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In October-November 2009, the MIFS went to the field for the second time with an international team of eight members: one German, three Pakistanis and five French researchers. The main task was to deepen the knowledge acquired in 2008, and to open new areas of research. Some members focused their attention on mapping sacred places and processional itineraries. An architect worked on the main *mazâr*, as well as on other sanctuaries scattered throughout the town. Three anthropologists also joined the team. Besides, the secretary of Antiquities of the Sindh Government, Dr Kaleemullah Lashari, paid a visit to MIFS members with Dr Asma Ibrahim, director of Museum and Art Gallery Department, State Bank of Pakistan. For the first time, two French diplomats came to visit us in Sehwan. Pierre Seillan, Consul general of France in Karachi, and Francis Widmer, Commercial Counsellor, Head of the Economic Department at the French Consulate spent a few hours with the team members, so that they were able to explain the main findings of their research and to show them around the locality and its main sites. A detailed report of the MIFS 2009 is available in this issue.

The year 2009 ended with the visit to Paris of an important scholar. Dr Kishwar Rizvi teaches Islamic Art History and Architecture at Yale University. She has devoted most of her work to the study of the interrelation which exists between Architecture, rituals and gender in the context of Medieval Persia. She also works on other artistic expressions in contemporary Iran, and also Pakistan. Last but not least, Dr Rizvi has undertaken a study on Architecture, gender and ritual at the Shrine of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar in Sehwan Sharif.

In this issue, we have decided to propose more Sindhi literature in translation. It is a fact that Sindhi devotional and mystical literature is ignored, in comparison with others written in South Asian languages like Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi or Gujarati. Although Sindhi is not taught in the West, it is of interest to show the wide range of its literary expressions. The issue therefore proposes verses from *Shâh jo Risâlo* translated into English. This long poem, composed by Shâh `Abd al-Lâtif (d. 1752), is the most famous piece of Sindhi culture. It is frequently referred as the "mathnawi of Sindh". We also chose another excerpt of the *risâlo* written by Shâh `Abd al-Karîm, the grandfather of Shâh `Abd al-Lâtif.

Michel Boivin

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Interview with Kishwar Rizvi

Architecture and Islamic Art History

Kishwar Rizvi is Assistant Professor of Islamic Art History and Islamic Architecture at Yale University. She has recently completed a book: *The Safavid Dynastic Shrine: History, religion and architecture in early modern Iran* (London: British Institute for Persian Studies, I. B. Tauris, 2010). Dr Rizvi co-edited with Sandy Isenstadt another book, *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and politics in the twentieth century* (University of Washington Press, 2008).



During her visit to Paris in December 2009, Annabelle Collinet (Louvre Museum), interviewed her about her work and projects.

Can you tell us first about your background and how did you come to work on this field?

I am an architect and art historian, with an interest in issues of religion, gender and nationalism in the art and architecture. My primary research areas are Iran and Pakistan, with current projects in the United Arab Emirates. My research moves between the early modern period of the 'great' empires of 16th and 17th Turkey, Iran, and India, to contemporary cultures of the modern Middle East and South Asia.

I grew up in Karachi, Pakistan, and came to the United States for Bachelors, Masters, and eventually PhD degrees. During these times, I practiced also as an artist and an architect. Although my recent scholarship has focused on Iran, I have been documenting and photographing architectural sites in Sindh, Pakistan, for many years. Of particular interest to me are shrines and funerary architecture, as found in Makli, Sehwan, and Bhit Shah.

What was your first fieldwork experience?

I have conducted fieldwork in Iran since 1994. My focus has been on Sufi and Shi'i shrines for the 16th and 17th centuries, that is, the Safavid period. My first project in Iran was the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini, the ideologue of the Iranian revolution. I was interested in the manner in which historical form, such as the tradition shrine type, merged with modern concerns of nationalism and popular culture. I did research for my PhD dissertation on the shrine of the Sufi Shaykh, Safi al-din Ishaq Ardabili, the founder of the Safaviyya order.

What sort of research methodology did you develop at that time?

The primary focus of my research have been the shrines of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq in Ardabil (northwest Iran), Imam Ali Reza in Mashhad, and that of his sister, Fatima Masuma in Qum. In my methodology, I depend on close historical analysis of chronicles from the 16th and 17th centuries, illustrated manuscripts, literary texts, as well as European travelogues. I am particularly interested in asking how architecture, as a functional space, also performs as a symbolic site for the enactment of the rituals of piety and imperial ideology. Combining the formal with the phenomenal, one may reach a better understanding of the religious and cultural contexts of a period, in this case, Safavid Iran. I also study, as comparanda, religious and imperial representations in Ottoman Turkey and Mughal India.

As a native of Karachi, you have visited very often the Sufi shrines of Sindh in Southern Pakistan. What did you find particularly appealing about Sehwan Sharif?

I am particularly interested in shrines such as that of Sehwan, because of the access they allow for women. Such is not the case in other spaces,

Conferences in Paris

7 December 2009,
CEIAS-EHESS

Meeting with MIFS team members

9 December 2009,
Louvre Museum

***Transnationalism and
architectural culture in
United Arab Emirates,
at the international
workshop, "Abu
Dhabi: A city in
construction"***

Interview with Kishwar Rizvi

Architecture and Islamic Art History

such as mosques, in most Muslim countries. Sehwan also holds a very special place for me on a personal, as well as professional, level. I have visited it since I was a child, and have always been fascinated by the dynamism of the site – as a place of both communal and religious activities. In fact, much of my academic research has been driven by questions first formed in Sehwan; for example, how does one study an architectural monument that is constantly changing and evolving, in form and meaning? What is the role of Sufism in contemporary Pakistani society, and how does the shrine institution augment that role? What are the particularities of Sehwan's 'ecstatic' tradition of Sufism, and how do they affect the way in which the shrine is used and understood? How can we describe the *phenomenal* qualities of the space? What medium would best capture that dynamism – text, music, photography – and what can the architectural historian contribute to that understanding?

In sum your experience of Sehwan Sharif played an important role in your trajectory. Can you elaborate more about the relationships existing between gender and architecture at the mausoleum of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar? What were the major conclusions of your study at Sehwan?

The shrine of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar maintains what would be considered the *ishrâqî* tradition of Sufism and, as the rituals and ceremonial evinces, an 'ecstatic' mode. By that I mean that the weekly *dhammâl* in the courtyard (the beating of the ritual drums, *qawwâlî*, and dancing) creates a space that is phenomenal and also illusionary. In my research I was intrigued by how women's bodies inhabit the shrine, and how their particular designation (for example, 'young girl', 'prostitute', 'transvestite' and so on) could be codified through architecture and ritual. One of the insights was that the shrine is gendered space, and yet the idea of gender becomes unstable through the complex social and spatial negotiations that take place in it. Indeed, the rituals and dance within 'powerful' spaces such as the courtyard and tomb enclosure alter and subvert the male/female dichotomy.

