

The term *Hindī* and its more archaic forms, *hindavī/hindūī*, *hindīyah* etc., was first used in Arabic and Persian sources in the sense of "Indian (language)". Their meaning was not fixed over the time.¹ The term *hindīyah* referred to the language of India already in ninth-century Arab sources.² It is, however, unclear what language was meant by it. It is similarly obscure whether classical or vernacular texts were meant by Ghaznavid references to Hindavi writing and poetry, such as of Maḥmūd Ghaznī's Hindu general Tilak, who was an excellent writer in Hindavi and Persian (*khattī nekū ba-hindavī va fārsī*), to the encomium in Hindavi (*luḡhat-e hindavī*) by the Chāndela king Nanda of Kalinjar, which was highly appreciated in the court of Maḥmūd Ghaznī, or to the Hindavi divan of Mas'ūd Sa'd Salmān of Lahore (1046-1121).³ When we have extant „Indian" poetry from these times, namely Abd ur-Raḥmān's *Sandēśa-rāsaka*, it is in the literary language Apabhramsha.⁴ However, from the early fourteenth century onwards, the term *Hindavi* appears to refer primarily to vernaculars. The Indo-Persian poet Amīr Khusraw on the one hand in his preface to his *Ġhurraṭ ul-kamāl* (c1294) identifies his own vernacular with Hindavi, on the other, in his *Nūh sipihr* (1317/8) he lists twelve Indic vernaculars which he also qualifies as *hindavī*.⁵ Sufi remarks on Hindavi singing, such as that of Niẓāmuddīn Auliya from 1316, are likely to refer to vernacular compositions.⁶ In around 1379 Maulānā Dāūd called his vernacular *Hindukī*

¹ Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *India: A Polyglot Nation and Its Linguistic Problems Vis-À-Vis National Integration* (Mumbai: Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Research Centre, Hindustani Prachar Sabha, 1973), pp. 35-7.

² The *Kitāb 'ija'ib al-Hind* records the anecdote current around 288/900 that around 270/883 a Kashmir ruler reportedly wrote to the Habbārid amir 'Abd Allāh requesting an exegesis (*tafsir*) of the laws of Islam to be rendered into *hindīyah*. The translation was undertaken by an Iraqi who was living in Mansura but who had been raised in al-Hind and was familiar with its languages.²¹⁸ See Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton, N.J. ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 44. The source of this information is Buzurg ibn Shahriyar Ramhurmuẓi, *Kitāb 'Ija'ib Alhind (Livre Des Merveilles De L'inde)* (Leiden: Brill, 1883-86), pp. 2-4.

³ On Tilak see Abu'l-Faẓl Muḥammad b. Hosayn Bayḥaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayḥaqī* (Mashhad: Danishgah-i Mashhad, 1971), pp. 522-33. For an English translation see Baiḥakī, "Tārīkh-S Subuktugin by Baiḥakī," in *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, ed. Elliot and Dowson (London: Trubner and Co., 1869), vol. 2 (pp. 53-154) 125-34. On Nanda's poem see Abu Sa'id 'Abd al-Hayy ibn al-Daḥḥak ibn Maḥmūd Gardīzi, *Kitāb Zāyn Al-Akḥbār* (London: Luzac & Co., 1928), pp. 70-71. In English: Shri Ram Sharma, "An Almost Contemporary Account of Maḥmūd's Invasion of India," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1933), pp. 940-1. On Mas'ūd's Hindivī see Sunil Sharma, *Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2000), pp. 161-2 and Shamsur Raḥman Faruqī, *Early Urdu Literary Culture* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 65.

⁴ Sharma., p. 163.

⁵ Faruqī., p. 69 and p. 66.

⁶ See below.

