

courtesans embodying the whole range of literary and musical tastes that elites and aspiring elites needed to acquire. Also significant is the emergence of a popular urban culture—the culture of storytellers, street-singers and performers—that was to find expression in popular publishing and in the great success story of the nineteenth century theatre. As the evidence from nineteenth-century Hindi and Urdu barahmasas suggests, this was an eclectic literary taste that, to a much higher degree than Ritter's *Hariaudh*, mixed tropes and registers.

Also, while Ritter shows that *Hariaudh* became increasingly ill-at-ease about his own eclectic poetic tastes and subscribed to the Hindi cultural project, in the domain of popular print and popular theatre, cultural nationalism could go hand in hand with linguistic and poetic hybridity.²⁹ It is indeed ironic that the nineteenth century that produced the exclusivist discourses of Hindi and Urdu should also have produced their most eclectic mixture.

If it is still true, as A.K. Ramanujan liked to argue, that every Indian is inescapably multilingual, the recognition of multilinguality as the defining feature of the pre-twentieth century cultural landscape requires an imaginative effort on the part of us literary scholars, now sadly monolingual in our research. The good news is that the first step to becoming multilingual is easy—we just need to learn another script.

²⁹See for example, Kathryn Hansen (1992, 2003) on the language of Nautanki and of Parsi theatre.

2

Rekhta: Poetry in Mixed Language The Emergence of Khari Boli Literature in North India

Imre Bangha

INTRODUCTION

In one of my classes a student was puzzled by a short poem inserted into an Urdu prose narrative. The poem had hardly any Perso-Arabic vocabulary but was written in the Urdu script as was the rest of the text. She complained that despite being a native speaker of Hindi who had learnt the Urdu script she could not tell the difference between Hindi and Urdu. This spontaneous eruption is in dramatic contrast with the political role the Hindi-Urdu divide played in twentieth-century India, manifesting itself in sentences such as Abdul Haq stating that 'Pakistan was not created by Jinnah, nor was it created by Iqbal; it was Urdu that created Pakistan.'¹ Although since the eighteenth century Hindi and Urdu have

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¹Abdul Haq 1961: 22. Quoted in Alok Rai 1991: 264.

developed two distinct literary traditions, the borderlines between the two are far from being as clear as the political boundaries.

The essays in this collection show that, apart from the script, the divide between Hindi and Urdu was blurred in certain intermediary literary genres even in the late nineteenth century.² The example of the perplexed student shows that the uncertainty persists to the present day. It seems one might recognise their common linguistic and literary heritage in a plethora of north Indian vernacular dialects that from an outsider's point of view were simply called Hindavi, ('language of India'), or Bhakha, ('language'), to distinguish it from Persian and Arabic on the one hand and from Sanskrit and Prakrit on the other. Instead, however, discourses on their early literature that evolved in the two languages from the eighteenth century onwards are marked by appropriation, neglect and exclusion.

While histories of early Hindi literature tend to be integrative, often including the borderlands of Apabhramsha, Maithili or Dakkhani, those of early Urdu either try to restrict themselves to the Khari Boli dialect and to Muslim authors³—making some allowance for Muslim authors writing in Hindavi dialects other than Khari Boli, such as those of the Avadhi masnavi tradition or, more catholically, for Hindu authors who show some input from Khari Boli. The latter approach is the one adopted from Muhammad Husain Azad's *Āb-e hayat* (1880) to the most comprehensive recent history of early Urdu by Jafar and Jain (*Tārīkh-e adab-e Urdū 1700 tak*, 1998). Though this last work excludes the Avadhi masnavis, the authors are well aware of the vagueness of their approach. They give up the idea of restriction to Muslim authors on the basis that authorship is an element external to language⁴ and include poets central to the Hindi tradition such as Mirabai and Tulsidas because of the Khari Boli features of poems attributed to them. However, they also admit that calling this poetry Urdu would render the Hindi-Urdu distinction meaningless and therefore hail approaches, such

²See also Orsini (forthcoming) on nineteenth-century Barahmasa printed books.

³The latest and most coherent example of such efforts is Faruqi 2001.

⁴Jafar and Jain 1998 vol. I: 371.

as that of Sahil Bukhari, which examine the history of Khari Boli literature in the Perso-Arabic and in the Devanagari scripts together, showing the overlap of Urdu and Hindi traditions.⁵ It is indeed the most suitable approach to investigate the early development of this idiom, all the more because the use of Khari Boli is not closely linked to any writing system. Apart from the Perso-Arabic and in the Devanagari script Khari Boli was written in Gurmukhi in the seventeenth century and later in the Kaithi script.

The most influential recent study to deal with the origins of modern Hindi and Urdu is Shamsur Rahman Faruqi's *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History* (2001),⁶ which is a close English reworking of his *Urdū kā ibtidā'ī zamānā* (1999). Faruqi's view of Urdu literary history is also exclusivist, and early Urdu literary culture appears limited to Khari Boli literature by Muslim authors. In opposition to this is the general (and official) Hindi stand emphasising the composite aspect of Hindi, which encompasses a surfeit of dialects such as Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Braj Bhasha, Rajasthani, Khari Boli and others. This view is expressed in English in Amrit Rai's *A House Divided: The Origin and Development of Hindi-Urdu* (1984), which in turn was based on Suniti Kumar Chatterji's *Indo-Aryan and Hindi* (1942). Rai's examples are taken from both Hindu and Muslim authors.⁷

The polemic is well-illustrated by the search for the earliest poet. While Chatterji and Rai trace the development of early Hindi from Apabhramsha and consider Gorakhnath (eleventh century c.) and the Nathpanthis, followed by Amir Khusrau (1253–1325), to be the first Hindi authors, Faruqi suggests that Urdu literature began with Ma'sud Sa'd Salman (1046–1121) of Lahore followed by Amir Khusrau. Both speculations are problematic, however. No Gorakhnath manuscript is available prior to the late seventeenth

⁵Sahil Bukhari, 'Urdū kā qadīmtarīn adab'. *Nuqūsh* 105 (May 1945) and *Urdū kī kahānī*, Lahore, 1975: 160–98. Quoted in Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. I: 451.

⁶A shorter version of this essay appeared in Pollock 2002.

⁷This Hindi expansionist tendency is refuted by Faruqi, who examined the origins of Urdu as independent of the Hindi and indeed Hindu tradition and labelled Rai's work as 'full of tendentious speculation' and dismissed it in a footnote. Faruqi 2001: 1, n1.

century,⁸ and thus we are not able to say with certainty what form of language Gorakhnath used. Similarly, the earliest quote from Khusrau's Hindavi is in the *Sabras* of Vajhi of Golkonda written in 1636. Faruqi himself points to the fact that nothing of Ma'sud's and Khusrau's Hindavi⁹ corpus is available today, and that 'the first person whose Hindavi survives in substantial quantity, and with whom Urdu literature can seriously be said to begin', is an author not from the north but from Gujarat, namely Shaikh Bahauddin Bajan (1388–1506)¹⁰ of Ahmadabad.

REKHTA AS MIXED POETRY

The Persian word *rekhta* ('poured, interspersed, mixed') had several technical meanings. Prior to the eighteenth century, it was part of musical terminology. It also referred to a mode of writing, namely to poetry written in a language that mixes lines, phrases and vocabulary from Hindi and Persian (the reference to Persian also includes the Arabic vocabulary imbibed by Persian), in which the Hindavi component is normally Khari Boli and sometimes Braj Bhasha or a mixture of the two.¹¹ As a musical term, *Rekhta* appears in Alauddin Barnavi's musicological treatise *Cishtiya bihishitiya* (1655). Barnavi defines *Rekhta* as a kind of text in which one sets the words of both languages to a *raga* and a *tala*.¹² Although Mahmud

⁸Kamal Singh 1983: 56.

⁹The word Hindavi in this article refers generally to the varieties of Hindi and Urdu prior to the articulation of their separate identity.

¹⁰Faruqi 2001: 71.

¹¹This is what was theorised by Mir in the eighteenth-century; see p. 27 below.

¹²Every farsi—farsi being consonant with Hindavi khyal—in which one sets the words of both languages [Persian and Hindavi] to a *raga* and a *tala* is called *rekhta*. This *rekhta* is composed in every *parda* [musical mode], [thus] increasing pleasure and enjoyment'. Tr. based on that by Katherine Butler Brown 2003: 240. The original reads: 'Har fārsī ki ba mazmūn-i khyāl-i hindavī mutābiq bāshad va alfāz-i har do zabān-rā dar yak tāl va yak rāg bar bast namūda bāshand... ān-rā rekhtā-rā dar har pardā mibandand va zauq va lazzati afzūn midahand'. Shahab

Sherani's suggestion that this definition of *Rekhta* originated with Amir Khusrau cannot be substantiated, this passage indicates an early link between *Rekhta* and Hindustani music.¹³ It is in the same year that another occurrence of *Rekhta* in the sense of 'mixed language' appeared in the colophon of a manuscript of Vajid I am to discuss below. So far no documentation has been found of the same technical use of the term prior to the mid-seventeenth century.

In the eighteenth century, *Rekhta* appears also as the name of Khari Boli mixed with Perso-Arabic vocabulary—the language which is today called Urdu. The greatest Urdu poet of the century, Mir, referred to his language not as Urdu, but either as Hindi or as *Rekhta*.¹⁴ The meaning of the word, however, varied even within Mir's usage: he used *rekhta* interchangeably with *shi'r* (verse).¹⁵ In his *tazkira Nikāt ush-shu'arā*, for example, he called *rekhta* 'poetry which is in the style and manner of Persian poetry, but in the language of the exalted court of Delhi'.¹⁶ In this work, he distinguished between six kinds of *rekhta*, two based on style and four based on the linguistic mixing of Hindi with Persian, i.e. (1) Persian and Hindi lines alternating; (2) the same line half in Persian and half in Hindi; (3) the use of Persian verbs, prepositions and conjunctions within a Hindi line, and (4) the use of appropriate Persian phrases in Hindi.¹⁷ (The list in fact is not exhaustive, and Ali Jawad Zaidi in his *History of Urdu Literature* presents yet another linguistic type: (5) Persian couplets

Sarmadee 1996: xxxii–xxxiii. Farsi at this stage was a musical composition sung in the 'Khusravi' style of qawwals in Delhi (i.e. that of qaul and tarana later known as 'qawwali': see Brown 2003: 239).

¹³Sherani 1926: 3.

¹⁴E.g. *Guftagū rekhte mē hamse na kar, yah hamārī zabān hai, pyāre*. [*Kulliyāt-e Mīr* I. 548] 'It is my own tongue, my dear, don't contend to me in *rekhta*.' (Tr. Faruqi 2001: 23).

¹⁵*Sar sabz-e hind hī mē nahī kuch ye rekhte; hai ghūm mere shi'r kī sāre dakhān ke bīc* [*Kulliyāt-e Mīr* II. 790]. 'My poetry grows green not only in the northern planes. In all the Deccan too the praises of my verse resound.' (Tr. Islam and Russell 1969: 215)

¹⁶'*Rekhta ki shi'r ast ba-t'aur-i shi'r-i fārsī ba-zabān-i urdū-i mu'allā-i shāhjahānābād-i dehlavī*.'; Khan, n.d.: 1.

¹⁷Khan n.d.: 186–87.

with Hindi refrains.¹⁸) In the eighteenth century Mir, as his poems illustrate, only approved of the fourth type and normally used the word *Rekhta* in a restricted sense to refer to the fourth type only. For the sake of convenience, I will refer the other forms of *rekhta* as 'macaronic' poems, borrowing the term from Italian renaissance literature, where the word *maccheronico* referred to mixed Latin-Italian verse.¹⁹ The fact that in Gujarat or in the Deccan the mixed language was not called *Rekhta*, and Mir's consciousness that he wrote in *Rekhta* suggests that in the eighteenth century Urdu poetry was perceived as the inheritor not only of *Dakkani* but also of earlier *Rekhta* experiments in north India.

In this essay, if not indicated otherwise, I will call *Rekhta* any poetry in either the 'extended' Persian, *Gurmukhi*, *Kaithi* or *Nagari* script which *consciously* mixes the vernacular *Hindavi* (including *Braj Bhasha*) and the cosmopolitan Persian. This *Rekhta* is different from *Sadhukkari*, the *spontaneously* mixed literary language of the Sants, that blends elements from various north Indian dialects and languages. Although *Sadhukkari* may include Sanskrit and Arabo-Persian words, it is a spontaneous blend of several vernaculars. As we shall see, in north India, *Rekhta* was a literary idiom that was (a) first practised in certain Sufi circles from the early sixteenth or maybe late fifteenth centuries, (b) patronised in the Mughal court, (c) taken up occasionally by *Nirgun* sants, (d) by some Sikh authors of the *Janamsakhis*, (e) by Krishna bhaktas, (f) by syncretistic authors and (g) court poets in Rajasthan in the seventeenth and particularly in the eighteenth centuries.

Early *Rekhta* poetry in the Persian script figures to a greater or lesser extent in most histories of Urdu literature,²⁰ but no study exists of its counterpart in the *Nagari* and occasionally in the *Kaithi* or *Gurmukhi* scripts. *Nagari Rekhta* (i.e. *Rekhta* in these three scripts)

¹⁸Zaidi 1983: 30; this type can also be conceived as a variety within Mir's first category.