Since your childhood you visited Sehwan. What major changes did you notice in terms of urban architecture?

This is a difficult question, and one that my

sociologist and urban historian colleagues can answer better. However, I did see that the shrine is much cleaner and under closer management. My first impression was that the institution has become more commercial and tourism has increased, but I suspect that has always been a factor for popular pilgrimage sites such as this.

How did your experience of Sehwan contributed to your understanding of other sites, ie the mausoleum of Khomeini and others?

There are multiple ways in which the experience at Sehwan continues to inform my research, both in the context of sixteenth-century shrines in Iran and contemporary religious architecture elsewhere in the Middle East and South Asia. It teaches us to think more deeply about spaces for women in Islamic society, the political and ideological power of religion, and, perhaps most interestingly, the phenomenological experience of architecture through rituals of devotion.

More on Kishwar Rizvi

"Image of Man, Vision of the Divine: Illustrated *Assembly of Lovers* manuscripts in 16th-century Iran," lecture at the workshop, "Troubling Images: Some Cross-cultural reflections," sponsored by the Religious Studies department at Yale University, May 2010.

"Sites of Pilgrimage and Objects of Devotion," chapter on the great shrines at Ardabil, Qum and Mashhad, for *Shah 'Abbas: The Remaking of Iran*, edited by Sheila Canby, (London: British Museum Press), publication accompanying exhibition at the British Museum, 2009.

"Locating Architecture, Gender and Ritual at the Shrine of Lal Shahbaz in Sehwan Sharif, Pakistan," on the panel "Boundaries of Sacred Space: How "Public" and "Private" Come into Being," at the biannual conference of the American Council for Southern Asian Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, lecture, March 2007.

"Religious Icon and National Symbol: The Tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran," *Muqarnas: Journal of Islamic Art and Architecture*, vol. 20, 2003.

For this second fieldwork session (mid-October until mid-November), the team members present were Michel Boivin (historian, CNRS, Paris), coordinator, Rémy Delage (geographer, CNRS, Paris), Jürgen Wasim Frembgen (ethnologist, Museum of Ethnology, Munich), Hasan Ali Khan (anthropologist, SOAS, London), Waheed Mahar (assistant-interpreter, Karachi), Omar F. Kasmani (anthropologist, Agha Khan University, London), Delphine Ortis (anthropologist, Paris), Sophie Reynard (topographer, IGN, Paris), and Yves Ubelmann (architect, DAFA).

Nothing would have been possible without the financial and logistical support (p.18) of a number of persons. We especially thank Dr Kaleemullah Lashari, Secretary of Antiquities, Sindh Government, Shams Jafrani, Secretary of Culture, Sindh Government, as well as Pierre Seillan, Consul general of France in Karachi, and Francis Widmer, Commercial Counsellor. The daily fieldwork activity was also greatly facilitated by the unfailing presence of Omar Kasmani, Hasan Ali Khan and Waheed Mahar.

Urban History and Processional Itineraries in Sehwan Sharif (Rémy Delage and Sophie Reynard)

We set ourselves two major objectives. The first was to finalize the urban map of Sehwan Sharif, whose main characteristics were collected during the first mission in 2008. We had indeed to complement and enrich our Geographic Information System with new records in order to refine our understanding of the urban structure of the holy city: colonial buildings, cemeteries, neighborhoods, etc. We had noted in 2008 that due to increasing urbanization in the new town and its outskirts, houses were built up on cemeteries that are usually managed by one or more groups or communities. Our investigation revealed that until the mid or late 1970s, the entire southern part of the town was occupied by cemeteries. Today, they have almost disappeared from the landscape. Another difficult task was to identify and delimitate the neighborhoods (*mohallah*) within the city. On the one hand, some names have changed over

From left to right: Rémy Delage, Michel Boivin, Sophie Reynard, Omar Kasmani, Delphine Ortis, Yves Ubelmann, Waheed Mahar, Hasan Ali Khan



time, including those sounding Hindu, which complicates the understanding of place-names because several names coexist today for the same area. On the other hand, the neighborhood boundaries are never entirely clear and fixed. They can vary greatly depending on the individuals we interviewed. We nonetheless managed to draw a relatively stable map of neighborhoods.

In 2009, the main tasks of the MIFS were: to resume the geo-referencing of the main sites connected to the cult of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar inside the town of Sehwan (RD and SR) and to survey cult associations in Lahore (JWF); to draw architectural plans of Sehwan (YU); to collect more information and materials regarding the competition between religious leaders such as *pîrs* (MB); to focus on the daily-life of *faqîrs* and the comparison between La`l Shahbâz Qalandar's mausoleum and the *dargâh* of Bodlo Bahâr (DO); to document the process of making of a *pîr* (OFK); to explore the concept of *tariqa* as expressed in the discourses and practices of *faqîrs* (HAK). Besides the continuation of what was initiated during the first fieldwork in 2008, the arrival of three anthropologists and one architect contributed to achieve significant progress in several directions.

The second objective was to identify and map all the routes designed by the processional groups during the two major ritual events occurring in Sehwan: the death anniversary of the saint (*`urs* or *melâ*) and the celebrations during the month of Muharram. Beyond the ritual significance, it is also the form of the processional route that attracted our attention as it can teach us about the sociology of actors, as well as the logic of belonging to a particular urban neighborhood. The system of processions during the *`urs* is well structured and institutionalized by the *awqaf* department; the routes are quite simple and easy to draw on a map. On the contrary, itineraries are far more complex and sociologically interesting. Between the 5th and the 10th of Muharram, the day of Ashura, the two main families sharing the management of rituals in Sehwan alternate in

conducting processions in the town. The fact that the lineage of Lakiyyaris end most of their processions in the neighbourhood of Kerbala reflects their social and symbolic domination over the Sabzwaris, whose processions end in their ancestral cemetery (*Shâhan jā Qubba*).

