followed by two complementary processes: the interest in the life of the poet, and the lexicographical approach making for easier access to the poetry for the different categories of the Sindhi population.

Afterward, in the early twentieth century, a new thread was added to the tapestry of the Sufi paradigm. The Sufi paradigm expanded out of the *Shah jo Risalo* framework. In other words, new Sufi texts were printed to enlarge the Sufi paradigm in the first years of the newly born twentieth century. Northern Sindh, with cities such as Shikarpur and Sukkur, played a leading role in the first opening of the paradigm. Karachi and even Hyderabad were relegated to a secondary role. In northern Sindh, the *kalam*s of poets such as Shah Abd al-Karim, Rohal Faqir, and Sachal Sarmast were printed. They belonged to different spheres of Sindhi Sufism.

Throughout the printing of their *kalam*s, two other threads of Sufism were included in the Sufi paradigm. The first one, embodied by Shah Abd al-Karim, can be called "Sindhi classic." Shah Abd al-Karim was a precursor of his great-grandson Shah Abd al-Latif. There are many features of Shah Abd al-Karim's poetry that would be found in Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry. For example, there is the importance given to music. First of all, music is the meditation, the *zikr*, par excellence for the latter; music has supernatural power over men and the forces of nature. Apart from the perspective of the Sufi paradigm, one can rightly think the transition from oral poetry to a printed one should have gradually caused an impact. Unfortunately, due to a lack of sources, we cannot speculate on this matter.

The resources provided by the Sufi paradigm were enriched firstly in terms of language. Two poets from Southern Sindh had been printed, Shah Abd al-Karim and Shah Abd al-Latif. It is well known that one of the difficulties of the *Shah jo Risalo* comes from the fact that it was written in the Lari dialect. With Rohal Faqir and Sachal Sarmast, the northern parlance enters the scene of the Sufi paradigm. Although the issue is to know whether this is a dialect of northern Sindh, or if it is a variant of the Vicholi, the language used by Rohal and Sachal is slightly different only because they include a number of Siraiki features in their poetry. The new thread

they brought about was not only limited to the language. As a matter of fact, both Sufi poets used more direct references for Hinduism than their southern counterparts, especially in quoting the names of Hindu gods, be it as allegories or Sufi qualities.

Consequently, the northern thread served more as a bridge with the Bhakti and the Vedanta expressed by another northern Sindhi poet, Sami. Also, northern Sindh was very close to Punjab, a kingdom ruled by the Sikhs. In southern Sindh, one can decipher that the Sufi poets were in close touch with another school of Hinduism, the Nathpanth. Shah Abd al-Latif spoke of them many times and Shah Abd al-Karim had already built a figure of the *jogi* in his poetry that he was a model of renunciation. Rather than see these two distinct trends of the Sufi paradigm as competitive, it is more relevant to see them as complementary, and especially as evidence showing how flexible the Sufi paradigm was, and how its inclusiveness allowed it to incorporate the different regional cultures. In northern Sindh, the religious field of Hinduism was dominated by the Bhakti, and reframed as Vedanta after reformism; while in southern Sindh, it was the Nathpanth who provided Hindu features to the Sufi paradigm.

The very evidence that shows the existence and domination of the Sufi paradigm in the knowledge of colonial Sindh is the fact that non-Muslim literati started to compose Sufi *kalam*s. Between the publishing of the *Shah jo Risalo*, followed by a number of dynamics of enlargement of the Sufi paradigm, and the publishing of Hindu Sufi poets, there was a kind of transitional process. In 1885, Kauromal Khilnani, a Hindu literati from northern Sindh, started to publish the *kalam* of a poet who is always introduced as one of the three stalwarts of Sindhi poetry: Sami.

As noted above, his was finally the first Sindhi *kalam* to be printed after the *Shah jo Risalo*. Sami is introduced by the specialists of Sindhi literature, both in Pakistan and in India, sometimes as a Bhakti, a Vedantist, and also a Sufi. These different identifications clearly show the permeability of the religious schools in colonial Sindh. Sometimes, the authors can use these different qualifications indifferently. I am not myself inclined toward giving an opinion on such debates, but what I can say after reading Sami's *slok*s is that he used a Sufi lexicon with others coming from different Hindu schools.

The deployment of the Sufi paradigm informs us about the new geographical distribution of the Sindhi literati. As a matter of fact, the northern cities took the lead in terms of publications. We can surmise this

resulted from an alliance between literati, and the wealthy traders that dominated cities such as Shikarpur or Sukkur. On the other side, the enlargement process shows the ability of the paradigm to incorporate other Sufi traditions that can be said to be more "Hinduized," since one can find references to Hindu gods in Sachal or Rohal Faqir. The enlargement simultaneously reflects the dominance of new classes in the Sindhi society, and how participating in the constant making of the Sufi paradigm was also a means to exhibit a new status in this society.

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PART III

Challenging the Sufi Paradigm in the Era of Communalism

In the first two parts of this book, we have dealt with a concept, the Sufi paradigm, through which we seek to unveil the different ways involved in the making of a vernacular knowledge in colonial Sindh. After the British conquest in 1843, the British obsession was to find out how to control the country of Sindh and its population. Along the way, they planned to get knowledge under control. They suppressed Persian as the official language, selecting a Sindhi dialect as the standard language, and chose an official script. The direct goal was to educate the British civil servants and officers in Sindhi so that they would be more able to control taxes and perform other duties.

The last part of the nineteenth century faced many upheavals in various fields. The Industrial Revolution in Europe reframed the social organization in depth following the spread of liberal capitalism. In India, one of the main impacts of British colonization was to thrust the economy into a kind of pre-globalization. Especially in maritime territories such as Sindh and Gujarat, the local merchant castes mostly followed the networks following the expansion of the British colonial empire. The economic improvement conjugated with the development of education gave shape to a new social class we have named the middle class. As a global process, this evolution of Sindhi society was similar to that of other parts of British India, such as in the northern Muslim society around Delhi studied by Margrit Pernau (Pernau 2013).

In the field of knowledge in colonial Sindh, the Sufi paradigm was dominant, but this does not mean it went unchallenged by other regimes of knowledge in this very rich intellectual scene. Some new regimes of knowledge were strongly opposed to it, such as the Muslim and Hindu reformists, which were building distinct religious traditions with no possibility for bridging them. I prefer to speak of normative regimes of knowledge instead of reformist movements because, most of the time, the reformist movements among the Muslims as well as among the Hindus started with enterprises involving the codification of beliefs and rituals. Always, this process was born through the printing of sacred scriptures, both in their original sacred languages and in vernacular translations. Thus, the codification process was a kind of condition for the implementation of reformism movements.[1]

Other regimes of knowledge could compete with the Sufi paradigm, these being implemented based on devotion and the performance of emotion. I prefer to use the expression devotional regimes of knowledge, rather than popular or folk regimes of knowledge. Since I am aware that, to some extent, a religion can hardly be conceived without a devotional part, I would like to explain why I did select this expression. It is to be put in contrast with normative regimes of knowledge, although I think it is obviously not sufficient to legitimize my choice. Contrary to normative regimes of knowledge, the devotional regimes of knowledge do not intend to impose an encompassing and daily way of life to the practitioners. Beyond the opposition between normative and devotional regimes, a number of characteristics can be provided which make it a distinct regime of knowledge. The devotion is a central religious practice, and especially, it is performed in religious places that are not accepted as the official prayer places in the universal religions. For example, the mosque is the normative place of worship in Islam, and the sanctuaries devoted to the saints are either not recognized as such, or considered as secondary places of worship.

Among the characteristics of the devotional regimes of knowledge, the first one is that the devotional regime is based on vernacular scriptures. Thus, there is no claim to constitute a universal, or, to quote Sheldon Pollock a cosmopolitan, regime of knowledge. The basic literary reference

[1] The issue of the renewal of religious traditions in nineteenth-century South Asia has been largely covered by scholars. Among numerous studies, Van der Veer provides a kind of synthesis (Van der Veer 1994).

is vernacular poetry, rather than the Quran, or the Bhagavad Gita. It does not mean that they, both the producers and the consumers, do not know them, but they don't consider them as the first and final source for religious knowledge. It pertains to what Rita Kothari calls "non-textual" religions (Kothari 2009: 123). Secondly, the agents and consumers of the devotional regimes are not members of the traditional elite of the local society. Although of course, some exceptions are possible, they are not members of the groups of the religious specialists, for example, from the Brahman caste, or of the Sayyids. Furthermore, consumers mostly belong to non-literate categories of people. The third characteristic is consequently that these regimes were exclusively oral before the coming of the printing in the nineteenth century. We cannot find any manuscripts, as it is the case in normative regimes of knowledge. Fourth, maybe that the most important element is the importance given to vernacular music and songs, at a point that they can be shared between members of different religious persuasions. Musical performances with instruments were at the core of the practice of devotional traditions. These regimes of knowledge were expressed among groups and communities who often belong neither to the "majority" nor to the normative expression of a given religion.

Nonetheless, it is quite possible that a devotional regime of knowledge, based on vernacular culture, shifts to a normative and cosmopolitan regime of knowledge, or at another time, a regime of knowledge can be ambivalent. For example, the Shia regime of knowledge started as a devotional regime of knowledge; still, it was when the Talpur State became its main supporter. Finally, it was transformed into a normative regime of knowledge when the migrants from India came to Sindh after 1947. Consequently, a regime of knowledge can dispatch both a normative/universal religiosity and a devotional/vernacular religiosity. But in other cases, such as the Khoja regime of knowledge, the process aimed at providing a community identity, as well as dealing with issues related to authority. The competitive regimes of knowledge shared some features with the Sufi paradigm. The crucial one was their devotional orientation, and consequently the importance of emotion in its performance. In fact, the study of the devotional regimes of knowledge will play a fundamental role in the demonstration that the Sufi paradigm worked as a paradigm in the vernacular knowledge of Sindh. It is through the study of the very nature of their relationship that it will be possible to scrutinize how the paradigm role of Sufism was efficient or not.

The last chapter will continue to explore other devotional expressions that have challenged the Sufi paradigm. The contents of a regime are concerned, but also the way it is transmitted. The last chapter will also address the issue of oral knowledge in relation to the Sufi paradigm, given that one knows its making was closely associated with the spread of mass printing. In other words, the chapter will examine how oral tradition was located by the entrepreneurs of the making of the Sufi paradigm. The third part of the chapter consequently looks at the different challenges the Sufi paradigm had to face, not only regarding the other regimes of knowledge. As a matter of fact, until now, the issue of Sufism has been addressed as a paradigm.

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CHAPTER 9

The Sufi Paradigm and the Normative Regimes of Knowledge

Introduction

The many events that occurred in the last quarter of the nineteenth century clearly show that India was entering a new era of its history. While British imperialism was at its apex under the rule of the viceroy Lord Curzon (1859–1925), the seeds of discontent were growing, and the new associations being created were using in their name the adjective "national"—such as the Indian National Congress created in Bombay in 1885. It was like a kind of protohistorical step of the national movement. In Sindh, the two main religious persuasions, Islam and Hinduism, were being submitted to revivalist and reformist movements, most of the time imported from the northern region of the Indian subcontinent. The dominant trend can be described as aiming to develop a new understanding and conception of these religions, based on a return to the sources in the scriptures and a subsequent "purification" of both the tenets and the practices. Furthermore, we can say that both were turning to a literary reading of the scriptures, rather than a symbolic or allegorical reading.

Among the Hindus, the revivalist movements were extremely varied. The underlying ideology they nevertheless all shared was to issue a modern discourse on Hinduism, and sometimes, through Hinduism, to show that the Hindus could be modern in using an updated version of their religious tradition. The purification of Hinduism could come along with a purification of the people. For example, those who were considered new

converts, such as Christians and Muslims, could be purified and taken back to Hinduism. On the other side, another trend of the revivalism aimed at building a modern interpretation of Hinduism through claiming its universalism. This universal Hinduism could provide major answers to the challenges that India was facing at the end of the nineteenth century. Consequently, inside a single religious persuasion such as Hinduism, one can observe that there were several interpretations because, despite the similarities of their goal—to make Hindus modern—there were major divergences in thought of how to reach this goal.

The same kind of situation prevailed among the Muslims. Like what was happening with the Hindus, the main issue was to state who was Muslim because of the lack of any centralized and institutionalized authority. There was a need to discover a convergent and also consensual discourse on what it meant to be Muslim. The revivalist movements were dealing with new challenges concerning the very groups themselves: the issue of authority, and the issue of the nature of the group itself. A consequence of the British census had been to prompt the Indians to think of themselves in terms of religious categories they had never dealt with before.

In this chapter, I refer to "regimes of knowledge" instead of tradition or religion, borrowing the expression as used by Michael Laffan (Laffan 2011: 85). Since this study analyzes how the Sufi paradigm was central to the building of a vernacular knowledge, it is more relevant to consider how norms, both concepts and practices, or, in other words, orthodoxy and orthopraxy, are able to build a system that allows people to think about the world in which they live. A normative regime of knowledge is not always a dogmatic one, but mostly, normative regimes of knowledge aim at constructing boundaries. Furthermore, there is forcible control, and authority, involved in making a regime of knowledge, and sometimes a group of people who belong to a dominant section of a society can attempt to edict a dogmatic orthodoxy. Other sections can challenge and even overturn such a self-proclaimed authority.

The Codification of Islam and Hinduism: Sanatan Dharma Versus Umma

Before turning to the reformist readings of Hinduism and Islam, it is necessary to start with a discussion of a trend that appeared in Sindh as soon as the 1860s: the aim of codifying religious knowledge. This was a

kind of prerequisite before the development of reformist and revivalist movements. The codification process concerned the beliefs, and sometimes even the theology, as well as the law—the religious law. In other words, it intended to clearly state what the believers were supposed to believe in, and how they should behave regarding the legal prescriptions expressed in their scriptures. Another characteristic was the vernacularization of the scriptural sources, which were mostly in Arabic or Sanskrit, two languages that were unknown to the majority of the Sindhis. Here, the vernacularization was completed through the translations of the scriptures into Sindhi, and the addition of comments and explanations in the same language. Sometimes, the two sides could be coupled, and sometimes a book was only a translation of a scripture, while another book proposed explanations.

The codification of the regimes of knowledge was a first step toward the establishment of normative systems of knowledge. There was a will to standardize the religious knowledge, this being the prerequisite for the making of a unified community all over India. Focusing on the scripture allowed for the erasure, for the first time, of the innumerable sects that were found in both Islam and Hinduism. Regarding Islam, attempts to codify the tradition went back to the seventeenth century. For example, in 1713, Makhdum Muhammad Hashim Thatawi (1692–1761) completed the *Zad al-Fakir*, where he described the religious duties of a Muslim in verses. The work would be published in Bombay in 1873. In 1731, Makhdum Muhammad Hashim completed the *Faraiz al-Islam*, or the religious duties of Islam. Originally written in Arabic, it was translated into a Sindhi metrical version by the author (Blumhardt 1905: 35–36). Hashim described 1272 religious duties (*farz*) the Muslims were supposed to perform. Thatawi had been initiated in both the *tariqa* Qadariyya and Naqshbandiyya.

The process for codifying the Islamic knowledge went through two stages: first, the printing of seventeenth-century treatises as composed by Makhdum Muhammad Hashim Thatawi, and new ones written by nineteenth-century Sindhi literati. Regarding the Islamic law, it is noticeable that one of the first printed books was completed by a Hindu, Navalrai Shaukiram Advani (1848–1893). He was one of the first four Sindhis to be accepted at the University of Bombay. In 1867, he published *Sharia-e Muhammadi*, *The Muhammadan Law*, in Karachi (Advani 1867).

During the First World War, significant books were published, such as in 1916, the three-volume *Tuhfa al-Islam*, *The Gift of Islam*, by Maulvi

Muhammad Usman (Usman 1916), or even Mirza Qalich Beg's *Usul Shara Muhammadi*, *The Foundations of the Muhammada Law* (Beg 1916). The Turkish wars had already attracted the attention of some Sindhi Muslims, but after the end of the war, the Khalifat Movement gave a new impulse to the effort for codifying Islam, and a number of books were published on the issue of khalifat, for example, *Yawm al-Khalifat*, or *The Day of the Khalifat*, by one Shaykh Abd al-Aziz (Aziz 1919). The *khalifa*, or caliph, was the religious head of the Sunnis all over the Muslim world. This function had been held by the Ottomans since the 16th century, and its seat was therefore in Istanbul.

The Islamic law was not the only topic on which the Sindhi Muslims focused. There was also that of the scriptural sources: the Quran and also the Sunna. Since the printing press did not appear in Karachi until the 1850s, and was used only for the government printings, books were often printed in Bombay. In 1877, Aziz Allah Mutawali published the Arabic text of the Quran with interlinear translations and marginal notes in Sindhi (Quran 1877). One of the groundbreaking new translations of the Quran into Sindhi was completed by Abd al-Hassan Moulvi and Taj Muhammad Moulvi in three volumes from 1911 to 1914, with the title of *Ilham al-Rahma*, or *The Divine Revelation* (Moulvi and Moulvi 1911–1914).

Compilations of *hadith*s in Arabic and Sindhi were also published—for example, the *Ahadith Nabawi*, *The Prophetic Sayings*, edited by Ali Khan in Hyderabad (Khan 1919). Another major source of Islam is the *sirat*, the life of the Prophet. As we saw before, several biographies of Muhammad were published in the 1910s and 1920s, with the generic title of *Hayat al-Nabi, Life of the Prophet*. According to Schimmel, the first biography was published by a Hindu scholar, L. A. Jagtiani, in 1911 (Schimmel 1974: 32). The second was probably Fateh Muhammad Sehwani's version, with the same title, published in 1914 in Sukkur. With 335 pages, Sehwani intended to emphasize the superiority of Islam over Christianity and other creeds.

Likewise, the Hindus were also interested in the scriptures of their religion during this period. Also, there was the issue of the need to know Sanskrit, or not. In 1886, Jhamatmal Narumal published a glossary of Sanskrit roots and words with Sindhi derivatives (Narumal 1886). The Hindus also felt the need to know Sanskrit, which could have been neglected. In this respect, Gidumal Shahani, Dayaram Gidumal's father, had spent seven years in Haridwar for the purpose of studying Sanskrit. When he came to Sindh, he taught the Sindhi Brahmins and even gave them stipends. His son built in Hyderabad a Sanskrit Pathshala, a Sanskrit school (Malkani 1997: 72).

Later on, the scriptures of Hinduism were approached through two perspectives: the translation from Sanskrit to Sindhi, and the narration in Sindhi of stories taken from Sanskrit sources. In this last category, there was, for example, *Drupadi Charitra*, *The Life of Drupadi*, based on the story of Draupadi, the most important female character in the *Mahabharata* (Vantanmal 1905). One of the founding texts of Hinduism was translated from Sanskrit to Sindhi in 1912, this being the *Dharam Shastra Manu Smirti*, otherwise known as *The Laws of Manu* (Thanvardas 1912). In 1913, some abstracts from the *Mahabharata* were translated from Sanskrit into Sindhi (*Mukhtasar Mahabharata* 1913). Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* was also translated into Sindhi by Dayaram Gidumal in 1909 (Patanjali 1909).

Other books were also published in relation to Tulsidas' version of the *Ramayana*. One of the first editions was completed in Sukur in 1903, and abridged versions were later translated into Sindhi, such as Tejuram Ruchiram Sharma's version in 1926 (Tulsidas 1926). Tulsidas (c. 1532–1623) re-wrote the *Ramayana* in the Awadhi dialect of Hindi, under the name of *Ramcharitmanas.* For centuries, Tulsidas' version was more popular than the original *Ramayana* composed in Sanskrit. Regarding the Sindhi translator, his name "Sharma" clearly shows he was a Sindhi Brahman. Some other Sindhi literati attempted to build bridges between Hinduism and other religious persuasions, such as Sikhism. For example, Jamnadas Parsram dealt with the Sarkutawali, a sacred Sikh scripture (*granth*), in its relationship with the *sanatan dharma*, the eternal religion, this being a common expression used to designate mainstream Hinduism, in his book published in Sukkur in 1919 (Parsram 1919).

