



## Edito

The first half of the year 2009 was very busy for several reasons. The study group “History and Sufism in the Valley of the Indus” organized a one-day conference in January on *Plurality of sources and interdisciplinary approach: a case study of Sehwan Sharif in Sindh*. It was attended by senior scholars such as Claude Markovits (CNRS-CEIAS) or Monique Kervran (CNRS), as well as doctoral students such as Annabelle Collinet and Johanna Blayac, and also “post-docs” such as Frédérique Pagani (p. 4-5). The conference was also attended by Sindhis from the very small community settled in Paris.

In the same period, two professors working on Sufism in Pakistan were invited by the EHESS. Pnina Werbner, professor of Anthropology at Keele University, was invited by IISMM, an institute centred on the Muslim world and affiliated to EHESS. Professor Werbner delivered conferences on topics related to Sufism, and she also headed a workshop for Ph.D. students. She wrote a seminal paper on *Transnationalism and Regional Cults: The Dialectics of Sufism in the Plurivocal Muslim World* (p. 6-7) which will be put online on the forthcoming MIFS website.

Professor Richard K. Wolf, professor of Ethnomusicology at Harvard University, was invited in May by the EHESS, by Marie-Claude Mahias (CNRS-CEIAS). He delivered four lectures, the first one devoted to Nizami Sufism in Karachi and Delhi. Professor Wolf gave a talk at the study group “History and Sufism in the Valley of the Indus” on “Music in Shrine Sufism of Pakistan” (CEIAS, 28 May 2009). It was a fascinating experience since Professor Wolf studied *dhammâl* performed at Madho Lal Hussain, in Lahore. Professor Wolf’s interview by Dr Frédérique Pagani gives clues for comparing *dhammâl* in Lahore and in Sehwan Sharif (p. 2-3).

In this third issue, we also took the initiative of publishing a translation of some excerpts of Sindhi literature (p. 8-9). These are *panjrâs*, Sindhi poetry with five verses devoted to the Indus divinity, Udero Lâl. The *panjrâs* are translated by an Indian Sindhi academic, Dr. Charu Gidwani, Associate Professor at R. K. Talreja College, affiliated to Mumbai University (India). She is the daughter of a leading “sindhologist”, Dr. Parso Gidwani (1932–2004), himself a pioneer in Ethnolinguistics. This sacred literature was not easily available for Western readers before her translation.

Michel Boivin

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## *Interview with Richard K. Wolf* *Ritual, Music and Ethnography in South Asia*

Richard K. Wolf is Professor of Ethnomusicology at Harvard University. While working first on the Kotas of South India, he did fieldwork on Shia and Sufi rituals in Pakistan. Dr Frédérique Pagani, a MIFS member, interviewed him in May 2009 about his fieldwork in Sindh, including his methodology.



### **How did you come to study Sufism?**

I started out studying ritual drumming. I looked at all the different contexts in which drumming was important. I didn't start out with the intention of doing something Sufi at all. There was a close connection between Sufi and Shia things in a kind of a popular realm even though rather strict Shias don't necessarily like to be associated with Sufism; still, we found a Shia family for example that was in charge of a Sufi shrine in Punjab, and I guess this is not all that uncommon.

### **You talk about a kind of porosity of religious boundaries between Shia and Sunni in Sindh which was very interesting. What was your understanding of this situation in Sindh?**

Among Sindhis, my impression was that Shias and Sunnis both practice Muharram in the same places and engage in some of the same kind of activities. In some processions, at least, both populations would be together; Shias would also be musicians and so the kinds of distinctions between the two groups, which is more pronounced in most urban areas and outside of Sindh, did not seem to be so pronounced even in the relatively urban area of Hyderabad.

### **You said that when you cannot attend a musical event, you ask the people to do a demonstration, can you explain in a more detailed way the way you work with the musicians? Perhaps if you take a precise example...**

For example, the drummers who played on my video tape of Madho Lal Hussain, I took their names and addresses at the event because I couldn't talk with them there. And then, I tracked them down later and had them come to my apartment in Lahore. There I had a longer discussion with them about what they were doing there and their relationship with the dancers; I asked them to play their versions of the different rhythms I had been studying.

In Lahore the best place to record and interview was at my home; there, other people would not come and interrupt us, give their own opinions, and things like that. But sometimes I was forced to discuss these things in crowded places where there were a lot of interlopers and distractions. It was sometimes difficult to find a place where drummers could demonstrate because it's so loud. The drumming would alert people and they would wonder why it was going on.

### **Has it also something to do with the fact that, you're explaining in your paper on Madho Lal that there are appropriate ways to do music and inappropriate ways. Is it sometimes inappropriate to do music in front of you? Is it disrespectful? For example if it's a musical religious event and if it's detached from the context, has it something which sounds a bit disrespectful?**

No. Not in that way. It's not disrespectful. There are a number of different kinds of issues. So like among the Kotas, if you play funeral music when it's not a funeral, then you don't play any of this stuff, loud instruments, outdoors except for maybe some celebratory and not particularly marked occasion; but it's OK if you go at distance, away from the village. Because otherwise people think that there is a funeral and they start feeling bad and so people would come and say, "Don't do that."

