



Fieldwork in a sensitive context

In the last IAS issue devoted to Pakistan, Kristoffel Lieten article was entitled: "Pakistan, an abundance of problems and scant knowledge". He followed Stephen Cohen who claimed in 2004 that, the USA has "only a few true Pakistan experts and knows remarkably little about the country. Much of what has been written is palpably wrong, or at best superficial" (*IAS Newsletter* 49, Autumn 2008, p. 3). For instance, one of the most neglected aspects regarding Pakistan is the segmentation of the country and its society. However by segmentation, we do not mean that the country is about to be dismembered, contrary to common assumptions by so-called experts.

We claim that the spread of radical Islam is mainly a response to social problems that depend on the history and the structure of local societies. Islamist groups tend to focus naturally on places where there is a lack of social cohesiveness and more particularly on places where the State fails to interact with local society. But then we can ask why some areas in Pakistan seem to be spared by the influence of radical Islam, as it is the case of Sindh (Karachi excluded)? Even though social injustice and violence are found there, based on tribal, ethnic or religious differences, the province of Sindh is an interesting case study. During our latest field trip in Sehwan Sharif, a major pilgrimage centre in contemporary Pakistan, we observed that the "Sufi system" produces a certain form of social cohesiveness. Hence the interest in developing knowledge about the functioning of such local societies, where Sufism seems to contain the spread of radical Islam, its discourses and actions, and that despite the numerous bridges between orthodox and devotional Islam.

Following Robert Rozehnal's brilliant essay (p. 8), we intend to investigate the nature of such an "alternative modernity" created by Sufism and its practices, through the case study of Sehwan Sharif. Such a project and related fieldwork activities, in the volatile context of Pakistan today, require consolidating our networks. Therefore, we are particularly grateful to the Government of Sindh, its Department of Antiquities, and its Culture, Tourism and Social Welfare Department, for their active support during our field work. It enabled us to work in excellent conditions in both Sehwan Sharif and the region of Sindh (p. 4).

Michel Boivin

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Interview with Monik Kervran

Archaeology and the Indus valley (1989-2002)

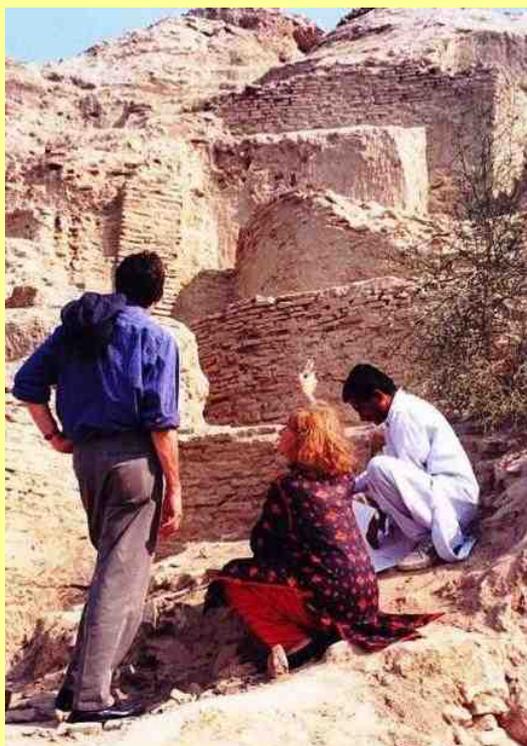
Monik Kervran, a researcher at CNRS, headed the French Archaeological Mission in Sindh (MAFS) between 1989 and 2002. The editors of the MIFS interviewed her in October 2008 to reconstruct the scientific itinerary that led her from the Persian Gulf to the Indus Valley and the region of Sindh, specifically the site of Sehwan Sharif.

Can you describe us the steps that led you to open new sites of excavation in the Indus Valley?

In the 1970s the Persian Gulf opened up to scientific expeditions from the West, including archaeologists, iranologists and islamologists. At that time, the scientific challenge was to deepen our knowledge of commercial activities between the Arab and Iranian coast. Trade with Asia, India and China, was also a field to be studied, in particular the period from antiquity to the Islamization of the Indian subcontinent. When I did excavation in Bahrain and Oman, I was intrigued by the strong presence of a very special sort of ceramic, which is red and strongly micaceous. Following this discovery, I decided to find the export ports of this ceramic, which led me on the side of the Indus Valley.

The common thread running through your scientific route is the presence of these red glazed tiles, so you wanted to discover its origins.

Yes indeed. During a private trip in Sindh in 1987 or 1988, I was quickly fascinated by the presence of red glazed tiles in the oldest ports that we could find, that of Barbariké/Daybul now called Banbhore. We dated it between 400-300 BC and 950-1000 AD.



Monik Kervran (center) on the excavating field

Is it there that you opened the first excavation site of the MAFS?

No, not at all. In fact, after negotiations between France and the Government of Sindh for the opening of an archaeological excavation site, an agreement was reached and the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs was ready to finance the project. But in 1989, when we arrived in Pakistan to begin the excavation, the new Director of Antiquities in Karachi did not agree that we work in Banbhore, ostensibly for security reasons.

Chronology

1922-1930s: Excavations of Mohenjo-daro by the Archaeological Survey of India.

1922: Foundation of the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan (DAFA), still in activity until now.

1958: Creation of the French archaeological mission for the Indus (MAI), founded by Jean-Marie Casal, then curator of the Guimet museum, in a country that was traditionally the reserve of the Anglo-Saxons.

1959: First excavation completed by the MAI headed by Jean-Marie Casal at Amri, in Sindh.

1962-2002: The MAI concentrated on various sites located in Baluchistan. The MAI stopped in 2002 following the destruction of numerous villages and archaeological sites.