(*turakī likhi likhi hindukī gāī*).⁷ From the fourteenth century onwards, we can assume that the term Hindavi referred to the type of Hindi composed or studied by Muslims, especially to the language of the Sufi romances. The word Hindi, appears to be a later spelling of *Hindavī*. In the eighteenth century, it rather designated Urdu.⁸

Hindi as an umbrella term for a range of spoken dialects and literary idioms owes its present scope of meaning to colonial and nationalist scholarship. However, the major old literary traditions in the Hindi Belt, that is Avadhi, Braj, Sant bhāṣā and Khaṛī bolī (used initially in Persian-mixed Rekhta compositions), for long lacked clear borders, and their names and boundaries are relatively late constructions. These traditions were mutually intelligible, shared their poetic forms and were often anthologised together.⁹ Many authors easily moved between one and another.¹⁰

The early nineteenth century misconception that Hindi was the language of Hindus and Urdu of Indian Muslims, obscured the fact that a profuse Islamic literature existed also in what is labelled now as Hindi. Colonial, nationalist and contemporary Hindi literary histories have accepted all available work of this literature as its own. The literature that will be discussed in the following paragraphs contain Sufi or bhakti poetry composed by Muslims, Hindu bhakti poetry interpreted to illustrate Sufi ideas, syncretistic Sant works and mixed-language Khaṛī Bolī Rekhta verses composed in the Nāgarī script. From the earliest times until the Hindi-Urdu bifurcation, Hindi was a rich treasury of poetry with Islamic forms and meanings.

The Hindi Belt in North India never has been a monolingual region. Various form of multilingualism and diglossia operated throughout the late medieval and modern periods.¹¹ This lead to a rich cross-fertilisation of various cultural traditions.

We can infer from later parallels that Sufis in Hindi Belt are likely to have used the local vernacular(s) in their communication and possibly interpreted local songs or narratives according to Sufi tenets from the earliest times. They must also have composed songs in the vernacular. However, such compositions never seem to have been written down as literature before the fourteenth century. As far as high literature

⁷ At least this is the form in which a manuscript from 1617 preserved the word.

Ālām 9 in Mataprasad Gupta, ed. *Ālām: Dāud-Viraṇit Pratham Hindī Sūfī Prem-Kāvya* (Agra: Pramanik Prakashan, 1967)..

⁸ Faruqī., p. 23. According to S. R. Faruqī, the name “*zabān-e urdū-e mu‘allā*” should have begun to mean ‘Hindī’ around 1790-95, and at not any rate earlier than January 1772.” Ibid., pp. 27-9.

⁹ The famous Fatehpur manuscript dating from 1582, for example, contains Sant Bhāṣā poems of Kabīr along with the Brajbhāṣā poems of Sūrdās.

¹⁰ In Ālām’s *Mādhavānal-kāmkandalā* Braj-Avadhī *ṇaupāṣ* alternate with Braj *dohās* as published in the critical edition, which, interestingly, conceives the work to be in Avadhi (R. Mishra, ed. *Ālām k 𑂔 Mādhavānal kāmkandalā: Avadhī premākhyānak* Prayag: Ratnakumārī Svādhyāy Sansthān, 1982). All authors of Nāgarī Rekhtā produced texts in either Sant Bhāṣā or Brajbhāṣā (See Bangha, ‘Rekhta, Poetry in Mixed Language: The Emergence of Khaṛī Bolī Literature in North India’, 53-61, 71-80).

¹¹ The distinction between multilingualism and the hierarchical diglossia is discussed in Francesca Orsini, “Traces of a Multilingual World: Hindavi in Persian Texts,” in *After Timur Left*, ed. Francesca Orsini and Samira Sheikh (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014)., pp. 404-5. For an analysis on how it operated in early Avadh, see Francesca Orsini, “How to Do Multilingual Literary History? Lessons from Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century North India,” *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 49, no. 2 (April-June 2012 2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/001946461204900203>..

is concerned, nothing is known about Mas'ūd's Hindavi divan.¹² His extant Persian oeuvre suggests that he had not yet fully accommodated the Indian cultural milieu. Although he made use of Indian imagery it did not play a prominent role.¹³ If his Hindavi poetry existed at all, it was not deemed to be of a work of particular value by subsequent scribes and was not copied to the extent that it could survive. In contrast with Mas'ūd, Amīr Khusraw's Persian writing displays an unparalleled pride in India. The poet also mentioned that he had composed songs in Hindavi although he did not deem them to be worthy of writing down.¹⁴ Brajbhāṣā and Rekhta songs bearing his name today may not have been composed by him as no record of them exists prior to the seventeenth century and they show linguistic and stylistic features peculiar to the sixteenth to nineteenth-centuries.¹⁵ Similarly, most Hindavi poetry attributed to other Muslim authors during the Sultanate period (1206-1526) may not originate from the time of their putative authors.¹⁶