#### **Conferences in Paris**

6 May 2009, EPHE

***The Shi'i faces of Nizamuddin: Nizami drumming and texts in Delhi and Karachi***

7 May 2009, EHESS

***Musical and other social 'beginnings' in South Asia and beyond***

14 May 2009, EHESS

***The rhythm of raga: pulse, gesture and time in «free rhythmic» music of South Asia***

28 May 2009, EHESS

***Music in Shrine Sufism of Pakistan***

***Emotionality in the music of South Asia***

## *Interview with Richard K. Wolf*

### *Ritual, Music and Ethnography in South Asia*

As for Muharram performance, if a group of musicians agree to go out to an open field and play the different rhythms, it usually doesn't matter. But in urban contexts it could matter. In one Karachi neighbourhood, as I discussed in my Muharram drumming article in the Yearbook for Traditional Music, a community that supported Muharram drumming was under pressure to curtail this activity and a number of related rituals such as carrying the *taziyah*. Their processions and drumming during Muharram were sort of tolerated; but reformers didn't really think that's a proper way to observe Islam. So members of this community were under pressure not to go outside and perform for me even though it was still the general period of Muharram (but not the first ten days). They did it indoors for me. Sometimes playing out of immediate context can be a sensitive issue, but it's not a matter of musicians lacking respect for the context of the music exactly.

**You give the concept of emotion a fundamental place in your paper on Muharram drumming and in several other publications. Can you detail a bit more the relation between emotion and music?**

Well I got interested in that mainly because of funerals. Many people have been interested in why there are celebrations even on occasions of mourning. I was particularly interested in how we deal with the combination of different emotions that are associated with occasions like this – and the fact that musical pieces or styles can be associated with some components that have explicit emotional connotations.

**In your paper on Madho Lal Hussain, you speak of the *urs* as a “highly heterogeneous event”. Can you explain the notion of heterogeneity in relation to the rituals and the way you try to deal with this?**

I think it's very hard to talk as if you are dealing with a single culture when you're looking at a very complex event. So many things are going on at once. But it turns out that there are usually some themes that people hold in common. They might deal with them differently. We can't just say: “This is so heterogeneous, there is nothing at all in common and we have no grounding whatsoever.” People experience the same kinds of events over and over and develop certain expectations that are based on that experience.

They're also exposed to certain kinds of poetry in the respective languages that brings up so called Sufi themes... So it's inevitable that there is going to a certain amount of common knowledge.

**That means that you really need to be used to the event...**

Ideally yes. It's pretty hard to get used to the events themselves, but the picture starts to look more cohesive when you put together general observations with the points that participants make repeatedly during interviews.

**Can you explain for instance how you worked on precise events?**

I usually heard that something was coming up and I would decide I would go; I didn't necessarily have time to prepare...

**Yes, for example, you record, you try to analyse this, you show it to the participants...**

Yes, that's what I try to do. I would record interviews. Back in 1996, I would go over the recordings carefully with my Urdu teacher, and listen for where our discussions were ambiguous; there was often an issue to be explored at such places in the interview. So in general just working through the materials in multiple ways is very helpful. Often I found out about interesting places to research from these interviews with drummers. I would ask them to tell me stories of what happened when they were playing or about the pieces. Then I would want to go and see them in those contexts.

#### **More on Richard K. Wolf**

Richard K. Wolf has written about classical, folk and tribal musical traditions in South India as well as on musical traditions associated with Shi'ism and Sufism in North India and Pakistan.

(ed.) *Theorizing the Local: Music, Practice, and Experience in South Asia and Beyond*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009.

*The Black Cow's Footprint: Time, Space, and Music in the Lives of the Kotas of South India*, Permanent Black, 2005 and University of Illinois Press, 2006.

# A workshop on Sehwan Sharif

27 January 2009, CEIAS-EHESS

As part of activity of the research team "History and Sufism in the Indus Valley" (CEIAS), led by Michel Boivin, a workshop was held on 27 January 2009 at the EHESS in Paris: *Plurality of sources and interdisciplinary approach: a case study of Sehwan Sharif in Sindh*.

## J. Blayac – Epigraphy and Architecture in Sehwan Sharif and Southern Sindh

The paper presented the epigraphical material surveyed in Sehwan Sharif, and showed the main palaeographical and architectural features observed in the region, chiefly in Sehwan and the necropolis of Makli with references from the 14th up to the 18th century. Through Lal Shahbâz's mausoleum's inscriptions for about the same period, it notably threw light on the evolution of the name of the saint and the successive constructions, and noticed that the modern Shia phraseology has been mostly removed from the building after its nationalization. More generally, it finally asked about the extent and impact of the medieval central authorities on the town and the region.

## M. Boivin – Lal Shahbâz Qalandar in local written sources

La'l Shahbâz Qalandar (d. 1274) appears first as 'Usman Marandi in two authors from the 14th century. Three centuries later, the *Tazkira-ye mashaykh-e Siwistan* gave the basic elements which constitute Lal Shahbâz Qalandar's "legend". But while he is described as a pious Sufi, others sources depicted him as an antinomian Sufi who did not strictly follow the *sharia*. This paradoxical representation will be discarded in the first biography published in 1904. Here, La'l Shahbâz is an "orthodox" Sufi who is found of music and dance, and who is worshiped by Muslims and Hindus alike. After the mausoleum was nationalized in the 1960s, this publication will be the basis for many others published by Awqaf Department.

## A. Collinet – Ceramics in Sehwan Sharif from 2nd/7th century to 12th/17th century

From 1996 to 2002, the archaeological excavations made by the MAFS in the Purana Qil'a, situated at the north of the most remote part of Sehwan, gave light to a huge quantity of

ceramics. With numismatic and paleographic findings, they allowed to draw the historical chronology of the site between the Arab Period, which begins in 93H/711-712, and the Mughal Period (11th cent. H/ 17th C. AD). Besides, the chrono-typology of this material and its regional characterization were deciphered. The painted red wares, burnished black and grey wares, moulded red wares and glazed wares found during the excavations were studied, and for the first time, the ceramic productions of Sindh from the early Islamic Period up to modern one can be presented.