The Mausoleum of La'ī Shāhbāz Qalandar and its Urban Environment: a Study in Architecture (Yves Ubelmann)

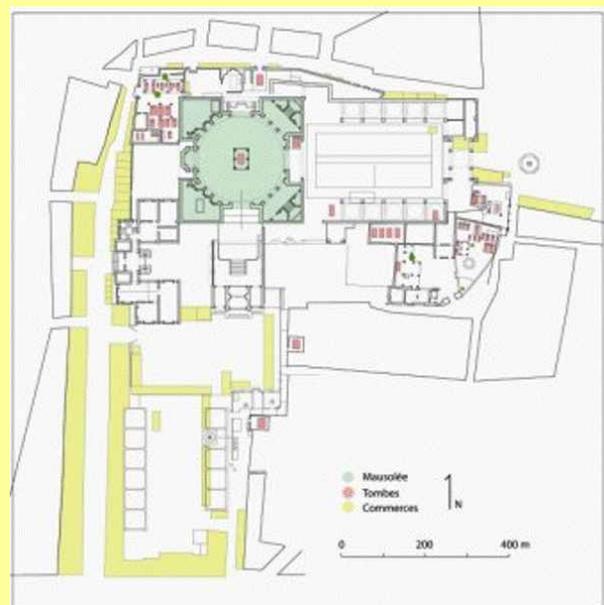
The main task was to draw architectural plans and maps of the mausoleums of La'ī Shāhbāz Qalandar and Bodlo Bahâr. Given the importance and the monumentality of the former, most of the time was spent around it. This enabled us to draw up a very detailed architectural study of its place in the urban environment, including the stages of its construction, the identification of *bâzârs* and places of gathering in and around the mausoleum, etc. This led us to analyze in detail the discrepancies between formal and informal urban planning in Sehwan Sharif.

The position of the shrine of La'ī Shāhbāz Qalandar is very central in the town, but we could identify a certain hierarchy of spaces around it. The mausoleum is a large area covered by a dome and open on three sides. Each of these doors opens onto a secondary space, whose role is directly linked to the mausoleum: the *dhammâl* court, which brings the pilgrims to the daily ceremony; the space behind the Golden Gate, where pilgrims rest and eat; the *kâfi* situated north of the shrine, where pilgrims gather on the tombs of saints. Each of these three spaces plays a specific role in the religious practices of the pilgrims.

What is more, there is an interesting and functional equilibrium, which can be kept because of the incompleteness of the former architectural project. Indeed this logic does not correspond to the initial urban project, which did not take into account the present centrality of the mausoleum. In order to better understand the transformations of the urban space of Sehwan Sharif, we intend to record more information about the blocks surrounding the mausoleum and to gather documentation about the multiple architectural projects.

The Politics of Devotion: Competition and Legitimizing Processes among the Urban Elites of Sehwan Sharif (Michel Boivin)

The Sindh National Archives in Clifton (Karachi) have recently progressed significantly. A new program was started for the digitizing of the archives. It allowed us to have access to previously unknown archives related to the Hindus of Sehwan. These documents proved that they played a main role in the urban economy, in addition to the ritual role in the *mazâr* of La'ī Shāhbāz Qalandar. We thus decided to re-focus our study on the competition between urban elites, and not only between the Sayyid lineages. From a historical perspective, the balance between Muslims and Hindus was challenged three times. The first challenge was due to partition. In 1947, most of the Hindu population of Sehwan migrated to India. The Hindus nevertheless kept their ritual role in the *mazâr*. The second one occurred in the 1960s. Perhaps as a consequence of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, two new Hindu families took over the *mendî* ritual. And thirdly the two last Hindu temples of Sehwan were destroyed in the 1990s, because nobody had prayed in them for a long time, and they were thus abandoned. Hindu worship was therefore restricted to domestic temples.



Architectural plan of La'ī Shāhbāz Qalandar's mausoleum drawn by Yves Ubelmann

Since partition, the ritual and economic roles of the Hindus have obviously diminished. Moreover, there is no longer any relic which is exhibited in the centre of devotion, namely La`l Shahbâz Qalandar's *mazâr*. The *ling*, an old symbol of the god Shiva, disappeared at an unknown date. We were fortunate enough to find old photos where the *ling* is visible, thanks to Sayyid Mehdi Reza Shah Sabzwari. The present relics, whose role is to provide legitimacy to the practice of spiritual authority, are all related to Shia mythology. The ceremony of the display (*didâr*) occurs during the first ten days of Moharram, and most often on the 10th, the day of Ashura. Interestingly, the head (*sarguruh*) of the Lakiyyaris sayyids claims that he is not Shia, but neither Sunni. He belongs to a new path created by La`l Shahbâz Qalandar, the Shahbâziyya, which stands between Sunnism and Shiism.

Following the 2009 fieldwork, we plan to focus more on the relation between economic domination, urban governance, and ritual management in Sehwan Sharif. This should allow to find more clues related to the balance between Muslims and Hindus, and also, to the impact of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar's *mazâr* on urban governance. Moreover, since our next fieldwork is planned for the month of Muharram in 2010, a main issue will be to decipher the nature of the *Shahbâzi* identity, in terms of practices, and also of representations.

Study of the cult of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar from his sanctuary and from its affiliations (Delphine Ortis)

The objective of this fieldwork was to study the daily life of the sanctuary, by privileging the observation of the different daily rites (*dhammâl*, closure, opening and bath of the mausoleum), times and ritual spaces, and the role of the various agents, to bring out the functions of the saint from the rites of which he is the subject and the object. This first approach puts in evidence a very strong link between the calendar of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar (21st of the month, 27th *rajâb*, anniversary of the Imam, etc.), its objects and those used in his cult and panislamic major figures, notably Shiite. But the life of the sanctuary does not bear witness to the religious effervescence which animates Sehwan Sharif and which is connected, nevertheless, to the cult of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar.

For this reason this work was undertaken in a comparatively way with the *dargâh* of Bodlo Bahâr, the main disciple of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar and the most important secondary sanctuary. This one has the advantage of being close to that of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar, by its calendar and its temporality: it is the same date and the day is marked by the same rites. It also has the advantage to be different in the execution of the rites. If the rites in the sanctuary of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar are performed for the public, the same accomplished in Bodlo Bahâr are by and for the *faqîr* themselves and often held in secret.

The main conclusion of this fieldwork is that La`l Shahbâz Qalandar seems to be today, in his *darbâr*, the subject of a public life, whereas the cult around Bodlo Bahâr appears as the private exercise of Sufism.

Crafting Gendered Selves: Subject-hood and Agency among Women Intercessors of Sehwan Sharif (Omar F. Kasmani)

The objective of this study is to explore, at the shrine of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar, a gendered dimension of *pîrî-faqîrî* [system of spiritual guidance and healing] amongst women subjects, who aspire to become spiritual intercessors. In other words, the research aims to explore in the operations of such women, the notions of gender, subject-hood and agency.