There are however, a few notable exceptions that belong now to the precious corpus of pre-Mughal Hindi. The earliest records of the Muslim use of Hindavi come from the discourses (*malfūzāt*) of fourteenth-century Sufi masters. They often use Hindavi utterances in their discourses as repartees, mimicking women's speech and, rarely, the language of the idolaters or spells.¹⁷ *Malfūzāt* texts at other times make references to Hindavi singing or present specimens of poetry. The quoted poems are not songs but some twenty couplets used for homiletic purposes. Distichs attributed to Bābā Farīd (1175-1265), as well as to Śaikh Ḥamīduddīn Nāgaurī (d. 1273) are embedded into mid-fourteenth-century Persian texts. Both of them are Čīstī sufi authors close to Śaikh Mu'īnuddīn Čīstī. While Farīd is linked to Panjab, Nāgaurī to Rajasthan and Delhi.¹⁸ The form used in the distichs is Indic: corrupt or proper *dohā*.

¹² On Mas'ūd's Hindavi see Sharma., pp. 161-2 and Faruqi., p. 65.

¹³ Sharma., p. 163.

¹⁴ Faruqi., p. 69.

¹⁵ Cf. Imre Bangha, "Rekhta, Poetry in Mixed Language: The Emergence of Khari Boli Literature in North India," in *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture*, ed. Francesca Orsini (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2010)., pp. 30-33.

¹⁶ See Saiyida Jafar and Gyan Chand Jain, *Tārīkh-i Adab-i Urdū 1700 Tak*, 5 vols. (New Delhi: Qaumi Kaunsil barā'e Furug-i Urdū Zabān, 1998)., vol. I, pp. 383, 422-8; Ali Jawad Zaidi, *History of Urdu Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademy, 1993). p. 19 and Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1-2 (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978)., vol. I, pp. 327-8.

¹⁷ Orsini, "Traces of a Multilingual World: Hindavi in Persian Texts," in *After Timur Left*, pp. 410-415.

¹⁸ On Farīd, see Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004)., pp. 71-77. The eight *Hidāyat al-qulūb* folios containing Farīd's Hindavī couplets are published along with their Gurmukhi transliteration in Pritam Singh, *Śrī Guru Granth Sāhib Vāle Śaikh Farīd Dī Bhāl* (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, [2008])., pp. 128-143. A folio from the *Nafā'is al-anfās* with verses attributed to Farīd is included in Tyler Williams, "Sacred Sounds and Sacred Books: A History of Writing in Hindi" (Columbia University, 2014), https://www.google.ro/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CCUQFjACahUKEwihmLnSlojIAhVF8XIKHV3DC8A&url=https%3A%2F%2Facademiccommons.columbia.edu%2Fdownload%2Ffedora_content%2Fdownload%2Fac%3A176989%2FCONTENT%2FWilliams_columbia_0054D_12234.pdf&usg=AFQjCNE1hGdV9oM_cV_k_sHP0gz86x6VMWg&sig2=Uemp_9_V2AWqDBIRXedVeA&cad=rja. p. 83.

While the language of the Farīd couplets has been linguistically identified as Siraikī (Western Panjabi), his *dohās* have also become part of the Hindi tradition, and were especially popular in seventeenth-eighteenth-century Dādūpanthī anthologies.¹⁹

The Indo-Sufi maṣnavī *Āndāyan* (1377/79) is the most successful of the earliest works in Hindi.²⁰ This romance, based on a popular local folktale but presented with spiritual overtones, addressed both the Sultanate court cultures of Turkish and Afghan nobles as well as Sufi hospices.²¹ Through its blending of Persian and Indic traditions, it utilised Hindavi poetry as a means of indigenising Sufism and has enjoyed a wide circulation throughout north India and, possibly, northern Dekkan. It was illustrated, translated and emulated by later authors, especially in the sixteenth century.²² Its popularity reached its peak during the rule in Delhi of the eastern Sūrī dynasty (1540-1555), when it was lavishly illustrated and emulated.²³ Apparently it was perceived as an emblematic eastern Hindavi text. Through this popularity and consequentiality, A. Busch presents this work to be at the beginning of the Avadhi and indeed Hindi literary tradition.²⁴ In later centuries, apparently overshadowed by the more sophisticated *Padmāvat* (1541) it fell into oblivion and was to be brought to the modern public only in the 1960s by Parameshvarilal Gupta (1964) and Mataprasad Gupta (1967).