¹⁹Ugo Enrico Paoli, *Il latino maccheronico*, Firenze 1959. Quoted in Phukan 2001: 42.

²⁰E.g. Jalibi 1977: 19-83; Zaidi 1983: 19-35; Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. I: 371-462, vol. V: 9-97.

was composed by mainly Hindu Vaishnava, Sant or Sikh authors since the late sixteenth century. It is based on *Khari Boli* (the dialect associated with Delhi in its origins) and written down in the *Nagari*, *Kaithi* or *Gurmukhi* script either at the moment of composition or later. This *Rekhta* is a literary language with a (usually loose) *Khari Boli* template (that is a base language or grammatical structure) and a relatively high Perso-Arabic vocabulary compared to *Braj* works. In this way, although linguistically not different from Urdu, which was also called *Rekhta* in the eighteenth century, *Gurmukhi Rekhta* is part of the Panjabi Sikh tradition, while its *Nagari* and *Kaithi* counterparts are included in *Braj Bhasha* or the Sant devotional tradition. As such, *Nagari Rekhta* is entered in literary histories and manuscript catalogues along with *Braj Bhasha* texts since it tends to use the metres and themes of *Braj* and *Nirgun* Sant literature. Many of its authors wrote the majority of their works not in *Rekhta* but in *Braj Bhasha* or in *Sadhukkari*, the mixed language of the Sants.

In spite of using *Khari Boli* and the *Nagari* script, this genre was not hailed as the precursor of modern Hindi literature, even though *Rekhta* was produced well into the nineteenth century and was, directly or indirectly, influential in the development and acceptance of modern Hindi. If the history of *Nagari Rekhta* is taken into consideration, then modern Hindi should not be considered as a language originating only from the artificial experiments of Fort William College but also as the continuation of a now-forgotten literary idiom. Yet *Rekhta* became neglected from the 1850s onwards, the time of *Bhartendu Harishchandra*. Instead of allying themselves with this literature, *Bhartendu* and his circle fought against 'Urdu Begam' and should probably be held responsible for denying the existence of literature in *Nagari Rekhta* as a possible meeting point between Hindi and Urdu.

Today it is only a small group of *Braj Bhasha* scholars who know about the trend of writing Krishna poetry in *Nagari Rekhta*, current mainly in the eighteenth century. Although *Nagari Rekhta* is incomparably smaller in its output than the mainstream *Braj Bhasha* or Sant literature, and its poetry has not exercised such influence as the *Avadhi* narratives, there are beautiful pieces in it. Indeed, many of the best poets of the eighteenth century, such as *Anandghan*,

Nagaridas and Brajnidhi, tried their hands at Rekhta, along with many lesser-known authors like Manohardas and Rasrashi.

In this essay I will present a sketch of the history of Rekhta and Khari Boli poetry in north India. In the first part, I will talk about the unsubstantiated claims to early Rekhta and describe the development of Rekhta through its sixteenth-century extant versions manifest in the different varieties of macaronic poetry written chiefly in the Perso-Arabic script that were marginalised after the success of Vali's *Divān* in Delhi. In the second part, I will show how in seventeenth century north India, Nagari-script Rekhta coexisted with sporadic Urdu-Rekhta, and I will follow up its record in sectarian and court literature until the mid-nineteenth century, when it became neglected due to the exigency of defining clear linguistic and literary boundaries.

A fundamental difficulty in writing the early history of Hindavi is the lack of philological background work to the texts studied. Even when we have critical editions based on manuscripts, we cannot be sure that the text in a later manuscript represents the same linguistic situation as at the time of its composition. One cannot state with certainty that the text of the critical edition of works such as the *Bikaṭ kahānī*, based on manuscripts dating from at least a hundred years after the death of the author, corresponds to the language of its birth in the early seventeenth century. As we will see, traditional attributions to early authors found in relatively late handwritten books are far from reliable since it was common in early modern South Asia to link poems to the prestige of established names. But the undependability of manuscript transmission is only one of the many problems. An immense part of early Hindavi literature still lies unpublished in manuscript collections, and the picture that we can get on the basis of published material is bound to be distorted. The published material is, more often than not, available in publications whose principles are far from that of a critical edition. The editors often standardise not only the orthography but also the language. Studies on early literature often give examples without specifying their sources and in this way the reliability of their quotes is uncertain. This paper aims to follow up the emergence of Khari Boli literature in north India by a search for works in early dated manuscripts. By using this material as a point of reference in language and style, poems

with less reliable transmission can be examined comparatively. In this way I will present traditional attributions to sixteenth and seventeenth-century poets when the styles of the individual works are consistent with that of other works found in dated manuscripts.

A philological approach is by definition restrictive since it cannot take into consideration the rich oral tradition that is almost impossible to document today. Already Amir Khusrau mentioned that he had composed poems in Hindavi, and there must be other Indo-Persian poets who also did so. This Hindavi poetry, however, did not initially enjoy much prestige and was probably never committed to writing. We do not have many documents about the spread of the speech of Delhi, the 'Dehlavi', throughout the Delhi Sultanate as a lingua franca. It was from this lingua franca that the first documented literary languages based on Khari Boli, namely Dakkani and Gujri, emerged in areas south of the modern 'Hindi belt'. Although poetry with Khari Boli features or macaronic stanzas may have existed in north India prior to the sixteenth century, due to the lack of reliable sources observation on the nature of such material can be more than conjecture.

CLAIMS TO BEGINNINGS

Khari Boli literature, like that of all modern languages, emerged at a certain point in history. It can be argued that the spoken language that, in all probability, had links with the literary Shauraseni Apabhramsha of north-western India, developed into idioms of which Khari Boli was one of the literary versions. Some Hindu scholars argue for the continuity of linguistic forms in the literary languages Apabhramsha and Khari Boli. Their ideas are supported by lines such as the one from the *Apabhramśaprakaraṇa* of Hemachandra's *Śabdānuśāsana*.

Bhalā huā ju māriā bahiṇī mahārā kantu
(*Śabdānuśāsana* 8, 4, 351)²¹.

It is good that my husband was killed, my sister.

²¹Vyas 1981: 8.

This line indeed shows Khari Boli and Punjabi features indicating a period of development when the two idioms were not separated, a phenomenon attested also by the Punjabi elements of early Dakkani. Most of the Khari Boli features in this work and in other Apabhramsha compositions, however, are isolated instances and do not suggest any use of systematic Khari Boli as can be seen from the second line of the same couplet:

Lajjiamtu vayanisahu jai bhaggā gharu emtu

I would have been put to shame among my friends, if he had run away
(from battle) and come home.

It might therefore, be more fruitful to examine extant material that shows a systematic use of Khari Boli.

Probably the best known example of macaronic Rekhta is a popular poem attributed to Amir Khusrau Dehlavi (c. 1253–1325) in which the first half of each line is in Persian and the second in Braj Bhasha (Perso-Arabic words are in bold type):

*Zi hāl-i miskīn makun taghāful, durāye nainā banāye batiyā;
Ki tāb-i hijrān na dāram ai jān, na lehu kāhe lagāye chatyā....
Ba-ḥaqq-i ān rūz-i faṣl-i maḥshar, ki dād mā-rā fareb **Khusrau**
Samīpa man ke davāri rakhū jo jān pāū parāi rakhyā.²²*

Do not be negligent towards this poor one—You hide your eyes and invent excuses.

Since I do not have the strength to bear the separation, o my love, why don't you embrace me at once?...

I swear by the Day of Gathering that she deceived me, Khusrau,

I will keep a sentry near my heart if I find my beloved guarded by someone else.²³

²²This text is quoted on the basis of Partab Singh's album in Sherani 1931: 88. Panchal (2001: 75) gives a variant version without referring to an original source. The final couplet, for example, is as follows: 'Ba-ḥaqq ān mah ki roz-e maḥshar, badād mā-rā fareb **Khusrau**. So pīt man ki durāya rākho, jo jāya pāū piyā ki khatyā.

²³The meaning of the last line is unclear.

A similar composition is attributed to Khusrau's contemporary Amir Hasan Sijzi Dehlavi (d. 1337)²⁴:

*Har laḥza āyad dar dilam dekhū ūse ṭak jāy-kar;
Gūyam hikāyati hijr-i khud bā ān ṣanam jū lāya kar....
Bas hīla kardam, āy Ḥasan, bejān shudam az dam ba-dam;
Kaise rahū tujh jū bin tum le gae jang lāya kar.²⁵*

Each moment I felt like going out to catch a glimpse of her,
setting my heart on that beloved I myself tell the story of my separation....
I tried many ways, O Hasan, at every instant I lost my life.
How can I remain without you, my life? You have taken it and brought
war.

There are similar claims for being the precursors of Khari Boli and of Rekhta literature by thirteenth- to fifteenth-century Sufi poets, such as Baba Farid, Farid's son-in-law. Ali Ahmad Sabir Kaleri (Kalyari) (d. 1265), Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri (d. 1273), Ali Qalandar Panipati (d. 1363), Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri (d. 1381) and others.²⁶ There are also candidates for early Rekhta and Khari Boli authorship with a Hindu background, such as the fourteenth-century poet-saint from Maharashtra, Namdev:

*Sāvadha sāvadha bhaja le re rājā; nahī āvai aisi ghaḍī jū.
Uttama naratanu pāyā re bhāi; gāphila kyō huvā divāne jū.
Jinne janma dārā hai tuja kūṃ bisara gayā unakā gyāna jū.
Phira pastāyegā dagā pāyegā; nikala jāyegā āvasāna jū....
Aisi bāta sunake nāmā sāvadha huvā; guru ke pāva miṭhī dāri.
Mai ānātha dubale śarana saye tuja kū; āba jo merī lāja rākhī jū.*

(Pad 192)²⁷

²⁴See Jafar and Jain 1998 vol. 1 419–22.

²⁵Zaidi 1993: 28. Jalibi (1977: 35) and Jafar and Jain (1998, vol. I: 420) give a slightly different text based on 'Abdul Qadil Sarvari: 'Aligarh tārikh-e-adab-e-Urdū, pp. 148–49. Jalibi says that the poem was found in an old album at the Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu (Pakistan). Neither Zaidi nor Sarvari has given any indication of source.

²⁶See Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. I: 383; 422–28; Zaidi 1993: 19 and Rizvi 1978, vol. I: 327–28.

²⁷Callewaert and Lath 1989: 360.

Worship the King with complete alertness; you will never have the opportunity again.

O my Brother, you received the highest estate, a human body; why have you become so lazy, so negligent, so deranged!

You abandoned the knowledge of the one who conferred life upon you.

You will repent, will be cheated, and you will go away in the end...

Hearing such words Nāmdev became alert and took the dust of the guru's feet.

I took refuge with you as a frail orphan; now, please protect my honour.

In the absence of early evidence such as manuscripts or dated references, the attribution and the dating of all these poems are problematic and they may not reflect the linguistic situation of the times of their putative authors.²⁸ To illustrate the pitfalls of traditional attributions

²⁸Baba Farid's earliest documented poems as quoted by Bajan (1388–1506) and in the *Guru Granth* (1603–1604) do not show the systematic use of Khari Boli features with which some later authors credit him (see Jalibi 1977: 27, 35). As far as Maneri is concerned, two independent collections of his spiritual discourses agree that the mystic was inimical to Hindavi singing because of the frankness of its expression (see below). Although Nāmdev's songs are present in manuscripts from the second half of the sixteenth century, namely in the Goindwal pothis and in the Fatehpur manuscript, the *padas* with substantial Khari Boli elements and Perso-Arabic vocabulary are not there. The song quoted above, for example, was found only in an undated copy of a manuscript from Pandharpur. The poem found in the undated Pandharpur manuscript is taken into the critical edition by Bhagirath Mishra and Raj Narayan Maurya (eds): *Sant Nāmdev ki Hindī padāvalī*, Pune 1964. Similar claims to Kabir's Khari Boli poems (e.g. *Rahanā nahī desa, birānā hai* or *Sumirana bina gotā khāoge*, see Rai 1991: 157–59) cannot be confirmed due to the lack of early written evidence, since none of these poems is present in the earliest available manuscripts dating from between 1570 and 1681 (see Callewaert 2000). In his *History of Rajasthani Literature*, Hiralal Maheshwari (1980: 9) claims that occasional Khari Boli usages (sometimes mixed with Punjabi) occur in Rajasthani bardic literature such as in Badar Dhadhi's (fl. c. 1450) *Vir māyan* written in the nisani metre and in Sandu Mala's (1573–1679) *jhulnas* (*Mahārājā Rāysinghī rā, Akbar Pātsahjī rā, Divān Pratāpsinghī rā* etc.) as well as in the arillas (also called *chandrāyanas*) of Kesaudas Godara and Vajind and in the songs attributed to Qazi Mahmud (fifteenth century). Most of these works are still inaccessible. There are, however, indications that Maheshwari's statement should be treated with caution. The *Vir māyan*, for example, dates not

let us have a closer look at the most famous of these early Rekhtas, namely that of Khusrau. As has been mentioned, no manuscript evidence for his Hindavi exists prior to the quotes in Vajhī's *Sabras* (1636). The rekhta quoted above first emerged as Khusrau's in the album of Partab Singh copied in 1719. After that, the poem appeared in *tazkiras* under the name of Khusrau. The same rekhta, however, is also present in an earlier album dated 1652/1656, which was in possession of Mahmud Khan Sherani. Here, however, the *takhallus*, pen name, inserted into the last but one line is not of Khusrau but of a certain Ja'far, about whom nothing is known,

Ba-mihr-i ān sokh carḥ-i bad-mihr (ki) burd mā-rā šikeb Ja'far.
*Su pitā man māh durāya rākhū jo tūha pāo parāna katiyā.*²⁹

I swear by the love for that coquettish beauty that the unkind fate took away my patience, Jafar,³⁰

I will hide my love in my heart, when I am killed at your feet.