Reformism and Universalism Among the Hindus

Following colonization and the violent attacks, some Christian priests had formulated, and printed, the Hindus felt the need to produce a new reading of their sacred scriptures, and to express a new discourse related to Hinduism. All of these movements can be said to belong to the reformist attempts. Some tended to focus on Hinduism as being the sole reservoir capable of providing references for an Indian nation. On the contrary, others underscored the ability of Hinduism to construct a universal message, which could be understood by all human beings on earth. This section of the chapter attempts to deal with the appearance and spread of the Hindu movements that aimed at expressing a new discourse, most of the time for the purpose of meeting the so-called needs of the time.

Among the universalist trend, one of the most popular was originated by Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836–1886). In his training, he was informed by several Hindu-related traditions, such as a strong devotion toward the goddess Kali, but also Tantra, Vaishnava Bhakti, and Advaita Vedanta. His teachings were spread by his main disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who founded in 1897 the Ramakrishna Mission. Another important disciple was Keshab Chandra Sen (1838–1884), who was a member of the Brahmo Samaj. In 1863, he wrote *The Brahma Samaj Vindicated*, in which he strongly criticized Christianity, and he traveled throughout the country lecturing and preaching that the Brahmo Samaj was intended to revitalize Hindu religion through the use of ancient Hindu sources and the authority of the Vedas. After he had founded his own branch of the Brahmo Samaj, he went on to be a close follower of Ramakrishna; furthermore, Sen's primary quest was for a universal religion or belief system. Sen established a syncretic school of spiritualism called the Nabo Bidhan or "New Dispensation," in which he intended to amalgamate the best principles of Christianity and of the western spiritual tradition with Hinduism. In Sindh, C. P. Tilokchand published *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* in 1915 (Tilokchand 1915).

Sadhu Hiranand Advani (1863–1893) was strongly attracted by the "New Dispensation," and his life is quite exemplary in this regard. He was born in Hyderabad to a family of Khudabadi Amils. The Khudabadi Amils were at the top of the social structure of Hyderabad. The Amils belonged to a high caste and were well-educated and well-versed in Persian. Most of them were in government service and a number of them had been *diwan*s (prime ministers) of the Talpur *mir*s. Hiranand was himself educated as a Nanakpanthi—that is, a follower of Guru Nanak, or of his son Shri Chand—but he was not in the brotherhood of the Khalsa (Gidumal 1932: 40). His elder brother, Navalrai, was the first to become a follower of Keshub Chandra Sen (1838–1884), and he traveled to Calcutta where he joined the Brahmo Samaj. Following Ramakrishna's egalitarian philosophy, Navalrai and his brothers refused to bow to the Brahmans or to the *bawa*s, the Nanakpanthi priests.

Some young Hindu Sindhis from Hyderabad met Ramakrishna in his *ashram* on the banks of the Hugli, located in a suburb of Calcutta. In 1883, Hiranand used to spend several consecutive days and nights in the *ashram*. According to his biographer, he was "the one whom he [Ramakrishna] loved most deeply" (Gidumal 1932: 150). When he heard that Ramakrishna was seriously ill, Hiranand hastily left his work in Karachi

and went to Calcutta to see the dying saint. Ramakrishna's preaching encompassed all great religions since "the Muhammadan Allah, the Christian God, the Nirakara Brahma were all realised in him" (Gidumal 1932: 152). Furthermore, a central concept of Ramakrishna's Neo-Vedanta which the Sindhi literati understood as being close to *wahdat-e wujud* was the concept of *akhanda satchidananda*, "the Indivisible and Eternal Being."[1]

The concept of *satchidananda* is made of three Sanskrit words. The first part, *sat*, stresses the divine as the Truth, as it is in *haqq mawjud*. Thus, *sat* corresponds with *haqq*. The second part, *chit* roughly means consciousness, while *ananda* means bliss and happiness. *Akhanda* means non-divisible—that is, unity, *wahdat*. The expression finally emphasizes "the glimpse of ultimate reality," and in the words of Hiranand's biographer, the "eternal and formless Being, Who is unchangeable in his blessedness and unity." Many Sindhi literati were convinced that Neo-Vedanta was the key to the modernization of India. A number of charitable institutions were created, for example, by Hiranand and his brothers, or by his "disciples." Amongst these were the leper asylum in Mangho Pir and an orphanage in Sukkur. Many educational institutions were also established.

According to *The Gazetteer of 1907*, a Sikh Sabha was created in 1868, and it was afterward incorporated into the Brahmo Samaj, which had already reached Lahore in 1861. In 1875, a Brahmo Samaj temple was opened in Hyderabad and the congregation set itself actively to the work of social improvement (Aitken 1907: 167). Another temple was opened in Karachi, but the members were less numerous, only amounting to 40. In 1875, another movement belonging to neo-Hinduism was created in Bombay by Dayanand Saraswati (1824–1883), the Arya Samaj. *The Gazetteer of 1907* claimed that the Arya Samaj members were more numerous than those of the Brahmo Samaj. Aitken nonetheless observed that the Arya Samaj had achieved less practical results. It had branches in Karachi, Hyderabad, Thata, Larkana, Sukkur, and Shikarpur.

Although no academic study has been conducted yet on these neo-Hindu organizations in Sindh, it is possible to find some evidence that they were active in the province. The modernist approach adopted by the Brahmo Samaj was criticized by some more traditional Hindus. When the Brahmo Mandir was inaugurated in 1875, a multi-religious musical

[1] Madaio develops a critical discussion of the use of the expression "neo-Vedanta," arguing the best expression for Vivekananda's thought is "vernacular Vedanta" (Madaio 2017).

procession was arranged—singing, among other things, “Allah Akbar” (Malkani 1997: 81). Notwithstanding, the Arya Samaj was to be the most active for decades. Its coming to Sindh is to be located in the issue of conversions, which could have increased in the late nineteenth century. Both the Muslims and also the Christians were looking at different means for achieving conversion. Still, the Christian missionaries were active. A great controversy paved the way for the coming of the Arya Samaj, and this also indicates how the members of the Hindu elite, mostly the Amils, disagreed upon what it meant to be Hindu.

In 1878, Tharumal Makhijiani, an Amil from Hyderabad, fell in love with a Muslim girl, and leaving his Hindu wife and his children, he embraced Islam to get married to her. When he lost his Muslim wife, Sheikh Tharu wanted to go back to Hinduism and his previous family. Hindu “modernists” wanted to organize a *shuddi*, the specific ritual preformed for the reintegration of a Hindu in the Hindu community. But the *mukhi* of the Hyderabad Amil Panchayat, Showkiran Advani, refused. The affair created a split in the caste, and they even had their separate burning ghats (*shmashans*) (Malkani 1997: 73).

It is well known that one of the main goals of the Arya Samaj was to reconvert Muslims to Hinduism. In Sindh, they were targeting two groups in this respect: the Shaykhs of Larkana and the Amils of Hyderabad. The neo-Hindu organization was called on in 1893 by Sindhi Hindus to help end the movement of conversion to Islam that was spreading within South Asia. With the increase of conversions to Islam and Christianity, Dayaram Gidumal sent an urgent request to Swami Shraddhanand (1856–1926), the head of the Punjab Arya Samaj, who sent Pandit Lekhram and Pandit Parmanand from Lahore to Sindh. The Arya Samajis launched interreligious debates with the Muslim clerks and Christian priests. According to Malkani, since they were able to prove they knew the Quran better than the Muslim *ulamas* themselves, Pandit Lekhram was assassinated (Malkani 1997: 82).

In 1905, the Arya Samaj succeeded in re-converting the Shaykhs of Larkana (Kothari 2007: 35–39). According to Malkani, any Hindu converted to Islam was brought back to the ancestral faith, including the entire community of the Sanjogis (Malkani 1997: 82).[2] A biography of Dayanand Saraswati was published in Sindhi in 1917 in Mirpur Khas (Tahilsing 1917). Notwithstanding, Rita Kothari claims the work

[2] See section “The New Conjuncture of the 1920s.”

completed by the Arya Samaj in Sindh contributed directly to the creation of mutually exclusive categories such as Islam and Hinduism. Later on, in the 1920s, it also contributed directly to the Hindu-Muslim confrontation, and paved the way for the coming of more radical Hindu organizations, such as the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha (Kothari 2007: 37–38).

The name Shaykh is usually given to recent converts from Hinduism, and it is said that they were "half-Muslim, half-Hindu." For the Arya Samaj, it should have been easier to re-convert these Muslims to Hinduism since they had been converted recently. The conversions increased the animosity between Hindus and Muslims. Also, it was frequently said that the Shaykhs were neither Hindoos nor Muslims, as in the saying: *Shaikh putta Shaitan jo, na Hindu-a jo, na Musulmam jo*, meaning, "a Shaykh is the son of the devil, neither Hindu nor Muslim" (Bhavnani 2014: xxxii).

The case of the Amils was a little bit different. It is not that they had massively converted to Islam, though a few had, but rather that they were seen as being under the influence of Islam. In fact, they imitated their Muslim masters—in terms of dress, for example. Also, there was the strong interest they had in the Sufis of Sindh. They were devotees of the Sufi *dargahs* and used to regularly visit them. Furthermore, some of them were *murid*s, formal disciples of Sufi saints who were alive. In the nineteenth century, a number of Amils had become Sufis themselves, for example, Dalpat Sufi.

Sunni Reformism

Beyond the construction of the Sufi paradigm, one can observe the development of three other regimes of knowledge among the Muslims of Sindh: the reformist, the Shia, and the Ismaili, the last two regimes being devotional instead of normative. Once again, the dynamics of these regimes were not exclusive, meaning that a group could be under the scope of different regimes. Also, there were attempts to encompass them all, as, for instance, with the reformist regime of knowledge whose aim was to elaborate upon a pan-Indian discourse for the whole Muslim community. On the other hand, the late nineteenth century saw the birth of two communal ideologies among the Muslims of Sindh, both of them originating in two Shia schools: the Isna ashari, hereafter simply called Shia, and the Ismaili. The changes occurring on the Muslim scene of Sindh were due to many different factors, both internal and external.

Regarding Muslim reformism, the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent pursued a process of standardization of their community. In the vision of Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898), expressed in 1890, the diversity of Muslim schools, the variety of ethnicities, and the occurrence of cultural indigenization were all denied: a Muslim was to adhere to Islam, and therefore the entire population of Muslims was described as monolithic and homogeneous. Contrary to Shah Wali Allah, however, he did not criticize the allegedly "non-Islamic" practices and beliefs of a number of Muslim sects in India.

At a time when the British accorded one single category to all Muslims of India in the decennial census, Sayyid Ahmad Khan strongly opposed the Indian National Congress, whose members claimed that India was a nation. He was the founder of the Anglo-Muslim College of Aligarh. Created in 1877, the college wished to build bridges between a traditional teaching of Islam, based on the sacred scriptures, and the Western sciences and languages. Sayyid Ahmad Khan was a major exponent of the "rationalist" wing of Muslim reformism in India. Influenced by the rationalistic approach being taken to sacred Christian scriptures in the West at that time, he was convinced that Islam was the most rationalist religion in the world. This phase of development was the prelude to the assertion of the existence of a Muslim nation in India, and it would result in the two-nation theory, according to which India was divided into the Muslim nation and the Hindu nation.

Sayyid Ahmad's conception of Islam and of the Muslim community in India quickly spread over Sindh, where a section of the Muslims became his heralds. Among them, Hasan Ali Effendi (1830–1895) was to be the most active. In 1860, Mr. Middleton, who was the Chief Judge in Karachi, arrived at night to cross the Indus River by a ferry, but eventually he decided to spend the night on board and cross the river the next day. After dinner, while he stood on the deck, he saw a young man who was reading a book in English. He was very surprised to learn he was a Muslim. He decided to talk with him, and was so amazed by his conversation that he proposed on the spot that he be the translator of the District Court of Karachi (Shaikh 1999: 244). The young Muslim man was Hasan Ali Effendi. Later on, the judge allowed him to practice law before the court without obtaining any formal degree in Law. He was thus the first Muslim lawyer while others were Hindu or British.

Hasan Ali Effendi is a typical example of the Muslim intelligentsia, which slowly saw growth from the middle of the nineteenth century

onward. He was born to a family of *akhund*s from Hyderabad. In Sindh, the *akhund* was the schoolmaster, and he belonged to the lower strata of the *ulamas*. The knowledge he had acquired was based on repetition and imitation. Hasan Ali Effendi had himself been taught the Quran and the basics of Persian in a *madrasa*, following the tradition of his family. In fact, the *akhund* was the very symbol of the sclerotic learning the Muslims were deemed to disseminate. It is said that when Hasan Ali Effendi had been a clerk, a Christian colleague had convinced him to learn English. In March of 1884, Hasan Ali Effendi founded the Sindh Branch of the Central Muhammadan Association, this association having itself been created by Sayyid Ameer Ali in 1873. And in August 1884, Sayyid Ameer Ali was in Karachi.

Furthermore, a place was needed for the set-up of a Muslim intelligentsia: the Sindh Madressatul Islam was to play the role. After he had met Sayyid Ahmad Khan at Aligarh, Hasan Ali Effendi created the educational institution in 1885, but he quickly had to face the opposition of the *ulamas*. Indeed, they condemned the teaching of English matters as *kufr*. Hasan Ali Effendi had to resist, and he decided to follow Sayyid Ahmad Khan in starting a newspaper to argue the urgent necessity of improving Sindhi Muslims' situation through modern education. He had also to find teachers. Last but not least, the creation of the Sindh Madressatul Islam was possible thanks to the support of Muslim merchants. Interestingly, most of them belonged to minor Muslim sects such as the Bohras and the Khojas (Shaikh 1999: 251).[3]

Among the Muslims, Hasan Ali Bey Effendi created the Sindh Mohammadan Association which gave birth to the Sindh Madrasat ul-Islam in 1885. One of his most famous students was Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Dayaram Jethumal (d. 1887) had founded Sindh Sabha a few years before the creation of the Congress in Bombay. It was to disappear at his death in 1887 after giving birth to D. J. College. In 1885, finally, a branch of the National Mohammadan Association of Amir Ali was founded under the name of the Sindh Mohammadan Association. Sindh Sabha then took the name of Sindh Hindu Sabha. The Muhammad Association was to be especially active in trying to increase the number of Muslims in administrative jobs.

[3] The three names quoted by M. A. Shaikh belong to these communities whose members were Shia Ismailis, and who broadly followed caste-like social structure.

The Deputy Collector of Shikarpur welcomed a delegation of the association complaining about how the Muslims were unfairly treated, despite the fact that they were in the majority. In his report to the Bombay Government, H. E. M. James, commissioner in Sindh, acknowledged that "several influential families of Hindu Amils had obtained a practical monopoly of appointments in some quarters" (India Office Records, LPJ 6-53-005, p. 3).

The Church Missionary Society (CMS)

In the religious normative market that developed at the end of the nineteenth century, it is also necessary to situate the place of an organization that has already been mentioned several times: CMS. Several of its members played a key role in the construction of colonial as well as vernacular knowledge, particularly Rev. Shirt. Despite disappointing results in terms of conversion to Christianity, the missionaries of this organization continued to work throughout Sindh. Among other things, they continued their work of translating the Bible into Sindhi, a program in which Shirt still had a prominent place. The Sindh Mission had been established in 1852 through the effort of Colonel Preedy, Collector in Karachi. When the report is published in 1885, there were 17 missionaries as well as two trained schoolmasters.

The Karachi Mission was in charge of Reverend Bambridge, whom we have already met before. The main language used for proselytism was Urdu, since Karachi is introduced as a cosmopolitan city. There were two divine services a week, to which was added a service in English once a week, and another one in Sindhi fortnightly. One of the questions asked by the report is whether preaching in the bazars is effective, and in any case sufficient. It seems it is the main tool for informing the local people about Christianity and its sacred scriptures. Although the technique used is not detailed, we learn that songs are sung with hymns three times a week in the bazars of Karachi (Clark 1885: 233).

Another method to attract educated Sindhis has been developed by Bambridge in Karachi: conferences. According to the report, it would have some success although the majority of the topics are related to Christianity. However, some of them concern India, such as conferences on the Vedas, Hinduism, or Brahmanism. It can be noted that none of the themes of the conferences mentioned in the report are related to Islam. In

addition, it is instructive to note that the report does not mention at any time any competition related to proselytism between Christians, Muslims, and Hindus.

It was probably because of the lack of success in conversions that two new Christian organizations were created in 1883: the Church Council for Sindh provided autonomy to the missionaries since until then, they were affiliated to the Punjab Council. The Council for Sindh aimed at undertaking the "evangelisation of the Heathen," the name given to the low caste Hindus (Clark 1885: 236). The second new organization was restricted to Karachi; it was named the Karachi Church Missionary Union.

Shirt was in charge of the Hyderabad Mission, but he traveled extensively throughout Sindh, because of his "knowledge of the language and experience of the people" (Clark 1885: 237). By the way, in another report he wrote in 1878, we discover how Shirt represented popular Sufism, that of the *dargahs* when he stops in Sehwan to preach. He writes that he was not well received by the local population, which he expected "knowing Satan reigns (in Sehwan), having his throne at the tomb of a Mahomedan saint named Lal Shahbaz, around which dirt, drunkenness, immorality, and fanaticism gather thick and strong" (quoted in Clark 1885: 241–242). It is difficult to find a more caricatured expression of how the majority of the colonizers represented everything related to popular religion.

Despite Shirt's disgust with all these forms of idolatry, as he calls them below, he is well aware of the popularity of the religious festivals held there. They are therefore for him privileged places of preaching, with many crowds of people coming to them. In Sukkur, for example, he makes sure that his coming falls at the same time as Jinda Pir's fair. He gives Jinda Pir as the "local water deity", and adds that he and his fellow missionaries were engaged the whole day not so much in preaching set sermons as in holding conversations with ten or a dozen listeners at one time (quoted in Clark 1885: 243). It would imply that preaching was having some success, a presumption that he reinforces by specifying that among the educated classes, there is a friendly feeling toward them. He finally states that the religious leader such as *pir*s or *maharaj*s have less influence than they had.

Whatever the results of Shirt's preaching, it must be said that he was certainly the most active member of the CMS in terms of Sindhi translation. Clark's report mentions nine parts of the Old Testament and the whole New Testament. Fifteen other books published by Shirt are quoted, including one titled *Native Bhajans*, as well as the famous dictionary we

have already dealt with. His huge amount of work does not seem to have been sufficient to allow the conversion of Sindhis to Christianity, which remained the primary objective of CMS.

The New Conjuncture of the 1920s

In his book on the construction of communalism in colonial North India, Gyanendra Pandey claims that the 1920s made for a new conjuncture in the world of Indian politics (Pandey 2012: 232). He also considered that it was in these years that India saw an increase in the communal riots happening in most parts of the country. For him, the nationalist discourse was built against communalism, which was understood as being only, so to speak, a product of colonial power. Nevertheless, the communal violence and cruelty spread, and after V. D. Savarkar (1883–1966) had written his book *Hindutva* while in jail in 1917, the Rashtriya Svayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) was created in 1925 by K. B. Hedgewar, a Marathi Brahmin.[4] After the separation of Bengal in 1905 and the creation of the All India Muslim League in 1906, Hindu leaders decided to create a Hindu organization to safeguard the interests of their coreligionists. In 1909, Lala Rajpat Rai, with other Arya Samaj leaders, founded the Punjab Hindu Sabha. In 1915, an all India Hindu Sabha was birthed, and in 1921, it took the name of Sarvadeshak Hindu Mahasabha, better known as the Hindu Mahasabha.