The *Āndāyan* fits well into the above cultural development and it served as a model for later Hindavi romances.²⁵ At least eighteen different authors with over thirty

For more on Farīd in the early sources see Singh., pp. 123-143. On Nāgaurī, see Rizvi. vol. I, p. 327-8.

¹⁹ Singh., pp. 108-122. Ibid. and Brajendra Kumar Singhal, *Śekh Pharīd Gañj-E Śakar: Jīvanī Aur Račnāem* (Merta: Mahant Ramkishore, 2016)..

²⁰ The Indo-Sufi *maṣnavī* is a term used by Naseem Hines to refer primarily to the vernacular romances. Naseem A. Hines, *Maulana Daud's Āndāyan: A Critical Study* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2009)., p. 26, Table 1.1.

²¹ Aditya Behl, *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379-1545*, ed. Wendy Doniger (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)., p. 59.

²² One of the two partial Persian translations was undertaken by 'Abdul Quddūs Gangohī probably around 1478 (Hines. p. 69, Behl., p. 59.) and a later one titled *ʿIṣmat-nāma* by Ḥamīd Kalānaurī (d. 1619) in 1607/1608 (Nabi Hadī, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature* (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Abhinav Publications, 1995)., p. 220). The Bengali version *Satī mainā lor čandrānī* (1659) was started by Daulat Kājī (d. c1638) and finished by Ālāol (1607-1673). See Thibaut d'Hubert, "Pirates, Poets, and Merchants: Bengali Language and Literature in Seventeenth-Century Mrauk-U," in *Culture and Circulation: Literature in Motion in Early Modern India*, ed. Thomas de Bruijn and Allison Busch, Brill's Indological Library (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2014)., p. 61. On the illustrated manuscripts, see Qamar Adamjee, "Strategies for Visual Narration in the Illustrated Chandayan Manuscripts" (New York University, 2011)..

²³ On the Delhi origin of several illustrated manuscripts, see Sonya Rhie Quintanella, "The Chandayan and Early Mughal Painting," in *Indian Painting: Themes, Histories, Interpretations: Essays in Honour of B.N. Goswamy*, ed. Mahesh Sharma and Padma Audrey Kaimal (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd in association with Osianama.com, 2013)., pp. 105-124.

²⁴ Allison Busch, "Hindi Literary Beginnings," in *South Asian Texts in History: Critical Engagements with Sheldon Pollock*, ed. Whitney Cox, Yigal Bronner, and Lawrence McCrea (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2011)., pp. 208-9.

²⁵ On the sequence of scenes that served as model for the *Padmāvat* see Thomas de Bruijn, *The Ruby in the Dust: Poetry and History of the Indian Padmavat by Sufi*

works have been listed in various surveys.²⁶ The most famous of the later ones are Qutuban's *Mirgāvatī* (c1503), Malik Muḥammad Jāysī's *Padmāvat* (1540) and Manjhan's *Madhumālatī* (1545). The most successful of them, the *Padmāvat*, is the story of how Ratan Sen, the ruler of Chittor hears about the beauty of Padminī of Sinhala Dvīpa through her escaped parrot and how he undertakes a journey as a yogi to that distant island to achieve her. The second, shorter part of the romance tells how Alauddin Khalji tries to take her by force. The heroes die at the siege of Chittor and Alauddin remains unsuccessful. While the first part of the story draws on the typical Sufi allegory of ascent, the second half is with its historical material is a bold innovation within the genre.²⁷ The complex aesthetics at work in the Indo-Sufi *maṣnavīs* has been studied in superb detail in the various works of Aditya Behl and Thomas de Bruijn.²⁸ The Sufi interpretation of the stories was facilitated by a long tradition of interpreting the experience of *ʿīśq*, "love" in literature and beyond, as leading to the divine.