The study uses a triangulation of methods, which include interviewing, observation and photography. Observations and interactions have been documented regularly in the form of a field-diary. An archive of images regarding ritual and devotion in Sehwan Sharif is also being developed. This phase of the fieldwork has primarily focused on questions regarding operations of two women intercessors. Foremost amongst these is their unique gender-specific experience including the process of attaining spiritual rank and its validation, processes of meaning making, and more importantly self-perceptions regarding the nature of their relationship with the saint. Concentrating on the distinctive aspect of such experiences, articulated usually in contrast to that of their male counterparts, a subsequent phase of research would explore its impact on the process of subject formation. Moreover, it would explore contextual models and idioms that inform the aspirations of such women.

To achieve this, secondary informants need to be identified in order to support the data obtained from the primary informants. More importantly, experience of gender needs to be ascertained in the local context so that its manifestations in aspects beyond ritual may allow an understanding of its role in practices of devotion.

Motifs of the Qalandariyya in the Religious Practices of Sehwan (Hasan Ali Khan)

The initial plans to do a paper on Satpanth connections to the ceremonies at the shrine of Shahbâz Qalandar were met with little evidence on the ground; insofar the time period of the fieldtrip was wrong for researching such a connection, which is carried out by visiting Shamsi *faqîrs* from the Punjab area. This is not to state that such a connection is not present, or cannot be re-discovered in ceremony, but that it is not a determining facet of the shrine's religious life. The fact that Qalandar is supposed to have been related to Shams Sabzwari should not be a determining factor in establishing Qalandar's own Ismailism. This was brought to my attention by Dr Michel Boivin after his many years of studying the city's ceremonies. Indeed one may state, as many have asserted, that Qalandar may have been from an Ismaili family, with his family tree emanating from Isma'il ibn Ja'far, yet he was by no means an Ismaili himself, or that he adhered to the Satpanth. It seems that Qalandar was a Sufi in the Twelver Shia tradition, in the non-Sharia adhering order of the *Qalandarî* movement which started in the 10th century, and it's most famous son. The most important period in his life which may have influenced this change, from a plausible Ismaili background to a Twelver Sufi Qalandari outlook, would be the time he spent at Kerbala.

Hence the connection to Satpanth, which has already yielded some clues, can be established if need be, to explain the Qalandar era in Sehwan in the larger context of the Satpanth/Suhrawardi entity which existed contemporaneously northwards, in the Multan region. In light of this, the greatest academic 'prize' that can be scooped is research on the different ceremonies which survive at the shrine of Bodla Bahâr amongst the *faqîrs*, considered as the equivalent of Sharia practices for 'normal' Twelver Shias/Sufis alike. In addition the Muharram ceremonies which I have observed in December 2009 show their continuity for many centuries. These could shed additional light on the religious beliefs of Shahbâz Qalandar and



A shop keeper selling amulets (*Ta'wiz*) in the market of Sehwan Sharif



A debriefing session in the afternoon



A *haveli* in the old part of Sehwan

the order he set up for his inner sanctum, as opposed to popular Shiism or Sufism, which one sees on display at the `urs in Sehwan.

A Universe of Devotion: Networks of Devotees and their Ritual Spaces in the Context of the Pilgrimage to La`l Shahbâz Qalandar (Jürgen Wasim Frembgen)

I first visited Sehwan Sharif to document *kâfis* (lodges) as aesthetic spaces and to interview shrine attendants and pilgrims. In addition I travelled through other parts of Sindh province, namely Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas and Mithi in the desert of Thar, to get an overview of the "catchment-area" of Qalandar devotees and to learn more about the saint's regional popularity.

Nevertheless, the cult of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar has a clear transregional and transethnic character. In this respect Lahore is the main centre of Qalandar devotees in the Punjab with the highest density of exclusively male associations and circles of friends (known as *qâfilâs*, group of pilgrims, or *sanghats*, which means to be in the company of friends) venerating La`l Shahbâz and celebrating him in the context of ritual events known as *shâm-e Qalandar*. During my stay in November 2009 I could build meet and interview some of the main organisers and leaders of "Jhule Lâl *sanghats*" or "*Qalandari qâfilâs*". As the saying goes, "in Lahore in every second small street there is a Jhule Lâl *sanghat*"; thus insiders estimate the number of these devotional associations in the city to be between 2000 and 3000. The social composition of these "Jhule Lâl *sanghats*" in Lahore is mainly based on locality as well as on circles of friends. Thus, it cuts across the boundaries of *qaum*, *zât* and *birâdari*, although the latter remains an important factor in establishing an association. There is generally a low level of hierarchy and a clear emphasis on equality and brotherliness.

Thus far, studies on South Asian Sufi cults have barely addressed questions of the organisation of devotees who regularly visit the shrine of their saint and undertake pilgrimages. The sacred centre, which is Sehwan Sharif in Sindh with the shrine of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar, and the different sub-centres, especially the largest one which is Lahore, form a unique cult organisation. In addition to study popular aesthetics, the project tries to understand how this cult reproduces itself in time and space, how it is mapped in space and how it is managed as viable organisation.

Conferences and exhibitions in Karachi

22 October - 20 November 2009

Troubadours of Allah: the Spirit of Sufi Music

Exhibition at Goethe-Institut

24 October 2009

The Sufi message of peace and tolerance: lived Sufi-Islam and local religious syncretism in Pakistan

by Dr. Wasim Jürgen Frembgen at Goethe-Institut

24 October 2009

Re-imagining devotees: inventive agency and the complex subject of Sehwan Sharif

by Omar Kasmani at Goethe-Institut

13 November 2009

Surveys and Layouts in the Field of Urban Architecture

Training by Yves Ubelmann at Department of Antiquities, Government of Sindh

13 November 2009

From multidisciplinary to interdisciplinary: Sehwan Project as a Case Study

by Michel Boivin at Agha Khan University

14 November 2009

Artefacts of Devotion: Approaching Sufism through Material Culture

by Michel Boivin and Omar Kasmani at NED University

10 December 2009

Intersection: an Exhibition on Amulets and Ritual Practices (Sehwan Sharif)

by Omar Kasmani at Koel Gallery

Excerpts from Sindhi poetry

The melody of the wandering ascetics

We wish to introduce new Sindhi poetry through excerpts of the *risâlo* of Shâh `Abd al-Karîm (1536-1624). He was the grand-father of Shâh `Abd al-Lâtif (1689-1752), the famous author of *Shâh jo risâlo*. Shâh `Abd al-Karîm lived in the village of Bulri, not far from Thatta. The *risâlo* is made of 92 *baits* which are one of the oldest samples of Sufi poetry in Sindhi. It was published and translated into English by Motilal Jotwani in 1979, in a booklet entitled *Shah Abdul Karim – a mystic of Sind* (New Delhi, Rajesh Publications) and reprinted by Sindhi Kitab Ghar and Indus Publications in 1986. The *baits* deal here with the Sufi concept of *wahdat-e wujûd*:

The Beloved has a way
unheard of and unknown,
Utter bewilderment
is the lover's fate.