Sindh was not spared from communal riots—a fact which has been overlooked or even forgotten by the defenders of the idea of an idealistic and peaceful pre-Partition Sindh. Long before the famous Manzilgah affair,[5] a number of issues clearly showed how the communal idea was undergoing a radicalization process. In Jacobabad, Abul Hasan, who was a revered *pir*, fell in love with Suggu, a young Hindu boy who used to act female parts in local dramas. While watching Suggu's rehearsal, Abul Hasan fell from a window and died. In May 1929, ten Hindus were killed in retaliation, and, as Malkani expressed, "Nothing like this had happened in Sindh before" (Malkani 1997: 82). The famous Congress leader, Pandit

[4] The RSS only reached Sindh in the early 1940s. See Kothari (2007) and Malkani (1997).

[5] In 1938, the Muslims probably prompted by the Muslim League asked the British to restore and re-open the Masjid Manzilgah which had been closed because of Sadh Belo, a Hindu pilgrimage. From the Hindu side, the Hindu Mahasabha was particularly divisive. The Manzilgah affair finally turned into communal riots that caused the death of 142 Hindus and 14 Muslims (Shahani 2018: 88).

Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861–1946),[6] came to Jacobabad to reassure the population. The British sent a Parsi to inquire, but although he unearthed a conspiracy of *zamindars* and maulvis, they were not touched. Fake accusations were leveled, but the subjects were prosecuted and then duly acquitted.

As stated by Hamida Khuhro, there were frequent incidents of violence from 1929 to 1931, especially in Sukkur (Khuhro 1998: 75). In 1929, there was a riot in Larkana and Muslims were arrested indiscriminately by the police. According to Khuhro, the police were under a Hindu magistrate named Rupchand, and they were following Mahasabha activists who were pointing out the people they wanted to be arrested (Khuhro 1998: 72). In the same year, 1929, Muslims were beaten and injured in Sukkur by militant Hindus. Muslims of surrounding villages poured into the city to avenge the outrage. This caused a riot and incidents of looting in the city.

The case of the Sanjogis is especially representative of the increasing communal tensions. The Sanjogis were a subdivision of the Shaykhs, the name usually given to Hindus who had converted to Islam. They would have been converted during Kalhora and Talpur rule. They were settled in northern Sindh, in Shahdadpur, Larkana, and Sukkur. In colonial times, new Hindus were converted as Sanjogis by one Mian Ghulam Siddique Mekan (1844–1905), of whom nothing is known. It is said that the Sanjogis were called as such by Hindus, while the Muslims called them Shaykhs. They used to keep a Muslim name and also a Hindu name, as can be seen with the renowned poet Sheikh Lalchand, alias Lal Muhammad Majruh. According to U. T. Thakur, the Sanjogis continued to observe Hindu customs. They celebrated Hindu festivals and worshipped the Hindu gods and the sacred cow (Thakur 1959: 67). The Sanjogis were a primary target of the Arya Samaj, and scholars agreed to claim that many among them were re-converted to Hinduism by the Samaj. But in Larkana, the Sanjogis who were refused admission by the Bhaibands were included among the Amil caste. Another target of the Arya Samaj were the outcaste groups, such as the Menghwars.[7]

[6] The pandit had created with Annie Besant the Banaras Hindu University for which he was Vice-Chancellor from 1919 to 1938. He was also president of the Congress in 1909 and 1918.

[7] I warmly thank Uttara Shahani to have brought the case of the Menghwars to my knowledge, and provided relevant sources about the subject.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to evaluate to what extend new normative regimes of knowledge could have challenged the steady process of building the Sufi paradigm in Sindh. The normative regimes of knowledge were mostly imported from northern India to Sindh. Dominant sections of the Hindus, the Sikhs, and the Muslims claimed that their respective traditions had been corrupted, and that they needed to be "purified." Most of the time, the purification process implemented was coupled with a rationalization process, made to withdraw a number of beliefs and practices that were more or less related to superstition and magic. Also, the reformist discourses enjoined people to turn back to the scriptural texts, which were considered to be the very and original essence of the religious traditions. Last, the reformist movements aimed at building a sense of community belonging. For this, the variety of the interpretations of a scriptural text was ignored, as was the flexibility which had before allowed for the vernacularization of the respective traditions.

All of these processes were nevertheless not harmonized or standardized and, in fact, they mirrored the diversity of the interpretations mostly marked by the vernacularization they had been submitted to. A main trend for the Hindus was to spread a Brahmanised reading of the Hindu scriptural texts and, in this respect, the basic scriptures were translated from Sanskrit to Sindhi. These texts were thus made accessible to Sindhi-speaking people, and, incidentally, they were supposed to display the normative discourse of and on Hinduism: what we could call orthodox Hinduism that, according to most nineteenth-century sources, was unknown in Sindh. Notwithstanding, the publications devoted to this normative reading of Hinduism were far from being the majority in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

Another trend of Hinduism echoed the wish to make Hinduism a modern and universal message which could improve the state of humanity as a whole, and especially the Western component. There was a will from the Hindus to spread Hinduism all over the planet, and for this purpose, they were to develop a new interpretation of the sacred scriptures which could match with the needs of the time. For example, the social side was increased so as to meet the expectations of the new ideologies which were being born in late nineteenth-century Europe. In Sindh, a number of literati—mostly belonging to the Amils—were the heralds of the universalist message of Hinduism, but it is difficult to evaluate the real impact of these new ideologies on the whole of Sindhi society.

Finally, there was a reformist ideology which was developed by Muslims in the wake of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and the Aligarh school. Like Hinduism, it was coupled with a new focus on the scriptural sources of religions, here Islam, starting with the Quran, which went through new Sindhi translations or glosses. Also, we can observe that a number of books published at this time focused on how to be a good Muslim, this expression usually meaning how to follow the *sharia*. In this respect, it is remarkable that, in the 1860s, the first normative text published both for Islam and Hinduism was completed by a Hindu gentleman, who of course belonged to the Amil community. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century onward, this would no longer be possible: no Hindu would publish a book related to normative Islam. But the main shifting occurred with the new conjuncture of the 1920s, when riots burst out in Sindh.

With the changing scene following the building of new orthodoxies both among the Muslims and the Hindus, only the Sufi paradigm was able to maintain a unity between the Sindhis, be they Muslim or Hindu. The position of the reformist readings of the religion toward the Sufi paradigm was plural. If we take the example of the Muslims, different positions can be observed. Some condemned the worship of the Muslim saints, but not the "philosophy of Sufism." Others would counter all that was related to Sufism, including the main exponents, such as Ibn Arabi. Finally, others would still elaborate upon their own reformist readings of Sufism, which would lead them to reformulate some of its tenets to update the ideology of Islam. The exemplar thinker in this regard was, of course, Muhammad Iqbal.

The religious effervescence that marked the end of the nineteenth century not only concerned the normative and/or reformist religious ideologies. Also, it is worth noting that these constructions were not directly competing with the Sufi paradigm and, all in all, Sufism was not the core of their normative constructions. If we consider that devotion was a major component of the Sufi paradigm, thus we have to look at the competitive regimes of knowledge in this field. The thorough reconstruction of society which concerned all of India and Sindh in this crucial period was mostly expressed through religious belonging and affiliation. Religious communities, then named *panth* or *jamat*, also followed the injunctions of regional culture, and the next chapter will scrutinize how these devotional regimes of knowledge competed, or not, with the Sufi paradigm, as well as how they contributed to its legitimacy. In any case, it must be noted that Sindh presented a different situation from that of the other provinces of India, where the shared religious culture that may have existed was weakened by the new knowledge regimes.

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CHAPTER 10

The Sufi Paradigm and the Devotional Regimes of Knowledge

Introduction

This chapter intends to question how regional religious persuasions evolved in relation to the Sufi paradigm in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The significant remaking of religious communities was coupled with the slow birth of proto-nationalist feeling in India. In Sindh, a part of this remaking was operated by regimes of knowledge that were located in the same field as the Sufi paradigm, that of devotion. This chapter will observe the four main regimes of devotional knowledge that were expressed in the late nineteenth century. The first one will be related with an attempt to create a distinct Sindhi community based on the cult of the Indus River.

Uderolal, otherwise known as Amarlal, was the incarnation of the Indus River, and he was worshipped by members of the dominant caste, the Lohanas. One again, historical sources do not allow us to decipher how popular the god was among the Hindus of Sindh since we have contradictory statements. Nevertheless, there was a clear attempt in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to build a separate *panth* as a local interpretation of Hinduism. We will attempt to understand how this new construction, or re-construction, of the cult of Uderolal, would be located regarding the making of the Sufi paradigm. Once again, the literature will be the most significant source on which this study will be rooted.

Another dominant *panth* of the Sindhi Hindus would go through a most significant remaking, but more in the early twentieth century: the Nanakpanth. The Nanakpanthis were the followers of the Sikh *guru*s, but in Sindh, they did not follow the reframing of the community that was implemented in Punjab, where the aim was to build a separate religion from Hinduism. After books devoted to Sufism, the second in number are the books devoted to Sikhism, either the Sikh *guru*s or the Sikh scriptures. These intense debates would lead the Nanakpanthis to claim their Hindu affiliation instead of their Sikh belonging. Regarding the location of the Nanakpanth in relation to the Sufi paradigm, we will observe at the moment that many Nanakpanthi devotees would also publish books in the field of Sufism.

The last devotional regimes of knowledge that could compete with or reinforce the Sufi paradigm were Shia: the Isna Ashari and the Ismaili. It will be interesting to observe that these regimes of knowledge were very involved in the making of the Sufi paradigm, and here again, the task of analysis is made very difficult because of the entanglement of the regimes of knowledge with the Sufi paradigm. As a matter of fact, the integration by Shah Abd al-Latif of the Karbala dramatic epic initiated an indissoluble link between the Sufi paradigm and the Shia regime of knowledge. Nevertheless, this complication did not prevent the birth of a Shia community in the early twentieth century, in which the ruler of Khairpur would play a leading role. However, a difficult issue should be addressed in this respect: was the building of a "political" Shia community related to the Shia regime of knowledge?

The other Shia regime of knowledge is expressed by the Khojas, a caste-like group dominated by traders, whose religious traditions mostly pertained to Vishnuite soteriolgy Vishnuism. In 1843, the exile of Hasan Ali Shah, also known as Aga Khan I and the living imam of the Ismaili Shias from Persia to Sindh, would cause a huge reshaping of the Khoja communities, both in terms of social organization and religious beliefs and rituals. In some decades, the Khojas would become Ismaili Shias, a denomination they had not heard of before. The community would be built of followers of Aga Khan I, and it would cause a number of splits among the Khojas since some of the wealthiest members would become either Sunni or Isna Ashari Muslims in order to escape the Aga Khan's stranglehold on the group's goods and earnings.

The intricate challenge this chapter will have to face is in stating whether the devotional regimes of knowledge would compete with or reinforce the

making of the Sufi paradigm, or perhaps do both. Consequently, it will provide an opportunity to address the challenging issue of the intermingling of the devotional regimes of knowledge, including the Sufi one. My hypothesis is that the position of a devotional regime of knowledge depends on the location of the group in Sindhi society. Briefly put, when a regime of knowledge is expressed by a group that is noticeably a minority, the discourse will tend to be more in accordance with the Sufi paradigm, mostly to be provided an opportunity to appear on the scene of the devotional regime of the whole of Sindh. In the case where a regime of knowledge is attached to a group which would be considered stronger, then attempts would be made to construct a singular regime of knowledge, and thus to get rid of the Sufi paradigm.

The Attempt to Create a Daryapanth

Hindu revivalism was not solely due to external Hindu movements that had reached Sindh, such as the Brahmo Samaj or the Arya Samaj, although they could have created an impetus. Two other issues should be analyzed in order to complete the scene: the attempt to reorganize the Daryapanth, and the rupture between the Khalsa Sikhs and the Sindhi Nanakpanthis. The British reported that the Hindus of Sindh were either Nanakpanthis or Daryapanthis. The Daryapanth is the name of the community whose members venerate the deity Udero Lal, or Jhulelal, usually associated with the Indus River. Udero Lal was a typical Sindhi god who would have rescued the Hindus from the threat of being converted to Islam by a king.

According to Dayaram Gidumal, Udero Lal is an *avatar* of the Indus River, also known as Varun. He adds that Udero Lal "is par excellence the patron god of Sindh, than whom none is more revered or more esteemed, and around whom a large majority of the Hindu population in Sindh love to cluster all their ideas of divinity, of purity and of the sanctity, whether derived from the Vedas, the Dharma Shahstra and the Puranas, or the songs and sayings of Nanak and Kabir" (Gidumal 1882: 53). Gidumal thus envisioned Udero Lal as a synthesis and an expression of Sindhi culture and identity.

Nonetheless, some events that occurred in the last decade of the nineteenth century clearly show that the Daryapanth moved into a new stage: the attempt to transform the path from a fairly fragmented tradition to a normative and standardized tradition, as well as a united and a harmonized community. Once again, this process should be located in the great

movement of reshaping the castes and religions all over India, especially marked in Punjab by the creation of the Singh Sabha in 1873 (Van der Veer 1994: 74). The first process which was supposed to cause the shift was printing. In 1883, Gidumal wrote that he had been told there was a "memoir" of Udero Lal in the possession of the Thakurs, but he was unable to get a copy (Gidumal 1882: 47). The Thakurs were the priests of the Daryapanth as descendants of Pugar Rai, Udero Lal's cousin, on whom he bestowed the leadership of the Daryapanth. Although Gidumal speaks of a text that the Thakurs would have possessed from Udero Lal, the tradition was nevertheless transmitted orally.

While the first accounts related to Amar Lal and Udero Lal were published by the British, it was not until the last decade of the nineteenth century that vernacular booklets were published in Sindhi. The first known of these publications is kept in the British Library in London, having the title of *Janam Sakhi Udero Lal Sahab ji*, or *The Life Narrative of Udero Lal*. It was published in Karachi in 1890 with 58 pages. This is the first known vernacular narrative of Udero Lal. While it is divided into three main parts, every section starts with a poetical verse, a *dohira*. It relates the birth, miracles, and finally the disappearance of the deity who is introduced as being an *avatar*.

In the 1893, another book was published in relation to the Daryapanth—the tradition therefore shifting from oral tradition to printed tradition. The second book published in Lahore in 1893 is of a different nature. The first book ever published on the Daryapanthis was a *janam sakhi* written with the Khudawadi alphabet. The second is titled *Maddah*, or *Praises*. The first one is a hagiography of Udero Lal, a kind of sacred narrative where the supernatural characteristics and numerous miracles he performed show his power, especially over the Muslims. The *Maddah*, a word from Arabic initially used for the Prophet Muhammad, included poetry in Sindhi where Udero Lal is praised.

The *Madah Amar Lal ji* is divided into 41 parts and each one contains between four and six verses, but with a majority having five. This means that, in fact, the form of the poetry is dominated by the *panjra*s, a five-verse or five-line poetry. Consequently, the first name of *madah* designates the content—praise—while the second one, *panjra*, the shape, with five lines. Furthermore, the subtitle provides other information: "*Sloka Kakar Bhagat ja*," or "The *sloka*s of Kakar Bhagat." A third term is thus used, *slok* or *sloka*, and the name of a *bhagat* is given: Kakar Bhagat. The *slok* or *shlok* or *shalok* means "couplet," "type of stanza," and it is much used in

many different South Asian literatures. In the introduction, the subtitle becomes the title and the title becomes the subtitle. One can observe the flexibility of the literary categories in the first publications related to the poetry devoted to Amar Lal.

Finally, we can see in these two books the two wings employed in building a distinct and homogenous tradition: the mythical story of the founder, and the scripture whose verses would be the basis of the prayers and rituals. According to Shackle, Trumpp was the first to arrange this double side of the Sikh tradition (Shackle 2015: 16). The main actors involved in this shifting would have been the Thakurs. They had an indisputable stranglehold on the path at this time, but every Thakur lineage managing a local cult performed in temples. It does not appear that they were organized following the pattern of a clergy. While their organization as a sacerdotal caste was relatively loose, they all acknowledged the superiority of the Thakur lineage, which was established in the *darbar* of Udero Lal, here the name of a village in central Sindh. The Thakurs were principally divided into three main groups: the Buddais, the Somais, and the Gorelas, the latter looking to have been extinct.

A lineage of Thakurs, maybe those of Udero Lal Village, probably attempted to build an institutionalized tradition in following the Sikh pattern, as the borrowing of the word *janam sakhi* would indicate. Even the fact that a book was published in a typical Sindhi alphabet, the Khudawadi, could mean they wanted to have their own distinct script like the Sikhs, who had the Gurmukhi script. The fact that the Daryapanthis took inspiration from the Sikhs is also obvious through the iconography: first in mimicking the representation of Guru Nanak and, secondly, in building a distinct representation of Udero Lal, despite its still having minor iconographical elements.

There are several indications that the actors involved in the construction of the Daryapanth used the Sikh model in the first phase. One of the most convincing elements is undoubtedly a book compiled in 1921 in Sukkur by Mulchand Pokardas. Nothing is known about this character who was apparently an editor and compiler of several books about Jhulelal in the 1920s. This book is published by Hari Singh and Sans, but others are published by Pokardas Tajir Kutub who is based in Sikarpur. The cover of this book entitled *Shri Amar Lal ja* is itself very significant. The title clearly indicates that it is dedicated to Jhulelal, under the name of Amar Lal. The alphabet used is Gurmukhi, but that's not all. Although the subject of the book is therefore clearly identified as Jhulelal, the portrait

represented is that of Guru Nanak, and not just any representation of Guru Nanak was chosen.

This is a portrait of Guru Nanak painted in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and preserved by the Government Museum and Art Gallery in Chandigarh. Guru Nanak is old with white hair, beard, and moustache. He is sitting in a deep meditation, on a small carpet on a terrace, with a tree behind him, and crossed knees that are balanced by the hand on the floor. As usual, a halo surrounds his face. The most interesting thing, however, is the clothing he wears. His robe is inscribed all over with calligraphy, the entire front in Arabic characters in Naskh style, with verses from the Quran. The sleeves, as well as a part of the hem, are inscribed in the same Arabic characters, but with Guru Nanak's most important composition, the *Japji*. The portrait is highly symbolizing the fact that Guru Nanak acknowledged different faiths, including Islam. It also mirrors a story of the *Janam sakhi*, according to which Guru Nanak was given in homage, while visiting Baghdad in Iraq, a cloak on which verses from the Quran were embroidered.

It is true that the representation in the book is slightly different. The background is composed of several trees, slender like cypress trees, while the original one was only one behind Guru Nanak. But the main difference is that the writings are unreadable: in fact, they are not represented. Therefore, what appeared to be a direct reference to an episode in Guru Nanak's life has been deleted to allow the portrait to be assigned to another character, Jhulelal. Finally, this representation shows that the Daryapanth was seeking to emancipate himself from his Sikh model, but that this differentiation process was at various stages. Indeed, other representations of Jhulelal printed in the 1920s on other books show it closer to the Mughal representation of Khwaja Khizr, which will be the other major source of Jhulelal's future iconography. In this case, he is represented on the fish, in the middle of a river, an iconographic motif that is more in line with its major function as an avatar of Varun, the figure of the divinized Indus.

A last event which occurred in the same decade, the 1890s, reinforces the idea that a process of communalization of the tradition was in progress. Off the city of Sukkur in northern Sindh, there are several islands in the middle of the river. As we saw before, one of them hosted a beautiful *dargah* devoted to Khwaja Khizr. This is a figure of the Indus River, and thus of Udero Lal, to whom specific legends are attached. As in the village of Udero Lal, the sanctuary was managed by both Muslims and Hindus.

A dispute arose regarding the management of the site between the Muslims and the Hindus, of which the details are unknown. However, the Hindus decided to leave the island of Khwaja Khizr and went onto the bank of the river in Sukkur. There, they built a new temple, only Hindu, from a piece of land they had bought in 1894 for the use of the "Jind Fakirs," after a trust deed in favor of Bhai Balo, the head of the fakirs at that time (Memon 2005: 198–199). Their temple displayed a unique Hindu identity and the bicephalous nature of Khwaja Khizr has disappeared. Notwithstanding, some architectural elements still refer to the Muslim background that predominated in Sindh, such as the dome standing above the main entrance.