Moreover, Sherani demonstrated that the sixteen-morae form of its metre (U - U/- - / U - U/- -) called *mutaqārib fu'ūlu fi'lun shānzdah ruknī* was not used before the mid-fifteenth century.³¹

Nevertheless, we need not be over-sceptical and should also take into consideration that 'the language of Delhi' was already used and understood by literati during the Sultanate period. It is also possible that there were poems in a Khari Boli template circulating orally that are lost today, since by the early sixteenth century 'Dehlavi' had become the vehicle of the Sufis of Gujarat and was cultivated in the courts of Deccan and Gujarat as a literary language. Khari Boli elements were also current in the mixed language of the Nirgun Sants, as attested for example in the vocabulary of the *Guru Granth*, where

from the fifteenth but from the nineteenth century (Menariya 1978: 222). In spite of the fact that Vajind or rather Vajid was the author of a Rekhta composition (not mentioned by Maheshwari), his arillas do not show Khari Boli features.

²⁹Sherani 1931: 88.

³⁰The line can also be interpreted as 'I swear by the love of that coquettish, unkind Fate, who took away my patience.'

³¹Sherani 1931: 91–94.

verbal and pronominal forms such as *kiā, gaiā, mujha, tujha, mujhai, tujhai, tumhārā/tumhāri/tumhāre* etc. figure in abundance.

The search for mixed Hindavi-Persian, Rekhta, and for Khari Boli features shows that most early claims link Rekhta with Muslims rather than with Hindus, raising the expectation that the use of Khari Boli and of Rekhta was more closely linked to Muslims. But can anything at all be known about the literary Hindavi that Muslims used during the Sultanate period? After all, the dialect of the Hindavi romances was Avadhi, ever since Maulana Daud's *Candāyan* (1379).

References to the use of Hindavi as well as Hindavi phrases and sometimes even poems are embedded into Persian works, such as letters or the discourses (*malfuzat*) of leading Sufis delivered to a select gathering of disciples and visitors.³² These discourses were embellished with didactic poetry, anecdotes and apophthegms. In the absence of early Hindavi manuscripts, it is in the works of the *malfuzat* genre that a systematic and critical search can reveal the earliest recorded occurrences of Hindavi poetry. Although works of this genre may date from centuries after the death of the *pir*, some of them are reliable sources of information about the times of the sultanate. Some *malfuzat* were discourses recorded soon after they were delivered by a spiritual master and some were collected by a descendant or disciple of a Sufi after his death. The most important source for early Hindavi, the *Surūr aṣ-Ṣudūr*³³ belongs to the second category. It contains the sayings of Shaikh Hamiduddin Nāgauri (d. 1273), the successor of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Ajmeri,³⁴ as recorded by his grandson and successor Shaikh Fariduddin bin Abdul Aziz (d. 1334).³⁵

³²Bailey 1930: 205–208 based on works by Muhammad Sherani, Shamsullah Qadri and Abdul Hay Nadvi. See also Jalibi 1977: 26–29; Orsini 2007.

³³The manuscript of this work is found in the Habibganj Collection, Aligarh Muslim University. See also Nisar Ahmad Faruqi, 1989: 26–27a.

³⁴Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi 1996: 426.

³⁵Literary histories also refer to the *malfuzat* containing the sayings of Baba Farid (e.g. Zaidi 1993: 19). It is recorded, for example, that Baba Farid, who is supposed to have used Hindavi in his conversations when living in Ajmer and Delhi, used to call a friend 'bhayia' (Bailey 1930: 205). The *malfuzat* containing his sayings, Ali Asghar's *Javāhir-i Farīdī*, dates from the Mughal era, written

What is attested in works from the fourteenth century onwards is that Sufis and other musicians used Hindavi in their musical gatherings in the North, and this may have been a tradition going back to earlier times. A spiritual discourse of Nizamuddin Auliya, dated 1316, tells us how the weaver Shaikh Ahmad Nahravani (fl. 1235)³⁶ became the disciple of Faqih Madhaw, the imam of the Jami Masjid at Ajmer, who had been entranced by Nahravani's Hindavi song and 'said to him that it was unfortunate that he was just wasting his melodious voice in singing Hindavi songs, and advised him to memorise the Qur'ān.'³⁷

The use of Hindavi is also associated with the person whom Nizamuddin Auliya credited with the introduction of *sama'* singing to Delhi, namely Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri (d. 1273).³⁸ The *Surūr aṣ-Ṣudūr* quotes several Hindavi verses attributed to Hamiduddin:

*Jo bistārai to sabai sikata (jo) samkoya;*³⁹
*Sau sau eka puruṣa ke nāmva biralā jānai koya.*⁴⁰

Everything that expands, basks and shrinks:
Hundreds of names for the one God—the outstanding man
understands it.

The Hindavi of this poem (with the exception of the *-ā* ending in the word *biralā*, which suggest Khari Boli usage) and that of the other ones found in the same work⁴¹ is what later was called Braj

three hundred years after the time of the Shaikh with the aim of glorifying the spiritual achievements of Baba Farid and his descendants (Rizvi 1978: 13).

³⁶Nizamuddin Auliya stated that Nahravani had been present at the *sama'* gathering in 1235 where a Persian verse produced such powerful extasy in Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki that he died a few days later. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (1182–1262) also talked with respect about him. See Faruqi 1996: 325–26.

³⁷Faruqi 1996: 326.

³⁸Faruqi 1996: 426.

³⁹The first line of this couplet seems to be corrupt. The metre is close to that of a *dohā*.

⁴⁰*Surūr aṣ-Ṣudūr* p. 69, quoted in Rizvi 1978, vol. I: 327.

⁴¹On p. 74: *Biralā cīna jo rogina gai jāugina harī guna gai ko dosa, ayana rasāyana*

Bhasha. This instance alerts us to the fact that the Hindavi favoured by north Indian Sufis in their gatherings was probably closer to Braj Bhasha than to Khari Boli or Rekhta.⁴²

REKHTA AT THE MUGHAL COURT

In the sixteenth century Rekhta seems to have been practiced both in Sufi circles and in the Mughal court. From Babur's evidence below and the existence of Rekhta attributed to other sixteenth-century Persian poets such as Saqqa, Mu'ayyid and Mashhadi, one can argue that the earliest Rekhta writing may coincide with the beginning of Mughal times. One might even suspect that the poems attributed to Khusrau and to the other poets mentioned above date from this century. Prior to the early eighteenth-century success of Vali's *Divān*, however, no serious effort was made to record Rekhta poetry in the north. The lack of manuscripts is indicative of the neglect of poetry that had not found its way into a larger composition and also suggests that the use of Rekhta must not have been very widespread, or that it may have been an oral genre considered too frivolous or undignified for committing to writing.⁴³

An important pre-Mughal religious lineage that used Rekhta is that of Miran Sayyid Muhammad from Jaunpur (d. 1505),⁴⁴ who after a pilgrimage to Mecca travelled widely in India including Gujarat and Bidar in the Deccan and eventually died in Baluchistan. In 1497, in Ahmadabad, probably prompted by the approaching

saṃcarai raṃga jo mārai oṣa. On p. 302: *Ausadhi bhejana dhani gāi ou bhāi birahina; ausadhi dosa na jānāi nāri na cetāi tīna*. Both are quoted in Rizvi 1978, vol. I: 327.

⁴²The same phenomenon is recorded in the sixteenth century in Mir Abdal Wahid Bilgrami's *Haqā'iq-i Hindī* (1566). In this work Bilgrami interpreted the Radha-Krishna imagery in a Sufi light and the examples of Hindavi quoted are in Braj Bhasha.

⁴³I owe this last suggestion to Allison Busch.

⁴⁴A study of their contribution to Urdu can be found in Sherani: *'Dā'ira ke mahdaviyon kā urdū adab ki ta'mir meñ ḥiṣṣā'* In *Maqālāt-e Sherāni* vol. II: 146–242. On the beginnings of Mahdism and its connection to Jaunpur see Rizvi 1965: 74–75, Maclean 2003.

millennium of Islam in 1591/2, he declared himself the Mahdi, the leader who is expected to rise before Judgement Day. He is credited with the use of mixed language.⁴⁵ Among the nine couplets attributed to him in various sources, one is in the Rekhta form in a Perso-Arabic metre:

Agar faḡal kunī yak jau jīve jīve jīve;
*Agar 'adal kunī yak jau muve muve.*⁴⁶

If you have mercy the size of a grain, then you live, you live, you live.
If you administer (mere) justice the size of a grain you die, you die,
you die.

His other examples, however, use Indian metres and thus his poetry is in line with the earlier tradition of Hindavi poems used in *sama'* gatherings, and also with his contemporary, Abdul Quddus Gangohi, whose similar poetry under the pen name Alakhdas survives in considerable quantity.⁴⁷

Although Sayyid Muhammad was banished from Gujarat, a large number of ulama and sufis accepted him as the Mahdi⁴⁸ and his followers are known as the Mahdavis. His often-persecuted successors in Gujarat and Rajasthan also used Hindavi. The most important of them were Sayyid Khwandmir Matufi,⁴⁹ who fell fighting in Patan in 1524, and Mian Mustafa (d. 1577),⁵⁰ who at times was persecuted by local authorities and at times summoned and rewarded by Akbar.

⁴⁵Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. I: 428–33.

⁴⁶The poem is found on the margin of Miyan Valiji's *Inṣāf-nāma* (p. 217), quoted in Jafar and Jain 1998 vol. I: 429. The metre is *mujtass, musamman makhbūn mahzūf* (u – u /uu – –/u – u / – –).

⁴⁷Abdul Quddus Gangohi, *Rushd-nāma (Alakh-bāni)*, Aligarh, 1971.

⁴⁸Rizvi 1978, vol. I: 284.

⁴⁹Rizvi 1965: 107–10. A couplet attributed to him was found by Sherani in a manuscript of a work called *Zād al-fuḡarā* in possession of Sayyid Khayruddin Sahib Wakil Thakanjat, Jaipur. See Sherani 1940–41: 199. Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. I: 433–34. Jalibi (1977: 134) found the same couplet in an old album in possession of Afsar Siddiqi.

⁵⁰Rizvi 1965: 114–18.

The Mahdavi poems suggest that Rekhta was initially cultivated in religious circles and appeared in north India as the result of the wanderings of religious personalities probably connected to the Deccan or to Gujarat. It is, however, the Mughals to whom the earliest firmly datable Rekhta can be attributed, and its author is none other than Emperor Babur. His Turkish *Divān*, preserved in a manuscript dated from 1529, includes a couplet partly in Khari Boli Hindi, partly in Persian and partly in Turki:⁵¹

*Muj-kā na huā kuj havas-i mānak-o motī;
Faqr ehliga bas bulgusidur pānī-o rotī.*

I had no desire for gems and pearls,
For poor people, sufficient are water and bread.

After Babur, there is not much dated early manuscript evidence for Rekhta in the north for more than a century. The most important manuscript is the album written by Jaimal Thal in 1652–56, which contained Ja'far's Rekhta that was later attributed to Khusrau. Apart from Persian compositions, this album contains poetry in the mixed language by several poets, as can be seen from the pen names: Jamali, Faizi, Bairam, Jani, Sedan, Fatah Muhammad, Ja'far and an unknown author.⁵² With the exception of Fatah Muhammad, all these authors produced macaronic poetry with Persian template. One poem later attributed to Khusrau is in Persian but two words can be read as a pun and be interpreted as Rekhta,

⁵¹Yücel 1995: 500 and f. 88b. This is a critical edition based on ms Nr. 3743 at the University of Istanbul Library and dated 1265AH/1848/9 CE. The poem is missing from the earliest manuscript of Babur's *Divān* preserved in Paris and dated from 1515 CE. The edition mentions that this couplet is on folio 17b in the 1529 Rampur manuscript.

⁵²The identification of the poets with known personalities is not without problems. The names of Sedan and Ja'far do not figure anywhere else in literary histories. (There is however, a Braj Bhasha work on conjuring called *Adbhūt vilās* written in 1638 and attributed to a certain Mira Sedan Guhar who may be identical with our author. A manuscript of this work is mentioned in Menariya 1942, vol. III: 228–29.) Three other names present a different challenge since there were several poets with the names Faizi, Bairam and Jani.

*Guftam gahī dar khāna-yi ma'mūn-i tū bāsham;
Guftā ki darīn khāna balā'ist mamānī.*⁵³

I said that I would be for a while in your safe house;
She said that calamity resides in this house—don't stay!

And reading it with the Hindavi meaning of the words *māmūn* and *mumānī*,

I said that I would be for a while in the house of your uncle.
She said that her aunt was a calamity in that house.