He Himself is the king,
And Himself the envoy sent,
He Himself receives the envoy
and accredits Himself.

Those for whom we yearn
are none but we ourselves;

Now, O Doubt! be gone,
We recognise the Beloved.
You were created
out of nothing;
What does your saying "I" mean,
When you are nothing still?

You live in "Nought but God";
be not away one moment from Him;
Man is God's manifestation,
why break this whole in parts?

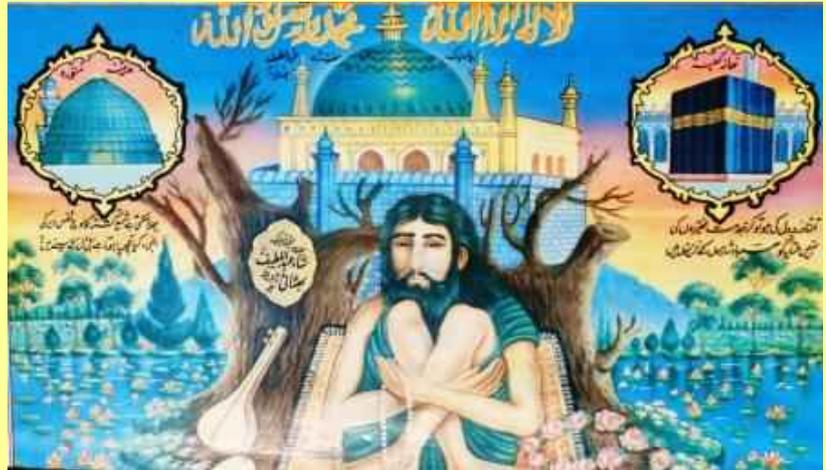
He guides us to the Fount of Light,
to Himself,
So to our source we all return,
Hold fast to this root of the matter.

Shâh `Abd al-Lâtif Bithai was born in Hala. During his lifetime, he saw the decline of the Mughal empire, and the invasions of Nâdir Shâh and Ahmad Shâh Durrânî. According to tradition, he always kept three books with him: the Quran, the *risâlo* of Shâh Karîm, and the *Mathnawî* of Rûmî. It is said he visited many sanctuaries, including Hindu ones in the company of wandering ascetics (*jogis*) probably from Nathpanthi persuasion. Following Shâh Karîm's steps, but writing in a more common language

though hardly understandable for Sindhis today, Shâh Lâtif uses the folktales of Sindh for depicting the quest of the human soul toward God.

The ascetics, handsome and enlightning, the
world over roam;
None of them has any place his home.
Those of them that kindle Love's fire,
Without their company, I can not live.

The horns the ascetics blow produce ecstatic
sound;
They are more precious then treasures in
palaces found.
Pure gold are their horns, their possessions all;



Shah `Abd al-Latif

Do not them devoid of wealth call.
You must feel yourself as reassured,

Perchance, this company may have this place
renounced;
« Let us go », they may have pronounced.
Without their company, I can not live.

The ascetics their « Ego » gather,
And set it to fire altogether.
The ascetics their « Ego » squeeze,
And devour it as they please.
Those that across the ocean to safety lead,
Without their company, I can not live.

As their dwellings I am beholding,
There arises within my heart a longing.
Not yet over is this morning,
So, the ascetics are not yet their music playing.
Those, who follow the Path of submission to
God,
Without their company, I can not live.

Source: G. Allana, *Selections from the Risalo*, Education Department, Government of Sind, Karachi, no date.

Special book review

Material culture and medieval «Hindu-Muslim» encounter

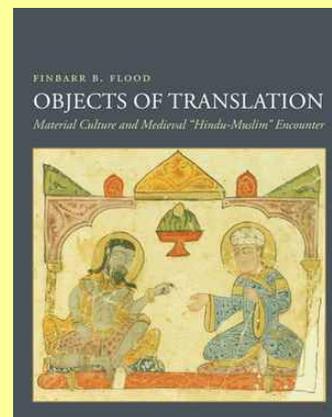
Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval «Hindu-Muslim» Encounter*, Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009, 366 p.

Flood's *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval «Hindu-Muslim» Encounter* is according to me, that is to say according to a young historian of pre-modern South Asia and 'Islamic' cultures, *the* book one has to read if interested in the history (that is to say *possible comprehension of*) and more particularly in the genesis of the Indo-Muslim worlds and cultures, and beyond, if interested in trans-cultural processes, forms, perception, and reflection about them.

The book, which is composed of six thematic chapters dealing both with commercial and political (notably through looting and gifting) trans-cultural contacts through artefacts, coins, dress, paintings, inscriptions, and architectural structures, or literary translations, is an invaluable contribution to Indo-Islamic studies, which widely breaks away from the still traditional division between "Islamic" and "Indianist" or "Indic" fields. The material it considers, presents and analyses, – including pre-Islamic, Ghaznavid and Ghurid Afghanistan –, is extremely vast and rich, and it thus offers a unique and complete synthesis about the first Indo-Islamic artistic productions and their historical significance, from the beginning of the eighth to the early thirteenth centuries.

Flood's recent work in general has largely participated in the making of a "new" history and new forms of history regarding pre-modern South Asia, giving material culture and complex perception and understanding a more important place. This book is both a broadening and deepening of this approach and reasoning. One can find here for example his study of Ghurid monuments in the Indus Valley, displaying an important Indo-Islamic composition both in their forms and patterns. But it also constitutes, as the author himself declares he is "forging a dialogue between those interested in the relationships between pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial history and historiography", an important theoretical and reflexive (or epistemological) contribution by knowingly reflecting and using contemporary theories. Rejecting, and arguing against the Manichean and teleological views of history that have been flourishing in Indian historiography under colonial and nationalist banners, the static and narrow conception of pre-modern Ages, and the monolithic perceptions of religions, cultures, and identities, it first recalls the vast mobility and fluidity that existed during the period (*Roots or Routes?* in the introduction), – which is again highly displayed through the different material productions analysed in the book –, and ends (*Conclusion: In and Out of Place*) by calling new ways of negotiating the present challenges, notably regarding trans-regional cultural flows, contingent cosmopolitanisms, subaltern diasporas, and trans-cultural elites, i.e. globalization, or one may say, identities on multiple scales.