1989-1995: The French Archaeological Mission in Sindh (MAFS), headed by Monique Kervran, mainly concentrated on six ancient ports and few other places located in the Southern valley of the Indus river.

1996-2002: The MAFS excavated the tell of Sehwan Sharif.

2008: Members of the French Interdisciplinary Mission in Sindh (MIFS), headed by Michel Boivin, conducted a survey of potential fieldwork sites in and around Sehwan Sharif.

Interview with Monik Kervran

Archaeology and the Indus valley (1989-2002)

We finally started our excavation work at Ratto Kot (see map), an outpost of Banbhore located fifteen kilometers downstream. Between 1989 and 1995, the MAFS was principally interested in this outpost and then in a second port, the Juna Shah Bandar or Lahori Bandar, mentioned in written sources from the 10th century. During this mission, six ports were discovered in the lower Indus Valley, but only some of them were excavated.

What have you learned from this first campaign of the MAFS?

The excavation of these two ports has helped us to highlight the mechanism with which ships were cleared for entry into Sindh. Such a device was also described by a source dating from the 16th century. But this system met its match when faced with more important invaders, for instance the Arab armies who conquered Daybul and Sindh in 711 or the Portuguese invasions of the 16th century. Having no reference study, we had problems dating the ancient and medieval ceramics. So we had to find a new site in order to have a stratigraphic reference, necessary for the calibration and timing of our samples found in the Indus Valley. After an initial refusal by the authorities (1994) to open an excavation site in the city of Hyderabad, again for security problems, we obtained the necessary permits for the site of Sehwan Sharif.

Why did you particularly choose the site of Sehwan Sharif?

Firstly, this city, which had suffered the invasion of Alexander in 325 BC and of British troops in the 1840s, had the advantage of having a tell overlooking the city and separated from it by a ditch. The site had never been excavated and archaeological layers were clearly visible. The first sounding, from the top of the tell up to the initial layer, that is more than twenty meters sounding, delivered vital information. Seven phases of cultural occupation of the city were made clear and were easily interpretable, from the 4th century BC until the 16th century AD. Finally, we were able to draw up the necessary stratigraphic reference for dating the sites discovered in the Indus delta. This has also delivered a number of clues allowing a better understanding of the history of the city and the region. For instance, we found confirmed that in the 13th century, when the city fell under the thumb of the Delhi Sultans, the tell became

essentially a garrison and local people occupied the southern part of the fortress. The stratigraphic reference from Sehwan Sharif between 1996 and 2002 allowed us to put forward many other hypothesis for historical research. The opening of another site in the town of Sehwan itself would have enabled us to look for signs of more ancient urbanization.

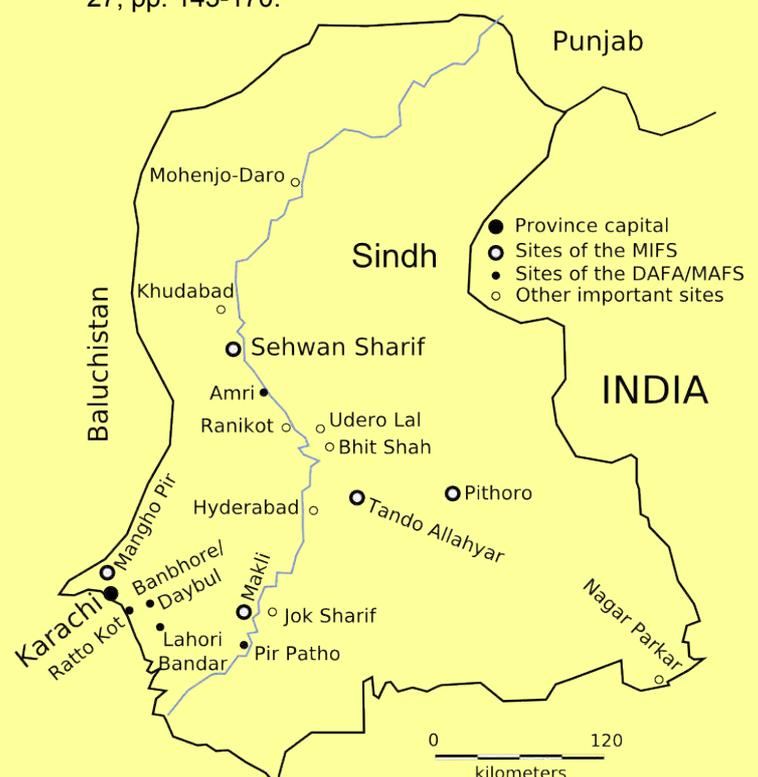
More on Monik Kervran

Monique Kervran (2005), "Pakistan. Mission Archéologique Française au Sud-Sindh", *Archéologies. 20 ans de recherches françaises dans le monde*, MAE, Maisonneuve et Larose/ADPF-ERC, pp. 595-598.

Monique Kervran (1996), "Le port multiple des bouches de l'Indus: Barbariké, Dêb, Daybul, Lâhorî Bandar, Diul Sinde", *Res Orientales*, VIII, pp. 45-92.

Monique Kervran (1993) "Vanishing medieval cities of the northwest Indus delta", *Pakistan Archaeology*, 28, pp. 3-54.

Monique Kervran (1992), "The fortress of Ratto Kot at the mouth of the Banbhore River (Indus delta, Sindh, Pakistan)", *Pakistan Archaeology*, 27, pp. 143-170.