## R. Dehghan – Sindh and trade between India and Baghdad according to Abbasid Period writings

During the Abbasid period international trade covering vast areas from China to Spain developed. One of the centers of this vast network of trade exchange was Baghdad. From there a wide variety of commodities were shipped, particularly from Sindh. From the chroniclers' testimony, we are able to retrace various commodities and products that came from Sindh or those that were in transit. The commodities were used for medical use: musk, *agallocha* wood, camphor, sandalwood, *costus*, rattan, and bamboo stalks used as construction materials particularly for scaffoldings. These sources were very valuable and offer complementary testimonies to archaeological discoveries in order to develop a portrait of this region and exchanges that made its prosperity and its importance throughout the centuries, especially during the Abbasid era.

## **R. Delage – Sehwan Sharif and Sindh represented cartographically**

The aim of this paper is to situate the small locality of Sehwan Sharif within its regional environment and to describe its transformations since the 18th century. The materials used for this description includes numerous travel accounts dating from the pre-colonial and colonial period, i.e. expedition reports dating from the period preceding the annexation of Sindh by the British. The regional maps drawn by these travellers and colonial agents, as well as water-colour paintings and sketches of the site help to illustrate this aspect of urban history. In conclusion, we offer an hypothesis about the rapid changes taking place in Sehwan due to the booming pilgrimage activity.

## **M. Kervran – The archaeology of Sindh and the Indus valley: the work of the MAFS**

Between 1989 and 2002, the aim of the French Archaeological Mission in Sindh (MAFS) was to discover the ports of export for red ceramics heading for Arab countries. During the first phase of this project (1989-1995), we concentrated on six ancient ports and few other localities in the Southern valley of the Indus River. In this paper, I provide a broad outline of this scientific expedition, through the description of the geography of places visited, and eventually excavated, as well as of the difficult fieldworking conditions in the Indus delta due to rapid turning of the tide and other local constraints.

## **C. Markovits – Colonial sources on the history of Sindh**

This presentation gave an overall idea of the official sources available on the history of colonial Sindh (1843-1947). It focused firstly on the archival sources, i.e. the India Office Records, found in the African and Asian collections of the British Library, and secondly on printed material, such as *Gazetteers*, in particular Aitken's 1907 volume. The conclusion was that, while these sources were fairly rich, they had to be complemented with other non-official written and oral sources to produce a balanced picture of the history of colonial Sindh.

## **F. Pagani – Studying the Sindhis in India: an anthropological approach**

Our research on Sindhi Hindus was initiated through a study of their philanthropic practices and conceptions based on an ethnographic fieldwork in a charitable trust in the outskirts of Bhopal. We showed how their philanthropy, as merchants, they are generous (and expected to be), has to be understood through their dispersal and transnationalism. This research fits into recent studies focusing on the construction of their religious identity. We are particularly interested by trends with complex interrelations in the construction of the Sindhi identity such as the perpetuation and the recomposition of their religious eclecticism, an affirmation of the Sindhi identity (*sindhiyat*), a hardening of their Hindu identity and a strong involvement in neo-Hindu religious movements.

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# A paper by Pnina Werbner

## *Transnationalism and Regional Cults*

Pnina Werbner is Professor of social anthropology at Keele University (UK). Her fields of interest include urbanism, ritual and religion, cultural politics, migration, diaspora, and ethnicity. She was invited by IISMM-EHESS in March 2009 during which she delivered four papers and co-animating a workshop. During her stay in Paris, she also wrote a seminal paper on *Transnationalism and Regional Cults: The Dialectics of Sufism in the Plurivocal Muslim World*, which will be put online in the forthcoming MIFS website. You can have here a brief outline of this paper:

### **Introduction: the Problem of Comparison in Sufi Orders**

I have been thinking for some time about the possibility of comparing Sufi orders, conceived of as focused, central place organizations, as they exist in different parts of the Muslim world. The challenge is, as I see it, how to formulate a set of analytical concepts to create a theoretical approach that encompasses Sufi ritual and religious movement, and which can be applied to Sufi practice in geographically distant geographical locations, from North Africa in the West to Pakistan and Indonesia in the East. I stress practice as against Sufi cosmology or poetry, since my aim is to understand the sociological and economic dimensions of Sufi orders.

Of course, it cannot be taken for granted in advance that comparison is a valid project. Superficially, even in a single locality, there is an enormously wide range of types and styles of Sufi shrines and saints, from major shrines of great antiquity, managed by descendants of the original saintly founder and guardians of his tomb, to minor saints with a highly localised clientele (see Troll 1989; Werbner and Basu 1998). The question is: if even in a single locality, shrines differ markedly, how much more so if we try to compare, for example, Sufi orders in Pakistan and Indonesia? In the following discussion, I highlight key analytical terms that I believe are crucial for a comparative account of Sufi orders.

One problem in the project of comparison I am proposing has to do with language. In parts of the Muslim world there appears to be a reluctance to use the analytic armoury of concepts developed elsewhere. Hence, Indonesian scholars, for example, prefer to use vernacular concepts to describe the ritual and organisational practices of Sufi orders, and this then leads a description of these cults that seems to imply that they are quite different from Sufi orders and cult practices in Pakistan, for example, or Morocco. One challenge, then, in the project of comparison is to begin to disentangle the meanings of vernacular terms in order to be able to explore if comparison is, firstly, possible and second, where difference lies. I began this project when I undertook a reanalysis of research on Sufi orders in Indonesia, which seemed to expose many unacknowledged areas of possible comparison between Indonesia, Pakistani and North African Sufi orders and the cults they generate (Werbner 2008). While it had been recognised in Indonesian studies that the ideas of Sufi theosophy were shared with the rest of the Muslim world, rituals practices seemed quite different. My reanalysis highlighted aspects of the cults that were described but left untheorised by south-east Asian scholars.