The Hinduization of the Nanakpanth

Another mutation occurred among the Hindus of Sindh, between the late nineteenth century and the 1920s. The Nanakpanthis, or non-Khalsa followers of Guru Nanak, decided to leave the Sikh community and to introduce themselves as Hindus. This shift was mainly due to the evolution of the Sikh community during the same period. The Nanakshahis were followers of Guru Nanak and were not into the Khalsa Sikh.[1] They would go every morning to the temple known as the *tikano*, the temple in which they read one or two verses from the *Adi Granth*, of which they would repeat at home the portions known as *Japji* and *Sukhmani*. In the evening, they would once more attend the *tikano* and listen to a reading and explanation by the priest, the *bawa*, of the Bhagawat, the Ramayana, or other Hindu *shastras* (Aitken 1907: 165).

Over the nineteenth century, the Sikhs had gradually built a distinct tradition in making it mandatory to perform prescribed rituals. In October of 1909, the Imperial Legislative Council passed the Anand Marriage Act into law. As expressed by Oberoi, "For the first time, this act legally codified a Sikh ritual, thus providing Sikh separatism with the government recognition" (Oberoi 1994: 342). In 1925, the Gurdwara Reform Act determined who had the right to manage *gurdwaras* and decide who their legal owner was. Since the late nineteenth century, the Khalsa Sikhs had tried to dismiss the ancestral priests running the *gurdwaras*, such as the *masands* and the *mahants*, who were hereditary priests (Murphy 2012: 205). Thanks to the act, all of the *gurdwaras* came under the Shiromani

[1] According to Harjot Oberoi, the "non-Khalsa Sikhs may be meaningfully considered under the category Sahajdhari" (Oberoi 1994: 78).

Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which was controlled by the Singh Sabha. Consequently, the sections of the Sikhs (such as the Nanakpanthis) who followed the Sikh teachings but did not accept the Khalsa had to declare that they were not Sikhs but Hindus (Van der Veer 1994: 74).

To better understand the Nanakpanth as being different from the Khalsa Sikhs, it is useful to focus on the temple of Sadh Belo. The island of Sadh Belo is located off Sukkur in northern Sindh. As we shall see below, it was founded by an Udasi, Shri Swami Bhankandiji (1763–1863), and it hosts a complex of religious buildings. In the description of the different divinities exhibited in the island of Sadh Bela, there is mention of "Jinda Pir riding on his favourite pullah fish with a trident in his hand" (Gidumal 1882: 63). Other deities included Krishna and Radha. In the book published by the Shri Sadhbella Tirath in 1924, commemorating a century, the description is different: Anapurna Devi, Shiva, Hanuman, Ganesh, Sita… (Ajwani 1924: 86). Amazingly, the Granth Sahib was installed in 1873, thus half a century after the complex of Sadh Bela was created.

Shri Swami Bhankandji, the founder of Sadh Bela, was an Udasi, a follower of Shri Chand, Guru Nanak's eldest son.[2] The Udasis were the most important segment of the Sahajdhari Sikhs. They proclaim indifference to worldly concerns and were renunciant. They do not follow the Khalsa Sikhs, who knot their hair under a turban or wear sporting arms. The Udasis' dress code would include "a cap, a rosary of flowers, a cotton bag, a vessel, ash for smearing on the body, a chain to tie around the waist, and a deer-skin upon which to perform Hatha-Yoga." Oberoi concludes: "In appearance perhaps no two persons could have looked more different than a Khalsa Sikh and an Udasi…" (Oberoi 1994: 79).

However, in Sindh, the Udasi *tikano*s display a number of deities and, today, a place is devoted to Jhulelal in the main temple of Sadh Belo. The same situation prevails in another Udasi *tikano* located in southern Sindh, in the village of Pir jo Goth near Thatta. In Mirpur Khas, the temple of Lal Saeen—an obvious reference to Jhulelal—is made up of Jhulelal references, as well as Nanakpanthi and also Shivaite figures. On the other hand,

[2] On the Udasis, the best study is Sandhu (2011). For the Udasis in Sindh, see Jatt (2017). Murphy identifies three meanings of the word Udasi: (1) Guru Nanak as a traveling preacher; (2) the Sikh specialists who do not marry; (3) the followers of Shri Chand (Murphy 2012: 206). Thakur claims that in Sindh, the Udasis are not married while the Jagiasis can get married. Notwithstanding, today the Udasis can be married, and they still claim to be the descendants of Shri Chand.

in the temples devoted to Jhulelal, there is often a portrait of Guru Nanak. The available sources do not allow us to know more about the aggregative process through which different gods were integrated in a pantheon articulated around a kathenotheist system.

Thus, there was an echo of the debate between the Khalsa Sikhs and the Udasis in Sindh, but it was not until 1905 that a book on the teachings of Guru Nanak was published in Sindhi, by Dayaram Gidumal (Gidumal 1904). In Sindh, as shown by the numerous publications which happened in the early twentieth century, the *Sukhmani*, or *Psalm of Peace*, was the most popular piece of the *Adi Granth*. It belongs to the category of the Gurbanis, or texts written by the gurus. The *Sukhmani* was written by the fifth guru, Guru Arjun (1563–1606), at Amritsar in about 1602. It deals with topics mostly related to meditation leading to the merging with God, a similar topic to that which can be found in Sufi poetry. One of the first editions in Sindhi script was published in 1910 in Hyderabad by one Swami Kalachand Sahib Mulchand Manghumal (Manghumal 1910). It was reprinted many times.

The *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, in its 1908 edition, provides a meaningful statement about the shifting of the Sindhis from a Sikh affiliation to a Hindu affiliation: “The Sikhs, of whom a considerable number were returned in previous years, are concealed in the Census statistics of 1901 under the denomination of Nanakpanthi Hindus” (IGI 1909: 406). Incidentally, this shows how ignorant the British were in regard to the different currents, and competition, which were at work among the followers of Guru Nanak. The real meaning of the comment is that the Sindhi followers had decided not to identify as Sikhs because, in the early twentieth century, it means “Khalso” as Shirt and *alii* explain in the dictionary: “a follower of Gobind Singh” (Shirt et al. 1879: 383). They wanted to be a path, the Nanakpanth, among others belonging to Hinduism. Therefore, the Sikhs were not concealed: the Sindhi followers of Guru Nanak considered themselves Hindu, not Sikh.

Several paradoxical processes were at work in Sindh, mostly focusing on situating the Sindhi paths in the broader Indian context. Sometimes this would produce a Hinduization of a Sindhi tradition, as in the case of the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. In using the word Hinduization, I want to put focus on processes that had two main characteristics. Firstly, they claimed to provide the true interpretation of the scriptural sources of Hinduism, and secondly, they wanted their interpretations to be spread all over India as a pan-Indian discourse that could encompass all previous

Hindu schools of thought. Another trend was made up of dynamics thrusting Sindhi paths into universalist traditions, such as the Islamic Umma and the Theosophical Society. Notwithstanding, and although it is not easy to inform it, another dimension should not be neglected: the competition between the Sindhi paths, these sometimes even belonging to the same religious persuasion.

In this respect, the opening illustration of a book published in 1923 on Udero Lal tells us more than a long rhetorical argument. In this picture, three characters are going toward the West, as if in a procession: the first one is walking, the second one is riding a horse, and the third is walking. The caption is written in Arabic Sindhi for the title, as is the whole book itself, while Devanagari is used for identifying the three characters. The figure that is riding a horse is Udero Lal, as this is also given in the title written in Arabic Sindhi: Shri Amar Udero Lal Sahib. The character walking before Udero Lal is Pir Patho, and the one walking behind him is Lal Shahbaz. The picture clearly illustrates the superiority of Udero Lal over two main figures of Sindhi Sufism. The representation shows they are his servants, and they are similarly drawn, as if they were twins, and bear two meaningful symbols: the flag for Pir Patho,[3] and the Shivaite trident for Lal Shahbaz.[4] The latter attribute highlights a Hindu account that Raja Bharthari, a key figure in the Nathpanth, was worshipped in Sehwan before the arrival of the Sufi from Persia. So it also implies that Jhulelal won the Nathpanth. Since Sufism and Nathpanth were the two dominant religious currents in Sindh before Guru Nanak's prediction, the final message of the representation is that Uderolal subjugated both of them.

The evolution of the different Hindu paths in Sindh must be located within the tensions over the definition of religious communities. In the absence of historical sources, it is difficult to know the relationship between the Hindus and the sacred scriptures of Hinduism, such as the *Baghavad Gita*. In fact, it is only through the British that we can have a bird's eye view of the question, and they always make the same claim as E. H. Aitken, the compiler of the *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind* published in 1907:

[3] Pir Patho is a Sufi belonging to the thirteenth century, maybe the first Sohrawardi of importance in Sindh. His shrine lies in the Indus Delta, and it is a main site of Sufi pilgrimage, as well as a necropolis. The Hindus of Sindh worshiped him as Raja Gopichand, who is a main character of the Nathpanth.

[4] The trident should come from the association of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar with another Nathpanthi character, Raja Bharthari. Once again, one can hardly find any historical source before Richard Burton.

"But there is after all very little religion in Sind that would be recognised as Hinduism in the rest of India" (Aitken 1907: 165). Notwithstanding, in 1893, the text of the *Baghavad Gita* was translated by Dayaram Gidumal into Sindhi—without quoting a source, but most probably from a Hindi translation (Gidumal 1893).

The Shia Regime of Knowledge in the Public Sphere

Shiism in Sindh is another neglected topic, despite recent works such as the papers published by Zulfiqar Ali Kalhoro (Kalhoro 2015). Yet, Shiism was an important element of the religious scene of Sindh for three main reasons. First, we have historical sources offering evidence that Shiism reached Sindh very early. As soon as the tenth century, Sindh was a Shia state under the suzerainty of the Fatimid Empire based in Cairo. Secondly, the Shia *Sayyid*s of the Indus Valley played a prominent role in the management of the Sufi *dargahs*. And, thirdly, the last dynasty to have ruled Sindh before the British conquest had been Shia. As a matter of fact, the Talpurs patronized Shia buildings and rituals from the late eighteenth century on to colonial rule. Furthermore, since the Khaipur Emirate was granted the status of a princely state by the British, the local *mir*s carried on the Shia patronage policy during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in their territory.

The first *tazia*, also known as a *zarih* in Sindh, a replica of Imam Husayn's mausoleum, was made at Tando Agha in Hyderabad. It is believed to have been constructed by Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur in 1785. Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur was the founder of the Talpur dynasty, a dynasty which followed the Shia faith (Kalhoro 2015: 48). Later on, he was given as a gift the footprints of Imam Ali by the Qajar king, Fateh Ali Shah. The late Talpur, as ruler of Hyderabad, would build a shrine to shelter the footprints which were then known as *Shah jo Qadam*. After the defeat of the Hyderabad Talpurs in 1843 by the British army, the patronage of Shia buildings and ceremonies stopped in Hyderabad since the families of the rulers were sent to exile. The new patrons were the Talpur rulers of Khairpur, the only remaining princely state in Sindh after the conquest.

During the colonial period, the role played by the Khairpur *mir*s in the spread of a new Shia belonging is not to be overlooked. They built a number of *zarih*s, otherwise known as *tazia*s in South Asia. In Khairpur, the rule of Mir Ali Nawaz (r. 1894–1909) was the most prolific with two categories of buildings: the palaces and the Shia buildings. A *zarih* was

built in Khairpur with a beautiful monumental entrance, built by craftsmen who the ruler had sent to Karbala to mimic the mausoleum of Imam Husayn. Another one was built in Kot Diji, the town where the rulers used to stay. Furthermore, not only did they patronized the building of new Shia monuments in Khairpur, such as a big and beautiful *imambara*, but they were eventually involved in the new Shia organizations that were created in the early twentieth century, such as the All India Shia Conference.

The ruler of Khairpur, Mir Ali Nawaz, was asked to deliver the presidential address held in Calcutta in 1928. The same year, he published it in Khairpur. The All India Shia Conference (AISC) was founded in 1907 and the first meeting was organized in Lucknow. Built in the wake of the Indian National Congress, the All India Muhammadan Educational Conference, and the All India Muslim League, the goal of AISC, like that of other previously mentioned organizations, was to gather community representatives for the exchange of views on modern socio-economic and educational questions (Jones 2011: 118). At the Indian level, the AISC would become one of the driving forces in the construction of a Shia community. Beyond claiming to work for the advancement of the social, moral, and intellectual conditions of the Shias in India, the AISC was able to express a modern vision of welfare, social service, and collective responsibility—what Justin Jones coins "associative Shiism" (Jones 2011: 121).

Mir Ali Nawaz's presidential address in the Calcutta session clearly addressed a number of issues, starting with stating that the AISC was not the rival of the Mohammedan Educational Conference or the Muslim League. All of these organizations worked at reaching a common goal in "the interest of the progress" of the Muslim community of India. He went further in claiming that the progress of a community depends on education, especially what he calls "universal education." "In every place, in every village, in every big family there is the need of an indigenous school" (Mir Ali Nawaz 1928: 5). He also spoke of the necessity for the Shia College of Lucknow to be transitioned into a university.[5] Female education was also, according to him, a major issue.

The ruler of Khairpur had a special interest in the situation of the Sayyids, who are the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad and also of the first three imams—Ali, Hasan, and Husayn. He did not detail whether he spoke of the Shia *Sayyid*s or of the whole community. Nevertheless, he

[5] It is not a coincidence that the Anglo-Muslim College at Aligarh was transformed into a University in 1920.

requested the creation of three more orphanages in addition to that of Lucknow; these were to be located in Bombay, Calcutta, and Hyderabad in the Deccan. He also argued that, in Sindh, the *Sayyid*s were a destitute population, "most of whom follow no profession but that of beggary" (Mir Ali Nawaz 1928: 14). Other topics addressed, such as the need for well-trained missionaries based on the Christian mission's training, the need to have their own banking structures in order to escape the domination of the *bania*s, and the necessity of reinforcing the structure of the AISC, and especially its central office.

While Mir Ali Nawaz started his address by claiming the AISC was not involved in politics, he devoted the last and biggest part of his talk to the issue of *swaraj*. His words were nonetheless very diplomatic. He acknowledged that the British had already started to shift some quasi-political responsibilities to the Indians, but that this was not enough. At the same time, he also attempted to show that the self-government of the people over its own territory would be quite natural. This discourse on *swaraj* comes from the fact that, as the ruler of Khairpur observed, communal riots were becoming "the order of the day"—both between Muslims and Hindus as well as between Sunnis and Shias. This implies that colonization had more or less added fuel to the communal issues, although he did not give any further details. But in this regard, he added that communal riots were unknown in his state and that Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus were living there peacefully together (Mir Ali Nawaz 1928: 28).

This involvement of the ruler of the Khairpur state in pan-Indian Shia events could indicate that the Shias were on the way to "communitizing"—which they were, in fact, as thoroughly demonstrated by Justin Jones for northern India (Jones 2011). Was it the will to bring into existence a Shia group in Sindh that brought Mirza Qalich Beg to start publishing devotional Shia poetry? And how did this literature go to locate regarding the Sufi paradigm? It is probable that he operated these publications with the help of the *mir*s of Khairpur. As a civil servant in the British administration of Sindh, he was posted in Khairpur. Furthermore, he took interest in the emirate to the extent that he published a book in Sindhi on the history of the emirate of Khairpur. Notwithstanding, Mirza Qalich Beg's books as related to Shiism were not the first achieved by Sindhis. As a matter of fact, the British Library holds two related books published in Bombay as early as 1877 and 1884. The first one is the *Sahifat al-Kalima*, the prayer book attributed to the fourth Shia Imam Zayn al-Abidin, with the Arabic text and Sindhi translation (Blumhardt 1893: 2). The second

book is the *Bayan Imam Husayn jo*. Though, the script used for this book is not the Arabic Sindhi, but the Khojki characters.[6]

The use of Khojki script clearly attests that it was published by the Khojas, and in 1884, the Ismaili imams were still very close to the Isna Ashari in their practices. It is well known that the first Aga Khan, Hasan Ali Shah (d. 1882), was the main patron of the Moharram ceremonies as organized in Bombay (Green 2011: 155). Nevertheless, the fact that the book was published in Khojki clearly shows that it was not meant for a large audience, but rather an audience restricted to the Khoja community since it was the "communal" script, which was used for the printing. However, another hint of the birth and the spread of a Shia regime of knowledge is attested to by several publications of translations in Sindhi, these being printed in the Arabic Sindhi script, one of them being the most famous Shia book in India: the *Rawzat al-Shuhada*, which went through several editions in 1905 at Lahore, and two distinct publishing in 1928 at Sukkur.

According to the catalogue prepared by his grandson Mirza Aijaz Beg, Mirza Qalich Beg authored eight works in relation to Shiism, all in Sindhi except one in Urdu; three of them are yet unpublished, and thus in manuscript form. Among them, there are a short collection of *marsiyya*s, a depiction of the Karbala tragedy, and a demonstration of the falsehood of the Sunni arguments against the Shias. Mirza Qalich Beg started with the *marsiya*s of Sabit Ali Shah, to which I shall return below, in 1900. Apart from this major book, he published two other groundbreaking works related to Shiism. The first was published in 1911 in Shikarpur with the title of *Kitab al-Majalis al-Shuhada* (*Book of the Mourning Assemblies of the Martyrs*), and the second, more comprehensive, was the *Tuhfa Imamiyya*, or *The Gift of the Imams*, published in 1929. With these two books, Mirza Qalich Beg gave the Shia community of Sindh a serious source of data designed for both learning the beliefs and performing the rituals through the singing of devotional poetry in Sindhi.

The *Tufah Imamiyya* provides a basis for the Shia devotion. It is made of ten *marsiyya*s and other religious literary genres. The *marsiyya*s cover 82 pages of a total of 98 pages. They are devoted to the martyrdom (*shahadat*) of the main members of the Prophet's family. Of course, there

[6] The Khojki is the communal script used by the Khojas, to which I shall return in the next section. The Khojki comes, as the Khudawadi, from the Brahmi, and it was therefore often confused with the same Khudawadi in the classification of the British Library.

is Imam Husayn's *shahadat*, Ali Akbar and Ali Asghar, and Qasim. Nevertheless, the two longer *marsiya*s are the ones on Ghazi Abbas and Zaynab. These two characters traditionally refer to the two most dramatic events of Karbala, if it is relevant to build a hierarchy between the martyrdoms. Zaynab was first Imam Ali's daughter, thus Imam Husayn's sister. She is considered a model of resistance among the Muslim world, and especially so of the archetypical woman who does not accept injustice. Ghazi Abbas was the half-brother of both Husayn and Zaynab. He became famous during the battle of Karbala because he was slaughtered while collecting water for the Prophet's family. Furthermore, the *Tufah Imamiyya* also includes a *rubayat*, two *nat*s, three *manaqib*s,[7] two *khutbi*s,[8] the *isna ashrari dua* (namely, the Shia prayer), and a *Khutbo id Ghadir jo*, or the sermon for the commemoration of the Ghadir, the place where Prophet Muhammad is said to have designated Ali as his successor.

Notwithstanding, the groundbreaking work in the process of unveiling the Shia regime of knowledge in Sindh was undoubtedly the publication of the *marsiya*s composed by Sabit Ali Shah (1740–1805) and completed by Mirza Qalich Beg. Already, we examined a probable collaboration between Mirza Qalich Beg and the *mir*s of Khairpur, especially if the latter did not ask him to do this work. It is doubtful when one knows Beg's proclivity to write and publish. The publication of Sabit Ali Shah burst on stage the Shia devotional approach as a new public regime of knowledge. This said, the impact of printing Shia devotional literature should not be exaggerated: it could rather be understood as a will, maybe expressed by or through the *mir*s of Khairpur, to build a Shia community, a *qawm*, in a period where the uniformization and solidification of groups into communities were spreading all over India.