There is a poem in the same album written by someone under the pen-name 'Jamali'. 'Jamali' must be identical with Maulana Hamid bin Fazlullah known as Shaikh Jamali Karnboh (d. 1536). He travelled to Mecca and to other Muslim lands and in his later life lived in Delhi as a member of the Suhrawardi order. He maintained good contacts with Babur and Humayun whom he accompanied on his expedition to Gujarat. He was a Persian poet and author of *Siyār ul-'arīfīn* (*Biographies of Holy Men*, c. 1530–36), a tazkira on the lives of Chishti and Suhrawardi holy men dedicated to Humayun.⁵⁴ Jamali's poem in the album is in Persian with an abundance of Hindavi words:⁵⁵

*Ān parī rukhsār cūn shāna ba cotī mikunad, jān darāz-i 'āshiqān-rā
'umr-e choṭī mikunad.
Cashm-rā qaṣṣāb sāzād khaṅjar az ghaṃza zanad; 'ishqbāzān-rā judā
botī zi botī mikunad.
Cūn zanad khaṅjar ba jānam khūn zi jānam micakad; hamcū murg-i
nīm basmal lot-potī mikunad.
Bar darat āyam raqīb-at gūyadam dar khāna nīst; īn cunīn kambakht
bā mā bāt khoṭī mikunad.*

⁵³Sherani 1931: 76.

⁵⁴On Jamali and his *Siyār ul-'arīfīn* see Siddiqui 1979: 82–98.

⁵⁵Jalibi 1977: 52 says that the poem is found in a manuscript album (nr. 3/633) at the Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu, Karachi. This might well be the same album since it does not figure in the catalogue of Sherani's manuscripts donated to Punjab University. See Husain 1968.

*Dar rah-i 'ishqat Jamālī gashta (cūn) zār-o-nazār; 'āqibat az muftisi
dar tah lāgotī mikunad.*

When that fairy-faced woman combs her hair, she makes the long life
of the lovers short.

She makes her eye into a butcher and turns her glances into a dagger.
She cuts into pieces the enamoured ones.

She thrusts her dagger into my heart, blood drips from it and it rolls
about like a half-sacrificed fowl.

I come to your door but your doorkeeper /my rival/ tells me that you
are not at home; that wretched one speaks to me so falsely.

On the path of your love, Jamali has become miserable. Out of poverty,
in the end, he ties a loincloth in several layers on his waist.⁵⁶

Another, incomplete Rekhta of Jamali which, according to Sherani,
is present in several tazkiras and albums, uses similar phrases:

*Khvār shudam zār shudam luṭ gayā; dar rah-i 'iṣq-i-tū kamar tūṭṭā hai.
Garcī badam guft raqīb-i kuṭṭan; uskā kahā mat karo yah jhūṭṭā hai.
Gāh nagufta ki Jamālī tū baith; tham karo, kyā apnā karam phuṭṭā hai.⁵⁷*

I became wretched and weak; I am plundered. On the path of your
love one breaks his back.

Though my mischievous rival spoke ill of me, don't do what he says,
he's false!

Didn't he say many times, 'Jamali, sit down here, pull yourself together,
is your fate broken?'

Though Ja'far's Rekhta in the album mentioned above used Persian
half-lines mixed with Braj Bhasha, the blend of Persian and Khari
Boli of this last poem proved to be more popular among sixteenth-
century authors.

⁵⁶There is a work play here. If a loincloth can be tied in several layers, it
means that its wearer is extremely emaciated. The idiom 'to tie a loincloth' also
means to renounce the world.

⁵⁷Sherani 1930: 16; Jalibi 1977: 52.

There are even more occasional Rekhta poems by Persian poets
from Humayun's and Akbar's time, as the examples of Bahram
Saqqa Bukhari and his contemporaries Mu'aiyid Beg Kur, 'the Blind',
and Mashhadi show. The identical rhythm and the rhymes of their
Rekhtas suggest that all may have been written for the same poetic
gathering, and they are a one-off experiment.⁵⁸ The first quotation
is by Saqqa, the second by Mu'aiyid and the third by Mashhadi,

[1]

*Bāz hindū bacca-i qaṣd-e dilam dhartī hai; kūch nahā jāno az in khasta
(ki) kyā⁵⁹ kartī hai.*

*Cin bar abrū zada barbasta kaṭāra⁶⁰ ba-miyām; cal cal ay dil manigar
tūjh kane⁶¹ ū lartī hai.⁶²*

*Hāt mahandī lāyhā⁶³ dast farū burda ba khūn; kih base kushta zi dastān-
i gham-ash martī hai....*

*Cup kar ay dil shuda Saqqā zi gham-e yār manāl; gar jafā raft ba jān tū
miyān kartī hai.*

An Indian girl wants to take my heart again.

— You do not know what she is doing to this poor one!

With brows knit and the dagger tucked at her waist,

Go, get away, o my heart, do not watch, she is fighting with you.

⁵⁸The poems appear in an album which was possibly written between 1556
and 1572 and was found by Nazir Ahmad at the Library of Habibganj. See Nazir
Ahmad: 'Salāṭīn-i mugaliya kā nayā kalām.' *Fiqr-o nazar-e aligarh*, Jan 1963, quoted
in Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. I: 444. Sherani (1931: 78-79) quotes f. 183 of the
manuscript of Saqqa's *Divān* as the source of the poem but does not give the
details of the manuscript. Jafar and Jain (1998, vol. I: 444) mention that copies
of this *Divān* are found in the Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna and at the Bhandarkar
Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

⁵⁹Emendation from *kī*.

⁶⁰Emendation from *kaṭāra*.

⁶¹Emendation from *tū cī kunī*.

⁶²Zaidi (1993: 29) gives a metrically correct variant reading of the first two
couplets, but his source is not indicated.

⁶³This word is problematic. The metre would require two short syllables
and a long one.

The henna on her hand is as if she had plunged it into blood,
That many die at the hands of grief for her!...
Be silent, o lost-in-love Saqqa, don't lament the sorrow caused by the
beloved,
If torment penetrates your soul, you act as its sheath.

[2]

*Hargah ān sāqī-yi-hindī ki ṭarab kartī hai; kāsa-yi mai zi sharāb-i-lab-i
khuḍ bhartī⁶⁴ hai.*

*Khawāham aḥvāl-i dīl-i khwīsh bigūyam bā tū; lek az nāzuki-yi ṭab'(yi)
tū-am dartī hai.*

*Gasht cūn qīssa-o-afsāna ba har pīr-o-javān; ki Mu'aiyid zi gham-i 'ishq-
i bate marte hai.⁶⁵*

Whenever the Hindi Saqi is making merriment she fills my cup with
the wine of her lips.

I want to tell you the condition of my heart but I fear because your
disposition is so fragile.

The news, like stories and fairy tales, reached all, young and old, that
Mu'aiyid dies out of his love for an idol.

[3]

*Hindū-y cashm-i tū goftam ki ba-man laṭtī hai; raft dar khanda o goftā
ki mughal ḍartī hai.⁶⁶*

I complained that her black eyes were ever at war with me.
She burst into laughter, 'Oh! the Mughal is afraid'.

Common to the authors of these Rekhta poems is that they are
Persian poets and their Rekhta is scant. While they use the Persian
ghazal form, their rhymes and end-rhymes are in Hindavi and the
rest of the lines are to a varying extent in Persian conforming to Mir's
third category, namely the use of Persian verbs, prepositions and
conjunctions within a Hindi line. The feminine is not a fortunate
solution in the rhymes. We might understand this use of the feminine
in several ways. It could be due to Dakkanī influence, where the

⁶⁴The original reads *bartī*; the emendation is by Jafar and Jain.

⁶⁵Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. I: 444 and Zaidi 1993: 29.

⁶⁶Ibid.

protagonist can be feminine. Or perhaps it was used for the masculine
in this form. Or else, the *ī* verb ending (as in *dartī*) could have
been pronounced as *-e* for the masculine plural. Some critics have
argued that this confusion is due to the authors' limited acquaintance
with Hindavi.⁶⁷

Jaimal's album also contains a poem with the *takhallus* 'Bairam'.
Bairam is a Turkish name meaning 'the Festival of 'Id'. The only literary
figure known to us with this pen-name is Abdurrahim's father, Bairam
Khan (1525–1561), author of Persian and Turki *Dīwāns*.⁶⁸ Even
though the poem is not found in these *Dīwāns*, and the attribution
to Bairam Khan may be doubtful, we cannot exclude the possibility
that the poem was composed by another person of this name. The
Turkish pen-name suggests Mughal authorship.

*Dilā kun yād-i ān s'at darūn-i gor jab sove; 'azāb-i sakht-tarīn⁶⁹ bāshad
ki lohū ānsuwān rove.*

*Na ānjā khwīsh nai qurbat na sāthī bāp aur bhāī; na zan farzand ko belī
dar-ān tārīk tanhāī.*

*Biāyad jānsitān nāgah cū⁷⁰ malak ul-maut darbārat; jo haigā jīv kar
sancā kunad dar yak zamān gārat.*

*Tihī raftand ān mardum jinhō ke lākh the pāle; na bā-khud burd yak jital
ki rete hāth uṭh cāle....*

*Gumān dāram dar īn dunyā do gaz ghar bās arū māī; pasārā dūr kar
candīn cū luqmān bāndh rah tāī.*

*(ki) Bairām naqd jo hove (to) ṣarf-i rāh-i ū kīje; are jo chāḍkar jānān
harā'in khāe le līje.⁷¹*

O heart, remember the hour when you'll sleep inside a tomb. There
will be such terrible torment that you will weep tears of blood.
There is no family, no kinsman, no companion, no father or brother.
No woman will protect her child in that dark desolateness.

⁶⁷Mas'ud Hasan Rizvi, 'Mirāsi-yi rekhta', in *Tahrīr-i Dillī*. April-June 1971:
8. Quoted in Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. I: 445.

⁶⁸Ross 1910.

⁶⁹Emendation from the *sakht-tar*.

⁷⁰This word is hypermetrical here.

⁷¹Sherani 1931: 84.

Suddenly the Angel of Death, Taker of Souls, arrives at your court.
 Whatever happens, concentrate in your heart, because it plunders
 you at once.
 Millions who were nourished⁷² were not even to take one *jītal*⁷³ when
 they left with empty hands....
 I am proud in this world to have two yards for home and soil. Running
 around, I have stretched as much as Luqman who fenced the road.⁷⁴
 Bairam, spend the money you have in God's path; oh, if you abandon
 the Beloved, consider it defeat.

There is another poem in the same album, with the pen-name Faizi.
 At least two known poets are candidates for its authorship. One is
 Sheikh Allah-dad Sirhindi, the author of the dictionary *Madār ul-*
Afāzil (*Pivot of the Most Learned Ones*, 1592) and of a contemporary
 history called *Akbar-nāma* (1601),⁷⁵ the other one is Abu'l-Fazl's
 brother and Akbar's poet laureate Abu'l-Faiz Faizi (1547/8–1595).
 The poem in this album follows a Persian template with a strong
 input of Hindavi words:

*Ay ān-ki hast la'lat cūn āb-i zindagāni; tā tishna lab namīram inak
 pulāo pānī.
 Guftī fasāna gūyam jānān ba jān va lekin; tū sust man pareshān ky kar
 bane kahānī.
 Ay dīl zi la'l-i jānān kāmam nagasht hāšil; zīrā-ki zar nadāram vo bastu
 hai birānī.
 Man dardmand-i 'ishqam bār man kanūn vafā kun; 'umram guzasht
 dar gam nis jāgte bahānī.
 Ba-shnū to faizi az man ba-gzār rū-yi jānān; tū 'āshiq-i va sāda vo zāt
 hai sayānī.⁷⁶*

⁷²An alternative meaning is: 'People who protected millions are left empty-handed.'

⁷³I was not able to interpret this word.

⁷⁴This must be a reference to the legendary, pre-Islamic sage, Luqman. Luqman's name is linked to many proverbs and fables. I was not able to find a reference to this story of Luqman's fencing of the road.

⁷⁵Hadi 1995: 146.

⁷⁶Sherani 1931: 83.

O, you, whose ruby-lips are like the water of life; behold, here is rice
 and water, so that I don't die of thirst.
 Oh beloved to my heart, you told me to tell my story, but you are lazy
 and me disturbed; how could the story build up?
 O my heart, my desire got no fulfilment from her ruby-lips, since I do
 not have gold and she is a treasure belonging to others.
 I am afflicted by love, fulfil your promise now. My life was spent in
 sorrow and I spend my nights awake.
 Listen to me, oh Faizi, leave the face of the beloved! You are a lover and
 are honest, and she is of a clever race.

The above attributions to Bairam and to Faizi (whichever one he
 may be) remain somewhat uncertain. Nor can we exclude later
 appropriations of a famous author's name as was the case with
 Khusrau. Nevertheless, the identification of Faizi and Bairam with
 Mughal noblemen would fit well with the syncretistic picture of
 the Mughal court. Other sources, too, seem to corroborate this
 attribution.⁷⁷

As Babur's example showed, it was not only Persian that was
 cast against Hindavi in Rekhta poems. The experimenting spirit at
 Akbar's court is attested by the macaronic poems attributed to
 Abdurrahim Khankhanan 'Rahim' (1556–1627). He mixed Khari
 Boli with Sanskrit and used not the ghazal but the quatrain form in
 Sanskritic metres. His *Madanāṣṭaka* is in the malini metre, while the
 following poem in shardulavikridita:

*Ekasmin divasāvasānasamaye māi thā gayā bāga mē;
 Kācit tatra kuramgabālanayanā gula toraṭī thī khari.
 Tām drṣṭvā navayauvanām śaśimukhīm māi moha mē jā parā;
 No jīvāmi vinā tvayā śṛnu priye tū yāra kaise mile.⁷⁸*

One day at dusk I went to a garden
 Where a woman with eyes like a young gazelle stood plucking flowers.