### **Key Terms**

Broadly speaking, charting the differences and similarities between Sufi orders as embodied traditions requires attention *beyond* mystical-philosophical and ethical ideas, to *the ritual performances and religious organisational patterns* that shape Sufi orders and cults in widely separated locations. We need, in other words, to seek to understand comparatively four interrelated symbolic complexes: first, the *sacred division of labour* – the *ritual roles* that perpetuate and reproduce the cult; second, the *sacred exchanges* between

#### **Conferences in Paris**

3 March 2009, CEIAS-EHESS

#### ***Regional Cults in Islam: Religious, Ethnic and Organisational Inclusiveness***

11 March 2009, CERI

#### ***The Muslim Diasporic Sphere Revisited at a Time of Global Terror***

20 March 2009, INALCO

#### ***Islamic utopian Discourse and Indo-Pak Asian Diaspora after September 11, 2001***

27 March 2009, IISMM

#### ***Sufi orders, Sufi transnationalism and the Problem of Comparison: from Morocco and Pakistan to Indonesia***

27 March 2009, CEIAS-IISMM

**A workshop on "Pilgrimages and Regional Cults in South Asia"** was co-organized by Pnina Werber, Michel Boivin and Rémy Delage

places and persons, often across great distances; third, the *sacred region*, its catchment area and the sanctified central places that shape it; and fourth, the *sacred indexical events - the rituals* – that co-ordinate and revitalise organisational and symbolic unities and enable *managerial and logistical planning and decision-making*. Comparison requires that we examine the way in which these four dimensions of ritual sanctification and performance are linked, and are embedded in a particular symbolic logic and local environment.

I begin with an example from my own research. The Sufi cult I studied in Pakistan (P. Werbner 2003), was in many senses remarkably similar organisationally to other, non-Muslim regional cults and pilgrimage systems elsewhere (for examples, see R. Werbner 1977). It also fitted the model of Sufi order cults analysed by Tringham (1971), which was mainly based on his extensive knowledge of Sufi orders in the Middle East and Africa.

During his lifetime, Zindapir, founder of the Sufi order of the saint I studied, established a lodge that extended globally: to Britain and Europe, the Middle East and even South Africa. Emerging as a saint during the 1940s, in the dying days of Empire, Zindapir began his career as an army tailor contractor for the seventh Baluch regiment, and his cult membership expanded through the recruitment of *state employees*, in this case soldiers and army personnel. These in turn recruited *members of their families* and, when they retired to civilian life, their *co-villagers* or townsmen. The cult expanded further as these soldiers went to work as *labour migrants* in the Gulf or Britain. Disciples were also recruited from among the stream of *supplicants* coming to the lodge to seek blessings and remedies for their afflictions from the saint, and from among casual visitors curious to see the saint and lodge itself, a place renown for its beauty. Some disciples joined the cult after meeting Zindapir or his vicegerents on the annual Hajj to Mecca. Such *recruitment chains* form *network clusters* whose members share either occupational or geographical proximity (or both).

Zindapir's disciples met regularly to perform *zikr* at the *lodge branches* of the order, located throughout Pakistan. They gathered at the *central lodge* of Zindapir weekly, monthly, and in most cases, annually, at the *'urs*, the three-day *ritual festival* commemorating the mystical

'marriage' of a deceased saint with God. Some *pilgrims* arrived for the festival as individuals, but most came in convoys of trucks and buses from established branches, travelling in some cases for over 24 hours. The *sacred exchange* at the cult centre was extensive: the groups arrived bearing with them sacrificial offerings of grain, butter and animals. They returned bearing gifts from the saint – gowns or caps, and in some instances, the sacred soil of the lodge itself. During their three-day stay at the *'urs*, all the participants were fed and nurtured by the saint himself. The hundreds of beasts sacrificed, the hundreds of thousands of baked chappatis and nans, the enormous cauldrons of sweet and pilau rice distributed during the *'urs*, feed some 30,000 people over three days, a major logistical challenge. But the saint also feeds pilgrims to the lodge throughout the year, in what may be conceived of as a form of *perpetual sacrifice*. The lodge itself has been built with *voluntary labour* in the name of God, usually in the weeks preceding the annual *'urs*. The crowds depart following the final *du'a*, the supplicatory prayer enunciated by the saint himself on behalf of the whole community.

...

### More on Pnina Werbner

*Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism. Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives*, Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2008.

*Pilgrims of Love: the Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult*. London: Hurst Publishers and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.

*Imagined Diasporas among Manchester Muslims. The Public Performance of Pakistani Transnational Identity Politics*, Oxford: James Currey/Santa Fe, School of American Research Press, 2002.

Werbner, Pnina and Helene Basu, eds, *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality and the Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*, London: Routledge, 1998.

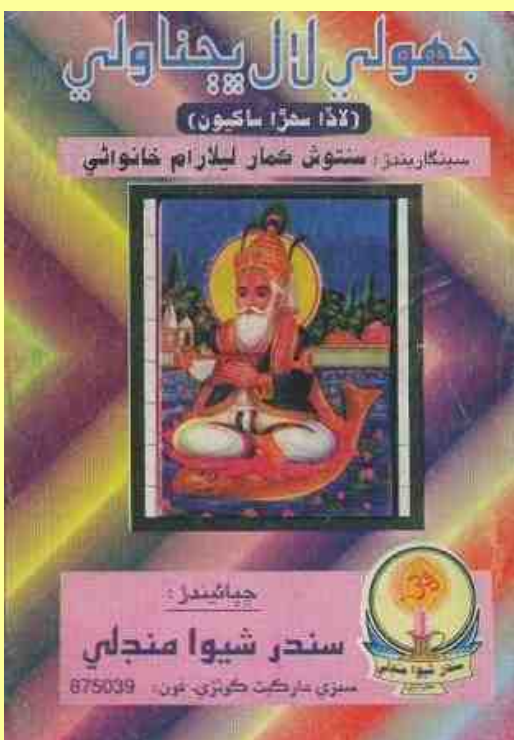
*The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings among British Pakistanis*, Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1990.