Mirza Qalich Beg published his work devoted to Sabit Ali Shah in four volumes, starting with the first published in 1900 and culminating with the fourth and last in 1925. Consequently, four years before publishing Shah Abd al-Karim's *kalam*, and before Sachal (1902) and Rohal (1903), he started publishing Sabit Ali Shah's work. As expressed in the title, this work is made up of the Shia devotional poetry, or *marsiyya*s, as well as the life (*ahwal*) of the poet. Sabit Ali Shah (1740–1810) was a Sindhi poet born in Sehwan Sharif, the son of Madar Ali Shah, whose small *dargah* lies

[7] Three different genres of poetry.

[8] The *khutba* is the prone delivered by the imam of a mosque on the Friday prayer, Friday being the most important day for the Muslims.

on the bank of the Arul Wah. Sabit Ali Shah is mostly known for being the most important author of *marsiyya*s in Sindhi. He also composed poetry devoted to Sufis, as for example, a *madah* dedicated to Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. He is buried in Sehwan Sharif in a small shrine located in the Karbala area of the town. His poetry and his *madah* are sung for Moharram.

Sabit Ali Shah was patronized by the Shia rulers of Sindh, the Talpurs of Hyderabad. He had been sent as a kind of ambassador to the shah of Persia. The matrix of the *marsiyya*s in Sindhi is the "Sur Kedaro" of Shah Abd al-Latif, a chapter of his *Shah jo Risalo*. In the early seventeenth century, other Sindhi poets composed *marsiyya*s in Persian. In his work, Shah Abd al-Latif had inextricably mixed Shia references with Sufi references, so that one can allegedly claim that the Shia regime of knowledge was already at that point a part of the Sufi paradigm. Notwithstanding, the edition and publishing of Sabit Ali Shah's *marsiyya*s worked at a different level than that of the building of a Shia *qawm*. Even so, the impact of publishing made the Shia devotional poetry accessible to the whole literate Sindhi audience.

As we saw above, Sabit Ali Shah also composed Sufi poetry, and today both are sung during the Moharram processions, implying that the Sindhis do not differentiate between the two regimes of knowledge, but rather consider them to form a single one, the Sufi paradigm. The interweaving of the regimes of knowledge is one of the most complex issues to be addressed, especially for traditions based on the performance of an oral tradition. As we already expressed, there is a lack of sources in Sindh which did not allow this researcher to find detailed answers regarding these issues. The imbrication of the two regimes of knowledge was nonetheless not working only in reference to Sufism and Shiism. We now have to turn to another regime of knowledge, which shared this peculiarity.

From Khoja to Ismaili: The Aga Khani Regime of Knowledge

The last regime of knowledge on the Muslim scene was that of the Ismailis.[9] The centralized policy of the present Aga Khan, Shah Karim, allows scholars, when they have permission, a good collection of manuscripts and lithographed books to study their regime of knowledge

[9] For a detailed analysis of the reframing of the Khoja regime of knowledge, and of its shifting to an Aga Khani regime of knowledge, see Boivin (2013). Here my contention is only to show the diversity of devotional regimes of knowledge in their relation with the Sufi paradigm.

in the nineteenth century. A major event occurred in the community in the same year when the British conquered Sindh, in 1843: the first Aga Khan Hasan Ali Shah, the 46th living imam of the Shia Ismailis, migrated from Persia to Sindh. This migration caused a major shifting in the governing of the community, to say the least. In brief, Hasan Ali Shah started to implement different policies to put the Khojas under his total control—policies that were to be expanded by his successors, Ali Shah (d. 1884) (or Aga Khan II) and Sultan Muhammad Shah (1877–1957) (or Aga Khan III).

The Khojas were made up of a cluster of castes comprised of the descendants of Hindus who had converted to Islam during different periods, and dominated by merchants. They were followers of the Shia Ismaili imams, known as the Aga Khans, but a small number among them would become Isna Ashari Shias to escape the authority of the Aga Khans, who wanted to control the whole community's properties. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Aga Khans were themselves practicing a religiosity that was much informed by Isna Ashari Shiism, this after the centuries they had spent in Persia where Shiism was the state religion from the sixteenth century onward. The *pothi*s kept by the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London provides a good summary of the regime of knowledge the Khojas were dealing with, although this regime went through a major turn as of the Aga Khan I's advent to Sindh. The most striking point to note here is the eclecticism of the sources and references, in terms of religious affiliation among others. Regarding Isna Ashari references, many *marsiya*s were included in the Khoja *pothi*s, among whom we find abstracts of Sabit Ali Shah. Such references could be coupled with other abstracts borrowed from Sufi poetry in Sindh, especially from the *Shah jo Risalo*.

The main teaching we can deduce from the *pothi*s is that the Khojas did not claim to be Muslim—at least not in the strict sense of the term implying adherence to the core tenets and practices of Islam: for them, as for many Sindhis, to be Muslim or not to be Muslim was not an issue. In fact, the Khoja religion resulted from a construction operated by a dominant group which was very pragmatic, organized as a caste including many different subcastes and probably unified through participation in a common economic network. The rituals performed by the nineteenth century Khojas, including the recitation of prayers, were much more Hindu than Muslim, if we are to use these categories that were developing in late nineteenth-century India, and this is the case for the main ritual they still perform, known as the *gat pat*.

The Ismaili regime of knowledge was a witness to all of the very diverse constructions completed by Sindhi groups, but due to the hermeticism the Khojas practiced, it did not spread outside of the group, the first protection against this being the specific writing they used, the Khojki script, which was unknown to non-Khoja Sindhis. The next step regarding the introduction of the three other regimes of knowledge prevailing among the Muslims of Sindh—the reformist, the Shia, and the Ismaili—is to evaluate what they shared with the Sufi paradigm, as well as what they did not share: In other words, did these other regimes of knowledge challenge the Sufi paradigm, or even weaken it, and how? Also, did they have a position regarding the Sufi paradigm or not? Of course, the answer is multifaceted.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have dealt with the competitive regimes of religious knowledge. My aim has been to scrutinize what the religious market was made of in this period, and how the Sufi paradigm was represented by it or ignored. The Sufi paradigm centered on, and was restricted to, the *Shah jo Risalo* as an incarnation of Sindhi literature, culture, and even more, identity. We can surmise that all of the Sindhis, be they Sunni, Shia, Hindu, or Sikhs, agreed with this statement, so that there was a consensus. However, this did not prevent new ideas from penetrating Sindh, also because the Sindhi youth were traveling—for example, they had to go to Bombay for study in a university. Thus, of course, the ideas of the time, like other kinds of material and immaterial goods, were circulating both in and outside of India and taking advantage of new technical progress, including lithographical printings and also the appearance of telephones.

It may be that the strongest impact in the reframing of the religious scene, in Sindh and elsewhere, came from the reformist movements, both Hindu and Muslim, as well as Sikh. After the violent attacks perpetrated by the Christian missionaries attempting to devalue non-Christian traditions, one could speak of a similar reaction from the Indians: They agreed that their own religion was corrupted with non-religious beliefs and practices. They did not agree on the corrupted elements, but they agreed upon the need to purify the Indian religions from these alienations. Hence, from the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs, many organizations were created

to transmit the "true" and "authentic" tenets and rituals of their persuasions. Often, such organizations were averse to all that was related to magic and superstition, and all that could not find any legitimacy in sacred scriptures. For all the reformers, the truth was expressed in sacred scripture—the Veda, the Bhagavad Gita, the Quran, or the Adi Granth. The religious traditions were more and more a matter of scriptural and textual traditions.

These intricate processes were for the most part reluctant to consider the Sufi paradigm as a paradigm. Notwithstanding, some authors started to draw a line between Sufi poetry, as the embodiment of the Sufi paradigm, and Sufi practiced, as a symbol of superstition and thus backwardness. Meanwhile, there were religious traditions in Sindh which were closed to the Sufi paradigm, in that they were based on the performance of devotion. In this regard, I have shown how the Sindhi Nanakpanth did not follow the Khalsa and thus kept its inclusive religious function, and also the attempt to build a specific Sindhi religion, the Daryapanth, based on devotion toward the Indus River. Consequently, even though one cannot deny that the Arya Samaj had already settled in Sindh, it was not challenging the Sufi paradigm yet.

Among the Muslims, the Aligarh rationality had been transmitted through new education institutions such as the Sindh Madressat-ul Islam. However, while Sunni reformism dominated the scene, several founders of the Sindh Madressat-ul Islam belonged to minor Muslim groups, such as the Khojas, who were Isna Ashari Shias or Ismailis. Regarding Shiism, Mirza Qalich Beg was once again the herald of its upsurge on the public scene in publishing the *marsiyya*s of Sabit Ali Shah from 1900 onward. Here, we can almost claim that this work can be seen as an addition to the Sufi paradigm, since it shared a great deal with it in terms of devotion and emotion. It focuses on the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and his family, but as we know, Shah Abd al-Latif had already introduced this theme in his poetry by devoting a whole chapter to it, the "Sur Kedaro."

The tapestry of the Sufi paradigm was enriched by a number of new threads in the early twentieth century. Another regime of knowledge perfectly illustrates the plasticity of the vernacular knowledge: the Khoja regime. The numerous manuscripts collected by the Institute of Ismaili Studies show that the *pothi*s were made of a number of texts belonging to different religious and spiritual persuasions, including Sufism. Their community textual tradition was often put side by side with abstracts of

the *Shah jo Risalo*, or *marsiyya*s authored by Sabit Ali Shah. In their policy implemented for controlling the whole groups of Khojas, the Aga Khans had started, since the 1880s, a rationalizing with the intention of expurgating all tenets and rituals that were not centered on them. However, these devotional regimes of knowledge were not strictly speaking a challenge for the Sufi paradigm. The communities that produced them were often in the minority and in fact had already absorbed the components of the Sufi paradigm. It can be seen that in nineteenth-century Khoja manuscripts, for example, there are many extracts from *Shah jo Risalo* intertwined with strictly community texts.

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CHAPTER 11

Oral Knowledge and the Sufi Paradigm

Introduction

To date, the Sufi paradigm has been studied mostly as an intellectual construction, distinguished from the very practice of Sufism. The third part intended to scrutinize the regimes of knowledge that were competing with the Sufi paradigm. Through the analysis in previous chapters, we have dealt with the entrepreneurs of the Sufi paradigm, and now I wish to focus on the transmitters of knowledge in colonial Sindh. Many parts of the ongoing study have been devoted to mechanisms for the building of the Sufi paradigm. Mass printing was instrumental in this process, in which the most significant actors were members of the intelligentsia. Nevertheless, printed matters did not end other forms of knowledge being produced. Despite the growing success of printed knowledge, it being reinforced by the progress of literacy, alternative forms of knowledge were still implemented and distributed.

The previous two chapters were devoted to competing regimes of knowledge in the era of printed data. However, in this chapter, more traditional ways of expressing and producing knowledge shall also be investigated, especially concerning knowledge as transmitted by the traditional groups who were in charge of the distribution of knowledge throughout Sindh.

The oral tradition is not an easy category of knowledge to define. I argue that manuscripts are included in oral knowledge instead of written

knowledge. The real cleavage regarding the production of knowledge, then, is rather between oral-manuscript knowledge and printed knowledge, given that the printing press allows society to make a corpus of knowledge available to the masses, following the huge spread of literacy and the reinforcement of the middle class.

Consequently, contrary to the dominant cleavage usually expressed as being between oral and written, or textual tradition, I intend to demonstrate that the most significant upheaval was undertaken through mass printing. Notwithstanding, the oral tradition was not suppressed by the mass spread of knowledge through printing. Different categories of pre-printing transmitters were still sharing their knowledge legacy, even besides the written works produced by the dominant groups such as the Sayyids and other Ashrafs. I am thinking of three main groups which were leading transmitters of oral knowledge throughout Sindh: the Manganhars, or professional caste musicians; the *faqir*s, non-professional transmitters; and the *bhagat*s. I shall provide an introduction for each of these groups, whose members did not belong to the dominant groups and who shared a low status despite the key function they had in society.

Yet, such an enterprise meets many pitfalls. Instead of summarizing them, I shall center in on the most challenging obstacle among them, which is related to how to restore the oral tradition, for which there is no trace par definition, save some manuscripts as they existed in the early twentieth century. I propose to draw on two different bodies of information. The first is the data collected through the leadership of Nabi Bakhsh Baloch soon after Partition in relation to the "folk" tradition, always oral, and published from the 1950s onward in tens of volumes by the Sindhi Adabi Board in Pakistan. The second is the corpus of manuscripts as collected by the Ismaili Khojas under the leadership of the fourth Aga Khan, Shah Karim al-Husayni, and then kept by the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. Other works based on the collection of oral Sindhi traditions in India can also be seen as part of this body of work.[1]

In using this data, we have to be quite aware of its limitations, which I shall describe below, and also keep in mind that the aim of this section is to locate the production of these bodies of knowledge and their transmitters in the makings of the Sufi paradigm. The second corpus is made up of ethnographical data collected by different scholars in the 1990s and the

[1] I am thinking especially of the works completed by Jetho Lalwani and Parso Gidwani, two pioneers in the understanding of Indian Sindhi knowledge after partition.

2000s, including myself, as I spent time with a group of Manganhars in the early 2000s. I am quite conscious of the span of time between the era of the makings of the Sufi paradigm, in the early twentieth century, and the ethnographical data collected in the early twenty-first century, which amounts to nearly a century's time. Despite this, I am not going to claim that the oral tradition has been fixed and without updates for ages, or centuries. In fact, I argue that the construction of a corpus is quite flexible, and updated regularly following a number of injunctions related to space, time, society, and other factors. A main corpus of manuscripts will be highly decisive in this respect, this being the one kept by the Institute of Ismaili Studies, which, despite it only being related to the Khojas, is the best catalogued and thus the most accessible.

The Figure of the Bard

In the previous chapters, we saw how British colonization caused the birth of a middle class, mostly based in a first step on mercantile groups and the Amils who adopted new ideals and new settings in the late nineteenth century. The intelligentsia challenged the authority of knowledge that had been kept for centuries by the traditional, professional learned groups. This does not mean these groups were suddenly deprived of their authority that was rooted in knowledge. The power they had from their control over knowledge was one among many other legitimizing means at their disposal, such as land ownership. Nevertheless, the intelligentsia built a new representation of Sufism which I have named the Sufi paradigm, and they benefitted from the spread of mass printing through the distribution of their conception of Sufism as a paradigm instead of a community practice. Furthermore, it is tempting to couple the divide between oral and written knowledge with that of rural land and urban Sindh.

In Sindh as in other areas of the world, the transmitters of oral knowledge can be divided into two main categories: the professionals and the non-professionals. However, the most important of these was the professional caste musicians, to which groundbreaking studies have already been devoted—especially in the Indian context.[2] In Sindh, the professional

[2] In fact, most of the time, the works are devoted to the transmission of a given epic, or other literary oral genre. See for example, Smith (1991) and Grodzins Gold (1992), among many others. A groundbreaking study is the one completed by Catherine Servan-Schreiber on the itinerant transmitters of the Bhojpuri knowledge (Servan Schreiber 1999).

caste musicians are known by different names, but the most common of these is the Manganhars, which is nonetheless a derogatory naming based on the idea of begging. Also, we find Bhats, Mirasis, and Langahs. Sometimes, they could be specialized in one field or another pertaining to oral knowledge. For example, the Bhats were known as skilled genealogists. In Sindh, the Manganhars are Muslim, like their cousins settled on the other side of the border in Rajasthan. Among the non-professional transmitters, we find also the *bhagat*s, who are mostly Hindu householders, and the *faqir*s. Finally, other more marginal groups can work in particular situations as singers and thus be transmitters of knowledge. There are, for example, the Shidis.

The most difficult challenge is, as expressed above, to deal with a corpus and actors which were active a century back. We have but a few clues about, for example, the professional transmitters such as the Manganhars. In the 1907 *Gazetteer of Sindh*, the Mirasis are classified as "unspecified," along with the Shidis (Aitken 1907: 180). Among the Hindus who were transmitters of knowledge, we find the Bhats and the Charans (Aitken 1907: 183). It would be possible to use data from neighboring provinces—for example, Rajasthan—to gain a sketch of how they served as transmitters of oral knowledge, but it is more significant here to center in on the works of knowledge themselves. I thus intend to see how the oral corpus is articulated with the printed one, or not, and determine its main characteristics in opposition with the printed one.

Among the Muslims, two different categories of musicians were transmitting devotional knowledge: the Manganhars and the *faqir*s. As professional musicians, the Manganhars' performances are not restricted to the *dargahs*. They can also play for different life rituals, such as circumcision and others. But if we focus on Sufi and devotional repertoires, the Manganhars share it, more or less, with the faqirs. The Manganhars are hereditary musicians who play instruments and sing. They perform their art for two types of ceremonies: the Sufi rituals in the *dargahs* of Sindh, and the social rituals usually known as "rites de passage." The Manganhars could have played important functions in the Rajput kingdoms before the British colonization, and they were also key figures in the local courts, sometimes as buffoons. In Jaisalmer, for example, their principal patrons were the maharajas, and contrary to other bard castes who were Hindu, the Muslim Manganhars were involved in all of the social rituals their patrons were performing, such as births, weddings, and enthronement (Maheux 2004: 112).

Besides the Manganhars, there are different categories of Sufis who also performed musical sessions, most of them not being professional musicians. One of the most renowned groups of *faqir*s in Sindh is the Sung faqirs. In Sindhi, the term *sung* means friendship, sometimes with a spiritual inflection since it can also name a group of pilgrims. The first to be designated as sung would have been Sulayman Shah, a follower of Pir Ali Gohar Shah (d. 1896). Like other Faqir singers, they especially use *kafi*s in their repertoire and perform their art when they are asked by a *murshid*. The repertoire of the sung faqirs is very similar to that of the Manganhars. This is true regarding the devotional songs. The Sung faqirs do not perform for events other than religious events or when asked by a *murshid*. They do not perform for weddings and other "rites de passage." Also, another shared characteristic is that although a session can be different from one time to another, their sessions will always contain abstracts of the *Shah jo Risalo*. As already mentioned, they are not professional and most of them are agriculturists.

Another important transmitter of oral knowledge before Partition was the *bhagat*. The term was mostly used by the Hindus, but also by some Muslim communities such as the Khojas. The thorough research completed by Jyoti Garin is precious for many reasons in this area. The first one and maybe the dominant reason is that the *bhagat* tradition has totally disappeared from Sindh. In other words, all the *bhagat*s have migrated to India. The *bhagat*, to whom different etymologies are given, comes most probably from *baghti*, the *bhakti* in Sindhi being a name given to both the main actor and to the performance. The *bhagat* numbered five or six and they used to perform during three nights in the villages of Sindh. They were mostly non-professional, but some professionals became very famous. Bhagat Kanwar Ram, the *bhagat* par excellence, was not a professional despite the fact that he had studied singing with a master. As a boy, he used to visit the Hayat Pitafi Darbar, a Nanakpanthi place near Sukkur. Despite his popularity, Kanwar Ram made his living as a street vendor of boiled peas. He was assassinated in Sindh in 1939.

Other groups can work as musicians in non-fixed circumstances, which can vary from one place to another. For example, this is the case of the Shidis. The Shidis are the descendants of the African slaves who were brought to India right up through the British colonization, when the slave trade was forbidden in 1833, ten years before the conquest of Sindh. According to Burton, about six or seven hundred slaves were imported from Africa to Sindh under the Talpurs. He also makes a distinction

between two categories of slaves: those who were born in the house and those who were imported from Masqat. The first ones were treated as inmates of the family (Burton 1852: 211). Some of them could have reached a high position among the Talpurs, such as the famous Hosho Shidi (1801–1843), who was the head of the army in the battle of Miani.

Shidis are traditional singers and dancers in Sindh, and their major source of earning is known as *Ghor*. *Ghor* is being taken over from the heads and hands of people to people through dancing or showering over the people. Shidis are known as a singing and dancing occupational caste group in Sindh due to their major profession of singing in different ceremonies. In a way, as a folk musician caste group, they have been the inheritors of the musical tradition of Sindh over past generations. Especially in Southern Sindh, the Shidis perform for various ceremonies, both religious and non-religious. For the latter, such performances can be for welcoming guests, cultivation of crops, weddings, and so on. The men play different instruments, while the women sing and dance.