Johanna Blayac (EPHE/MIFS, Paris)



Other publications

Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque, Edited volume in the Debates in Indian History and Society series, Oxford University Press India, 2008.

"From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art", In Elizabeth Mansfield, ed., *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, Routledge, 2007.

"Signs of Violence: Colonial Ethnographies and Indo-Islamic Monuments." in 'Art and Terror', a special issue of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art*, 5.2, 2004.

The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture, Brill, 2000.

"Ghurid Architecture in the Indus Valley: the Tomb of Shaykh Sadan Shahid," *Ars Orientalis*, 36, 2001, 129-166.

Special book review

Five days and nights in Sehwan Sharif

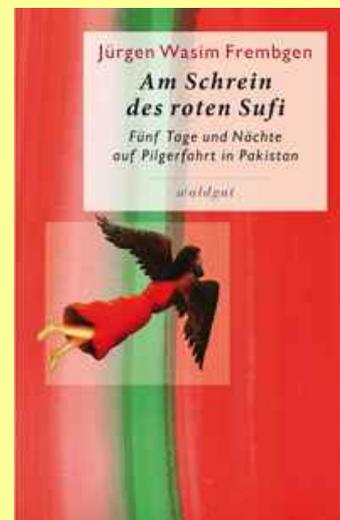
Jürgen Wasim Frembgen, *Am Schrein des roten Sufi. Fünf Tage und Nächte auf Pilgerfahrt in Pakistan*, Arles, Frauenfeld, Waldgut Verlag, 2008, 165 p.

The book by J. W. Frembgen, ethnologist Curator of the East State Museum of Ethnology in Munich, is a travel journal about five days and nights spent in Sehwan pilgrimage in 2002. Served by an excellent knowledge of Islam in Pakistan - since 1981 - and by the acuity of his observations, Frembgen's book is a pleasant and colourful story, well done and well written. The bravura that retains the reader's attention are the humorous stories of travelling by train from Lahore, and numerous portraits of the protagonists he met: *pīrs*, *malangs*, dancers, beggars, professional photographers, pilgrims from all persuasion, Shiite, Sunni, Hindu. The attention to material culture in general and to the "daily life" outside the usual daily life that is the pilgrimage is remarkable in its detail: the exhaustion of the pilgrim, how to drink a cup of tea, sleep under tent of pilgrims or how to urinate against a wall, close combat during the visit of the tomb or in shopping streets, spitting red betel brown or chewing tobacco, the movement of hashish or opium, showers at hairdressers. A real pedagogical concern led Frembgen to insert here and there some hagiographic stories or an explanation for the lay reader - for whom the book is basically designed. Therefore he explains how hagiographic stories circulate, the presence of many Hindus in the *melâ*, the liturgical rhythms of *melâs*, dances and trances practiced.

Some claims unfairly generalize the Indo-Pakistani Islam case to Islam in general, for example by taking shots at Kipling's or Guenon's styles on the materialistic West facing Mystical East (= India? The Islam?) – an opposition that the strong tensions within Pakistani Islam which is highlighted at the very end of the book itself. Frembgen seems more relevant when he said that the devotees of Sehwan are neither Islamic nor secular Muslims, and probably nothing that clearly corresponds to the inadequate categories of sociologists of religion. The book has also, inevitably, the look of a very "West Germany" German, very attentive to the ecology and highlights what is most interesting for him. He focuses on the "body" in the pilgrimage sometimes at the expense of proper spiritual aspects on which the book is ultimately more allusive. But incorporated religion is indeed the major characteristic of all pilgrimages.

One will enjoy reading a lively and successful book designed in the tradition of a certain German ethnographic culture that is carefully and thoroughly descriptive, and a long growing culture of the Wanderer that is renewed by globalization and which has been recently illustrated by the travel writings of another well-known author, Wolfgang Büscher. Immersed into another world, *Schrein Am roten Sufi* can benefit a wide audience, not only to those who love Sehwan.

Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen (INALCO, Paris)



Other publications

Journey to God. Sufis and Dervishes in Islam, OUP, Karachi, 2009.

The Friends of God – Sufi Saints in Islam. Popular Poster Art from Pakistan, OUP, Karachi, 2006.

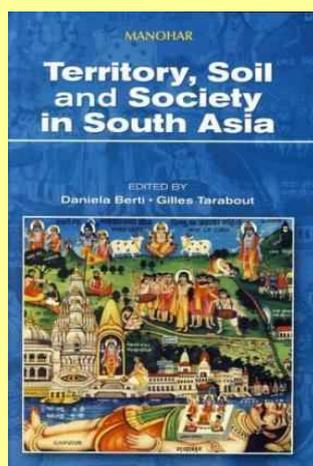
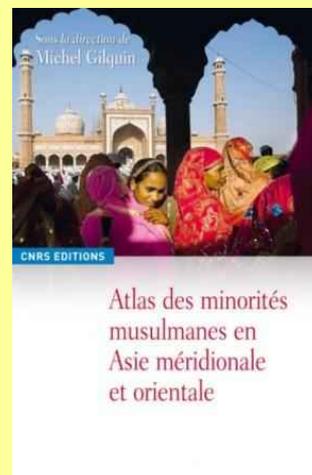
"Divine Madness and Cultural Otherness: Diwânas and Faqīrs in Northern Pakistan", *South Asia Research*, 26: 235-248, 2006.

"From Dervish to Saint: Constructing Charisma in Contemporary Pakistani Sufism", *The Muslim World*, 94/2: 245-257, 2004.

"Religious Folk Arts as an Expression of Identity: Muslim Tombstones in the Gangar Mountains of Pakistan", in *Muqarnas XV: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*, Gülru Necipoglu (ed.), Leiden: E.J. Brill, 200-210, 1998.

Michel Gilquin (dir.), 2010, *Atlas des minorités musulmanes en Asie méridionale et orientale*, Paris, Editions CNRS, 347 p.

This book brings together fifteen contributions addressing the issue of Muslim minorities in South Asia (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka) and Southeast Asia (Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Philippines), as well as in the Chinese world. This is justified by the fact that over half of Muslims in the world live in these regions. However, the director of publication has chosen here the case of Muslim minorities in countries where Islam is not the dominant religion. Of particular interest is that six papers relate to South Asia, three are dedicated to India, given the demographic weight of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent (about 400 million people). All in all, this book, dressed up with many maps and statistical data, offer a good overview of the Muslim population living in these regions, while focusing especially on their internal diversity at the doctrinal, social, cultural and linguistic levels.