## Three panjrās of Udero Lâl Translated from Sindhî to English by Dr. Charu J. Gidwani

### Uderolal and the panjrās

Uderolâl, also known as Jhulelal, is God to some Sindhi-Hindu believers. Legend has it that Uderolâl was born as saviour of the people of Thatta in Sindh. The people here felt helpless when faced with the atrocities of the Muslim ruler Mirkshah who forced them to follow Islam. They offered prayers at the banks of river Sindhu (Indus). Uderolâl was an answer to their prayers. For the Sindhi-Hindus in India, He has become an important mark of identity; especially because they were forced to leave Sindh due to the Partition of India. Sindh is now in Pakistan. Jhulelal offers a distinct mark of identity to the community in India.

The *panjrās* of Jhulelal are prayers sung to the glory of Jhulelal. It is the *panjrās* that add to the liveliness of the *bairanas*, a festive occasion to offer prayers and thanksgiving to Jhulelal. The crowd gathered for the occasion, colourfully dressed, sing loudly the *panjrās* to the beat of musical instruments. Of these the *dhol*, a kind of drum, is the most important. Another important instrument is the earthen pot, which is turned upside down and tapped rhythmically. Devotees accompany the music with their claps. As the force of the music and singing catches on devotees also start dancing.



A representation of Udero Lal on a booklet

### About the translator

Charu P. Gidwani holds a PhD from Pune University, May 2004, *Depiction of Childhood in the Works of Rabindranath Tagore*. She is the daughter of a Sindhi linguist and lexicographer, Dr Parso J. Gidwani. She has inherited her love for Sindh and Sindhi from him. She teaches English Literature at RKT College, affiliated to the Mumbai University.

#### 1. O my Jhulelal Sain

Mounted on a blue\* horse, my Lal Sain  
Riding a pallo\* fish, my Lal Sain

Makes every Sindhi prosper, my Lal Sain  
Makes us carry offerings\* every year, my Lal Sain

Makes us keep bairanas\*, fulfils all our wishes, my  
Lal Sain  
He is the true glory of Sindhunagar\*, my Lal Sain

Ferries\* everyone across, my Lal Sain  
Fulfils hopes of devotees, my Lal Sain

At your feet, all bow their heads,  
My Lal Sain, O my Lal Sain

Source: Anonymous *panjra*, *Jhulelal Ji Mahima*, second edition, April 2008, edited by Kavi Bharat (Bhagat) Bhatya, p. 14.

### Glossary

**blue:** blue colour is the colour of gods, it represents divinity in the Hindu religion.

**pallo:** a kind of a fish that belongs to the *clupa ilisha* genre. Legend has it that Jhulelal, referred here as 'Lal Sain', had this fish for his vehicle. A special feature of this fish is that it swims against the current.

**offerings:** offerings to Jhulelal are made in pots, these are then immersed in a river or flowing water, after the *bairana* is over.

**bairana:** it is an occasion to worship, offer prayers, offer thanks to Jhulelal. One of the most important times of *bairana* is conducted is on Cheti Chand, the time, in March, marking the birth of Jhulelal. This is also the Sindhi New Year.

**Sindhunagar:** This is the proposed name for Ulhasnagar, a place of British horse-stables converted to a camp for Sindhi refugees. Literally, 'Sindhunagar' means 'settlement of Sindhis'.

**ferries everyone across:** in Hinduism very often life is compared to an ocean. Faith in God, and God alone, can carry a human being safely across this ocean of life. To put it simply, faith in God makes life smooth.



# Three panjrâs of Udero Lal

Translated from Sindhî to English by  
Dr. Charu J. Gidwani

## 2. O Lal keep my honour safe Jhulelan

This anonymous *panjrâ* is a favourite of Sufi singers in and around Sindh. Famous Sufi singers in Sindh, Punjab and even Bangladesh have sung it.

Lal keep my honour safe\* Jhulelalan\*,  
O thou of Sindhî\*, of Sewan\*, of Sakhar\*,  
Hail Mast Qalandar\*, we've Dulhe\* in our hearts

Four lamps always burn at your shrine,  
The fifth one I have come to light O Jhulelalan,  
O thou of Sindhî, of Sewan, of Sakhar...

You bless mothers with children,  
You safeguard fortunes of young girls\*,  
O thou of Sindhî, of Sewan, of Sakhar...

All who have lit the flame of Dulhe,  
You fill their coffers Jhulelalan,  
O thou of Sindhî, of Sewan, of Sakhar...

O Peer\* of Peers come to the centre of the ocean,  
In the name of the Lord ferry my boat across  
Jhulelalan,  
O thou of Sindhî, of Sewan, of Sakhar...

Sources: *Jai Jhulelal Beda I Paar* (Collection of stories, songs, prayers of Jhulelal), Ahemadabad; *Ke Saahitun Sajanan Saan: Sain Dr Rochaldas Sahibun Ji Satsangi Rihaan* (Some Conversations with Dr Rochaldas), by Shri H.M. Damodar, 1991.

### Glossary

'Keep my honour safe': is reference to the fact that the devotee has surrendered to God. Here the devotee pleads with God to keep his name, respect, dignity in society intact. That is all what the devotee seeks of God in humility.

Jhulelalan: the 'an' ending is the suffix used to show endearment.

Sindhî: the 'di' suffix is one showing endearment. Literally, Sindhî, means Sindh. Sewan, Sakhar: places in Sindh.

Mast Qalandar: refers to Qalandar Lal Shahbaaz, a peer. History gives different versions of him. According to Dr Rochaldas, a well-known saint from Sindh, Shahbaaz Qalandar even met Jhulelal. Shahbaaz Qalandar, fond of excursions, breathed his last at Sehwan, where a shrine is built in his name. Because his name as well as Jhulelal's name has 'Lal', today, many consider both names referring to one person. This song is a fine example of how the Sindhî mind is not rigidly fanatic about one religion. Here Jhulelal -a Hindu God- is seen as one with Mast Qalandar -a Muslim Peer.