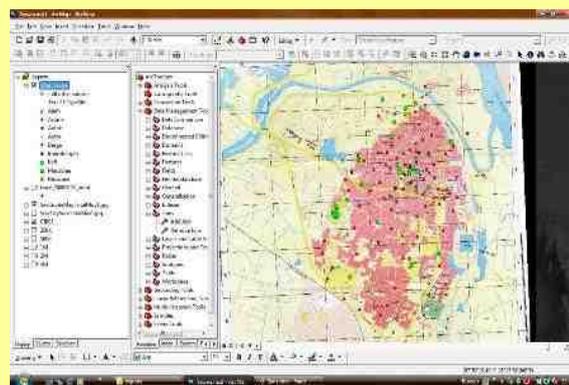


The preliminary fieldwork was conducted from October 12th to November 7th, 2008. It was financed by the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, Paris), the Fondation de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (FMSH, Paris) and the Max van Berchem Foundation (Geneva). The MIFS team members who attended were Sohail Bawani (sociologist, Karachi University), Johanna Blayac (epigraphist, EPHE-Sorbonne), Michel Boivin (historian, CNRS), Rémy Delage (geographer, CNRS), Lata Parwani (ethnologist, Tuft University, USA) and Sophie Reynard (topographer, IGN-Paris). Although the program was focused on the site of Sehwan Sharif, other places were visited since they were relevant. Among them were Chaukhundi, Hyderabad, Karachi, Mangho Pir and Makli. Some MIFS participants had also the opportunity to survey the resource centres of Sindh, in Sehwan Sharif, Hyderabad, and Karachi.

This preliminary fieldwork would not have been possible without the active support of Dr Kaleem Lashari, Department of Antiquities, Government of Sindh, Shams Jafrani, Culture, Tourism and Social Welfare Department, and Dr Mehdi Reza Shah Sabzwari, *sajjâda nashîn* of La'l Shahbâz Qalandar. They provided us with excellent conditions for fieldwork in a peaceful and secure environment. Moreover, our research activity was greatly facilitated by the presence of Shahana Bhurghri, who assisted us every day on the field.

The 2008 fieldwork was prospective. We initially decided to devote a general survey of the site, by locating and mapping the places related to La'l Shahbâz Qalandar. Beyond this main objective, other topics were investigated. The MIFS wanted to: 1. map the main religious centres related or not to La'l Shahbâz Qalandar (RD & SR); 2. collect the historical inscriptions

in Sehwan (JB); 3. evaluate the religious role played by the Hindus in Sehwan (LP); 4. approach the *dhammâl* ritual performed by the *faqîrs* in Bodlo Bahar (SB); 5. and study the competition between the two mains branches of Syeds, namely the Sabzwaris and the Lakkiaris, especially through their processes of legitimization (MB).



AGIS of Sehwan Sharif in the making

Locating and mapping places

The main object of the field survey was to identify the main places of worship in Sehwan (mosques, mausoleums, *kâfis*, *imâmbârgâhs*, neighborhoods, etc.). To do this, MIFS team members used the map of Sehwan edited in 2004 (Survey of Pakistan) to locate a number of sites. During fieldwork, the whole urban area was surveyed to locate more precisely these sites, as well as others that were not listed on the map (especially mosques and recent *kâfis*). Basic informations (place names, photos of places, neighborhood names, etc.) were systematically recorded and daily integrated to a database. Finally, about 165 places were identified in the town.

The field survey also helped to update and correct certain inaccuracies contained in the 2004 map. An additional field trip will be needed to complete it, including roads and alleys in the old city. The 2004 map does not show the contrast between the densification of the urban infrastructure in the old city and the loose organization in the new city, located to the south. A sharp study of toponyms should also be envisaged, given that many of the neighborhoods (*mohallah*), defined by the presence of one or more communities, have been renamed. The collection of such data is essential for a better description of the urban history of Sehwan Sharif.

From left to right: R. Delage, M. Boivin, S. Reynard, S. Bawani, J. Blayac, S. Bhurghri, L. Parwani



Survey of epigraphical sources

Members of the MIFS collected data on a regional epigraphical and architectural production. Concerning the history of Sehwan and La'l Shahbâz's mausoleum, it is well known that a commemorative building was erected for the saint, who was already credited with miracles, in 1356-1357, during the reign of the Delhi sultan Fîrûz Shâh bin Tughluq. Although already published, there are several points in the two inscriptions recording this event that still have to be interpreted. The other inscriptions found during this prospective mission are mostly of Koranic origin and, since they cannot be dated before the 16th-17th century, they are probably more recent. The Thuluth script, which is used for these inscriptions appears on quite recent tombs, for example in Makli, and even in Hyderabad. In fact, this script appears to have been preserved for Koranic texts with the development of Nastaliq, just as with Kufic had been with the development of cursive scripts after the 12th-13th century.

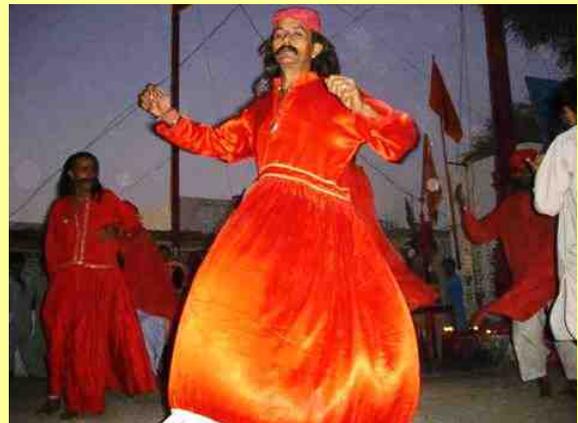
Actors and rituals: the management of the saint's charisma

The third objective of the MIFS was to study how the main groups of actors managed La'l Shahbâz Qalandar's cult through rituals. Due to the competition between the two main Syed branches, the Lakkiaris and the Sabzwaris, the masters (*sajjâda nashîns*) of the Sufi hospices (*kâfis*) have invented differing sources of legitimatization. According to a preliminary study of the relics, the Lakkiaris are most prominent as heirs of La'l Shahbâz Qalandar. Their possession of the begging bowl (*kishtî*), a sacred relic said to be La'l Shahbâz Qalandar's one, is significant.