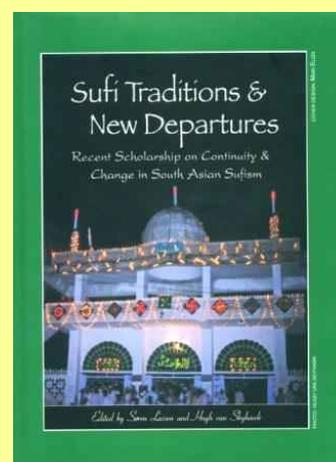


Daniela Berti & Gilles Tarabout (dir.), 2009, *Territory, Soil and Society in South Asia*, New Delhi, Manohar, 379 p.

A pluridisciplinary team of researchers has raised the question of territory in this book, which is the revised and English version of a previous publication in Italian. Beginning with the study of territorial representations in the Vedic texts to end up with a contribution about the mobilization of territorial categories by the Hindu nationalists during political processions, the authors have also taken into account in their theoretical framework the territory as a divine or spiritual jurisdiction, that is to say, a territory where the power and authority of various social groups exert on. Given the few studies on the notion of territory as both a cognitive category and a category of analysis of social change, it is certain that this book will not go unnoticed in the landscape of publications on Indian society.

Soren Lassen and Hugh Van Skyhaw (ed.), 2008, *Sufi Traditions and New Departures. Recent Scholarship on Continuity and Change in South Asian Sufism*, Islamabad, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, 215 p.

This book is the first one to be published on Sufism by the TIAC in Islamabad. The book gathers nine contributions mostly written by German scholars and other scholars working, or who have worked, in Germany. Noteworthy is a posthumous paper of Annemarie Schimmel she has delivered in 2002 on Muslim culture in the Deccan, which is also available through a CD. Sufi traditions are scrutinized in several provinces of the Indian subcontinent, like Rajasthan, Bengal, Punjab and others. Moreover, the *be shar* paths of Sufism are the topic of three contributions. A first one by Fateh Muhammad Malik is devoted to the Malâmatiyya in Punjab. A second one by Ute Falash deals with the Madariyya in India. Finally Jürgen Wasim Frembgen's paper focuses on an enraptured saint of Udaipur. In conclusion, the book mirrors well both the diversity of academic approaches to South Asian Sufism, and the variety of the Sufi expressions in this area.



What is new?

PhD dissertations

Through Ceramics: Sindh and Islam. Material Culture from Southern Pakistan, 2nd-12th centuries AH/ 8th-18th centuries AD.

This dissertation introduces an unpublished material on ceramics, coming from the archaeological researches of the MAFS (The French Archaeological Mission in Sindh) directed by Monique Kervran from 1989 to 2002. The ceramics studied were found during the excavations of the Sehwan Sharif fortress in Central Sindh, the excavations of the port establishments of Lahori Bandar and Ratto Kot, and during the surveys of 23 sites in the Indus delta. This material led to drawing a first chronological sequence of ceramics from Sindh, from the early Islamic period (8th century) to the Moghol era. Besides this chronological view the study of this ceramic material also deals with the technologies of the ceramic wares, and the questions of their production, distribution and commercial exchanges. Ceramics from Sindh of the Islamic period are characterized by the combinations of common red wares with painted red wares, stamped and moulded red wares ; by grey and black wares and by glazed wares. These types are inherited from very ancient regional traditions, belong to the Indian cultural area and lastly, belong to the specific ceramic culture of Islam with the use of glazed wares.

Keywords: Sindh, ceramic, ceramology, archaeology, excavations, surveys, Sehwan Sharif, Lahori Bandar, India, Islamic period.

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- Denis Matringe

Genesis and history of the first Indo-Muslim and Indo-Islamic Societies through Arabic and Persian inscriptions (7th-14th centuries).

Islamic inscriptions of the Indian subcontinent, that were collected and published since the end of the 18th century, have not been studied with a global problematic until now. The first two-hundred and ninety-six Arabic and Persian known inscriptions from the region (7th-14th centuries) are put together here, - listed, (re)edited, and analysed, to study the formation and history of the first Indo-Muslim and Indo-Islamic societies, through the multiple aspects of epigraphic sources, both textual or philological and material. This thesis thus begins by showing the various political, social and economic processes operating during the different phases of Muslim and Islamic penetration and implantation in the different regions of the Indian subcontinent through the chrono-geographic distribution of the inscriptions. It subsequently studies, by region and then by dynasty during the Delhi sultanate period, the composition and the representations of the Indo-Muslim elites, merchants, religious men, statesmen and soldiers, from the very texts of the inscriptions and the names and duties they provide. At last, it considers the first regional architectural remains, greatly composite, and the epigraphic programmes of the main monuments ordered by the sultans of Delhi, as "architectural" discourses, and thus reflects of the articulations and "tension" between the Islamic phraseology and the social, political and religious contexts.

Keywords: Medieval India, Islamic epigraphy/inscriptions, Islamic conquest, Muslim settlement, Delhi sultanate, Indian Ocean, Sind, Gujarat, Kerala, Indo-Islamic societies, composite cultures.

Pir politics. From Sufism to Sufislamism: recombination, modernization and mobilization of "brotherhoods" in Pakistan.

Generally posited as the mystical trend within Islam and often hyped as an alternative to the more politically active Islamism, Sufism, through its various orders and leaders, the *pirs*, is however a key to understanding "Muslim politics" (James Piscatori and Dale Eickelman). A major repertoire of Islamic language, Sufism is an ambiguous signifier which has undergone a process of politicization: its semantics has become a stake in the power ratio between many contending groups, both state and non-state. Within the Pakistani Islamist field, the movement which has the most loudly trumpeted its affiliation to the Sufi identity is the Barelwi movement. Often overlooked by scholars, this theological school has been experiencing a revival since the 1980s, through the burgeoning of many new religious and/or political organizations, generally structured on the pattern of the brotherhood. Recruiting in sociologically modern circles, these brotherhoods, established in urban centres, have often successfully attempted to redefine themselves in accordance with the demands of modernity. They have notably rationalized and internationalized their organizations, and become conscious of the importance of socio-political stakes, prompting them to adopt a posture of committed activism, thus demonstrating how "tradition" may become a powerful vehicle for change and political mobilization. In order to designate such groups claiming Sufism and Sufi identity as a register for Islamist mobilization, I have coined the concept "*Sufislamism*". Besides enabling an enhanced analysis of the various interactions between Sufism and Islamism, this concept may also improve our understanding of the highly fissile politicization of the doctrinal fractures inside the Islamist movement in Pakistan, thus helping to chart the deep waters of identity politics, especially those of intra-Sunni sectarianism.