Dulhe: another name of Jhulelal.

You safeguard fortunes of young girls: this is a subtle way of praying to Jhulelal that he bless young girls with good husbands. A girl's getting married to a worthy boy was seen as all that was needed for her well-being. This concept of a girl's good life has not changed much even today.

Peer: a peer is believed to be close to the Almighty. Peers are known to have shown miracles to save their followers from trouble. There have been many peers in Sindh. It is not unusual to hear of Sindhî Hindu families in India also knowing and believing a peer. Even today festivities are held related to one peer or the other which are attended in huge numbers by both Hindus and Muslims. Singing of folk devotional songs throughout the night are a special feature of these fairs. These fairs are held in Sindh (Pakistan) and also in Kutch (India) even today.

## 3. Panjrâ by Ram Panjwani

Ram Panjwani was a Sindhî writer (1911-1987). He has written many plays, novels, essays mainly on social issues. His most important contribution to the Sindhî community lies in the fact that he reintroduced Uderolâl to Sindhî-Hindus in India, especially in Ulhasnagar, after the Partition.

Jhule Jhule Jhule Jhulelal  
Lal Sain Uderolal

We, humble, full of vices,  
Dulaah\*, at your door sell ourselves\*

Our state is not hidden from you  
Please keep us well

Satguru\* Sain\* you fulfil our hopes  
Babal\* Sain you ferry us across the ocean of life

I am naked\*, O pall-giver\*  
Saviour of the helpless

Jhule Jhule Jhule Jhulelal Sain

Source: *Bharatiya Sindhu Sabha*, Mumbai, Volume VI, Oct-Nov 2000, "Sindhî of the Millenium: Bhagat Kanwar Ram", Editor and Publisher: Mohan Motwani, 5, Sai Parsad, Shivaji Park, Mumbai 400028.

### Glossary

Dulaah: a term for Jhulelal.

sell-ourselves: the idea here is that the devotee is worth nothing at the doorstep of God.

Satguru: 'guru' refers to teacher. 'Sat' refers to truth or the ultimate reality. Satguru here refers to Jhulelal.

Babal: endearing form of Baba. Baba is a term of reverence used to address any old man. Grandchildren usually address their grandfather as Baba.

Sain: term of address showing respect.

'I am naked': this line suggests complete surrender of the devotee to God. The devotee has nothing to hide from God.

Pall-giver: God as giving the protective cover of the pall, covering the devotee's nakedness to protect his honour.

## Special book review

### *The figure of Qalandar in Islam*

**Christiane Tortel, *L'ascète et le bouffon. Qalandars, vrais et faux renonçants en islam ou l'Orient indianisé*, Arles, Actes Sud, 2009.**

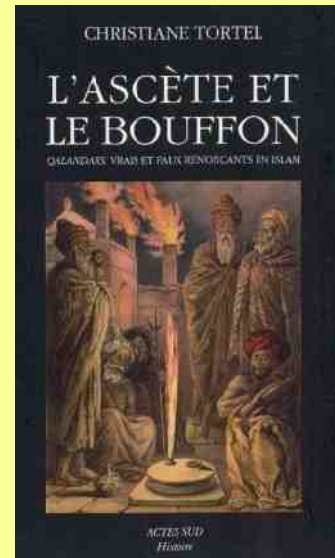
The publication of an academic book on the *qalandars* is a true event. Despite the existence of a book by Ahmed Karamustafa (1994), another one by Katherine Ewing (1977) and masterful papers by Simon Digby (1984), the article of the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* gives evidence of the scarcity of academic works on the topic. Christiane Tortel is a freelance specialist of Persian literature who is a recognized translator of referent treatises of Sufism (1998). Christiane Tortel, an expert in the collection of rare manuscripts, is also well acquainted with fieldwork since she has visited numerous shrines and temples in different parts of Asia.

This 439 pages book is a very ambitious work, in a previous version, a Ph. D. defended at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études in Sorbonne University. After an introduction, the first part is devoted to "Asceticism, transgression and quackery. The pariah and the jester" (pp. 25-228). The second part is devoted to "Unpublished texts: presentation and translation" (pp. 229-305). Beyond the notes, bibliography and index, one will appreciate wonderful pictures discovered in various libraries of Europe and Asia.

The main thesis proposed by the author is that the role played by India in Islamic and Christian worlds has been under evaluated. The main basis of this misunderstanding is that since Antiquity, the historians always classified the Indians among the Africans since they were seen as Blacks. The author uses the figure of the *qalandar* to track the way by which Indian characteristics have penetrated Islam and Christianity. The problem is that this policy implies the use of innumerable references written in innumerable languages over many centuries. The consequence is the details makes one lose the thread of the demonstration implemented by the author. The argument would have been more convincing if it had been more tightly focused on the figure of the *qalandar*, and possibly the main transmitters of this figure, the gypsies.

The second part provides very useful data. The author also gives useful summaries of the relations between the Qalandariyya and "institutionalized" *tarîqas* like the Sohrawardiyyas or the Chishtiyyas, especially in South Asia. Last but not least, Christiane Tortel provides us the French translation of unpublished manuscripts. They include treatises of the *Faqr-nâma* genre, like *Risâla-yi tawba* attributed to Abû'l-Hasan Kharraqânî (d. 1033), or the *Risâla-yi qalandarî*, translated into French from an anonymous Persian manuscript she has found in Tashkent. Another remarkable piece is a rare example of scholarly literature of the *qalandarî* type, the *Qalandar-nâme* composed by Abû Bakr Qalandar Rûmî (d. 1321) from Crimea. Although the conclusion of this huge work is contained in a single page, where the author re-states that Qalandariyya is a late extension of Indian renunciation, this book ultimately provides a useful basis for further study of the topic of *qalandar*, as the author states herself (p. 188).