Another manner of legitimization is the circulation of vegetal turbans (*dastârs*) through the city. The routes define a small circle which represents the *faqîrs* attached to the *kâfi* of Awladi Amir. Interestingly, the *sajjâda nashîn* of Awladi Amir is not a Syed. But since all the circulation routes start from there, they all end at the *kâfi* of Juman Shah, whose leader is a Syed. The circulation of the *dastârs* finally seems likely to be the result of a negotiation between Syeds and non Syeds.

The last source of legitimacy is far most common: civil justice. Pakistani and Indian judges

partially carry on a colonial custom. It is therefore not surprising to find in court several cases regarding the management of the *dargâhs* and the *kâfis*. One of the main tasks during the next year fieldwork will be to collect more court cases. Finally, the results of this preliminary fieldwork confirm that the management of rituals reflects the compromises between different actors, originating from various social and religious backgrounds.



Dhammâl performed by a faqîr at Bodlo Bahar

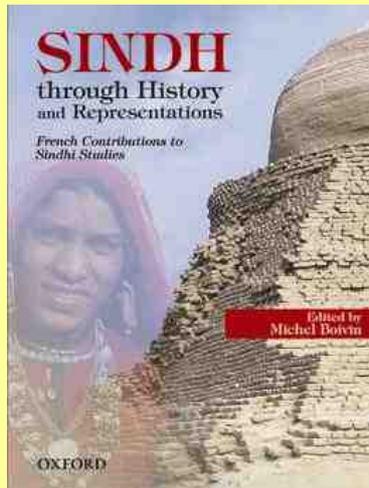
Concerning the role played by the Hindus in the 'urs festival, preliminary fieldwork indicates that a project of this nature requires extensive on-site investigation, particularly during the month of the saint's day, when both Hindus and Muslims attend the festivities and participate in various rituals. For instance, Mulchand Kâfi is managed by Ramdas, a Hindu from Sehwan who leads a *mendî* procession during the 'urs. It is a special place for the Hindus. There is the cremation ground, and some rituals are performed at Mulchand Faqîr's grave. This would provide an ideal opportunity for participant observation, though interviews and the collection of popular devotional literature and pamphlets.

The ritual of *dhammâl*, the most important in Sehwan, was observed in the *dargâh* of Bodlo Bahar, main disciple of La'l Shahbâz Qalandar. *Dhammâl* is more than a dance performance and a ritual. It is a creative dialogue between various sacred Sufi narratives and the social management of *faqîrs* of Sehwan. On the one hand, *dhammâl* can be seen as an act of devotion, piety and self-renunciation, as well as joy and an extreme form of submission to the saint. On the other hand, it can be read as an act of mourning to mark the martyr of the Shiite Imâm Husain ibn Alî, who suffered during the tragedy of Karbala.

Book launch in Karachi

15th October 2008, 6 pm at AFK

Michel Boivin (ed) *Sindh through History and Representations. French Contributions to Sindhi Studies*. Karachi, OUP, 2008.



“The book published by Oxford University Press aims to make available to English readers internationally research studies carried out by French scholars and advanced students. The topics cover the main periods of Sindh’s history, literature, architecture and anthropology and the authors seek to provide a wide-ranging and comprehensive survey of Sindh’s legacy. The work provides a fresh perspective on Sindhi culture, and its interaction with the legacies of other provinces of South Asia”. (jacket)

On the occasion of the visit of MIFS members to Pakistan, the French Alliance of Karachi (AFK) hosted an evening with **Michel Boivin** who presented his new edited book:

Contents

Introduction by Michel Boivin

Part 1: Historical Insights

Annabelle Collinet “Chronology of Sehwan Sharif through Ceramics (Islamic period)”

Michel Boivin “Shivaite Cults and Sufi centres: A Reappraisal of the Medieval Legacy in Sindh”

Claude Markovits “Urban Society in Colonial Sindh (1843-1947)”

Laurent Gayer “A History of Violence: Ethnic and Sectarian Conflicts in Karachi (1985-2005)”

Part II: Glimpses of Literature and Society

Françoise Mallison “Barmati Panth: A Messianic Sect established in Sindh, Kutch, and Saurashtra”

Dominique-Sila Khan “Jhulelal and the Identity of Indian Sindhis”

Pierre Lachaier “Lohana and Sindhi Networks”

Françoise Cousin “Colour and Light: The Textiles of Sindh between Sky and Earth”

Delphine Maucort “Bhopa's Costumes and Body Technical: The Shy Women and the Proud Men”

The AFK, the MIFS and OUP co-organised on that occasion the second seminar conference on **the cultural and historical legacy of Sindh and Pakistan:**

Dr Michel Boivin, CNRS (Paris)
Introduction to the book “Sindh Through History and Representations”

Dr Rémy Delage, CNRS (Paris)
Sehwan and Sindh through the maps

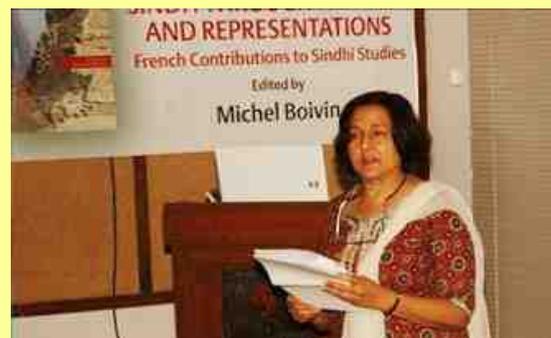
Dr Michel Boivin, CNRS (Paris)
Managing the sources for writing Lal' Shahbâz Qalandar's biography