⁷⁷Sherani, for example, mentioned that he had seen other Rekhtas attributed
 to Abu'l Fazl and to Faizi (1931: 83).

⁷⁸Mishra and Rajnish, 1985: 173 and Chauduri 1954: 22. Neither of them
 mention their source.

Glimpsing that woman in her prime, whose face shone like the moon,
I fell in love.

I do not live without you, listen my beloved, how can I meet you?

It should be mentioned that multilingual compositions are not exceptional in Indian literature, or indeed in any literary culture which is either multilingual or is marked by diglossia between a classical language and vernacular(s).⁷⁹ Sanskrit dramas already used different Prakrits according to the characters' role and social status. Dialogue across linguistic boundaries in early modern times was also alive in south India both in historical writings⁸⁰ and dramatic literature.⁸¹

Mixing idioms did not stop at drawing on two languages. The Maharastrian Jayarama Pindye's *Rādhāmādhavavilāsacampū* used twelve, while in north India a quatrain written in Sanskrit, Braj, Gujarati, Marathi, Rajasthani, Khari Boli, Punjabi, Persian/Arabic and Telugu, a real virtuoso performance, is attributed to the above-mentioned Rahim:

Bhartā prācīm gato me (Sanskrit) *bahuri na bagade* (Braj) *śhū karū re have hū* (Gujarati)

Mājhi karmāci goṣṭhi (Marathi) *aba puna sanasi (?) gāmṭha dholo nāi the* (Rajasthani)

Mhāri tirā sunerā (Rajasthani) *kharaca bahut hai* (Khari Boli) *iharā tābarā ro (?)*

Ditṭhi taimḍi dilō dī (Punjabi) *isāqa ila fidā* (Persian/Arabic) *oḍipo vaccanāḍū*⁸² (Telugu)

⁷⁹See e.g. María Angeles Gallego, 'The languages of medieval Iberia and their religious dimension', *Medieval Encounters* 9, 1, 2003: 107–39 and Claudio Giovanardi, 'Il bilinguismo italiano-latino del medioevo e del Rinascimento', *Storia della lingua italiana*, vol. 2, *Lo Scritto e il Parlato*, Torino: Einaudi 1994: 435–67. I owe this information to Francesca Orsini.

⁸⁰Subrahmanyam 1999: 280–321.

⁸¹The Telugu play *Annadāmahānatakamu*, for example, uses colloquial Tamil. Rao 1992: 334.

⁸²The Telugu part seems to be a corruption of *āḍḍe-po vaccināḍu*. (*Oḍipo vaccināḍu* means 'he came to be defeated'.)

My husband went east and is not coming back—what shall I do now?
This is my fate.⁸³ Please listen, I do not have a coin in my purse.

Listen to me, the expenses are high and there are many in the family.

In order to see him I sacrifice my heart for love.—'It is he who is coming!'⁸⁴

All the Rekhtas surveyed in this section, apart from Babur's couplet and possibly of Saqqa, Muaiyid and Mashhadi, are preserved in later manuscripts. Yet the relative abundance of macaronic Rekhta from the sixteenth century makes it difficult to question their authenticity on the same grounds as for Baba Farid, Amir Khusrau, Hasan Dehlavi or Namdev.⁸⁵ In the following section I will consider the possible motives that induced poets to compose such macaronic poems.

MOTIVES FOR LINGUISTIC HYBRIDITY

Much research has been done in recent years on language choice in India's multilingual society. Some scholars explain language choice through motives external to the language and its literary culture, while others search for internal forces. Some influential modern theories explain it in terms of its teleological contribution to some project such as proselytising or integration. According to an early idea of Richard Eaton, based on Annemarie Schimmel,⁸⁶ Sufis in Bijapur adopted Dakkani Hindi as an instrument of proselytisation.⁸⁷ In a similar vein, Muzaffar Alam has explained the Mughal choice of Persian on the basis of its non-sectarian aspect, which made Persian an effective tool for negotiating difference within Indian society and

⁸³Literally 'This is the accumulation of my karma'.

⁸⁴Translated on the basis of the Khari Boli transliteration in Mishra and Rajnish 1985: 174.

⁸⁵Surveys of sixteenth century Rekhta in north India can be found in Jalibi 1977: 51–61, Zaidi 1993: 28–35 and Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. I: 428–50.

⁸⁶Annemarie Schimmel, 'The Influence of Sufism on Indo-Muslim Poetry', in Strelka, Joseph P. (ed.), *Anagogic Qualities of Literature*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971: 196. Quoted in Eaton 1978: 143.

⁸⁷The same idea occurs in Zaidi 1993: 20.

thus contributing to the consolidation of the empire.⁸⁸ In his later research, however, Alam seems to have abandoned these ideas.⁸⁹

Another theory based on external motives has been put forward by Sumit Guha, who has examined language choice in the early-modern Maratha region in connection with the power of patronage. According to Guha, languages were marked by a tension between hybridisation and identity. In the case of administration the use of a vernacular invoked shared ethnic and territorial rootedness, while the higher Persianate register signalled cultural superiority as well as a wider subcontinental identity.⁹⁰ He has argued that the same phenomenon can be seen in poetry and was sometimes used to display poetic virtuosity as in the case of the above-mentioned *Rādhāmādhavavilāsacampū*.

Moving away from political and religious explanatory paradigms, Allison Busch and Christina Oesterheld in this volume examine lexical hybridity within the field of literature as a genre- and context-sensitive issue. They both find that a more *tadbhava* register was used for a female voice in opposition to highly Sanskritised or highly Persianised registers.⁹¹ Making a similar point, Shantanu Phukan argued on the basis of works such as the *Bikaṭ kahānī* and a marsiya by Sauda that Hindi was perceived by Mughal elite male authors as 'especially effective in moving emotions' and was embedded in Persian or Persianate Urdu to invoke a domestic female tone as opposed to the male and the non-domestic female world of the ghazals.⁹²

The use of a vernacular for female voice can be observed in a narrative poem from the sixteenth century by 'Ishqi Khan (d. 1582),⁹³ which describes how the Turkish, Tajik and Indian wives of a wealthy

⁸⁸Alam 1998: 349.

⁸⁹On Eaton, see Phukan 2001: 38, note 11. Alam did not emphasise the secular aspect of Persian in Alam 2002.

⁹⁰Guha 2004: 21–22.

⁹¹See Allison Busch and Christina Oesterheld in this volume.

⁹²See Phukan 2001.

⁹³'Ishqi Khan, a descendant of the Turkish spiritual guide Isma'il Tash, was a *mir munshi* during Akbar's reign and authored a Persian *Divān*. In his Persian qasida, *Sard-o-garm-i zamāna*, he used some Hindi and Turki stanzas. Haq 1931: 101.

jagirdar talk in Turkish, Persian and Hindi respectively. This is, for example, how he is received by his Hindustani wife on his return home,

*Zan-i hindī zi yak ʔaraf gūyad; haū tiri launḏī tū mirā khwandgār;
Tum jo mujh kō piyār karte ho; haū bhī kartī hū tihārā pyār.
Apne kothe pai māi bichāūm palang; ūs ūpar leṭ jō pāō pasār;
Bīc tūm leṭ loṇḏiyā cau-gird; ḥaramān ās pās tum backār.⁹⁴*

On one side the Indian wife said, I am your woman and you are my kind lord;

The way you love me, I love you in the same way.

Let me make up a bed in my room, come and lie down on it stretching your legs.

Lie down surrounded by girls; there are women round here—be careful.

And this is how an Indian wife receives a poor husband:

*Zan-e hindī zi yak ʔaraf gūyad; terī mā golī terā bāp camār;
Jhūṭh tujh thē bahut sunā mat bol; sac tirā haū kahaū mirā mat mār.
Tujh thē mujh ko na rotī o pānī; tujh thē mujh kō nahīm savār⁹⁵ o śīgār;
Ab na rāhūm tire khudā kī saū; nikalūngī tihāre ghar thē bahār.⁹⁶*

On one side the Indian wife said, your mother was a cowherd, your father a *camār*;

Don't say a word, I have heard enough lies from you, if I tell you the truth, don't beat me.

I get neither bread nor water from you, nor carriage, delicious food nor ornament.

I won't stay with you, I swear, I will leave your house.

Phukan briefly considered the possibility that the motive behind mixed-language could be irony, as was the case for Latin-Italian

⁹⁴Haq 1931: 101. An alternative interpretation of the last expression is, *ba-ci kār* 'what are you doing?'

⁹⁵Emendation from *savār*.

⁹⁶Haq 1931: 102.

macaronic parodies of the Renaissance.⁹⁷ Although he quickly dismissed the idea in favour of a more homely or pathetic effect, the humorous effect of the 'Persian' couplet attributed to Khusrau, Rahim's macaronic poem or 'Ishqi Khan's mimetic lines seems unequivocal.

Sometimes we have an indication from the users of the languages themselves on how they perceived the 'ecology of Hindavi' in their literary world. I have mentioned above Nizamuddin Auliya quoting—and apparently seconding—Faḡih Madhaw's opinion that Shaikh Ahmad Nahravani was wasting his time on Hindavi songs. We can see a more straightforward condemnation of Hindavi in the discourses of Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri (d. 1381), who once forbade the singing of a Hindavi chakri saying that

Chakri is found on the lips of women. It is a very free sort of thing. There were also some young men in the assembly. Can you tell me where one and all acquire the power to bear such things? Confusion would result, for 'melodious songs are as enchanting as adultery'. For that reason it was forbidden. If, however, it takes place in privacy, and all present are ascetics, men of struggle with self and having much knowledge, as well as being capable of making lawful exceptions, then they can do so.⁹⁸

At another musical gathering where after some Persian songs the minstrels had switched to Hindavi, Maneri said:

Hindavi compositions are very forthright and frank in expression. In purely Persian verses, there is a judicious blend of allusion and what can be fittingly expressed, whereas Hindavi employs very frank expressions. There is no limit to what it explicitly reveals. It is very disturbing. It is extremely difficult for young men to bear such things.

⁹⁷Phukan 2001: 33–58. Giovanardi 1994, however, distinguishes between 'pedantic' texts of a serious nature, which combined the morphology of the vernacular with vocabulary from classical Latin; medieval Latin and the vernacular, and macaronic poems whose phonology and morphology looked like Latin for parody. I owe the latter reference to Francesca Orsini.

⁹⁸*Bahr ul-ma'ānī* (Ocean of Meanings, unnumbered manuscript in the Fatuha (sic!) collection in the Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, 759 AH/1358), translated in Jackson 1987: 111.

Without any delay they would be upset. This is why there are difficulties involved in allowing young men to listen to such things. The members of this group, however, experience only grief and pain.⁹⁹

It is not difficult to imagine the growing fashion of Hindavi singing hinted at by these lines, and the perplexity of the older generation. We can also assume that since songs in Persian (and Arabic) and other languages alternated at Muslim musical gatherings, multilingual compositions must not have been out of place. In fact, Maneri's condemnation seems to have been of no avail since Hindavi words and verses begin to appear in the Persian writings of his followers, especially in those of Muzaffar Shams Balkhi (d. 1400/01).¹⁰⁰

Other authors similarly conversant with Persian and Hindavi such as Gesudaraz and, four hundred years later, Anandram 'Mukhlis' underlined the emotional capacities of Hindavi.¹⁰¹ In the earliest phase of Hindavi literature, Gesudaraz is credited to have emphasised the tenderness, clarity and musicality in this language¹⁰², while Anandram 'Mukhlis' spoke about the Hindavi romance *Padmāvat* as having 'an eastern melody brimming over with pain',¹⁰³ evidence that Hindavi retained a similar emotional appeal in the eighteenth century. Sumit Guha suggests that embedding eastern Hindi dialects in Persian or Persianate Urdu texts was a choice that aristocratic men of letters made to evoke intimate domains of affection and

⁹⁹*Mukhkh ul-ma'ānī* (The Core of Spiritual Realities), Agra: Mufid-i Am Press 1903: 154. Translated in Jackson 1987: 134.

¹⁰⁰Jackson 1987: 135.

¹⁰¹While discussing the early use of Hindavi in *sama'* gatherings, Athar Abbas Rizvi, the author of the monumental *A History of Sufism in India*, voices a similar opinion claiming that Hindavi songs 'were not composed for propaganda purposes but were a natural evolution from the deep and personal involvement of ... mystics with their environment. Hindavi was a more convenient language in which to utter the feelings of a heart filled with divine love'. Rizvi 1978, vol. 1: 327.

¹⁰²*Jāmi al-kalām*: (Compendium of works) *Khawājā Gesudarāz Sayyid Muhammad Akbar Husainī kī vānī*. Intizāmī Press, Usmānganj, 1937/8: 172–73. Trans. into English in Rai 1991: 121.