Interestingly, there is a gap of more than a century between the Čāndāyan and the later romances and hardly any record survives from the Sufi usage of Hindavi from most of the fifteenth century. The only Sufi with Hindavi output was of Śaikh ʿAbdulquddūs Gangohī (1456-1537), who composed Hindavi songs with esoteric yogic imagery or bridal mysticism under the pen name Alakhdās.²⁹ All the above authors were Sufis, most of them linked to the Čiśtī order.

Although reconstructing the original language and style of pre-Mughal Hindavi works always remain tentative, the above instances show that the Hindavi favoured by North Indian Sufis in their gatherings was probably closer to the Indic idioms Brajbhāṣā, Avadhi and Sant Bhāṣā than to the lingua franca *Khaṛī bolī* and the mixed-register Rekhta.³⁰ Furthermore, Perso-Arabic vocabulary was not used profusely as

Poet Muhammad Jayasi (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012)., p. 111-112; Cf. Hines; Bruijn., pp. 13.

²⁶ A chronological table of thirteen Indo-Sufi vernacular *maṣnavī* authors active between 1379 and 1917 is presented in Hines., p. 26. Adamjee., pp. 79-80 gives a not fully overlapping list of 16 post-Dāūd authors.

²⁷ The siege of Chittor has long been a subject matter of non-Sufi Sanskrit and Hindi works. See Ramya Sreenivasan, "Alauddin Khalji Remembered: Conquest, Gender and Community in Medieval Rajput Narratives," *Studies in History* 18, no. 2 (2002). and Brajendra Kumar Singhal, *Rāṇī Padmīnī: Chittaur Kā Pratham Jauhar* (Delhi: Vani, 2016)..

²⁸ Aditya Behl and S. C. R. Weightman, *Madhumālatī: An Indian Sufi Romance*, *Oxford World's Classics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).; Aditya Behl, *The Magic Doe: QutBan Suhraṣardī's Mirigāvatī: A New Translation*, ed. Wendy Doniger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).; Behl, *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379-1545*. and Bruijn..

²⁹ Simon Digby, "Abd Al-Quddus Gangohi (1456-1537 A.D.): The Personality and Attitudes of a Medieval Indian Sufi," *Medieval India: A Miscellany* 3 (1975)., pp. 1-66 and Orsini, "Traces of a Multilingual World: Hindavi in Persian Texts," in *After Timur Left*, pp. 415-419.

³⁰ Interest in Brajbhāṣā and its poetic world, rather than in Rekhta, is recorded in the sixteenth century in Mīr Abdul Wahid Bilgramī's *Haqāiq-i Hindī* (1566). In this work, Bilgrami interpreted the Radha-Krishna imagery in a Sufi light and the examples of Hindavi quoted are in Brajbhāṣā. On the *Haqāiq-i Hindī* see Francesca Orsini, "'Krishna Is the Truth of Man'" *Mir ʿAbdul Wahid Bilgrami's Haqāʾiq-i Hindī* (Indian

authors rather looked for equivalents of Islamic terms in the local languages.³¹ This search for equivalence can be traced to the earliest times when not so much linguistic but rather conceptual equivalence was sought for. Salmān Sa'd Mas'ūd, for example used the Persian term *bahār* (spring) for the Indian rainy season.³² The Indian rainy season carries a similar association with love as does the Persian and western concept of spring.

Hindavi was also the vehicle of the independent Nirgun Sants ("worshippers of the qualityless") who, just like many Sufis, aimed to transcend the apparent antagonism of Hinduism and Islam. They proclaimed that God, though inherent in everyone, is beyond qualities and is not present in idols or in rituals. Although they frequently referred to the transmigration of the souls, they put particular emphasis on the present human life as a unique chance to reach God. The most outstanding Nirgun sant was Kabīr (15th-early 16th c.), who equally distanced himself from the outside appearances of Islam and Hinduism and came to be venerated by both Hindus and Muslims parallelly. Although he is remembered as an illiterate weaver from Varanasi, his poetry shows good acquaintance with contemporary Hindavi literary forms.³³ His death memorial in Magahar contains both a Hindu temple and a Muslim rauza clearly separated from each other. The earliest sources, the *Ā'in-i akbarī* by Abū'l Fazl (1551-1602), and the *Akḥbārū'l-akḥyār fī āṣārū'l-abrār* of Šaiḫ 'Abdu'l-Ḥaqq Muḥaddaṣ Dihlavī (1555-1642/3), both presented him as a monotheist *muvaḥḥid*. The earliest layer of his poetry presents an imagery of esoteric yoga and of bridal mysticism similar to his Sufi contemporary, 'Abdul Quddūs Gangohī.³⁴ Another influential Nirgun sant with possible Muslim roots was Dādū Dayāl.³⁵ Although their poetry reject outward religion, the followers of both Kabīr and Dādū have organised themselves into sects with more Hindu than Muslim leanings. Dādū's disciples included Muslims who renounced the world, such as Rajjab a Pathan named Bājīd. Both of them had prolific literary output.³⁶ The tradition of the Nirgun sants continued into the later centuries.