Sohail Bawani, Karachi University
Ethnographic Reflections on the performance of the dhammâl at the shrine of La'l Shahbâz Qalandar

Special Guests

Ameena Sayyid, Managing Director of OUP

Dr. Fateh M. Burfat, Head of Department of Sociology, University of Karachi



Ameena Sayyid, Managing Director, Oxford University Press, addressing the gathering

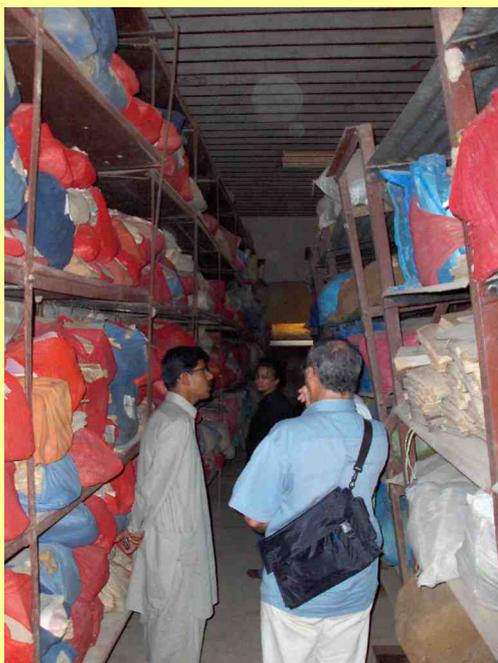
Plurality of sources and interdisciplinary approach: A case study of Sehwan Sharif in Sindh

Maison de l'Asie, Grand Salon (1st floor), 22 avenue du Président Wilson, 75016 Paris

Contacts: mboivin@ehess.fr, rdelage@ehess.fr

As part of activity of the research team "History and Sufism in the Indus Valley" (CEIAS), led by Michel Boivin, a workshop will be held on 27 January 2009 at the EHESS in Paris. Several members of this team will focus on how to integrate the plurality of sources in comparison with the interdisciplinary approach of a Sufi pilgrimage, that of Sehwan Sharif located in the region of Sindh in Southern Pakistan. Beginning on the work of the French Archaeological Mission in Sindh (1989-2002), different sets of research materials will be presented by the speakers: epigraphical sources, colonial archives, cartographic representations, vernacular sources, etc. If the primary objective of this workshop is to make an inventory of sources and materials collected, and eventually to compose a typology by disciplines, it also aims at multiplying angles of approach to a specific site, between local history and regional history. At the end of the day, a brief account of the field mission in October 2008 will be presented and commented, as well as various parallel projects around issues of data management and sharing (archiving and cataloging, GIS, website).

Archives at the mukhtyarkar office in Sehwan Sharif



Programme

9h30: Opening remarks by Michel Boivin, CNRS

Morning session

Chair: Véronique Bouiller (CNRS)

10h-10h30: Monique Kervran (CNRS), *The archaeology of Sindh and Sehwan Sharif: the work of the French Archaeological Mission in Sindh*

10h30-11h: Annabelle Collinet (Louvre Museum), *Sehwan Sharif through the study of ceramics: 2nd-8th until 11th-17th centuries*

Coffee break

11h15-11h45: Claude Markovits (CNRS), *Sindh through colonial archives*

11h45-12h15: Reza Dehghan (University of Aix-Marseille), *Sindh and commercial trade between India and Baghdad*

Afternoon session

Chair: Christophe Z. Guilmoto (IRD)

14h-14h30: Johanna Blayac (EPHE), *Epigraphy and architecture in Sehwan and southern Sindh*

14h30-15h00: Rémy Delage (CNRS), *Sehwan Sharif and Sindh represented cartographically*

Tea break

15h-15h50: Michel Boivin (CNRS), *La' Shahbâz Qalandar through vernacular sources*; Annabelle Collinet (Louvre Museum): *Commentary on the Qalandar's begging bowl (kishti)*

15h50-16h20: Frédérique Pagani (Paris X-Nanterre), *Studying the Sindhis in India*

16h20-17h: Michel Boivin (CNRS) and Rémy Delage (CNRS), *Brief account of the field mission in 2008, Parallel projects and Mission in Sehwan Sharif 2009*

Special book review

Sufism and Politics in Contemporary Pakistan

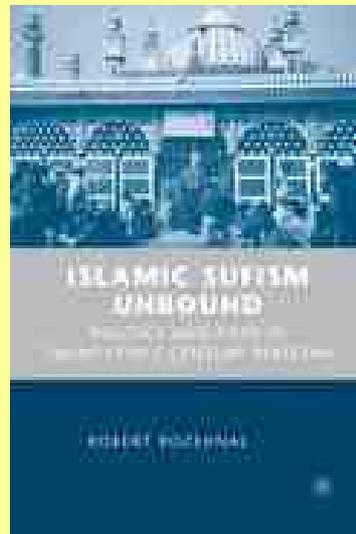
Robert Rozehnal (2007) *Islamic Sufism Unbound. Politics and Piety in Twenty First Century Pakistan*, New York & Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

In this book, which is a revised version of a PhD defended at Duke University with Bruce Lawrence as supervisor, Robert Rozenhal addresses a central question: "What do contemporary Chishti Sabiris make of modernity?". He explores how they "accommodate a life of spiritual discipline and religious piety to the myriad demands of their daily experiences" (p. 8). What the author calls "alternative modernity" is made up of "a range of practical strategies to integrate Sufism into the complex matrix of twenty-first century life" (p. 9). Contesting the essentializing and reductive lenses with which Western scholars interpret Sufi thought and practice, he stresses the need of a "more nuanced, multidimensional, interdisciplinary reading of Sufism's multiple dimensions – its public and private manifestations – doctrines and practices, its piety, and its politics" (pp. 13-14). In his methodology, Robert Rozenhal combines manuscripts and fieldwork, to bridge a disciplinary divide.