¹⁰³*Ibid.* Also Phukan 2001: 34–35.

loss especially connected to childhood, when they were surrounded by the rustic speech of the unlettered wet-nurses and attendants in the women's quarters.¹⁰⁴

Another possibility is that writing poetry in a mixed language meant imitating spoken usage. In pre-modern India, as today, informal speech very often mixed phrases and words of an Indian cosmopolitan language with those of a vernacular, as the example of the *mal'uzat* showed. Mixing, however, also had its rules. Normally a vernacular was mixed with a cosmopolitan language, and it is rare that elements of two vernaculars were mixed consciously.

The list of external and internal forces mentioned so far is far from exhaustive and further possible motives could have been at work behind linguistic choice and hybridity. For example, in the case of Sant poets such as Dadu Dayal, literary polyglossia was a powerful means of reaching out and impressing the audience.

Noblemen of Turkish descent such as Bairam Khan, Rahim and 'Ishqi may have felt encouraged by the innovative and hybridising spirit of the Mughal court to experiment with the several languages at their disposal, including those of the Mughals' ancestors and of the people of the country. It was, however, not only Turki noblemen who tried Rekhta. The unprecedented nature of cross-cultural interaction at the Mughal court between intellectuals whose work belonged to Sanskrit and Persian traditions has already been noted by Sheldon Pollock.¹⁰⁵ In Persian poetry a call for the new, and a dislike of imitation appeared as the preference for the *tāza-gū'ī* (freshness in composition)¹⁰⁶, while in the imperial painting studios this spirit manifested itself as the 'delight in originality' of artists like Daswant¹⁰⁷ and produced the unique Mughal style of miniatures uniting elements of Irani, Dakkani, Rajasthani and European painting.

Motivation behind the use of mixed language composition cannot be explained with one factor or another but should rather

¹⁰⁴Guha 2004: 20.

¹⁰⁵Pollock 2001: 20.

¹⁰⁶Alam 2002: 172-74.

¹⁰⁷Beach 1992: 41.

be perceived as the working of multifarious rationale with different intensity at different places and at different stages.

REKHTA IN THE NAGARI SCRIPT: EARLY STRAY POEMS (*MUKTAKAS*)

We have seen so far that Rekhta poetry in the Persian script was cultivated in the Deccan, in Sufi circles in north India and was patronised by the Mughal court already in the sixteenth century. In this section we will see that the same genre was taken up by Hindu religious poets in the second half of the sixteenth century. Since we have scarce material at our disposal, it is difficult to tell exactly under what circumstances Rekhta in the Nagari script emerge.

The oldest corpus of Rekhta poems in the Nagari script can be found among Nirgun Sants, whose teachings often contested and blurred the Hindu-Muslim division and whose mixed language could sometimes be very close to Khari Boli. Indeed it is the linguistically most adventurous Sant poet, Dadu Dayal (1544-1603), who not only used elements from different languages or dialects with confidence but composed poems in Rajasthani, Gujarati, Braj, Punjabi, Persian and Sindhi. His use of Khari Boli may have been prompted by the similar practice of the Sufis and the increasing popularity of Rekhta in the Mughal court. His literature is attested in early manuscript material and his Khari Boli *muktakas* can be considered to be the earliest extant examples of Nagari Rekhta. The following song, rather Sufistic in content, is already present in a manuscript from 1636 and no substantial variant readings exist to it:¹⁰⁸

*Alā terā jikar phikar karte hāi;
Āsaka mustāka tere; tarasi tarasi marate hāi.
Salaka ṣesa digarā nesa; baiṭhai dina bharate hāi.
Dāima darabāri tere; gaira mahala qarate hāi.*

¹⁰⁸Dādū Mahāvīdyālay No. 12. It is also present in mss from VS 1715, 1733, 1765 and 1770. On the solid manuscript tradition of Dadu see Callewaert and Beeck 1991, vol. I: 14.

Tana saḥīda mana saḥīda; rāti divasa larate haī.
 Gyāna terā dhyāna terā; isaka āgi jarate haī.
 Jāna terā jyāda terā; pāu sira dharate haī.
 Dādū divāna terā; jara ṣarīda ghara ke haī.

(Dadu Pad 398)¹⁰⁹

O God, I remember and reflect upon you.
 I am your passionate lover dying of intense longing.
 I have no other place [?] in the world; I spend my days sitting here.
 I am your permanent courtier—frightened outside your palace.
 My body is martyred, my soul is martyred; I fight day and night.
 My knowledge is yours, my meditation is yours; I burn in the fire of love.
 My soul is yours, my life is yours; I bow my head to your feet.
 Dadu is your steward; I am of your house bought with your money.

Dadu also experimented with the consciously mixed language of the Mughals by interspersing his Hindavi with long Persian phrases as in *Pad* 81.¹¹⁰

By the early seventeenth century the Sants developed their own vehicle of expression in a language that mixes various vernacular languages and dialects and what is by modern Hindi scholars called *Sadhukkari* (*sādhukkari bhāṣā*). This must be the reason why, though many of Dadu's disciples had a rich literary output in *sadhukkari*, most of them did not continue their guru's experiments with Hindavi–Persian hybridity or with Khari Boli, with the exceptions of Sundardas and Vajid. Here is an example by Sundardas where the first line of the poem is almost entirely in Khari Boli (with one Persian word) and the second is in Braj Bhasha:

Maī hī ati gāphila huī rahī seja para soi.
 Sundara piya jāgai sadā kyaūkari melā hoi.¹¹¹

4 (*Bandagī kau aṃga*) 27

¹⁰⁹Callewaert and Beeck 1991, vol. I: 263. Further examples include *padas* 75, 81, 84, 271 etc.

¹¹⁰Callewaert and Beeck 1991, vol. I: 213.

¹¹¹Callewaert and Beeck 1991, vol. I: 517.

I was too negligent and remained asleep on the bed.
 My beautiful beloved is always awake.—In what way can we meet?

Vajid¹¹² (fl. 1600), today a relatively unknown author¹¹³, was, according to the *Bhaktamāl* of Raghavdas¹¹⁴, a Pathan Muslim. When he killed a pregnant gazelle, compassion arose in his heart. He broke his bow and arrows and without returning home set off in search of a guru, which he later found in the person of Dadu. From the mention of Khadgasen as his office-keeper and Khadgasen's reference to him as *thākur* we can surmise that he was a landlord. Raghavdas counts Vajid among the hundred disciples of Dadu Dayal and several of his *padas* and *sākhīs* are also collected in the Dadupanthi *Sarvāṃgīs* of Rajjab (1620?) and Gopaldas (1627) and in Jagannath's *Guṇ Gañjanāmo*. His most celebrated works are his stray *arillas* that have been published four times in four different books,¹¹⁵ and which inspired the modern guru Osho to deliver discourses on Vajid.¹¹⁶

Over hundred different works of his are mentioned in manuscript catalogues.¹¹⁷ Most of them fall into the Nirgun Sant tradition and many are about morals (*nīti*). He was, however, a prolific author

¹¹²On Vajid and his Rekhta see Bangha 2005.

¹¹³Apart from two *padas* and some 180 *sākhīs* (*dohās* and *arillas*) in the *Sarvāṃgī* of Gopaldas the only published poems of Vajid are his *arillas* in modern collections such as the *Pañcāmṛt* (Mangaldas 1948). Indeed it is his *arillas* that, even today, are current as popular sayings in Rajasthan. (Maheshvari 1980: 126).

¹¹⁴Raghavdas: *Bhaktamāl* 428; Nahta 1965: 201–2.

¹¹⁵Ayodhyasingh Visharad, 1932 *Vājīnd kī arelāṃ*. Mangaldas, 1948, *Pañcāmṛt*. Dadu 1976 (VS 2033); Maharsī Vājīdji *Mahārāj ke arill*; Rajnis, 2004, *Pañcāmṛt aur Pañcrang: Madhyakālīn sant-kaviyom kī prāmāṇik pāth-sampādan*: 43–72.

¹¹⁶Osho, 1995, *Khai Vājīd pukār: Ośo dvārā Vājīd vāṇī par die gae das amṛt pravacanō kī apratim saṃskāran*.

¹¹⁷More than sixty of his compositions can be found in the City Palace collection in Jaipur. We have considerable manuscript material from his lifetime or from right after his death. His earliest manuscript, containing his eight works is dated from 1600 and we have a manuscript of his *Guṇ Gañjanāmo* from 1613, of his *padas* and *Guṇ ajāib-nāmo* from 1636. A critical edition of his works is being prepared by Daksha Mistry and myself.

whose literary output include entertaining religious works such as *Andhā kūbrā sagun* 'Omens of the blind and the hunchback', *Guṇ rājkr̥t* (or 'The acts of the king: The story of the previous birth of a king, a carpenter a merchant and a leper') or *Guṇ mūrikh-nāmo* 'The book of the stupid'.

His published works do not show any significant use of Khari Boli or Perso-Arabic vocabulary and the editor of his *arillas* in the *Pañcāmṛt* is astonished by the fact that 'he used a very pure form of Hindi'.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless some titles suggest a greater influence of Persianate culture such as the *Guṇ Sekh Saṃvād* or the *Guṇ Sūphī-nāmau* while his works on separation such as *Guṇ Virah-nāmau* 'The book of separation', *Virahvilās* or *Virah sumiraṇ hit upākhyān* suggest a Krishna-ite context. Vajid's *Rekhta* includes some technical musical terms such as *Malhār* and *Ahīrī* (names of ragas) or *mandra* (lower pitch), evidence that the author was at home in the world of music, and that it would be fruitful to examine further the earliest links between the use of *Rekhta* and music.

Vajid is the author of a work called by its scribes *Rekhta* or *Śrī rekhtā thākur kā*,¹¹⁹ 'The *Rekhta* of the Lord'. This is a collection of 14 *kavittas* in *Rekhta*, of which I have found four manuscript copied in 1651, 1655, 1752 and one sometime after 1667. The grammar of this work is Khari Boli with very strong traces of Braj. One of the most salient features of the text is the high number of Perso-Arabic words: 104 different words of Perso-Arabic origin are used 155 times, which means a proportion of 19 per cent.

In a few poems the Sufi idea of linking worldly love to transcendental love is dominant while the majority of the quatrains are concerned with the Vaishnava (and courtly) theme of the cowherd-women's separation from Krishna. The beloved is sometimes God described as a woman (*kavittas* 1, 4, 10) but more often it is Krishna. Sometimes the lovers speak directly to one another and sometimes we hear the words of a messenger as favoured by the Indian tradition. A popular context is the cowherd women's complaint to Krishna's messenger, Uddhava,

¹¹⁸Mangaldas 1948: p. ka.

¹¹⁹Pothikhana 2422, 3404, Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur no. 10902(1) and Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad no. 2145(3): 1354.

Gopī gāi gvalani tau behāla hāi bihārī bina
Hotā na mālumma makasūda kyā tumhārā hāi;
Ināyāta rahai makāmma kīne hai kamala naina
Maimnamathi mārai mādhai cārā kyā hamārā hai;
Jau tau takasira kachu bhāi hai hamārī Hari
Kīṭīye jū māpha tuma jīte hama hāryā hai;
Tuma tau sahhā hau sāmkhī sāncī kini kahau bali
Udhau brajanātha braja kāhe tāi bisārā hai. (7)

Without Krishna the cowherd-women, the cows and the cowherds are despondent.

'Nobody knows what you are up to.

The lotus eyed one favoured us, taking up residence in us—We have been smitten by the 'Soul-Churner' Love, O Krishna, what is our way out?

If ever we offended, Hari, please forgive us, you have won, we are defeated.

You are his friend—whom else can we call a true witness?—Uddhava, why has the Lord of Braj abandoned us?¹²⁰

In the following poem the masculine verbal form in the expression *khalak hī yāra huvā* 'the world has been made her lover' suggests a male lover,

Dila kī dilāsā sārī dunī kā tamāsā kuli
Gama kā karāra dunī dekhai jīsa ūba hai;
Vākī muhabati dekhāi khātari māi yau kyau avai
Ālama kī sāhibi tau aīsī jaisī dūbā hai;
Rāga khūba raṅgā khūba āmkhāi khūba bhaumhai khūba
Hausa khūba hāmsī khūba, sabhā kaisī khūba hai;
Umara kī khūbī para khalaka hī yāra huvā
Kaumna kaumna khūbī kahaū khūba mahabūba hai (1)

All consolation of the heart, the whole spectacle of the world and the permanence of sorrow—witnessing this one loses spirit.

¹²⁰Some phrases are addressed to Krishna and the last line is directed to Uddhava. It is possible that the cowherd-women unconsciously address Uddhava as Krishna. Such double vocatives are also found in Surdas.

Seeing her love why should I show regard for this? The dominance of the world is only like a blade of grass.

Her passion is splendid, her colour is splendid, her eyes are splendid, her eyebrows are splendid, her desire is splendid, her smile is splendid and how splendid is her purity.

With the splendour of her prime youth all creation has been made her lover. Why pronounce on her splendour? The beloved is splendid.

Other Sants outside Dadu's lineage continued this tradition. For example, Malukdas (1574–1682?) from Kara (Allahabad) frequently used a Khari Boli template with Perso-Arabic words in his *padas* and especially in his *kavittas*,

Bhīla kada kari thī bhalāi jiyā āpa jāna

Phīla kada huā thā murīda kahu kisakā.

Gīdha kada jñāna kī kitāba kā kinārā chuā

Byādha aura badhika nisāpha kahu tisakā.