Beyond the non-religious ceremonies, the Shidis can also play for the Moharram ceremonies, when only drums are allowed in the processions and the *majlis*. Furthermore, they have a special attachment with the *dargah* of Mangho Pir, located in northwest Karachi. They are the keepers of the pond attached to the shrine, in which tens of crocodiles live and are said to be sacred. The story of Mangho Pir and the role of the Shidis are not well documented historically, although new reconstructions have emerged recently, according to which Mangho Pir would have been a Chishti follower of Baba Farid Ganj-e Shakar. However, the urs of Mangho Pir is organized by the Shidis, and the most spectacular moment is when the *sajjada nashin*, who is the Sufi master, puts a garland around the head of the chief of the crocodiles.[3]

In colonial Sindh, the caste musicians, Muslim as well as Hindu, could play for different patrons and varied occasions, both religious and non-religious. Also, some castes could have their own musicians. On the other hand, the non-professional groups also performed, but usually only for religious occasions. The status of the musicians was furthermore not homogenous. While the caste musicians had a low status, the status of the non-professionals depended on their occupation. The case of the Shidis

[3] Shemeem Abbas claims that Mangho Pir is dedicated to Bava Ghor, the African Muslim saint (Abbas 2002: note 84: 169). Unfortunately, she does not provide any information about.

was different still. As ancient slaves, their status was among the lowest. And regarding their relationship with Sufism, it seems likely that Mangho Pir is not representative since, even if the Shidis performed for religious ceremonies in other *dargahs*, they did not play a leading role as they did in Mangho Pir.

Oral Knowledge and the Devotional Corpus

The nineteenth-century European specialists of Sindhi literature, namely Richard Burton and Ernst Trumpp, both agreed about the importance of oral literature in knowledge of Sindh. In the preface of his *Grammar*, Trumpp wrote that the next work to be completed would be to publish "a critically sifted edition of the popular Sindhi tales and songs, which are very numerous and from which a good collection might be made" (Trumpp 1872: 8). He considered it to be a priority, before a reference dictionary of Sindhi-English. This said, he was still more explicit in this respect in the preface he wrote for the edition of the *Shah jo Risalo* in 1866. He claimed there that the oral corpus of legends, ballads, and songs was more representative of the Sindhi literature, and thus explained why he had finally edited and published the *Shah jo Risalo* instead of a corpus of their bardic literature, as he named it himself (Shah Abd al-Latif 1866: v).

Trumpp explained that he had himself collected this corpus from "different old bards, who were in the habit of reciting them at festive occasions." This old literature was thus transmitted orally and "committed to the memory of the travelling bards and singers." He also added that the only books he was able to see, although scarce, were learned treatises composed by the mullas on religious subjects. As we know, no book on such issues had been printed yet, so he must have been speaking of manuscripts. Finally, the reason why he did not publish a collection of this oral literature is related to the difficulties involved in digesting the too numerous elements, given that, first of all, the ballads and songs differed very greatly when compared, and secondly, they were significantly mutilated and incomplete as performed by the reciters. In other words, it would have been a gigantic endeavor to edit and publish a representative collection of oral literature.

Oral literature, or what English speakers call folklore, was obviously very important in the process of transmitting the vernacular knowledge of Sindh. Often, it appears that the written literature was devoted only to the

learned literature as produced by an elite, that of the religious agents. Nonetheless, this representation can be challenged by the use of two corpuses. The first is the huge work as completed by Nabi Bakhsh Baloch from the 1950s onwards, and published by the Sindhi Adabi Board in numerous volumes, and the second is the manuscripts collection kept by the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. The nature of these two collections is different. Baloch's publications resulted from the collection of oral pieces registered and re-transcribed by his collaborators, one for one *taluqa*. The second collection is made of manuscripts, the oldest dating from the eighteenth century, and the majority dating back to the nineteenth century.

In 1956, the new Sindhi Adabi Board created a Folklore and Literature Project with N. B. Baloch as Director. A network of fieldworkers was stationed in every *taluqa* with the duty of collecting oral as well as written material. Nabi Bakhsh Baloch had based his work on the different literary genres found in oral literature. One of the most meaningful contributions was the compilation of the *kafi*s. It is well known that the *kafi* is the Sindhi genre of poetry *par excellence*. In Annemarie Schimmel's words: "The *kafi*, generally accompanied by instruments, is the typical vehicle of mystical songs and is used not only separately but also at the end of each chapter of the great poetical collections, like Shah Abdul Latif's risalo" (Schimmel 1974: 6). Baloch thus compiled three volumes of *kafi*s—for a total of 1545 pages—the last of which was relatively recently published in 1990. Dozens of Sufi poets are quoted therein, and it would be a challenge to introduce all of them. The volumes are arranged chronologically. The first volume opens with Shah Abd al-Latif, and poets are, interestingly, arranged according to their *silsila*. Furthermore, the volumes devoted to *kafiyyun* are more in line with the classical literature of Sindh, Shah Latif's *Risalo* being acknowledged as the matrix of the genre.

The most famous poets are thus represented. For example, one can find Bedil and his *silsila* with his own son Bekas, Paro Shah, and Nawab Shah. Every chapter devoted to a *silsila* is introduced with a few words on the founder. It is therefore quite interesting to see where the founder was based, and how influential he was in attracting other Sufi poets from different parts of Sindh. There is, for example, Sufi Muhammad Sadiq's *silsila*. Other poets in this line are Sufi Bayazid, Phato, and Dalpat Rai (another name for Dalpat Sufi).

The third volume, published in 1990, is somewhat different: the word *silsile* is not used anymore and the chapters are arranged by period (*dawr*).

Besides acclaimed Sindhi poets, Baloch's *kafiyyun* also introduces other poets whose *diwan* or *kalam* had not yet been published for a number of reasons. Those "unknown" poets also composed beautiful verses. One is a Hindu lady from Shikarpur: Nimano Faqir (d.1962). She became a Sufi through Sakhi Qabul Muhammad, the *sajjada nashin* of Sachal Sarmast in Daraza. She eventually wished to be buried at Daraza, near Sachal Sarmast's tomb. The last quoted poet is Behram Faqir Jatoi. Interestingly, the third volume devoted to *kafi*s was the last one in the whole project. The *kafi*s provide another facet of the role played by Sufism in Sindhi life. The three volumes give but small insight to the many poets of Sindh, be they Muslim or Hindu, who were on the path of the mystic quest. They put the quest into wonderful verses which were the delight of different classes of the local population.

Baloch devoted other collections to the *lok git*s, the folk songs, which he put in two main categories: the *git*s which were out of fashion and the still-popular *git*s. The volume devoted to folk songs (*lok git*) demonstrates his method and concern for classification. He was able to identify 57 types of folk songs currently in the Lower Indus Valley, namely Sindh. A subcategory of folk songs includes *maddah*, *mawlud*, *munajat*, and also *marsiyya*; although he did not, according to my limited knowledge, publish any of the dirges devoted to the martyrdom of Husayn and his family in Karbala. Among the still-popular *git*s, the 56th is of interest, with the label of *pirano*, meaning *git*s devoted to the *pir*, or Sufi master.

For example, Baloch quotes a *git* devoted to Pithoro Pir, the *pir* of the Menghwaṛs, an untouchable Hindu caste (*qawm*) of the Thar Parkar. While Baloch coined the pilgrimage place (*ziyarat*) as *astana*, the current name for the residence of a *faqir*, the *git* names this pilgrimage place as *mari*. In Sindhi, the first meaning of *mari* is "a room," but it is also a temple or any sacred place. According to Zulfiqar Ali Kalhoro, the *mari*, a phonetic variation of *marhi*, was the place of worship of the Nath *jogi*s. The *git* ends with the following verse:

Murid ahan mohara ja, ahe asan jo pir,
We are the *murid*s of the (his) seal, he is our *pir* …

This verse is very typical of the devotional *git* devoted to *pir*s. The language is quite simple and therefore quite touching. The *murid*s are nonetheless protected by Pir Pithoro since they have got his seal, his *mohar*. The *mohar* is the sign which is the link between the *pir* and his follower.

Another category of Sindhi folk songs is known as *ghich*. This mostly signifies a wedding song sung by women, but, as Baloch states, some are also rejoicing songs devoted to God, Prophet Muḥammad, the saints, and the spiritual guides. In this category, Baloch was once again a pioneer. He explained that about 5000 *ghich*s had been collected and that, among them, 1467 had been selected and published. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the criteria for selection. The *ghich*s are divided into two parts, with the second part including *ghich*s from the Thar area. Baloch's interest in music becomes clear here since he always gives the name of the instruments which are used for each song. He also identifies missing practices—for example, the magic (*kamin*) *ghich*s. Finally, the most fascinating aspect of this volume is that, contrary to the others, Baloch gives the name of the *taluqa* where every *ghich* was collected.

Who are the saints and spiritual guides to whom the *ghich*s are devoted? There is, for example, Ali. The *ghich* refrain draws on the usual *laqab*s attributed to him:

Ali sher ahe, sher-e khoda ahe …
He is Ali the lion, the lion of God …

Other *ghich*s also praise the "imaman" and the "panjtan pak." The Sufi who is the most popular is Abd al- Qadir al-Jilani (1083–1166), usually coined *badshah pir*. Other subjects of note include the alleged founder of the Qadiriyya *tariqa*, Lal Shahbaz (d.1274), Shah Abd al-Karim (1536–1623), Shah Bhitai (1689–1754), Pir Pagaro, and many other minor Sufis from Sindh. Interestingly, in the part devoted to Thar Parkar, one cannot find a single *ghich* devoted to a Hindu divinity or *guru*, although this area of Sindh is populated by a majority of Hindus. Baloch was thus interested in devotional Hindu *gīt*s when they were devoted to a Muslim *pir*.

The volume on *madah* (eulogy) and *munajat* (confidential devotion) is one of the most precious pieces in the collection. Among 102 devotional poems, almost half are *madah* and the other half *munajat*. The first lesson of the corpus is to show that, despite the wide array of practices and philosophies of various saints, a consistent part of the worship is to praise the Prophet Muḥammad as *nabi*, or prophet. There are numerous devotional poems devoted to him, and it is striking to see the strong faith of rural people. Specialists of Sufism, in South Asia and everywhere in the Muslim world, sometimes tend to downplay the intense devotion toward

Muhammad. Among the Sufis, one *badshah pir* is the most venerated. He is once again Abd al-Qadir Jilani. Another one is Ghaws Baha al-Haqq, better known as Baha al-Din Zakariyya. A first glimpse thus shows that only a few *madah*s and *munajat*s are devoted to local Sindhi *pir*s; there is hardly one *madah* on Shah Abd al-Latif, and only another one on Pir Pagaro.

A matter of curiosity is the *madah* devoted to the *char yar*, the four friends, a very common topic in Indus Valley devotional poetry. Fateh Faqir (d. 1843) wrote a number of them. His *madah* begins with a number of praises to God, under the many Quranic names given to him. Every verse includes a hemistich, and only at the bottom of the *madah* does the poet give us the name of the *char yar*. Interestingly, these four friends are not Sufis, but the first four caliphs of Islam, the *khalifa rashidun*, the well-guided caliphs. Nonetheless, the *char yar* story often depicts Baha al-Din Zakariyya (1170–1267), Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (1177–1274), Farid al-Din Ganj-i Shakar (1173–1266), and Makhdum Jahaniyyan Surkh Bukhari (1192–1291). But in the *char yar* as expressed in *Madahun ain munajatun*, they are other persons. First, comes Abu Bakr, often referred to here as *sacho sadiq*, the "real truthful," and second is Umar; third is Usman Shah, and the fourth is Ali Ḥyder. Another specialist of the *char yar* genre, Faqir Laghari (1809–1878), is very explicit in his refrain about the role played by them: *chari yar nabia nur*—"the four friends (bear) the light of the Prophet Muḥammad."

Now, let us turn to the manuscripts collection kept by the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. It will be very helpful to see how local communities use the religious tradition, and the structure and function they give to knowledge in the village. The knowledge is embedded in a crucial element: the *pothi*. It is interesting to compare the contents of the book with the other communities of Sindh. The configuration of knowledge as used by the Khojas was part of the episteme that was prevalent in the Sindh province, and probably in the northwestern Indian subcontinent.

It is noted that the constituent elements of the *pothi* are identical even though they are not placed in the same order: (1) prayers, (2) Sindhi poetry, (3) extracts from sacred texts, (4) folkloric narratives, and (5) treatises of divination. These different categories allow us to update a first characteristic of the oral knowledge. The most surprising thing to note is that the content of the *pothi* is, even according to our own categories of analysis, eclectic. Classical religious texts, such as the *Bhagawat* or the *Sukhmani*, rub shoulders with folkloric narratives (*qisso*), poetry (*kafi*), and treatises on magic: this composition calls into question the usual

divide that distinguishes the "great tradition" and the "little tradition," and also the opposition between scholarly religion and popular religion.

For the believers, the *pothi* forms a whole, a unity, and the transition between an extract of the story of Arjun, the legend of Umar and Marui, and then the consultation of the *fal namo* or book of divination is done without any break for the simple reason that each element, or parts of each element, respond to different necessities of daily life which occur at different times of the day, month, year, or life. This flexibility of the *pothi* allowed each group, and each individual within them, to build a specific worldview adapted to his own situation. Within the knowledge of Sindh, the Lohanas had their own episteme and the Khojah their own, but within these groups, different world representations coexisted. It is difficult to establish a typology of the contents of their *pothi*, as it varies according to the location. The chronological perspective, however, indicates that, from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, a new element appeared: different types of literature relating to or attributed to the Shiite imams. A manuscript of the famous *Rawzat al-Shahid* had been copied in Kutch in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Such a situation reinforced the idea that the knowledge in rural Sindh was atomized. According to the manuscripts, which have come down to us, the *pothi* belonged mostly to individuals, and sometimes to local communities. There is no indication of any authority imposing a particular text. It can therefore be considered that the worship was decentralized. Finally, it should be noted that, contrary to popular belief, classical texts of Hinduism are relatively rare. On the other hand, there are different texts of devotional poetry belonging to the Bhakti, such as the Kabir or Tulsidas. The most striking aspect of the corpus is its great diversity, which comes not only from the diversity of the topics dealt within the *ginan* themselves, but also from the diversity of the versions concerning a given *ginan*. There was flexibility in the transmission of these sacred texts: every *bhagat* who learned the texts by heart took advantage of this latitude to adapt the text to a familiar context on a regional or even local scale. The fixing of a canon was not realized before the appearance of the printing press in the community at the end of the nineteenth century.

This point is particularly evident in two versions of the *Das Avatar*, the ten incarnations, a leading *ginan*, as they were completed before the appearance of printing in the community at the end of the nineteenth century. The first manuscript was kept by the Ismaili Khojas of Karachi and the second one by the Imamshahis of Burhanpur (Khandesh). The first manuscript is the oldest: it dates from 1737, while the second dates from

1815.[4] The differences between the two manuscripts are such that, if it is not the central motive one examines (which is far from being predominant in the text, namely, the theme of the tenth avatar incarnated in the person of Ali and the living imam—who form the same spiritual person), then the two texts are almost unrecognizable: they appear to be two different texts although they carry the same title.

Therefore, it must be seen that these texts were constantly rewritten—so that they could keep their intelligibility for the people to whom they were addressed. The *bhagat* undoubtedly possessed a broad capacity and freedom to improvise, to add literary motifs to the central theme, be they stories of Hindu mythology or narrations from local folklore that would adapt it to a community. These elements made sense and, thanks to them, the *ginan* were alive: they spoke to people of whatever condition they were experiencing. Different types of vernacular poetry were also inserted into the *pothi*s. As far as Sindhi literature is concerned, all types of poetry were represented. The authors are not always mentioned, but when they are, celebrities rub shoulders with strangers.

An undated but relatively recent manuscript contains about 30 verses of the *Shah jo Risalo*, the great mystic poem composed by Shah Abd al-Latif (Noorally 1971: 30). Among the literary types, the *pothi* contains *bayt*, which are the origin of the units of two hemistiches of different numbers, according to a specific rhythm. In popular poetry in Sindhi, *bayt* are often composed of three hemistiches. One of the manuscripts indicates that the scribes copied them shortly after the poet's death. On the other hand, well after the first edition of *Shah jo Risalo* appeared in 1866, the Khojah still copied them, as another manuscript of the 1930s proves. Other *bayt* are from unknown composers, probably Khojah since they were devoted to Ismaili santons like Sayyid Muhammad Shah.

The Bardic Performance

Already, we have scrutinized the agents transmitting oral knowledge, as well as the corpus, to see how they were located regarding the makings of the Sufi paradigm. When dealing with oral knowledge, one of the main characteristics that distinguish it from written knowledge is the performance.[5] The most interesting aspect of the *bhagat* performance is that it is

[4] The data comes here from Gulshan Khakee's research (Khakee 1972).

[5] For addressing the issue, two academic research studies will also be used, since they are very scarce regarding the Sindhi context. Both are PhD theses submitted to the INALCO in

made up of many components. The session starts with prayers. Then, depending on the personality of the *bhagat*s, and on the occasion, it will be followed by tales and legends, folktales. Also, the *bhagat* will recite the stories of the lives of the saints, not only Sindhi, but those such as Kabir, Mira Bai, Guru Nanak, Baba Farid, and Buhle Shah. Nevertheless, the main part of the performance is the singing of the *kalam*s. All of the Sindhi genres are sung, from the *kafi* to the *dohiro* (Garin 2005: 34–35). The *bhagat* could have been a locus when no discrimination, social or religious, was observed.

Interestingly, there are about ten records of *bhajan*s and *kafi*s sung by Kanwar Ram. After his assassination, Bhagat Kanwar Ram himself became a subject for the other *bhagat*s, who used to praise his piety. In her thesis, Jyoti Garin depicted several *bhagat* sessions, and we have to look at the contents in order to see how oral traditions share, and do not share, data with printed knowledge. The session starts with praises to Guru Nanak and praises to Jhulelal. A third praise is devoted to Krishna. Then comes what Garin calls the core of the *bhagat*: the story of Sassui and Punhun. The tale is followed by two other tales, those of a king and his queen, and of a couple of sparrows, the two being interwoven. The other part is a wedding song, as well as an anecdote about the life of a *bhagat*, and another one on Bhagat Kanwar Ram. The final part is devoted to the pain of separation from God. The last verses are extremely interesting:

> O Ali, Muhammad, Udera
> The pains, you have given them to me, my Master. (Garin 2005: 183)

The repertoire of the *bhagat*s, even in early twenty-first century India, is still very eclectic, as it is in Sindh among the Manganhars. While one can surmise that the *bhagat* legacy has come about in India through a kind of soft Hinduization, it is meaningful that the performance ends with a very Sufi motif, that of the pain resulting from a separation from God. Furthermore, while the performance started under the auspices of

Paris. The first one was defended by Laurent Maheux in 2004 on “Moumal-Mahendra: contextes and variations d’un cycle légendaire du Thar” (Moumal-Mahendra: contexts and variations of a legendary cycle in Thar). The second was defended in 2015 by Jyoti Garin, with the title “Le bhagat: une tradition orale sindhie” (The bhagat, an oral Sindhi tradition). I should add that during my stay with the manghanars of Ustad Muhammad Shafi, I have noted a number of ethnographical and personal observations that can be used in addition to the two corpuses.

Guru Nanak, Jhulelal, and Krishna, it has ended with praises to Ali, Muhammad, and Udera, another name for Jhulelal. This progression shows that the mixed references of Sindhi culture are still at work in India 72 years after Partition.