Truths) and the Circulation of Dhrupad and Bishnupad," in Culture and Circulation, ed. Allison Busch and Thomas de Bruijn (Leiden: Brill, (forthcoming)).

³¹ Out of the 12,000 lexical items of the earliest Hindavi work from the Dekkan, the *Kadam rā'o padam rā'o* noted by its editor only 125 are of Perso-Arabic origin. See Simon Digby, "Before Timur Came: Provincialization of the Delhi Sultanate through the Fourteenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47, no. 3 (2004), p. 335. On the equivalence of Islamic and Indic terms see Tony K. Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Muslim-Hindu Encounter through Translation Theory," *History of Religions* 40, no. 3 (2001), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3176699>, pp. 260-287.

³² Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), p. 118.

³³ Imre Bangha, "Kabir's Prosody," in *Bhakti Beyond the Forest: Current Research on Early Modern Literatures in North India, 2003-2009*, ed. Imre Bangha (New Delhi: Manohar, 2013).

³⁴ Imre Bangha, "Kabir Reconstructed," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 63, no. 3 (2010), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1556/AOrient.63.2010.3.2>. and Orsini, "Traces of a Multilingual World: Hindavi in Persian Texts," in *After Timur Left*, p. 426.

³⁵ Winand M. Callewaert, *The Hindī Biography of Dādū Dayāl* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988), p. 31.

³⁶ On Rajjab see Winand M. Callewaert, "The Sarvāṅgī of the Dādūpanthī Rajab" (Revised doctoral dissertation, Departement Oriëntalistiek, Katholieke Universiteit,

In the first half of the sixteenth century, Hindavi was also used as an additional language of administration in the Delhi Sultanate under the Lodīs (1451-1526) and the Sūrīs (1540-1555).³⁷ According to Bābur, most local Afghan chiefs could not speak Persian.³⁸ The emergence of the use of Hindavi by Indian Muslims may be linked to the decline and fragmentation of the Persianate 'Ajam culture and is paralleled by the emergence of regional Indian literary cultures in India and of Uzbek and Ottoman Turkish at the corners of the former 'Ajam world.³⁹

The advent of the Mughals has in several respects changed Indian Islamic attitudes to Hindi. In order to distance themselves from the Hindavi literary taste and practical administration of their predecessors, the Mughals reinforced the position of Persian in both fields.⁴⁰ In literature, however, they only rejected the eastern Hindavi of the Sufi romances so dear to the Afghans and cultivated, patronised and promoted Brajbhasha.⁴¹ Hindi songs in *dhrupad* and other styles have been popular in Mughal courts since the time of Akbar's court musician Tānsen.⁴² Mughal courtiers also experimented with Hindi-Persian mixed-language compositions called Rekhta. Through their allies, Mughals also promoted the fledgling devotional Krishna poetry in Brajbhasha as well as the more courtly, classicist *rīti* poetry, which primarily operated with Krishna imagery.⁴³ One of the foremost Mughal noblemen, 'Abdur Rahīm Khān-ē

1978). and Brajendra Kumar Singhal, ed. *Rajjab Kī Sarbarīgī* (Raygarh: Brajmohan Samskṛti, 2010)., on Bājīd Imre Bangha, "A Curious King, a Psychic Leper, and the Workings of Karma: Bajid's Entertaining Narratives," in *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature and Performance Cultures in North India*, ed. Francesca Orsini and Katherine Butler Schofield (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015)..