Nāga kada mālā lai ke bandagī kari thī baitha

Mujhako bhī lagā thā ajāmīla kā hisakā.

Ete badarāhō kī badī kari thī māpha jana

*Malūka ajātī para etī kari risa kā.*¹²¹

Has a tribal ever done any good intentionally?

Has an elephant ever become a disciple of anyone?

Has a vulture ever touched the edge of a book of knowledge?

Has a fowler or a hunter done any justice to it?

Has a snake ever welcomed anyone sitting with a garland?

— I also had a rivalry with Ajamil.

You have pardoned the sins of many wicked people,

Why are you so angry with your worshipper, the casteless Maluk?

Ten words out of 60 in this poem are of Perso-Arabic origin. Malukdas used an even more Persianised language (24 out of 83

¹²¹*Malukdāsī kī vānī* 1912: 30. The transmission history of Malukdas's poems has not yet been studied critically. There is a possibility that some of his songs belong to later poets of the same name.

words) abounding in Islamic technical terms, where a stronger Sufistic message was intended,

Terā maī dīdār divānā.

Gharī gharī tujhe dekhā cāhū, suna sāheba rahamānā.

Huā alamasta khabara nahī tana kī piyā prema piyālā,

Thārha hoū to giri giri paratā tere rāga matavālā.

Kharā rahū darabāra tumhāre jyō ghara kā bandājādā,

Nekī kī kulāha sira dīye gale pairahana sājā.

Taujī aura nimāja na jānū nā jānū dhari rojā,

Bānga jikira tabahī se bisari, jaba se yaha dila khojā.

Kahāī malūka aba kajā na karihaū dila hī sō dila layā,

*Makka hajja hiye mē dekhā purā murasīda pāyā.*¹²²

I am crazy about seeing you.

I want to see you every moment, hear me, o gracious lord!

I became intoxicated, I do not know my body; I drank the cup of love.

If I stand up, then I fall again and again—drunk with the colour of your love.

Let me stand in your royal assembly as a slave born in your house.

I donned the hat of virtue and wear its cloak on my shoulders.

I know no arguments, no prayer, I do not know how to fast.

Since I searched my heart I have abandoned the muezzin's call and the remembrance of God.

Maluk says, now I won't make up for my missed prayers, I willingly fell in love.

I have seen Mekka and the Pilgrimage in my heart, and received my perfect spiritual guide.

Apart from the Perso-Arabic and in the Devanagari scripts Khari Boli was also written in Gurmukhi in early Sikh literature. Janamsakhis, such as Miharvan Sodhi's *Janama sākhi śrī guru Nānakdevjī* or Hariji Sodhi's *Gosati guru Miharivānu*,¹²³ written in Sadhukkari, mixed Braj features with Khari Boli and Punjabi. Some

¹²²*ibid*: 6.

¹²³Singh 1962, Rajguru 1974.

works, such as the *Ādi Rāmāin* by Miharvanu Sodhi 'Manohardas' (1580–1640), the grandson of Guru Ramdas, are occasionally dominated by Khari Boli. In contrast with the Nirgun Sant works mentioned above, in the Sikh compositions Khari Boli is very strongly mixed with other dialects and the high input of Perso-Arabic vocabulary is missing.

*Tab brahmādik kī bārī āi. Tab brahmādi ehi kahiā jī he srī dev jī mujh kau ehi lamkā dehi. Tab srī Mahādev kahiā jī mai dīnī. Tab itne kahne sāth pārbatī karodhu diā. Ji he adharmī tujh daū ehu bāt kiu kari kahinī āi hai? Mai aje iskau dekhi bhī nahī nibadī. Paru jāhi je sati paramaisur hai. Taba je kou is lamkā ke bīe bādēga so tatkāl hī bināsu hoi jāegā. Tab lamkā kau pārbatī kā sarāpu bhāiā.*¹²⁴

Then it was the turn of Brahma's son, Brahmadi. Brahmadi said 'O great god, give me this very Lanka.' Shiva said: '(It's yours.) I have given it to you.' When this much was said Parvati became angry: 'O you unlawful one, how could you say this? I haven't even seen it fully yet. But I swear by the highest God, if anyone enters this Lanka, he will die immediately. So Lanka was cursed by Parvati.

Although the early practice of Nagari Rekhta can be found chiefly among Nirgun Sants, an early Krishna-poet also experimented with it. Here is an example of the use of Khari Boli with Perso-Arabic vocabulary which comes from the heartland of Braj, from Vrindaban. It is a song by Svami Haridas, the founder of a school of Krishna devotion who is also celebrated as the initiator of the *dhrupad* style of singing.¹²⁵ In this case we lack manuscript evidence prior to the mid-eighteenth century, and there is a shade of uncertainty regarding its authorship and date, yet it is difficult to imagine that this odd poem would make its way to the limited sectarian Haridas corpus from outside and would withstand the 'Brajifying' tendencies of the scribes,

¹²⁴Shastri 1989: 4.

¹²⁵For Svami Haridas, see Rosenstein 1997.

*Bande akhatiyāra bhalā;
Cita na dūlāva āvā samādhi bhitar na hohu agalā;
Na phiri dara dara pidara dara na hohu adhalā;
Kahi haridāsa karatā kiya su huvā sumera acala calā.
(6 Aṣṭādash Siddhānta)¹²⁶*

O, worshipper, this choice is good.

Waver not in mind, enter into profound meditation, be not an adversary; Do not wander from door to door [or seek] your father's door, do not be blind.

Haridās says: what the creator causes, comes to pass—even immovable Meru moved.

(Translated by L. Rosenstein)¹²⁷

Although the poem is far from being pure Khari Boli and has Braj Bhasha forms (like the repeated imperative *hohu, 'be'*) it is rather isolated in the Haridas corpus. It is possible that a poem with Khari Boli features and some Perso-Arabic vocabulary was smuggled into the Haridas corpus in order to justify the Rekhta attempts of eighteenth-century Haridasi poets such as Sahacharisharan and Sitaldas. If this quatrain is genuine then the reason behind the use of Khari Boli forms and Perso-Arabic vocabulary may be an early attempt to evoke the atmosphere of music patronised enthusiastically in Islamic courts. It is also interesting to observe that there is nothing specific about Krishna bhakti here and the poem is rather similar to one by Nirgun Sants.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY—REKHTA IN THE PERSIAN SCRIPT

The seventeenth century saw an increased production of Rekhta in the Persian, the Gurmukhi and the Nagari scripts. According to Faruqi the earliest literary text in Hindi/Hindavi extant in north India is

¹²⁶Rosenstein 1997: 108.

¹²⁷Rosenstein 1997: 189.

the *Bikaṭ Kahānī* (Dire Tale, 1625), a poem of 325 *shī'rs* in the masnavi form describing a woman's pangs of separation during the twelve months of the year, whose author, Muhammad Afzal, is also known by the half-Hindu half-Muslim name of Afzal Gopal.¹²⁸ The problem with this poem is similar to that of the poems of Kabir and others. It was transmitted orally for a long period, and its text is preserved only in eighteenth-century or later manuscripts.¹²⁹ It is possible that the language of the published text does not represent seventeenth-century features.

This poem, Faruqi notes, was neglected by early Urdu tazkira writers and has only been reclaimed as part of Urdu literary history in the twentieth century (Sherani, Zaidi, Faruqi, Jafar and Jain). What could be the reason behind this neglect? Faruqi argues that macaronic poetry has been rejected by eighteenth-century Urdu poets. It can be claimed that probably before the nineteenth century 'Hindi' and 'Urdu' represented a *literary* division within Hindavi manifest in metrical forms and genres (rather than in language or script). Padas, dohas or kabittas were not accepted as part of the high Urdu tradition no matter how Persianate their vocabulary. In much the same way no ghazal or rubai could be produced within the Hindi tradition even if it lacked Persianate vocabulary. However *Bikaṭ Kahānī* belongs at least as much to the popular Indian barahmasas, 'twelve months' poems rejected by Urdu high tradition, as to the Persian masnavi genre.¹³⁰

Out of its 325 couplets 41 are directly in Persian, 20 have one line in Hindavi and one in Persian and another 20 lines are half in Persian and half in Hindavi.¹³¹ Since its Hindavi template is not pure Khari Boli but also shows Braj Bhasha features, *Bikaṭ Kahānī* is very close to the Nagari Rekhta poems. In the following lines, for example, *jare* and *bādara* are Braj Bhasha forms,

¹²⁸His actual poem may be earlier, but the only datum we have about the poet is 1625, the year of his death, though it is generally assumed that he completed the *masnavī* not long before his death.' Faruqi 2001: 113.

¹²⁹Hashimi and Khan 1979: 18–22.

¹³⁰After Mas'ud Sa'd Salman the genre was neglected in Indo-Persian tradition. See Orsini in this volume.

¹³¹Faruqi 2001, p. 117.

*Sakhī bhādō nipaṭ taptī paṛe rī; tamām-e tan-badan merā jare rī.
Siyāh bādar cahārō or chāye; liyā mujh gher piu ajahū na āye.*¹³²

My friend, the rainy season burns me severely; my entire body is aflame.
Dark clouds have spread everywhere and surrounded me—my beloved
has not come yet.

Bikaṭ kahānī is thus truly in an 'intermediary' position—linked to Indian tradition through its genre and to Persian through its metre, which all Urdu Barahmasa writers adopted after Afzal.¹³³ With works such as Vajid's rekhta, the *Bikaṭ Kahānī* and the *Prem Prakāsh* by Shah Barkatuddin Marharvi/Bilgrami (1660–1729), a Sufi and Persian poet, who used the pen-name 'Ishqī in his Persian compositions and *Pemī* in his Hindavi, we see the emergence of a hybrid linguistic and literary *koine* that combines and chooses between Persian language, poetic imagery and metres and Hindi (Khari Boli or Braj Bhasha) phrases, metres and poetic *topoi* and genres.

Prem Prakāsh uses not Perso-Arabic but Braj Bhasha metres and shows an even more sustained engagement with Hindi poetic forms: it contains 202 dohas, 50 rekhtas in kabitt (quatrain) and pad (song) metres, 20 rekhtas in question-answer-form, 113 kabitts and pads, 1000 lines of rekhta besides *irshad* (guidance), *ariza* (humble petition¹³⁴), barahmasa and *sadrta varnan*.¹³⁵ *Pemī* in his Rekhta mixes Persian phrases with Khari Boli inflected by Braj forms,

*Camke tere paṭ oṭa mē mukh rūp ujīyārā—jīvan. sē¹³⁶ badlī mē
Bagzār ki dar rū-i tū bīnīm khudā-rā—ab sūnī galī mē.*¹³⁷

Under your veil your bright face shines like water in a cloud.
Allow me to see God('s manifestation) on you(r face)—in an empty lane.¹³⁸

¹³²Khan 1965, pp. 418–9 quoted in Rai 1984, p. 123–4.

¹³³See Orsini's essay in this volume.

¹³⁴Probably the Urdu form of the Braj *vinaya*.

¹³⁵Zaidi 1993: 21; Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 93–94 and Khan 1966: 130.

¹³⁶*Sē* is the reading of Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 93. Khan 1966 has the uninterpretable *say* here.

¹³⁷Khan 1966: 130.

¹³⁸The interpretation of the tags at the end of both lines is problematic.

Other seventeenth-century authors who composed poems with one line in idiomatic Hindi and one in Persian include Mullah Nuri Azampuri.¹³⁹ Though this kind of macaronic poetry, Mir's third category, continued in the eighteenth century,¹⁴⁰ it was Persianised Hindavi, Mir's fourth category, which became mainstream Rekhta.

Several seventeenth-century Persian poets continued to use Khari Boli and the mixed language as in the previous century. The best documented example is that of Baba Fatah Muhammad (d. 1669), who was the son of Shaikh 'Isa Jand Ullah, a friend of Abdurrahim Khankhanan.¹⁴¹ The following poem is in an Indian moraic metre (16+13 morae) and its language is Braj with some Khari Boli features.

*Isa kula bhītara mīta na kou, āpa svāratha saba dekhe;
Tumha sāga janama akāratha bitā, jo bitā to kita lekhe....
Jhūṭha daghbāzī batamāri, ghāta bisāsī madhu-pīti;
Aba kāhe pachatāvana lāgā, taba kyō soca na mana kitī.
Fataḥa muḥammada kyā samajhāve, nakha-sikha tū yō āludā;
Apanā āpa savāra divāne, aurana sō kyā maqasūdā.¹⁴²*

No one is your friend in this family—everyone is after his own self-interest.

¹³⁹E.g. *Har kas ki kḥiyānat kunad albatta bitarsad; Bicāra-yi Nūrī na kare hai, na ḍare hai.* (Everyone who does treachery is certainly afraid; this poor Nuri does not do it, and he is not afraid.) Jalibi 1977: 59, on the basis of Qa'im Chandpuri's tazkira *Makhzan-i nikāt* (Storehouse of subtle points), Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu, Aurangabad 1929: 3. Also quoted in Sherani 1931: 87. This poet is not identical with Shaikh Muhammad Nur, the author of a prayer in Hindavi published in Sherani 1930: 244–46.