After an introduction devoted to "Mapping the Chishti Sabri Sufi Order", the book is divided into six chapters: 1. Sufism and the Politics of Muslim Identity, 2. Muslim, Mystic, and Modern: Three Twentieth-Century Sufi Masters, 3. Imagining Sufism: The Publication of Chishti Sabri Identity, 4. Teaching Sufism: Networks of Community and Discipleship, and 5. Experiencing Sufism: The Discipline of Ritual Practice. Robert Rozenhal's approach is undoubtedly innovative but since he focuses on the Chishti Sabri tradition, he sometimes makes rapid formulations. For instance, he states that "Pakpattan now stands as the unrivalled center of a distinctly Pakistani Sufism" (p. 26). It is a pity that his contextualization of Sufism in Pakistan is more or less restricted to the Chishti Sabri tradition. Obviously, it does not include the southern province of Sindh, although it is known as "the land of the Sufis". What about other major Sufi centres like Multan or Sehwan Sharif?

The most important contribution of this book is to show through a fine analysis how plural the discourses on Islam are in Pakistan today. The author makes it clear that "what is at stake here is the definition of Islamic orthodoxy" (p. 34). One can nevertheless regret that the author's demonstration is more related to the state than to radical Islam. He argues that "the state's control of Sufi tradition (...) has never been totalizing or hegemonic" (p. 227). He also states that "Sufi identity is capacious, broader, and deeper than the parochial constructions of religious nationalism" (p. 228). The "alternative modernity" embraced by Chishti Sabri Sufi order is framed within an "alternative geography" that delineates an expansive Indo-Muslim sacred landscape centered on Sufi shrines, an "alternative history" that links the disciples ultimately to Prophet Muhammad through a sacred genealogy (*silsilah*), an "alternative community" rooted in a teaching network, and an "alternative authority" thanks to the experiential knowledge acquired through the Sufi ritual practices.

Michel Boivin



More publications

"A 'Proving Ground' for Spiritual Mastery: The Chishti Sabiri Musical Assembly," *The Muslim World* (Vol. 97, No.4: October 2007): 657-677.

"Faqir or Faker?: The Public Battle Over Sufism in Contemporary Pakistan," *Religion* 36 (2006): 29-47.

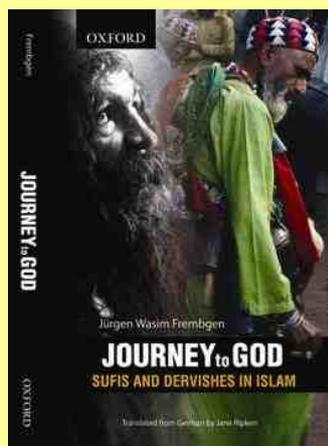
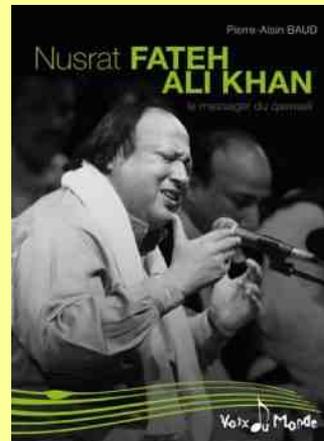
"Debating Orthodoxy, Contesting Tradition: Islam in Contemporary South Asia," in *Islam in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. R. Michael Feener (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004): 103-131.

From Sufi Practice to Scholarly Praxis: Reflections on the Lessons of Fieldwork for the Study of Islam," in *Items and Issues: Social Science Research Council*. Vol.3, No. 1-2 (Spring 2002).

What is new? Recent publications

Pierre Alain Baud (2008) *Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, le messager du qawwali [Nusrat Fath Ali Khan, the mesenger of qawwali]*, Paris, Editions Demi Lune.

Pierre-Alain Baud has published a number of papers on Sufi music from Pakistan. Although he began by focusing on Shah Latif's musical tradition at Bhit Shah in Sindh, he was one of the first Westerners to personally meet Nusrat Fath Ali Khan in the 1980s. He accompanied him on several tours in Europe and elsewhere. Since the book is published for a large audience of French-speaking readers, the approach is more journalistic than academic. He nevertheless draws a useful contextualization regarding Sufism in Pakistan, and the Sufi milieu in which Nusrat grew up. It must be remembered that Nusrat's most famous hit was *Dama dam mast Qalandar*, a song devoted to La'l Shahbâz Qalandar of Sehwan Sharif that he converted into a universal hymn of tolerance. MB

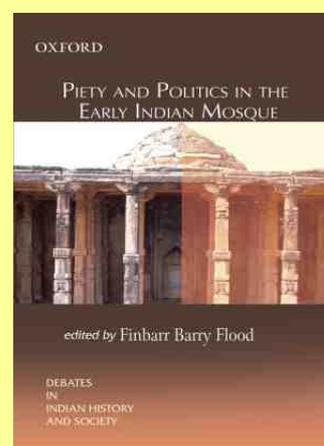


Jürgen Wasim Frembgen (2008) *Journey to God. Sufis and Dervishes in Islam*, Karachi, Oxford University Press.