Michel Boivin



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S. Digby, "Qalandars and related groups: elements of social deviance in the religious life of the Delhi Sultanate", in Y. Friedman, *Islam in Asia*, Jerusalem, The Magnes Press, 1984, pp. 60-108.

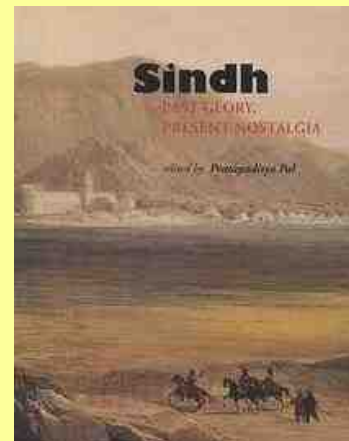
K. P. Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood. Modernity, Psychoanalysis, and Islam*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1977.

## What is new?

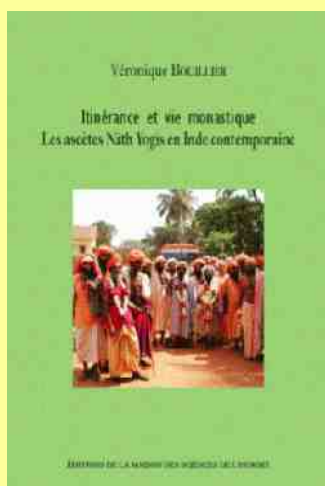
### Recent publications

**Pratapaditya Pal (ed.), 2008, *Sindh. Past Glory, Present Nostalgia*, Mumbai, Marg Publications, vol. 60, n° 1, 180 p.**

This collective book aims at making the public aware of the long and rich cultural heritage of Sindh, at the crossroads of Iranian, Central Asiatic and Indian Rajasthani-Gujarati worlds, and open on the Arabian Sea. From the remains of the protohistoric Mohenjodaro to the history of the modern Karachi and its inhabitants; from Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture, Islamic conquest and the development of Islamic architecture, to contemporary art, traditional crafts, and regional cookery; from history, political and cultural encounters through coinages to British production of representations on the region. It also points out some crucial studies that should be undertaken, for example about Buddhist sculptures, Hindu art and architecture, the medieval port of Banbhore which needs a new survey, etc. In sum, it highlights a composite Sindhi culture and identity, spoiled with the Indo-Pakistan Partition, in 1947.



JB



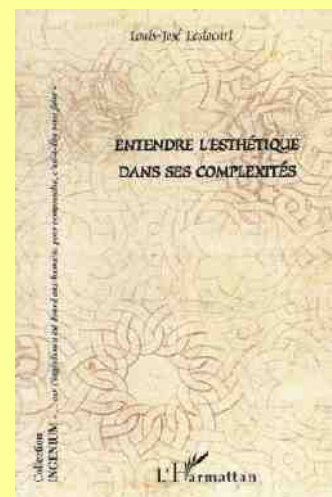
**Véronique Bouillier, 2008, *Itinérance et vie monastique. Les ascètes Nath Yogis en Inde contemporaine*, Paris, Editions de la MSH, 310 p.**

In this book, Véronique Bouillier gives a description of an Indian Saivaite sect, the Nath Yogis. Through the example of this sect, the social anthropologist examines the main features of Hindu asceticism i.e. the interweaving of a tradition of personal spiritual and ascetic quest and a collective organisation. She suggests that this collective organisation which relies on monastic institutions has enabled Hindu asceticism to endure and innovate. This volume, which draws on detailed ethnographic fieldworks as well as various historical sources to portray a vivid sect, is divided into three parts. The first part is a general presentation of the Nath Yogis, the second and the third parts describe the double configuration of the sect through the collective and personal monasteries. The author builds step by step her argument and her rich and detailed book can be read as an in-depth journey within the Nath Yogi world which leads us to Nepal, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Haryana.

FP

**Louis-José Lestocart, *Entendre l'esthétique dans ses complexités*, coll. Ingenium, L'Harmattan, 2008.**

This book about aesthetics in its complexities is primarily a philosophical and epistemological work. Constructed thematically around the main concepts of contemporary science (emergence, feedback, self-organization, recursivity, or more generally dynamic/nonlinear systems), it opens with a questioning about perception and the immediate data of consciousness, and offers a pragmatic examination of the connections and mutual influences among scientists and artists, which underline the complex and incessant weaving of knowledge and meaning. This Unitas Multiplex according to Valery's expression, the unity in the multiplicity ("I have a unitary mind in a thousand pieces"), which is understood at a multi-scale level in nonlinear science and each of its branches, and in art as a mirror of individual and social human being, comes de facto within and brings an important contribution to the development of new concepts and interdisciplinary and epistemological research in social sciences.



# What is new?

## PhD dissertations

### ***The Islamic monuments of the walled city of Ahmedabad, India (15-18th century): an archeological study.***

Unlike many medieval and modern royal urban foundations in the Indian subcontinent, the city of Ahmedabad survived till now as the politic and economic heart of Gujarat. Today, the historical Islamic monuments are the sole witnesses of the splendor of a city which used to controlled the trade ways linking Delhi and central India with the arabic countries and the eastern African coast.

Our archeological study not only identified the vast corpus of Islamic monuments still existing of the walled city of Ahmedabad, it also permitted a detailed analysis of the sites and buildings, bringing informations concerning the evolution of architectural forms and technics over more than four centuries. Those researches brought new lights on the urban history of Ahmedabad and the history of Gujarat, as well as on the importance of the "Gujarati style" within the Indian architecture and the architecture of the islamic world.

The study finally could show the survival, in Gujarat, of feudal systems deeply rooted in the local culture till the end of the 16th century, and the transition to a modern type of administration spread in India by the Mughal empire.