Similarly, in his thesis, Laurent Maheux studied the performance of Sindhi Manganhars performing in places located in Rajasthan, close to the border with Sindh. He focuses on the same tale performed in two different contexts: first as performed by a Sindhi Manganhar from Rajasthan, and second as performed by a singer from the *Shah jo Risalo*.[6] The first performance of the *Rane jo Qisso*, the *qisso* of Mumal Rano, was achieved by Mubbe Khan, a Sindhi Manganhar from a village close to Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. The text of the *qisso* can be understood as an element of a vast textual system, and its exterior thought as being still text: that of Shah Latif, to which the quotations connect it (intertext), and that of the oral tradition which he inserts (paratext). But to constitute a hermeneutics, these textual relations presuppose a competent listener with a minimal knowledge of the intertext and the paratext, as well as the symbols that they manipulate. The engagement of these textual relations is only aimed at certain listeners within an audience, which, it must be remembered, participates in a "recreational assembly."

Contrary to the refocusing performed by Latif, the centering on Mumal's history by the *qisso* interpreters is not operated with an explicitly didactic objective. The Sufi interpretive framework that they make available may or may not be mobilized by the auditor. The account of Mumal-Mahendra, even in Shah Latif's refocusing, does not lend itself to a linear interpretation in which each of the characters embodies a well-established role, one of the aspirant, the disciple (*murid*), and the other that of God, the Prophet, or the spiritual guide (*murshid*). The roles symbolized by the characters are related to the roles that they embody, and they vary with them. Also, it is advisable to recall here some elements that were previously underlined. In this mode of refocusing, which can be described as metonymic, Latif never forms the story of the plot, of which there remain only a few "traces." While it shares a certain number of points in common with others, the "Sur Mumal-Rano" is singled out precisely by the indelible "trace" of the complex actancial structure of the performance (Maheux 2004: 157).

[6] The following lines draw mostly on Maheux's research.

Conclusion

Coming back to the issue addressed in this section, it is difficult to think that there was a competition between the transmitters of oral knowledge and those of printed knowledge. The training was very different, as was the social milieu and location. The intellectuals were urban, middle-class individuals working for the British administration. The Manganhars and the *bhagat*s belonged to the rural milieu, at least before Partition. The corpus produced by the intellectuals and the one used by the bards share a main element, though: the repertoires. The main distinction, which is relevant to point out, is that within the oral tradition, the corpus is still eclectic, and consequently it does not aim at creating distinct communities, as was partly the case for printed knowledge. In fact, the oral and printed regimes of knowledge were targeting different audiences, but we can argue that the final goal was similar: to retain knowledge which allowed for the Sufi paradigm. Also, it is to be underscored that the knowledge as spread by the *bhagat* in present-day India is quite similar to that which is kept in the manuscript collections of the Ismaili Studies, and by the Manganhars of Sindh.

In this chapter, my aim was also to understand how oral knowledge interacted vis-à-vis with printed knowledge, especially regarding the makings of the Sufi paradigm. A number of statements concerned first the alleged competition between both bodies of knowledge, oral and printed, as well as between the agents and actors. Finally, the issue can be summarized as examining whether or not there was any interaction between them. It seems that manuscript knowledge was like a bridge, a kind of permanent and interacting transition between oral and printed knowledge. As a matter of fact, the first editors of Sufi works preferred to use manuscripts rather than transcribe by themselves the narration performed by the bards, as is clearly expressed by Trumpp for the *Shah jo Risalo*. The explanation he provides is related to the immense irregularity of the texts as transmitted by the bards, which means, in other words, that the great flexibility of interpretations and improvisations were quite accepted, so that a text could be adapted to a given milieu in terms of dialects, castes, or sects.

Finally, the spread of printed knowledge contributed to solidifying the different sides of knowledge, but not because it implied and imposed a fixed text, thus initiating a textual tradition, to quote Rita Kothari (Kothari 2009). Despite what is commonly stated by scholars, the deepest

consequence of printed knowledge was to compel a group, which can be called as Farina Mir, a literary formation, to comply with norms as expressed in a definitive text. And, regarding a possible interplay between the two categories of transmitters, the bards and the intelligentsia, we can hardly presume that the printed tradition had a strong impact on the bards. During my stay with the Manganhars, I observed that, still, Ustad Shafi Muhammad was using his own notebook, where thousands of songs, especially the lyrics with *rag*s, were handwritten, and thus transmitted from generation to generation.

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PART IV

Conclusion

CHAPTER 12

Conclusion: What Is Vernacular in the Sufi Paradigm?

In the introduction, I worked to locate this study in the intense debate about the production of knowledge in the colonial context, in the wake of the groundbreaking study completed by Edward Said in 1978. I suggested there was a serious concern regarding the relationship between colonial knowledge and vernacular knowledge, as well as regarding the actors and entrepreneurs of this production. Also, the main hypothesis offered was that the makings of the vernacular knowledge in colonial Sindh had been undertaken in building a Sufi literary legacy as a paradigm.

I surmised that using the concept of the Sufi paradigm can allow us to understand the processes through which a discourse expressed in Sufi terms can also absorb other devotional traditions. While the study has furthermore argued that the building of a vernacular knowledge and the development of the Sufi paradigm were inextricably interwoven, this epilogue will briefly address the issue of how vernacular the Sufi paradigm was in colonial Sindh. As we saw before, the dominant opinion regarding the Sindhi vernacular is that it was at the crossroads of the Iranian and Indic civilizations, and, consequently, the fruit of both if not a mixture of both—what Asani finally named "unique forms of religious syncretism" (Asani 2003: 612).

It is true that Asani's study, for example, mostly focuses on pre-colonial Sindh. However, the foundations of the vernacular knowledge were indirectly formed by the Europeans, when they aimed at educating and teaching British officers and missionaries in the Sindhi language in order

to reinforce their control over the society. Similarly, the first archeological step in the making of the Sufi paradigm was reached through a colonial enterprise: the first printing and edition of a Sufi work, the *Shah jo Risalo*. This printing operated as a process of objectification of the Sufi poetry. Clearly, it also contributed to unifying the intellectual conception of Sufis and to make it distinct from the practice of the Sufi saints' worship, although some Sindhi intellectuals were also followers of Sufi *pir*s.

One of the main issues this study wished to undertake is the issue of the "continuity-in-discontinuity" as a process, which has allowed the Sufi paradigm to be born. I use this kind of an oxymoron because it is true that the first phase that will lead to the Sufi paradigm is the outcome of the British Policy, whose main aim was to develop a colonial knowledge for reinforcing the domination and control over the country, and the people. Before coming to the main issue of this study, namely the Sufi paradigm, it has been necessary therefore to study how the colonial knowledge was marked for years by a core observation: Sufism was a not an issue in the colonial knowledge. British were fascinated by the dominant social groups, as well as by the dominant religious ideologies. For them, it was sufficient to conclude the alliance with them as the most secure way to maintain their domination.

We have noticed a number of times that the British had taken benefit of the previous experiences they had in India to deal with the Sindh experience since it was one of the last provinces to be annexed to the British Empire. Although there was not really a consensus in England about how to rule India, general features for ruling the territories of India had been in use since the late eighteenth century. Of course, Sindh society had its own specificities the British should have taken into account. Some of these peculiar features of Sindhi society were noticed very soon by the first British writers in the early nineteenth century. For example, they observed the social system of the Hindus was more flexible than in other parts of India, probably because of the few Brahmins who were settled there.

In the 1850s, the policy implemented by a commissioner in Sindh, Bartle Frere, had a huge impact both on the making of colonial knowledge and on the birth of a vernacular knowledge. His decision to replace Persian by Sindhi and English compelled him to select an official Sindhi standard and an official script. In this respect, two British officers played a tremendous role, Richard Burton and George Stack, both captains in the East India Company army. We know that Burton's theory was finally selected, according to which Sindhi should be written in Arabic originated

script. Despite this, and probably because of the socio-economic domination of the Hindu traders, Frere also wanted to give the Hindus a specific alphabet, the Khudawadi. Apparently, this script never met with success among the Hindu themselves, despite some attempts to publish religious traditions in this script.

Education was seen as a priority to teach Sindhi to the British, and many books needed to be translated from different languages, mainly English, Persian, and Hindustani, into Sindhi, and to be printed. In the first phase, the *munshi*, both Hindu and Muslim, was the linchpin of the enterprise. But his intellectual role was mostly limited to that of translation. Only a few *munshi*s can be considered as actors of the birth of the new vernacular knowledge. In this case, they could have composed books related to history or other matters. The spread of the colonial knowledge was greatly reinforced by the use of the printing press, which was mostly operated in the second half of the nineteenth century under the shape of lithography. The first publications perfectly mirrored the state of the world the British wanted to transmit to the Sindhis: a world in which the new sciences such as mathematics, physics but also geography or geology were the foundations of British and European powers.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, one of the main achievements of the British was two-sided. On the one hand, they established that Sindhi was a distinct language, and not a dialect of Punjabi or of any other Indian language. On the other hand, they had to provide evidence there was a literature in Sindhi. This dual process was a sine qua non condition to attest there was a distinct Sindhi identity, a Sindhiness, itself being a prerequisite for claiming the existence of vernacular knowledge. Furthermore, the Europeans stated that the cleavage between oral society and literate society was reflecting the distinction between non-civilized societies and civilized societies. In this respect, Richard Burton and Ernst Trumpp were the main actors. Burton soon provided evidence Sindhi possessed literature, as well as Trumpp, they also stated that oral literature could have many qualities, and thus should deserve interest among the European scholars.

During the whole first half of the nineteenth-century, Sufism was not an issue, with the exception of Richard Burton. Burton was well aware of the role played by Sufism as a cultural infrastructure of the local society. It is true that he mostly focused on the Sufi masters who were heading local shrines where Dead Sufis were venerated. He went up to construct a kind of theory of the intercessors, through which he identified the confluence

of the devotional practices of both Hindus and Muslims. In this functionalist approach, Burton claimed that the Hindu god and the Muslim saint played an equivalent role among the Sindhis. Hence, they also shared devotional practices that went beyond the religious belonging.

Nonetheless, it is consequently amazing to observe that the Sufis who are the leading actors in the building of the Sufi paradigm didn't deserve Burton's interest. Shah Abd al-Latif is not treated as he should have been and we find nothing at all on Sachal Sarmast, not to speak of non-Sufi authors such as Sami or Sabit Ali Shah. Burton is probably influenced by his somewhat "classical" conception of Sufism and Islam, and the Sufis he mentions are scholars who have authored classical Muslim texts on the sharia, the jurisprudence and so on. This is to be observed also with popular Sufis such as Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. Burton mostly mentions his alleged treatises on Islamic laws, arguing they are the most used in the madrasas. It is important to note here that these treatises have today totally disappeared, and nothing can be found about them in nineteenth-century local sources.

The colonial knowledge of Sindh that culminated with the printing of the first gazetteer in 1872 thus contained in itself the first fruits of the vernacular knowledge. The basic argument I have made is that, at the core of the colonial and vernacular knowledge, Sindhi literati built a paradigm, a semiological reservoir which was shaped from the Sufi poetry, and which could meet the expectations the people had during colonization. As a paradigm, it provided a technical lexicon as well as a corpus which underscores an ideology, that of the *wahdat-e wujud*. Very soon, the Sufi paradigm did focus on vernacularized forms of the *wahdat-e wujud*, such as the *haqq mawjud* or the *advaita vedanta*. The success of the Sufi paradigm was due to a number of processes, some of which were undertaken by British colonizers.

As a matter of fact, the development of the Sufi paradigm benefited from the printing that spread in the second half of the nineteenth century. A foundational step in this respect was the publication of the *Shah jo Risalo* in 1866, completed by Ernst Trumpp in Leipzig. However, because of the scarcity or even the absence of sources, it is not easy to evaluate the impact of the printing, and thus how it has challenged oral knowledge, which was transformed into published knowledge. I have argued that manuscripts can provide a data different from that which is printed, for the simple reason that manuscripts are kept by professionals while lithography allowed a huge dissemination of Sufi works beyond the circle of professionals.

Also, the manuscripts allow for the updating of texts following a number of injunctions, such as place, time, and social environment, while the printed texts are supposed to be fixed. I say “supposed to be” because, as we have seen in previous chapters, there can be competition between editors of different versions, each one claiming to have the genuine text. This was especially obvious with the *Shah jo Risalo*.

Furthermore, I was interested in Wagoner’s speaking of a process he called dialogue or conversation between the colonizers and local people. In studying the production of colonial knowledge, many scholars have focused on the staff, the “collaborationists” without whom the construction of colonial knowledge would not have been possible. The actors and the entrepreneurs of the vernacular knowledge were all working for the colonial administration, and this is a very important point to make for highlighting a kind of continuity between colonial and vernacular knowledge.

Nonetheless, their collaborationist jobs did not prevent them from building a vernacular knowledge articulated with the Sufi paradigm. Among the agents involved in the making of a vernacular knowledge, another category has not received the deserved interest: the independent publishers. Four main cities are concerned with publications in this regard: Hyderabad, Karachi, Shikarpur, and Sukkur. The vast majority of Sindhi books and booklets were published there, and in the early twentieth century, it is possible that Sukkur was the first publishing center of Sindh. After the domination of the missionaries’ printing press in the first phase, and the stronghold of the government in a second phase, it is also worth noticing that many publications were undertaken by the authors themselves.

For almost half a century, the Sufi paradigm was nurtured by the *Shah jo Risalo*, and its Sufi author Shah Abd al-Latif. As a paradigmatic reservoir, it quenched the thirst of vernacular displayed by the Sindhi literati. Twenty years after the first edition of the Sufi poetry was published, in 1887, Mirza Qalich Beg undertook a first biography, inaugurating a new genre which would be very popular: the life of the poet coupled with the text of its poetry. So, Sindhi literati would attempt to make the text more accessible, and from what we can understand, it was not an easy text and it was not understood by all. As had been the case for the biographical approach, Mirza Qalich Beg would be at the vanguard of the lexicographical approach in publishing in 1914 the reference book in this respect, the *Lughat-e Latifi*.

In the early twentieth century, a new dimension was added to the Sufi paradigm: for the first time, other Sufi poets' works were to be printed, although it should be kept in mind that the publications of books related to the *Shah jo Risalo* and Shah Abd al-Latif would never stop, on through today. Before turning to this new step, the mention of Sami deserves interest. While the Sindhi scholars do not agree whether he was a Sufi or not, his poetry used the Sufi lexicon while the ideological background displayed in his work is fully informed by the Bhakti. After Sami's *slok*s, four new contributors to the Sufi paradigm were published: Sabit Ali Shah (1900), Sachal Sarmast (1902), Rohal Faqir (1903), and Shah Abd al-Karim (1904).

We do not have details about why the Sindhi literati undertook the enlargement of the Sufi paradigm. From the four publications listed just above, three were completed by Mirza Qalich Beg and his brother, and the last, that of Rohal Faqir, was completed by a Hindu, Golasingh Parcharam, of whom we have not found any detail except in that he was a *munshi*. He was probably a follower of the Kandri school of Sufism since Rohal Faqir was its founder. Also, Shah Abd al-Latif and his *Shah jo Risalo* still dominated the scene of the Sufi paradigm with many books published from the early twentieth century onward, these being related to selections of the *sur*s, translations of his verses into prose, anecdotes on his life, and so on. We can hardly find a contributor to the Sufi paradigm who did not publish anything on Shah and/or his poetry.

In sum, the new steps reached by the Sufi paradigm mirrored both a reinforcement of some initial characteristics and the advent of more innovative elements. In the first field, we can mention the *sama*, through for example Abd al-Karim's poetry, and the Shahadat, with the *marsiya*s of Sabit Ali Shah. The themes of the *jogi* and the *virahini* are probably the most shared by the newly published *kalam*s. The reinforcement of the vernacularization of the core motif, the *wahdat-e wujud*, is also to be noticed. It is remarkable that when Sachal spoke of the *haqq mawjud*, it is a context where he also refers to Hindu divinities, this last point being also obvious with other poets such as Rohal Faqir. It is indeed one of the new trends of early nineteenth-century Sufi paradigm to incorporate works where several Hindu gods are currently named, which, to some extent, paved the way for non-Sufi poets such as Sami.

Besides, other new trends must be noted. There is the attempt to locate the Sufi paradigm in the wake of mainstream Sufism, especially the Middle-East Sufism, through the publication of Sufi biographies and translations

of works composed by Sufis from the "core" territories of Islam. The shifting from the poetical works to the life of the Sufis is another major evolution. While Mirza Qalich Beg was here also a precursor with his biography of Shah Ab al-Latif, Fateh Muhammad Sehwani was the first to devote a study to a local Sufi, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. For the first time, the rituals were covered and depicted, as well as the local agents of the shrine, who were Sayyids, although the author seems to attempt to locate them in the classical vocabulary of Sufism speaking for example of *raqs* instead of the local word of *dhamal*.

Nevertheless, the polarization on the Middle East was always a minor trend in the making of the Sufi paradigm. The early twentieth-century dominant interpretation was the reading throughout the Theosophical Society. Most of the Sindhi scholars were members of the Society and they did take into account a number of components of the Society ideology. For example, there was the urgent need of the *ustad-e ilm*, the Master of Knowledge, as Mirza Qalich Beg renamed the World Teacher of the Theosophical Society. For Jethmal Parsram, the original wisdom of humanity was not located in Tibet, as Blavatsky and Besant thought. This universal and peaceful wisdom was kept at Hinglaj, an old pilgrimage center shared by Muslims and Hindus in a Sindhi-speaking area of Baluchistan. The Theosophical framework was but a medium to express a modern Sufi paradigm and to participate in what was looking like a universal spirituality based on fraternity. This makes sense for the Sindhi literati: it made them "to-be-modern."

Also, it is to be highlighted that no contemporary poet—by which I mean Sufi poets who were alive during the period under study—saw his poetry published, except Qadir Bakhsh Bedil and his son Bekas, and Budhal Faqir, while still living. In the 1920s, abstracts of their poetry were nonetheless included in Sufi anthologies published by Bherumal Advani (Advani 1923) and Jethmal Khiomal (Khiomal 1919). Notwithstanding, Bedil's complete work in Sindhi would be published for the first time in 1940. Consequently, the entrepreneurs of the Sufi paradigm were obviously not in touch with authoring themselves Sufi poetry, although some of them, like Mirza Qalich Beg, had attempted to write poetry.

This observation leads us to think about the relationship between the Sufi paradigm and the "tariqa praxis" as named by Michael Laffan in his book on the makings of Islam in Indonesia (Laffan 2011: xii): Was there an interplay between the construction of the Sufi paradigm and the practice of the Sufi cult, with, for instance, the relationship of a follower

(*murid*) with a Sufi master (*murshid*), the performance of rituals such as the trance dance known as *dhamal*, or other remembrance rituals known generally as *zikr*?

The main issue is to know how their religious practice influenced their contributions to the Sufi paradigm. Most of them were not Sufi, by which I mean they were not professional Sufi. A professional Sufi is either a *faqir* or a *sajjada nashin*, or in any case someone who has devoted his life to the practice of the Sufi path. But most of them were *murid*, meaning followers of the Sufi *pir*, a status that allowed them to be a householder and to have a job. Notwithstanding, no book was published on the practice of Sufism and we can hardly find references to the related ritual in the poetry. Thus, finally, it is not really an issue to investigate the relationship between the makings of the Sufi paradigm and the Sufi practiced, especially by the entrepreneurs of the paradigm. The enlargement of the Sufi paradigm was operational in terms of Sindh areas, identities of the publishers, and also the figures of the poets themselves. Nevertheless, the first devotional text to be published after the *Shah jo Risalo* was not that of a Sufi *stricto sensu*: Sami.

The enlargement of the Sufi paradigm can reflect a separation into two sub-traditions: the one from north Sindh, and the one from the south. The Sufis from the north were more in touch with Hindu traditions, maybe because of the domination of the Hindu merchants in cities such as Shikarpur and Sukkur. Also, there was the powerful Sikh empire at the border, and many clues show the circulation of Sikh tradition toward Sindh. Furthermore, the poetry of these Sufis is more replete with Hindu references, such as naming Hindu gods or using Hindu concepts. In this respect, the concept of *haqq mawjud* as coined by Sachal Sarmast obviously paved the way for establishing an equivalence with the Vedanta, even if this theory was expressed much earlier.