Since 1981, the author has been conducting ethnographic fieldwork on Islamic mysticism and Sufi cults in South Asia and more particularly in Pakistan. His latest book is a revised English version translated of the German one by Jane Ripken. Jürgen Wasim Frembgen here focuses on the role played by Sufis and dervishes in shaping social and cultural environments in the whole Muslim world from Africa across the Middle East to South Asia, with special emphasis on India and Pakistan. While describing everyday practices, perceptions and representations, the author intends to show how Sufi cults and saints became popular forms of Islamic religiosity at the local level, as well as components of mass devotional movements in Muslim societies. RD

Finbarr Barry Flood (ed) (2008) *Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press.

This book is a reader that will be of great interest not only for scholars but also for teachers and students. It brings together the different historical approaches of mosques constructed after North-West India came under control of the Ghurid sultanate originating from Afghanistan in the 1190s. In his long introduction, the author wonderfully articulates the multiple contexts through which the earliest mosques in South Asia were constructed. All this to better understand how different historical approaches and discourses around the category of mosques have been shaped over time. It is not surprising then that this book found a place in the OUP series entitled "Debates in Indian History and Society." RD



What is new?

PhD dissertations

Identité "réfugié", identité transversale. Les réfugiés à Delhi au sein des dynamiques institutionnelles, communautaires et associatives.

Refugee identity, transversal identity. Refugees in Delhi within the institutional, community and associative dynamics.

This thesis examines the category of people known as "refugees" and the impact this categorization has on the creation of an identity in the limited framework, Delhi, a space of convergence, and dispersion. The category of refugees includes people of different ethnic groups, religions, and nationalities. I attempt to determine whether their image of themselves and the types of action they engage in are common to them all, which would indicate that their identity is based on their situation as refugees. The category of refugee is broken down into: the regulatory bodies that give substance to the refugee "label"; the people who support refugees politically and socially; and religious groups (Christian groups) who are also key players in the "refugee system". A transversal approach leads to the conclusion that as civil society emerges, carrying with it expression of a heterogeneous identity along with community dynamic, one can define the refugee identity.

Keywords: Delhi, refugee identity, UNHCR, refugees in urban centers, Christians, Tibetans, Afghans, Burmese, Sikh and Hindu Afghans, Chin, civil society.

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Ethnographie d'un islam indien. Organisation culturelle et sociale d'une institution musulmane: la dargâh du martyr Ghâzî Miyân (Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, Inde du Nord).

Discipline

Anthropology

Ethnography of an Indian Islam. Religious and Social Organization of a Muslim Institution: The Dargâh of the Martyr Ghâzî Miyân (Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, North India).

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This thesis deals with a *dargâh*, the most representative institution of Islam on the Indian subcontinent. The study of the *dargâh* of the martyr Ghâzî Miyân in Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh) raises issues concerning the role of Islamic values in local Hindu society. These have been studied from three different perspectives: organization of worship, social organization, and the martyr's acts. Both daily and festive worship, analysed on the basis of notions of time and space, reveals the distinctive roles played by Muslim and Hindu inhabitants of a territory defined by the worship of Ghâzî Miyân. He appears to be a kind of local power who reacts in function of human events. The social organisation of the sanctuary as an institution, comparable to the ancient landownership system, is based on relations of service and the sharing of wealth between several beneficiaries. The hagiography of the martyr describing him as a Jihad conqueror seems at first sight to be in contradiction with his veneration. His story is interwoven with hagiography, local legends and ballads and reveals itself to be a reconfiguration based on a universe of shared Islamic and Hindu values of the classic young warrior hero who dies a martyr's death.

Keywords: India, Uttar Pradesh, Muslim, Hindu, saint, martyr, hero, rituals, festivals, calendars, space, pilgrimage, shrine, social organization, legend, locality, universal.

What is new?

PhD dissertations

Églises, Monachisme et Sainteté. Construction de la communauté chrétienne en Syrie.

Churches, Monasticism and Holiness. Construction of the Christian Community in Syria.

This thesis focuses on the social, political and symbolic inscriptions of the Christian minority in the Syrian national territory, more specifically, on the monastic revival which has been taking place in this country over the last three decades. It is indeed a revival, in spite of its late manifestation, as this contemporary process, including its local representations, falls within the scope of a history which goes back to the origins of Christianity. What then are the motives of this phenomenon? How and why did monasticism reappear in Syria today? How must this "return of the monks", who had been saintly considered during the first centuries of Christianity, be interpreted? What kind of relation may be established between monasticism and holiness? This thesis attempts to answer these broad questions which place it, at the same time, in the field of the anthropology of Christianity and that of the study of monasticism. They refer to the contemporary modalities of construction of the Christian community of Syria, where its three dimensions, the Churches, monasticism and holiness are closely related and seem to structure its universe. Christian monasticism in Syria is analysed through its historical, symbolic, religious, social, economic and political dimensions.

Keywords: Monasticism, Oriental Christianity, holiness, pilgrimage, minority, community, Syria.

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Supervisor

Paul Benoît

Date

18 December 2008

Jury

- Lutz Ilisch
- Monique Kervran
- Françoise
Micheau
- Cécile Morisson
- Alastair
Northedge

Monnaies, métal et pouvoir. Frappes et techniques monétaires au Yémen (Ile-Vie/Ville-XIe siècles).

Coins, Metal and Power: Mints and Minting Techniques in Yemen (2th-6th/8th-12th centuries).