**Keywords:** India, architecture, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Islam, mosque, mausoleum, madrasa, Sultanate, Mughal, minaret, sufi, art, jain, brahmanical, indic, urban structures, city, monuments, water, tank, measurement, proportion, vastu, ornamentation, arche, technique, pietra dura.

**Laurence Gautier, *The evolution of the role and status of the Imam within the Imami Ismaili community in South Asia (1947-1993)*, M.A. thesis, ENS/EHESS (Paris), June 2009.**

This dissertation examines the evolution of the concept of Imama after 1947, in a context of communal tensions and rising Islamic fundamentalism in South Asia. It puts the emphasis on the efforts of Sultan Muhammad Shah and of his successor Shah Karim, *imams* of the Imami Ismailis, to defend their community - a religious minority in both India and Pakistan, and to preserve their own authority - the target of many controversies. To achieve both objectives, they developed privileged relationships with the authorities in the two new independent states, especially in Pakistan. Above all, they reinterpreted their role and status as *imams* by using the elements of the Ismaili tradition, which would strengthen the Muslim identity of their community and legitimize their own authority. The temporal dimension of the Imama became essential. Shah Karim later created a large network of NGOs, further shifting the focus of attention from religious controversies to development issues. Being the "Imam of the Time", Shah Karim not only adapted the understanding of faith to the changing times, he also gave a new definition of his role as *imam*. The Imama, considered as a fundamental of faith, therefore appeared as a concept in constant evolution.

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#### **Discipline**

Building Archaeology

#### **Supervisors**

Lorenz Korn, Marianne Barrucand and Jean-Pierre Van Staëvel

**Date** 16 October 2009

#### **Jury**

- Marc Gaborieau
- Yves Porter
- Elizabeth Lambourn
- Lorenz Korn
- Jean-Pierre Van Staëvel

**Manan Ahmed, *The Many Histories of Muhammad b. Qasim: Narrating the Muslim conquest of Sindh*, Ph.D., The University of Chicago, December 2008.**

This study focuses on the history and representation of Muhammad b. Qasim, the commander of the Muslim forces, which conquered the region of Sindh (present day Pakistan) in the eighth century. The history of Muhammad b. Qasim emerged as a central origin myth for the postcolonial state of Pakistan. It formed a piece of the nationalist struggle against the British, and remains a contested historical symbol. To understand the many social and political functions of the history of Muhammad b. Qasim, the study begins with the earliest extant accounts of the conquest and attempt to delineate "what happened" from "what is said to have happened." It argues for the re-casting of these histories outside of nationalist/postcolonial paradigms, in order to situate them as regional histories, produced within the "frontier of Sindh" - a liminal perspective mediating between the global and the local. This perspective allows examining the production of such histories, and the afterlives of the texts, in political and cultural memory, within their historiographical, literary and political contexts across the *longue durée*.

**15 September-15 October 2009**

Aix-en-Provence, France  
 Photo exhibition  
 Soufisme et politique au Pakistan  
 Organized by Alix Philippon and the MMSH  
<http://www.mmsh.univ-aix.fr/>

**22-23 September 2009**

Tokyo, Japan  
 Conference  
 The role and position of Sayyid/Sharifs in Muslim societies  
 Organized by the Institute of Oriental Culture  
<http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/eng/front.shtml>

**30 September-2 October 2009**

Brussels, Belgium  
 Conference  
 Sunni-Shia Contemporary Relations  
 Organized by Université catholique de Louvain  
[eliane.lallemand@uclouvain.be](mailto:eliane.lallemand@uclouvain.be)

**30 September-3 October 2009**

Frankfurt, Germany  
 Workshop  
 Local Modernities? Articulating transnational ideas in South Asia  
 German Anthropological Association  
[mail@bhoegner.de](mailto:mail@bhoegner.de)  
[mschleier@yahoo.com](mailto:mschleier@yahoo.com)

**6-8 October 2009**

Semarang, Indonesia  
 Conference  
 Islam, Democracy and Good Governance in Indonesia  
 Joint conference organized by:  
 -Leiden University, the Netherlands  
 -IAIN Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia  
 -Ministry of Religious Affairs, Indonesia  
[youngleaders@let.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:youngleaders@let.leidenuniv.nl)

**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://southasiainconference.wisc.edu/>

**17 November 2009**

Paris, France  
 Workshop  
 Rapports de domination et inégalités dans le sous-continent indien  
 Organized by the AJEI and hosted by the CHAC (Sorbonne)  
[seminaire@ajei.org](mailto:seminaire@ajei.org)

**20-21 November 2009**

Houston, USA  
 Conference  
 Hindu Trans-Nationalism: Organizations, Ideologies, Networks  
 Organized by Rice University  
[redy@uhcl.edu](mailto:redy@uhcl.edu)

**25-27 November 2009**

New Delhi, India  
 Conference  
 Region Formation in Contemporary South Asia  
 Organized by University of Delhi  
[indian.formation@gmail.com](mailto:indian.formation@gmail.com)

**26-27 November 2009**

Leiden, the Netherlands  
 Workshop  
 Young Scholars Workshop on Changing Governance in Asia  
 Organized by the IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance  
 Contact: Martina van den Haak  
[m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl](mailto:m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl)

**3-4 December 2009**

Aix-en-Provence, France  
 Conference  
 Les féminismes islamiques: de leurs frontières au politique  
 Organized by IREMAM  
 Contact: Stéphanie Latte Abdallah  
[latte@mmsh.univ-aix.fr](mailto:latte@mmsh.univ-aix.fr)

**9-10 April 2010**

London, UK  
 Conference  
 Cosmopolitan Connections: Encountering Gujaratis in Multiple Contexts  
 Organized by GSA and SOAS  
[s.mawani@gujaratstudies.org](mailto:s.mawani@gujaratstudies.org)

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