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Keywords

Sufism
Islamism
identity politics
modernization
mobilization
Pakistan

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subject/subjectivity
devotion
desire
Sehwan
shrine
shrine-goers

De-centering Devotion: The Complex Subject of Sehwan Sharif. MA thesis, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations.

Anthropological studies on ritual in South Asia have tended to emphasize an all-pervasiveness of the sacred so much so, it is alleged, that the non-sacred is rendered nonexistent. As a consequence, the "devotee" is imagined as a homogenous subject constituted under a unitary desire for submissive devotion. Complicating essentialist portrayals of the South Asian subject, the aim of this research is to situate multiple desires including devotion amongst shrine-goers at Sehwan Sharif, Pakistan.

The central framework of this study is informed by Ewing's idea of "multiple subjective modalities". Data from the field has been co-constructed in the researcher's interaction with subjects in and around the shrine. By speaking of personal narratives, conflicts and motivations, the four primary and several secondary informants have illustrated a shared nexus of desires and subject positions; finding themselves at the forefront of various ideological battles, shrine-goers dexterously hold, respond to, associate with, and shift between, a number of subject positions.

The evidence for polyvocal subjects at the shrine of La`l Shahbâz Qalandar as documented in this research makes a case for a more complex exploration of ritual practitioners' desires. In other words, by situating, at the level of the individual, an intersection of conflicting desires, it is argued, that shrine-goers operate, and in fact oscillate between, "multiple subjective modalities".

Recognising historic significance using inventories: a case of historic towns in Sindh, Pakistan.

This research deals with two connected problems in the context of Sindh, the south-eastern parts of Pakistan: the lack of adequate and flexible methods for assessing urbanized historic traditions, and the lack of knowledge and understanding for these. Addressing both issues, the research aims at developing methods for assessing historic built form traditions in the region, using its historic towns as case studies. This research derives its frame of reference by combining methods of historical urban geography and urban morphology, with principles of urban area conservation, to study the historic urban traditions in Sindh, and identify their value of significance as not only important historic sources, but also as economic and environmental assets of the region.

The defined objectives of research are achieved through investigations at two levels - regional and town. The regional level work develops a historico-geographic map of Sindh identifying the significance historic urban centers and presents their typo-morphological analysis. The town scale research develops a method for systematic documentation and inventory of historic places, and presents a method for analysis and evaluation to reinstate their significance and guide the development of effective policies and proposals for a possible revival of historic urban centers. The process of research involves a literature review on the history and background of the region and its case study towns. It further builds research data through inductive field research to develop a comprehensive documentation of the case study town. The outcomes of the research indicate a rich and unique urban fabric that represents socio-economic, political and cultural developments of the region. In addition, it represents a historic urban environment shaped through local building traditions and materials that developed in response to the climatic and environmental conditions in the region. The present state of affairs, as evident from the research outcomes, points towards an urgent need for conservation initiatives to ensure the survival of this historic built fabric into the future.

Historic towns of Sindh have never been surveyed or documented methodically in order to build inventories of historic places. The absence of effective implementation tools added by threatening development pressures, jeopardize survival of the historic built environments. There is thus an urgent need to identify and document the existing historic fabric and develop viable policies for their preservation; ensuring economic sustainability for the communities involved and allowing management of natural and environmental resources to achieve a balanced growth and development in the region.

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inventory
documentation
historic urban centers
Sindh
Shikarpoor
Pakistan
conservation policy
guidelines

Shia-Isma'ili Motifs in the Sufi Architecture of the Indus Valley, 1200-1500 A.D.

The relationship between Shiism and Sufism is one of the most unexplored areas of Islamic studies. Its study has traditionally been hindered by the lack of primary sources. This is especially so in the case of Ismailism in the medieval Islamic Era, which is more easily associable to Sufism.

Isma'ili associations with early Sufism go back to the Fatimid Era in Egypt of which the Indus Valley was a part. This is in the tenth century when dominant Isma'ili and Twelver states ruled the Middle East. After the destruction of these Shia states by the incoming Sunni Turkic dynasties, Ismailism went underground in Iran and its ideas reappeared in the shape of Sufi Orders in Iraq, most prominently the Suhrawardi Order. In this period, Ismailism flourished again in the Indus Valley under missionaries sent from neighboring Iran, who freely worked on the metaphysical commonality between Indian and Iranian cultures for their proselytism. Its zenith was reached under the Isma'ili missionary Shams in the thirteenth century, who after a long spate of problems in his host country, perfected a system of metaphysical interlacing called the Satpanth, or true path, setting up ceremonies which tied him to the Suhrawardi Sufi Order which preexisted here. This association led to the falling out of the court patronised order with the Imperial Authorities in Delhi. The Satpanth worked through an astrological framework based on the Persian New Year, and the vice-regency of the first Shia Imam Ali, which is the basis of the Shia faith. The astrological resonances of Ali's succession or vice-regency to Muhammad were known to Muslim scholars in the Iranian Shia-Isma'ili tradition before Shams's time, but are historically first interlaced by Shams with the local calendar for the benefit of his followers. The Satpanth later found its way as astrological symbolism on the monuments of the Suhrawardi Order. In addition, an unorthodox monument archetype which accommodates Satpanth ideals is common to the buildings associated with Shams, his descendants and Suhrawardi Sufis over three centuries. Evidence suggest that Shams may have been responsible this archetype.

A comparison between extant religious ceremony, iconography and the common monument archetype in the latter chapters shows the covert Shia-Isma'ili beliefs of the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley. This complements the critical reexamination of historical sources for the purpose in the first half of the thesis.

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Key words

Shiism
Ismailism
Suhrawardi Sufi Order
Satpanth
Shams
Indus valley
Pakistan

16-19 March 2010

Cairo, Egypt
Sufism and 19th century Literary Production
Organized by Etudes Turques et Ottomanes
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Department of Sociology
Department of Communication and Culture
Graduate Students Association York
University
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Archaeology and Art
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19-24 July 2010

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The European Institute of the Mediterranean
The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
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26-29 July 2010

Bonn, Germany
Conference
European Conference on Modern South Asian
Studies
Organized by EASAS
indologisches.seminar@uni-bonn.de

24-27 August 2010

Maynooth, Ireland
Conference
Crisis and imagination
11th EASA Biennial Conference
Organized by EASA
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1 September 2010

Call for book chapters
Islamic Imagery
Edited by John Andrew Morrow
drjamorrow3333@hotmail.com

14-17 October 2010

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CSAS, University of Wisconsin
conference@southasia.wisc.edu

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