The study of Yemeni coins, from the foundation in Ṣanâ' of the first mint during Hârûn al-Rashîd's reign (170-193/786-809) until the conquest of the Yemen by Tûrânshâh in 569/1173, explores History, Economy and metallurgical techniques. Comparing textual and numismatic sources allows one to fix the dates of historical events, to establish dynastic lists, to identify local troubles and, through titles, political allegiance between Yemeni rulers and the sovereigns of the Islamic world. Chronicles, geographical works, archives and hoards testify to the circulation and to the monetary uses in the Yemen where currencies were minted with different weights. They show the place of the Yemen in international trade between India and Egypt and shed light on the role coins played. Finally, the metallurgical treatise al-Hamdânî wrote in the 4th/10th century allows us to reconstruct the process of refining metal. Coins compared with textual and archaeological data reveal a political and economic history of Yemen during the first centuries of Islam. It shows the evolution of this country, at first neglected and then flourishing at the eve of the Ayyûbid conquest.

Keywords: Yemen, numismatics, economic history, archaeology, metallurgy.

What is new?

Forthcoming research project on saints and the veneration of their shrines

The Culture of Saints and the Veneration of their Shrines – Shiite and Sunnite – in the Turko-Iranian World (Turkey, Iran and Central Asia)

This pilot project will examine the culture of saints and the mortuary culture of the Turko-Iranian world in the light of cultural continuity, comparability in environment, and similarity of cultural form, with special attention given to the unique community mortuary landscapes and material cultures, and their accompanying ritual/historic topography. An overview of Turko-Iranian spiritual and ritual practices and their relationship to the use of mortuary material culture and sacred sites of burial will be accompanied by a summary of the use of two to five sacred sites by contemporary residents of Turko-Iranian cities. This project will be financed by the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) and the British Academy. It is scheduled to begin in spring 2009 and finish by spring 2011.

Project coordinators

Pedram Khosronejad (University of St-Andrews)

Thierry Zarcone (CNRS), Paris, France

Project honorary members

James Allan (University of Oxford)

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Project collaborators

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Ahmed Ocak, Historian of Sufism (Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey)

Alexandre Papas, Historian of Central Asia (CNRS, Paris, France)

Minoru Sawada (University of Toyama, Japan)

Baha Tanman (Department of Architecture, University of Istanbul, Turkey)

Yasushi Tonaga (Kyoto University, Japan)

Academic journals on Sufism, Pakistan and South Asia

The **Journal of the History of Sufism** (JHS), published annually, presents scholarly articles relating to the history of Islamic mysticism and of Sufi lineages all over the Muslim world.

<http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jhs/>

The **Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences** (PJSS) focuses on contemporary issues of society, economics and politics of regional and global interest. Of interest are themes relating to economic development and transformation, gender, civil society and political culture, globalization and anti-poverty.

<http://www.medwelljournals.com/new/5/c4p.php?id=5&theme=5&jid=pjss>

The **South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal** (SAMAJ) is an academic, peer-reviewed, on-line journal devoted to social scientific studies on South Asia. It publishes research-based articles written by professional academics as well as doctoral students. Its scope is multidisciplinary, covering studies in history, geography, anthropology, sociology, political science and economics.

<http://samaj.revues.org/>

23-24 January 2009

Aix-en-Provence, France
Conference
The identification of origins of Islam in the 19th century
Organized by IREMAM and the University of Provence
Convenors: Isabelle Grangaud and Nicolas Michel
<http://www.mmsch.univ-aix.fr/iremam/>

27 January 2009

Paris, France
Workshop
Plurality of sources and interdisciplinary approach: A case study of Sehwan Sharif in Sindh (Pakistan)
Organized by the CEIAS-EHESS
Convenors: Michel Boivin and Rémy Delage
mboivin@ehess.fr, rdelage@ehess.fr

15-20 February 2009

Varanasi, India
Workshop
Public Policies in India. What are their specific traits?
Organized by the AJEI and hosted by the Banaras Hindu University
ateliers@ajei.org

March 2009

Paris, France
Prina Werbner, professor of Social Anthropology at Keele University (UK) will be Visiting Professor at the EHESS in March 2009. She will present four papers (places and dates are still to be decided).
Contact: mboivin@ehess.fr

3-5 April 2009

Orlando, USA
Conference
South Asian Studies Third Annual Conference
Hosted by the University of Central Florida, Orlando
<http://www.sasia.org/>

11-13 May 2009

Islamabad, Pakistan
Workshop
History Dissertation Workshop
Organized by AIPS & HEC
aips@pakistanstudies-aips.org
<http://www.pakistanstudies-aips.org/English/events.htm>

14-17 August 2009

Daejeon, South Korea
Conference
The 6th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS6)
Hosted by the Chungnam National University, the Center for Asian Regional Studies and Daejeon Metropolitan City
<http://www.sasnet.lu.se/nyheterf.html>

22-25 October 2009

Madison, USA
Conference
The 38th Annual Conference on South Asia
Sponsored by the Center for South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
<http://southasiaconference.wisc.edu/>

American Institute of Pakistan Studies

(AIPS) - <http://www.pakistanstudies-aips.org/>

Association Française pour l'étude du monde arabe et musulman (AFEMAM)

www.afemam.org

Centre for South Asian and Indian Ocean Studies (CSAIOS), Tufts University

<http://ase.tufts.edu/southasian/faculty.asp>

Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA) - www.dafa.org.af

Gujarati and Sindhi Studies Group

<http://www.efeo.fr:80/recherche/gujarati.shtml>

Gujarat Study Association (GSA)

<http://www.gujaratstudies.org>

Indian Institute of Sindhology (IIS)

<http://www.sindhology.org/>

Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS)

<http://www.iis.ac.uk/home.asp?l=en>

Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations (ISMC)

<http://www.aku.edu/ISMC/>

Institute of Sindhology

<http://www.sindhology.com.pk/>

Institut d'Etudes de l'Islam et des Sociétés du Monde Musulman (IISMM)

<http://iismm.ehess.fr/>

World Sindhi Institute (WSI)

<http://www.worldsindhi.org/>

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