³⁷ Muzaffar Alam, "Persian in Pre-Colonial Hindustan," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)., p. 158 and Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India*., p. 123.

³⁸ Bābur 1970, pp. 459-460 quoted in Alam, "Persian in Pre-Colonial Hindustan," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*., p. 157-8.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 154-8.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 158.

⁴¹ Behl, *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379-1545*., p. 335.

⁴² Françoise Delvoye, "Tānsen Et La Tradition Des Chants Dhrupad En Langue Braj, Du 16e Siècle à Nos Jours [Microform]" (L'Atelier National de Reproduction des Thèses de l'Université de Lille III (A.N.R.T.), 1992), /z-wcorg/..

⁴³ A recent view on devotional Krishna literature that takes into account its historical embeddedness is John Stratton Hawley, *A Storm of Songs: India and the Idea of the Bhakti Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).. On the Mughal patronage of Hindi, see Shaligram Gupta, *Mughal Darbār, Kavi-SaṅgīTajñā: Saṅgī. 1531-1707* (Allahabad: Sāhitya Bhavan, 1999).; Shaligram Gupta, *Uttar Mughal Darbār Kavi-SaṅgīTajñā: Saṅgī 1707-1856* (Allahabad: Sāhitya Bhavan, 2003).; Sarayu Prasad Agrawal, *Akbarī Darbār Ke Hindī Kavi* (Lucknow: Lucknow University, 1950).; Allison Busch, "Hidden in Plain View: Brajbhasha Poets at the Mughal Court," *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 2 (2010/003/001 2010), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X09990205>. and Allison Busch, *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199765928.001.0001>., pp. 130-165. On Mughal the reception of Hindi see Shantanu Phukan, "'Through Throats Where Many Rivers Meet': The Ecology of Hindi in the World of Persian," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 38, no. 1 (2001)..

khānān, along with an outstanding literary corpus in Persian, composed particularly popular Krishna-poetry.⁴⁴ Moreover, the Mughal emperors themselves are also credited with Brajbhasha poetry though their authenticity and exact context of production are unclear.⁴⁵ Other outstanding Muslim authors of classicist Brajbhasha poetry include Ālam (fl. 1583/991Hi), and Sayyid Ġhulām Nabī ‘Raslīn’ (fl. 1740).⁴⁶

Although most devotional and classicist Hindi poetry was linked to the Krishna imagery, its Islamic perception was made possible by the Sufi idea of cultural equivalences according to which various elements of the Krishna lore stood for particular Sufi concepts as has been elaborated in Mīr ‘Abdul Vaḥīd Bilgrāmī’s *Ḥaqā’iq-ē hindī* (1566/AH974).⁴⁷ The grammar and aesthetics of Brajbhasha poetry was the subject of Mirzā Khān’s *Tuḥfat ul-Hind* (1675/1086Hi), a Persian work that also turns out to be the first grammar of Hindi.⁴⁸ Hindi was also the spoken intermediary between Pandits and Persian translators while working on Sanskrit-Persian translation projects.⁴⁹

An apparently insignificant development with far-reaching results in the Mughal court was the composition of primarily Perso-Hindi mixed language poetry called Rekhta. The first known Rekhta composer from north India was emperor Bābur. The Hindi component of Rekhta was normally not Brajbhasha but Khaṛī bolī, the commercial and military lingua franca of the empire. The occasional Rekhta experiments, however, reached beyond the Mughal court to various Hindu and syncretistic circles who recorded poetry in this idiom in the Nāgarī script already in the early 17th century. Nāgarī Rekhta remained in vogue until the emergence of modern

⁴⁴ On ‘Rahīm’, see R. S. McGregor, *Hindi Literature from Its Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century, A History of Indian Literature* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1984). pp. 121-2 and Corinne Lefèvre, "The Court of ‘abd-Ur-Rahīm Khān-I Khānān as a Bridge between Iranian and Indian Cultural Traditions," in *Culture and Circulation: Literature in Motion in Early Modern India*, ed. Thomas de Bruijn and Allison Busch, Brill's Indological Library (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2014)., pp. 75-106.

⁴⁵ See Chandrabali Pandey, *Mughal Bādsāhorī Kī Hindī* (Varanasi: Nagari Pracharini Sabha, 1940). and Manager Pandey, *Mughal Bādsāhorī Kī Hindī Kavītā* (Delhi: Rajkamal, 2016)..