Two Sufi poets were from northern Sindh, Sachal and Rohal, one is from southern Sindh, Shah Abd al-Karim, the great grandfather of Shah Abd al-Latif, and the last author, Sabit Ali Shah is not a Sufi, but a Shia. Beyond the issues related to the north and south, the most striking addition to the Sufi paradigm is the best exponent of Shia devotional poetry in Sindhi. We saw that it is possible that Mirza Qalich Beg, in publishing Sabit, was following the agenda of the Shia ruler of Khairpur. Nevertheless, since Shah Abd al-Latif had already integrated the tragedy of Karbala in his Sufi poetry, the Sindhi scholars considered sacrifice, like that performed by the third Shia imam, Husayn (d. 680), to be a true Sufi value. The interest

of the Sindhi scholars also turned to folktales as expressions of the Sufi mystical quest, once again as depicted by Shah Abd al-Latif.

The Sufi paradigm argument, which was developed from the *haqq mawjud* allowed for the overtaking of the field of Sufism proper. A number of attempts were undertaken, such as Hashim Lalu's enterprise; he was an Ismaili who was keen to demonstrate the homologies between the Sufi/Ismaili categories of knowledge and those of Hinduism. Other interpretations of the Sufi paradigm were expressed along the way. Sometimes, devotional regimes of knowledge started as an extension of the Sufi paradigm, as, for example, the Shia regime with Sabit Ali Shah's *marsiya*s. Mirza Qalich Beg was the first publisher of Sabit and it is true that he was himself a Shia. But there was no discontinuity, but rather continuity between the Sufi paradigm as expressed by Shah Abd al-Latif and Sabit's work since the shahadat, or unity of God, was a major theme of the *Shah jo Risalo*. This said the Shias were simultaneously building a "community," under the rule of the *mir* of Khairpur. One can see this turn as a first step of the shifting of the Shia regime into a normative regime since the *mir* invited Shia Ulamas from Lucknow. The process was completed after partition, when the Urdu-speaking Shias known as the Muhajirs migrated from North India to Sindh.

The evolution of the Sufi paradigm was not in step with the changes to which colonial India was submitted. The Sindhi literati were well informed about the different neo-Hindu movements, and reformist interpretations of both Islam and Hinduism. There was also the involvement in the independence fight that was growing day by day. Of course, all of these upheavals had a huge impact in Sindh. The leaders of the Congress, like Gandhi, and of the Muslim League, such as Jinnah, visited Sindh. First, I dealt with what I have called the normative or reformist regimes of knowledge in Sindh. The issue was to evaluate to what extent they had challenged, and even weakened, the Sufi paradigm. If we have a look at the publications in the 1920s, we can reasonably claim that the reformist regimes of knowledge were not dominant. After that discussion, I turned to another more competitive regime of knowledge: the devotional regime of knowledge.

According to the publications, four main regimes of devotional knowledge were scrutinized, reflecting the variety of the religious market in Sindh: the Nanakpanthi, the Daryapanthi, the Shia, and the Ismaili. The first two regimes are Hindu, and the two last Muslim. All of the four traditions developed their own regimes of knowledge that could compete with the Sufi paradigm. However, since the members were a minority, they

could not challenge the credo, and furthermore, they rather contributed to reinforcing the paradigm by borrowing concepts and trying to give evidence that their own regimes were similar, although using a different lexicon. We saw this quest for equivalence was clearly relevant in the Ismaili regime of knowledge: in fact, we can claim that, in the late 1920s, to adhere to the Sufi paradigm was the best way to claim to be Sindhi, whatever the religion at hand.

In his paper on the Sindhi literary formation, Asani focuses on the elite/mass cleavage, and he especially claims that the Sufi production was due to the Ashrafs, a group he considers to be the elite. As already expressed, Asani mostly centered his work on pre-colonial Sindh. It is undeniable that the large majority of Sufi poets of "classical" Sufism in Sindh belonged to this category. Nonetheless, one can wonder if another significant cleavage was not between Sayyids and non-Sayyids, even if the non-Sayyids could be Ashraf, as for instance was the case with Sachal Sarmast, whose family was Faruqi, claiming to be descendants of the second khalife, Umar. Also, another distinction could be operated between authority and prestige. Because, if the Sayyids had the highest prestige coming from their status as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, other groups had authority and power that did not always come from their genealogy.

Many among the holders of authority were non-Ashrafs, such as the Baluch *jagirdar*s, the Rajput *zamindar*s, the Sindhi *wadero*s, and more. Turning back to the Sufi paradigm and its building, it is interesting to observe that the Muslim traditional elite did not really participate in the process. As observed in the study, the Sindhi literati who were the main entrepreneurs belonged to two categories: the Hindus, mostly Amils, and the "declassed" Muslims, including the minorities such as the Shias and the Ismailis. Thus, we cannot find any leading Sayyid or even Ashraf in the process. This absence means that the Sufi paradigm also resulted from a shifting of the Sufi legacy from the producers and owners, mostly Ashrafs, to the middle class that was developing in the second half of the nineteenth century. The new middle class included merchants interested in the development of a vernacular knowledge, but above all, it was made up of educated people. Of course, the expectations of the new middle class were very different from that of the *pir*s, the holders of traditional Sufi authority that materialized into the *dargah* culture.

That is why it is relevant to highlight a cleavage operating in colonial Sindh between the landed Sufis, whose authority came from the *dargah* for which they were official caretakers, and the intellectual construction of

the Sufi paradigm. Of course, this does not mean these two sides of Sufism were hermetic and closed off from each other. The Sindhi intellectuals used to visit the *dargahs* of the most powerful *pir*s, such as Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Shah Abd al-Latif, and Sachal Sarmast. But their enterprise was of a different nature: they aimed at building a Sufi paradigm to enable the birth of a Sindhi-based universal wisdom. This construction did not compel the literati to give up their formal religious belonging and their religious practice because the Sufi paradigm, like Sufism at large, was located beyond the institutionalized religions and even spiritualties.

Throughout the study, we have clearly expressed that the Sufi paradigm was not unique to Sindh. Several times, we have referred to neighboring provinces, such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Punjab. This area forms a kind of koine, sharing many features and with its own vernacular singularity. The building of the Sufi paradigm in Sindh clearly shows that the vernacular knowledge was not a hybridization or a syncretic construction. It did not result from a mixture of a variety of religious traditions, but from existing convergences, which were allowed to build such a paradigm. It is not really significant to speak in terms of influence, from Bhakti to Sufism, or vice versa. The convergences of a number of ideological principles, the first being the oneness of God, opened the way for cross-fertilization. A privileged angle from which to observe this ongoing process is through the technical lexicon, as when *didar* and *darshan*, for example, became commutable, not only among the Sufi poetry of Sindh, but also among mystics such as Dadu Dayal (1544–1603).

Furthermore, another intricate issue this study has tried to deal with is the impact of the shifting from oral to printed tradition, rather than written. Firstly, it has highlighted that it is reductive to place oral and written—or textual—knowledge in direct opposition to each other. As long as the Sindhis have known the use of scripts—and it is attested since very long—there has been manuscript knowledge. It may be that it is not relevant to represent this process as a process that is completed, finished. Scholars have argued that the porosity between different religious traditions was due to the fact they concerned non-textual traditions. Talking of Shah Abd al-Latif, who would have refused to have his poetry written down, Rita Kothari explains: "Shah Abd al-Latif [...] preferred to exist in the oral tradition, because fixity leads to dogma" (Kothari 2009: 125). Often, the oral tradition is still at work alongside the printed tradition. Also, a printed tradition can be annotated, updated, and so on, in relation to the status that is given to it.

It is a fact that many poets did not want their works to be written down, and *a fortiori* printed, because of their contents. Shah Abd al-Latif is said to have feared that his work would be misunderstood and it is the same for Budhal Faqir. This is due to the Hallaj syndrome, according to which if you express ideas, which are not in line with the Islamic orthodoxy, you can be the target of a *fatwa* labeling you a *kafir*, a non-Muslim. But while it is difficult to state the impact of the printing of Sufi poetry in general, the action undertaken by the entrepreneurs of the Sufi paradigm aimed at building a reference and a reservoir, a kind of matrix, which all of the Sindhis could share and use.

In a broader perspective, I announced in the introduction that this study concerns issues relating to society, religion, community, and nation. It is therefore in line with Sheldon Pollock's stated perspective as "how culture relate to political orders" (Pollock 2006: 31). The study of the construction of the Sufi paradigm revealed a number of points related to society, culture, and politics that had been neglected. Without exaggeration, it can be said that the new Sindh elite was against the global dominant trend rooted in nationalism. The first reason is that the intelligentsia Sindhis did not seek to build a nation. The meanings and implications of the paradigm were intended to build a community—one whose characteristics were rooted in a vernacular culture on the one hand, but on the other hand in the vision of universal brotherhood made possible by the Sufi paradigm.

In addition, the study of the Sufi paradigm has shown how culture can escape the political order. Finally, it cannot be denied that the Sufi paradigm will ultimately be overtaken by the development of communalism and nationalism, and therefore will have failed to counter the split between Muslims and Hindus that will lead to the partition and, for Sindh, the migration of about one million Hindus to India. Despite this, and the resumption of political control over culture, the Sufi paradigm has survived. Proof of this was that it would feed into G. M. Syed's pro-independence political discourse in Pakistan. And on the Indian side, despite the domination of Hindu nationalist parties such as the BJP or Shiv Sena, the Sufi paradigm has taken refuge in the culture of the Hindu Sindhis, as evidenced by the importance they still attach to *Shah jo Risalo*, although it is not easy for him to resist the Hinduization of their religion.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Chronological Summary of the Publications Related to the *Shah jo Risalo* and Other Texts Related to the Sufi Paradigm[1]

Date	*Place*	*Shah Abd al-Latif*	*Other Sufi works & poets*	*Non-Sufi works*	*Author/editor/ compiler*
1866	Leipzig	***Shah jo Risalo***[a]			E. Trumpp
1869	Kar			*Hindu dharma shastar Sindhi men*	Navalrai Showkiram Advani
1874	Kar	*Muntakhab Shah Abd al-Latif*			Miyan Qazi Haji Ahmad
1874	Bom		*Bayazid Bistami*		
1878	Bom		*Dalail Khairat*		
1885	Kar			Sami	
1887	Hyd	*Life of Shah Abd al-Latif*			Mirza Qalich Beg

(*continued*)

[1] The list doesn't claim to be exhaustive.

(continued)

Date	*Place*	*Shah Abd al-Latif*	*Other Sufi works & poets*	*Non-Sufi works*	*Author/editor/compiler*
1888	Hyd	*Lataif-e Latifi*			Abd al-Husayn Khan Sangi
1890	Kar	*The Life, Religion and Poetry*			L. W. Lalwani
1890	Kar			*Janam Sakhi Udero Lal Sahab ji*	
1893	Hyd			*Shri Baghvat Gita*	Dayaram Gidumal
1893				*Madah Amar Lal ji*	
1895	Kar	*Notes on Shah jo Risalo*			J. N. Wasanani
1900	?	***Risalo Shah Abd al-Latif***			Tarachand Showkiram
1900	Suk			Sabit Ali Shah	Mirza Qalich Beg
1902	Suk		Sachal Sarmast		Mirza Ali Quli Beg
1903	Suk		Rohal Faqir		Golasingh Parcharam
1904	Hyd		Shah Abd al-Karim		Mirza Qalich Beg
1904	Hyd			*Guru Nanak Sahib*	Dayaram Gidumal
1906	Kar		Sunharo Sachal		L. A. Jagtiyani
1907	Hyd	*Gharib al-Lughat*			B. M. Advani
1907	?		*Sufi Sunhara*		P. L. Vasvani & M. S. Musafir
1908	Hyd		*Jawhar Nazam*		B. M. Advani
1909	Suk	*Bayan al-Arifin*	Shah Abd al-Karim		M. R. Abd al-Vasi
1909	Hyd			*Yoga Darshana—Patanjali's Yogasutra*	Dayaram Gidumal
1909	Kar			*Mukhtasir Mahabharata Bhago Bio*	Tejuram Rochiram

(*continued*)

(continued)

Date	*Place*	*Shah Abd al-Latif*	*Other works & poets*	*Non-Sufi works*	*Author/ editor/ compiler*
1910	Hyd			*Sukhmani*	Manghumal
1910	Hyd	*Sur Kedaro aon Sur sinhun Kedaro*			L. A. Jagtiyani
1910	Kar		*Halat Ghaous*		Makhdum M. M. Usman
1910	Shik		*Halat-e Awliya*		Mirza Qalich Beg
1910	Shik		*Maqalat-e Awliya*		Mirza Qalich Beg
1911	Shik		*Karamat-e Awliya*		Mirza Qalich Beg
1912	Hyd	*Sur Suhini-Selections from Shah jo Risalo*			Mirza Qalich Beg
1912	Hyd	*Latifi Lat*			Mirza Qalich Beg
1913	Hyd	***Wado Shah jo Risalo***			Mirza Qalich Beg
1914	Shik	*Lughat-e Latifi*			Mirza Qalich Beg
1914		*Shahano Shah*			L. A. Jagtiyani
1915	Hyd	*Shah Bhittai ji Hayati*			Jethmal Parsram
1915	Suk	*Kafiyun, Cayal Shah Abdulatif jun*			
1915	Hyd		*Mansur ji Hayati*		Deumal Parumal Sehwani
1915	Shirkarpur			*Akhlaq al-Quran wa al-Hadith*	Mirza Qalich Beg
1916	Kar		*Sindh jun Sukhriyun*		B. M. Advani & L. A. Jagtiyani
1916	Kar		Sunaro Sachal		L. A. Jagtiyani

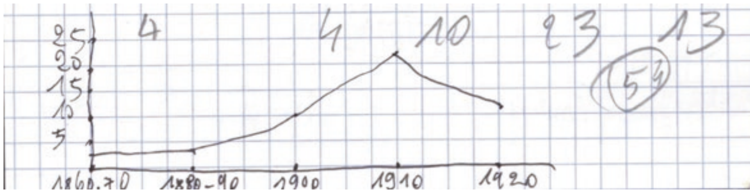
(*continued*)

(continued)

Date	*Place*	*Shah Abd al-Latif*	*Other works & poets*	*Non-Sufi works*	*Author/ editor/ compiler*
1916	Hyd		*Ilm Tasawuf*		Mirza Qalich Beg
1916–1927	Hyd		*Ajib Nayun Kafiyun* (6 vols)		Hemandas
1917			*Shaykh Mansur Hallaj*		Muhammad Ibrahim Halai
1918	Kar		*Bibi Rabia Misri*		Halai
1919	Hyd		*Ajib Nayun Kafiyun*		Jethmal Khiomal
1921			*Sufi Sagora*		Jethmal Parsram
1921			*Sufi Kalam*		Thakurdas Keshavdas
1922		*Shah jun Akhaniyyun*			Jethmal Parsram
1922	Hyd		*Jawhar Nazam*		B. Advani
1922			Sachal Sarmast		J. Parsram
1923		***Shah jo Risalo***			H. M. Gurbakhshani
1923	Hyd		*Chund Kalam*		B. Advani
1924	Hyd		Shabestari		tr. Mirza Qalich Beg
1924	Madras		*Sind and its Sufis*		J. Parsram
1925	Hyd		*Sindhi Chaman: Sindh je Shairan Manjhan Gula Phula*		J. Parsram

[a]The bold characters are used when there is an attempt to publish the entire *Shah jo Risalo*, even if the versions can be different

Appendix B: Chronological Evolution of the Publications by Decades



1860–1870: 4
1880–1890: 4
1900–1910: 10
1910–1920: 23
1920–1930: 13

Appendix C: Distribution According to the Editor/Writer's Religion

Hindus (tower): 33%
Muslims (moon crescent): 30%
Christians/Europeans (cross): 2%
Unknown: 35%

Appendix D: Mapping the Publications

Central Sindh (hatching): Hyderabad = 50%
Northern Sindh (triangles): Shikarpur; Sukkur = 16%
Southern Sindh (dots): Karachi = 24%
Others (blank): Bombay, Leipzig = 10%

Glossary[1]

Akhund a Muslim school-master.
Amil a Hindu belonging to a caste, which is specialized in writing and administration.
Ashraf a social category encompassing the superior strata of the Muslims; usually, they are said to be the descendant of non-Indian people.
Bait *kafi* or *wai*, a song from eight to a dozen verses; a *bait* or couplet;
Bawa a Hindu priest of inferior status.
Bhagat a Hindu preacher or singer.
Bhaibund a Hindu trader, usually belonging to the Lohana caste.
Bhajan a Hindu devotional song.
Bhat genealogist and musician.
Darbar a sacred building.
Dargah the place where an important Sufi is buried, which has become a place of pilgrimage.
Darshan vision, visualization. A main ritual in Hinduism.
Dhamal ecstatic dance, usually associated with the Sufi Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.
Didar vision; a Sufi concept when the Sufi is able to visualize his master, or even God.

[1] The glossary deals with Sindhi words as they were understood in late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Dohiro the section of singing *kafi* that comprises of rhythmically free improvisation.
Godri a piece of cloth, which is used as a blanket or a shawl; the symbol of renunciation in Sindh.
Gurdwara the sacred building of the Sikhs and other followers of Guru Nanak.
Ilm Tasawuf "the science of Sufism."
Imambara the building here the ritual objects that are paraded during Moharram are kept.
Ishq mystical love; a key concept of Sufism.
Japji a prayer composed by Guru Nanak, which started the *Granth Sahib*.
Jogi a Hindu renunciant, usually a follower of the Nathpanth.
Kafi a piece of devotional poetry.
Kamil insan the "perfect man." A Sufi concept dealing with the possibility for a man to become God.
Kardar a native revenue and judicial officer.
Langa a caste musician.
Latifiyyat all matters related to Shah Abd al-Latif and the *Shah jo risalo*.
Madah praise to God, the Prophet or to a saint.
Mahant the head man of a religious establishment of the Hindus.
Malfuzat a compilation of a Sufi's sayings collected by his followers.
Manganhar a caste musician.
Mastan a council with certain powers on a given territory.
Mirasi a caste musician.
Mowla jo qadam the footprints of the Lord, namely the first Shia imam, Ali.
Munshi a vernacular clerk.
Murid a follower of a Sufi master.
Murshid A Sufi master; also *pir*.
Panchayat a council made of a member of the dominant families of a caste or a village; they have to check that the common rules are followed.
Pir a Sufi master; also *murshid*.
Pothi a collection of sacred writings in manuscript form, arranged like a book.
Qawal a singer of Sufi poetry in North India and today Pakistan.
Qutub the "pole"; a Sufi term for the Master of the Time.
Sab ka malik hai the most common meaning is there is only one god for all the creatures; thus, it is closed to the wahdat-e wujud.

Sama a musical Sufi session, where devotional songs are played with, or without, instruments.
Samagam (Sufi) meetings for singing Sufi songs.
Shah jo qadam the footprint of the shah, usually the first Shia imam Ali.
Sharia the Islamic law.
Shuddi a special ritual created by the Arya Samaj for reintegrating converted Hindus in Hinduism.
Slok also *shlok*; the epic form of Indian literature par excellence used for classical Sanskrit poetry; in Sindhi, the word is used for devotional poetry with other equivalents.
Sukhmani "Prayer of Peace," one of the most popular chapters of the Granth Sahib, written by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan (1563–1606) at Amritsar in around 1602.
Sur a chapter of a Sufi work.
Tazia a miniature replica of the imam Husayn's mausoleum in Karbala.
Tikano a Sindhi temple.
Uruj the ascending travel accomplished by a Sufi.
Virahini the woman who is longing for her lover.
Wahdat-e wujud the oneness of God; a central belief of a Sufi school according to which God is (in) everything and everyone.
Wai a lyrical form of poetry.
Wujudi a Sufi who believes in the *wahdat-e wujud*.
Zikr the most common term used by the Sufis for meditation.

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