⁴⁶ On Ālam, see Ramkumari Mishra, ed. *Ālam Kī Mādhavānāl Kāmkaṇḍalā: Avadhī Premākhyānak* (Prayag: Ratnakumārī Svādhyāy Sansthān, 1982)., pp. 24-32, McGregor., p. 194, Eugenia Vanina, "Madhavanala-Kamkandala by Alam: A Hindi Poem of Akbar's Epoch," *The Indian Historical Review* XX, no. 1-2 (1993-4)., pp. 66-77. On ‘Raslīn’, McGregor., p. 188-9 and Allison Busch, "Riti and Register," in *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture*, ed. Francesca Orsini (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2010)., pp. 115-118.

⁴⁷ Francesca Orsini, "'Krishna Is the Truth of Man": Mir ‘abdul Wahid Bilgrami's *Ḥaqā’iq-i Hindī* (Indian Truths) and the Circulation of *Dhruṇpad* and *Bishnupad*," in *Culture and Circulation: Literature in Motion in Early Modern India*, ed. Thomas de Bruijn and Allison Busch, Brill's Indological Library (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2014)., pp. 222-246.

⁴⁸ Khān Mīrzā and M. Ziauddin, *A Grammar of the Braj Bhakha, Visva-Bharati Studies* (Calcutta: Visva-bharati book-shop, 1935). and Mirzā Khān, *Tuḥfat Al-Hind: VāZhah NāMah-Yi Hindī Bi-FāRsī*, ed. Nūrulhasan Ansārī (Delhi: Bakhsh-i Fārsī, Dānishgāh-i Dihlī, 1983)..

⁴⁹ Audrey Truschke, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court, South Asia across the Disciplines* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016)., pp. 9, 216.

Hindi prose at the time of Bhāratendu Harīśchandra.⁵⁰ The emergence of Rekhta, apart from apparently mimicking the lingua franca, also introduced a new paradigm of interpreting Indian phenomena by Muslim authors that rejected the idea of equivalences. By the time of the Mughals, Islam had been present in most of India for several centuries. Islamic concepts and Persian terms became familiar to a large section of the society and required no translation.

With the emergence of Urdu as a language that married the practical exigencies of everyday life with courtly prestige in the 18th century, Indian Muslim authors enthusiastically turned to this idiom and gradually abandoned literary activity in other forms of the language, which came to be grouped under the umbrella of Hindi later. The Sanskritisation of Hindi in the nineteenth century alienated Indian Muslims from this language.⁵¹

In the twentieth century Hindi reappeared among Indian Muslims first in Bollywood cinema and then as literature by eminent authors such as Abdul Bismillah and Asghar Wajahat, who found it useful to explore not only contemporary questions but also the Indo-Islamic past.

Through its history, as old as north Indian Islam, literary idioms considered Hindi have been vehicles of various literary messages for Muslim authors. The extended presence of Hindi among Indian Muslims may be due to its capability to adopt to the various exigencies of emerging readerships. The thirteenth to fifteenth centuries were dominated by the Sufi use of the language either as songs, sententious couplets in sant Bhasha or long romances in Avadhi. Sufis aimed at finding equivalences for their concepts in their target language. From the sixteenth century onwards new literary idioms and new paradigms emerge. Brajbhasha and Krishna poetry also permeates Mughal and allied courts. The emerging new literary idiom of Rekhta rejects the search for equivalences and introduces Persian concepts into the Indic grammatical and indeed cultural template more directly. As Rekhta develops into Persianised standard Urdu and Hindi into Sanskritised Standard Hindi, a vehicle of Indian and Hindu nationalism, Muslim authors distance themselves from this idiom. In contemporary India, Hindi media can easily be followed by most Indian Muslims and Muslim novelists and playwrights reach out to new audiences in Hindi.

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⁵⁰ On the development of early Rekhta in both scripts see Bangha, "Rekhta, Poetry in Mixed Language: The Emergence of Khari Boli Literature in North India," in *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture*, pp. 22-83.

⁵¹ On the Hindi-Urdu debate in the late 19th century, see Christopher R. King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India* (1st edn 1994) ed. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999)..

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