¹⁴⁰As attested by a marsiya of Sauda (*Kulliyāt II*, Allahabad 1971: 376). See Phukan 2001: 45 note 22. Ghazals attributed to Munshi Vali Ram Vali, a Persian poet at Shahjahan's court, follow a similar blend but avoid Braj Bhasha forms. See *Khazīnā al-'ulūm* (Treasury of the sciences) by Durgaparshad Nadir (1879), quoted in Sherani 1930: 235. Also quoted in Jalibi 1977: 71, Zaidi 1993: 64–66, and Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 35–36.

¹⁴¹Fatah Muhammad was the author of a book on religious and Sufi beliefs, the *Fath ul-'aqa'id* (The Triumph of Religious Tenets) and a tract on prayers, the *Miftāḥ us-Ṣalāt* (Key to Blessing). See Hadi 1995: 117.

¹⁴²Sherani 1931: 86–87. The poem was found by Sherani in Jaimal's album dated 1652–56.

Your life has passed in vain. You lived, but for what reason?...

Falsity, deception, robbery, murder, treachery, debauchery—Why did you start to repent it only now? Why did not you think of it then? How much should Fatah Muhammad explain, you are defiled from head to toe.

See to it yourself, madman, why do you expect it from others?

The importance of this poem lies in the fact that it was included into a Persian and Rekhta album and that, despite its linguistic features, was considered to be part of the Persian/Rekhta tradition. The poem was called Rekhta by Sherani although it rather shows Braj Bhasha features with a minimum input of Khari Boli. The distance between the Rekhta of *Bikaṭ kahāni* and that of Fatah Muhammad shows two alternatives of mixed language. Unlike Afzal and Shah Barkatuddin, Fatah Muhammad used Indian metre and a Braj Bhasha template rather than Khari Boli.

A poem attributed to Chandrabhan Brahman (1574–1662),¹⁴³ who was Dara Shikoh's mir munshi and later vazir, shows the blend of Hindavi and Persian that became common in the eighteenth century with Vali Aurangabadi. Although Jalibi claims to have found it in an old album, the first dated occurrence of the poem is in a tazkira called *Khumkhāna-yi Jāved* (1908), and some scholars question its authorship.¹⁴⁴ Its imagery and language, however, suggest an early date of composition. Post-seventeenth century Rekhta is less likely to use archaic forms such as *haman ko* (us), *lāe dālā* (thrown) or the nasalised postpositions *sē* and *kō*,

*Khudā ne kis shahar andar haman ko lāe dālā hai;
Na dilbar hai, na sāqī hai na shīsa hai na pyālā hai.
Piyā ke nāva kī sumran hiyā cāhū karū kissē;
Na tasbī hai na sumran hai na kaṅṭhī hai na mālā hai.
Khuyubān kī bāg mē raunaq hoe to kis taraḥ yārān;
Na daunā hai na marvā hai na sosan hai na lālā hai.*

¹⁴³On Brahman see Rizvi 1978, vol. II: 414, Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 36–38.

¹⁴⁴Yusufi 1990, See also Jalibi 1977: 72, Zaidi 1993: 65 and Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 37, who also discuss Hashimi and Khan's views.

Piyā ke nāō 'āshiq kō qatl karnā¹⁴⁵ 'ajab dīkhe;
 Na barchī hai na karchā¹⁴⁶ hai na kharanjar hai na bhālā hai.
 Barahman vāste ashnān ke phirtā hai bagiyā sē;
 Na gangā hai na jamnā hai na naddī hai na nālā hai.¹⁴⁷

Into what city has God thrown us?

— There is neither beloved, nor cup-bearer; neither flask, nor cup.

If I want to repeat the name of my beloved, by what means should I do it?

— There is neither rosary, nor rudraksha, neither necklace, nor garland.

If beauties were to illumine the garden with their presence, then how
 would they do it, o friends?

— There is neither rosemary nor marjoram; neither iris nor tulip.

To attribute the killing of the lover to the beloved—how strange it seems!

— There is neither lance nor sword, neither dagger nor spear.

The Brahman wanders in the garden in order to taking a bath.

— But there is neither Ganges nor Jamuna; neither river, nor brook.

Since neither Vali Ram nor Brahman composed a Hindavi *dwān*, their Rekhta poetry has been neglected in the same way as that of many others.¹⁴⁸ Modern Urdu scholars have been eager to rediscover

¹⁴⁵Jalibi's text has a lacuna here and Jafar and Jain have *bā*. The conjecture *karnā* is by C. M. Naim.

¹⁴⁶Jalibi's text has *karchī* here. Jafar and Jain suggest *karcī*. The emendation *karchā* is by C. M. Naim.

¹⁴⁷Quoted in Jalibi 1977: 72, from an old handwritten album preserved at the Anjuman-e Taraqqī-e Urdū, Karachi. No further reference is given.

¹⁴⁸See the Hindavi verses attributed to Sufis like Shaikh Junaid (fl. 1618), Shaikh 'Usman Jalandhari (fl. 1625), Shaikh Faziluddin Batalvi (d. 1738), Sayyid Atal Narnauli, Shaikh 'Ata Banka, as well as the stray poems by Mir Ja'far Zatali (1659?-1713), Mirza Mu'izuddin Muhammad Musavi Khan Fitrat (1640-89), Naushah Ganjbakhsh; Sherani 1930: 240-41, Jalibi 1977: 81, Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 86-97. See also the marsiyas in the albums described by Ma'sud Hasan Rizvi Adib (*Shumālī hind kī qadīmtarīn urdū nazmā*, Lucknow, Adabistan, 1984; also Faruqi 2001: 114-5) or those attributed to the notoriously difficult Indian-Persian poet Shaikh Nasir 'Ali Sirhindi (d. 1697); Sherani 1930: 232-33 and 242-43, Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 34-35, 52-79. Even the most famous Indo-Persian poet of his times, Mirza Bedil, is credited with some couplets in Mir's tazkira *Nikāt ush-shu'arā*, but their language is too modern to be Bedil's (Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 88-89).

early examples of Urdu Rekhta in north India, though they have not viewed it in the context of a continued engagement with Hindavi but as prehistory of Urdu poetry.

There is also evidence of a widening of the domain of Rekhta in seventeenth-century north India. Some longer works produced in loose Khari Boli include Shaikh Maulana 'Abdullah Ansari's treatise on the religious jurisprudence of India entitled *Fiqh-e hindī* (1663),¹⁴⁹ Shaikh Mahbub 'Alam's three long poems, the *Mahshar-nāma* (The Book of the Day of Judgement), the *Masā'il-e Hindī* (The Precepts of the Prophet in Hindi) and the voluminous *Dard-nāma* on the life of Prophet Muhammad.¹⁵⁰ The language of these works is influenced by Braj and Punjabi and comes thus very close to the mixed language of the Sants, as the following *dohas* from the *Mahshar-nāma* show,

Rabbā merā eka tū nahī kōī dūjā; tujha sā sā'ī chāra kara kisa lāū pūjā....
Sāri qudrat tū rakkhā cāhā so kīnī; ekō kāyā china lī ekō māyādīnī.
Eka rakkhe nita rovatē rovē bahu bhātā; eka rakkhe nita sovate sovē dina
rātā.¹⁵¹

Only you are my lord, no one else.

Abandoning a lord like you whom else should I worship?...

You protect the whole creation and do whatever you want;

You took away the body of one or put another in illusion;

You keep one continuously weeping—weeping in many ways;

You keep another continuously sleeping—sleeping day and night.

In all probability Ansari's and Mahbub 'Alam's works attempted to communicate the most important teachings of Islam to circles that were less familiar with Persian. The language sometimes relies more on Khari Boli, as in the opening lines of the *Masā'il-e Hindī*,

¹⁴⁹Jalibi 1977: 79 and Sherani 1930: 236-39. See also Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 38-45. Sprenger (1854: 617), in his description of an undated manuscript in the Royal Collection of Avadh (nr. 644) mistakenly identifies the *Fiqh-e hindī* with 'Alam's *Mahshar-nāma*. See Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 48.

¹⁵⁰Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 45-51.

¹⁵¹Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 49. The earliest manuscript of the *Mahshar-nāma* dates from 1745 (1158AH).

Qayāmata ke aḥvāla mā hindī kahī kitāba; maḥshara-nāma nāva hai jāno aiy aṣhāba.

Maḥshara-nāma bīca hai suna va'da aisa diyā; ina 'ājiz darvesha ne būjho khola hiyā.

Amra-nahī kī bāta mō hindī bolī bola; shar' tarāzū dīna kī judī jo dū gā tola.

Bāra cauda barasa laga va'da lāgī dhīla; muḥammad jīvana yāra ne kahā āy beqīla.

Va'da kō ākḥīr karo amra-nahī kī bāta; likha diyo hindī bola kara bācū māī dīna rāta.

Talaba bahuta isa yāra kī dekhī sācī sūjha; likhī kitāba us vāṣṭe hindī bolī būjha.

Masā'il-i hindī nāva abā isakā kaha de yāra; paḥo fātiha mujha upara je baḥshe karanāra.¹⁵²

I have composed a book in Hindi on the final judgement; you know, it is called *Maḥshar-nāma*, o companions. In the middle of *Maḥshar-nāma* I, this lowly poor man, you know, openly made a vain promise that 'I will tell the commands and prohibitions in Hindi. The Law is the scale of Religion even though I give different measurements.' For some thirteen years I was lax with the promise, when my friend, Muhammad Jivan said: 'O you speechless one, fulfil your promise of telling the commands and the prohibitions, write them in Hindi and I will read them day and night.' I saw that his eager solicitation was earnest; know it therefore, that I wrote this book in Hindi for his sake. Call it now by the name of *Masā'il-e Hindī*, my friend, and read the prayer for the soul above me so that God may forgive me.

The number of the Rekhta works quoted so far testifies that by the seventeenth century a specific northern Rekhta *koine* had developed which was distinct from that used in the south. Northern Rekhta poets had a predilection for macaronic poetry and their Hindavi, though based on a Khari Boli template, showed strong Braj Bhasha influence and was free from Dakkanī features. That this was not a fixed language in the seventeenth century is shown for example by

¹⁵²Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 50.

Mahbub 'Alam's use of different registers. Indeed, writing on Muslim themes in the vernacular in the north was not restricted to Khari Boli or the mixed language. The tradition of writing popular works in Avadhi was kept alive by works such as Shaikh Faizullah's translation of the Persian, *Qiṣṣā-ye Jamjam*.¹⁵³

Moreover, Rekhta texts belonging to the Urdu-Persian masnavi tradition also began to be written in north India towards the final years of the century, after the genre had long become popular in Gujarat and the Deccan. Raushan 'Ali wrote his *Jang nāma* (War chronicle), also called *'āshūr nāma* (Tenth-day chronicle) in 1688/9, and in 1693/4 Isma'il Amrohvi wrote his *Tavalludnāma-ye bībī fātima*¹⁵⁴ (Birth Chronicle of the Lady Fatima), a biography of Fatima. His other masnavi, *Qiṣṣa-ye mōjiza-ye anār* (The story of the miracle with the pomegranate) was written in 1709. Significantly, the language of these two masnavis shows strong Dakkanī features, though their author proudly announces at the end of each that they were written near Delhi:

Vaṭan amroha merā hai shahar nām; isī jā par merā hai jā-(ye) qiyām.¹⁵⁵

My homeland is the town called Amroha; in that place is my permanent home.

There is some indication that Rekhta activities in the North were strengthened also through an early interaction with Gujri.¹⁵⁶ Faruqi

¹⁵³Ibid: 52-57.

¹⁵⁴Faruqi 2001: 113; Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 79-86. This masnavi was published by 'Abdul Haqq under the title *Vafāt nāma-ye bībī fātima* (Death Chronicle of the Lady Fatima) in *Risāla-ye Urdū* Karachi, April 1951.

¹⁵⁵Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. V: 83. They suggest that in spite of this statement Isma'il Amrohvi must have lived in the south, where his literary language imbibed its Dakkanī characteristics.

¹⁵⁶The dictionary of the Capuchin Friar François Marie prepared in Surat in 1703, the *Thesaurus Linguae Indianae*, is a dictionary of Gujri with a significant component of Perso-Arabic vocabulary but the Hindavi words are represented in the Nagari script thus hinting at further Nagari-Rekhta connections in Gujarat. McGregor 2003: 947-48. A manuscript copy of the dictionary is at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

observed that Raushan 'Ali's masnavi is modelled on Miskin's (fl. 1681) *Gujri Jang nāma-ye muhammad hanīf* (Battle chronicle of Muhammad Hanif) written in all probability in 1681.¹⁵⁷ But while Miskin describes his language as *Gujri*,¹⁵⁸ Raushan 'Ali refers to his as *Hindī/Hindustānī/Hindavi* on different occasions.¹⁵⁹

Another example of traffic between Gujarat and north India and of linguistic and literary syncretism—in this case connected to religious syncretism—is Prannath (1618–94),¹⁶⁰ a Gujarati kshatriya and a religious reformer with a wide outlook who even knew about Christianity. After travelling in Arabia in his youth, he eventually settled in Panna in Bundelkhand in 1683, where he became the spiritual mentor of King Chhatrasal (d. 1732). Prannath proclaimed himself both the Mahdi of Islam and Kalki of the Hindus and founded a sect that integrated Islamic and Hindu elements. His fourteen treatises in Hindi and Gujarati verse are collected under the name *Quljum-sharīf* (also called *Kuljam-svarūp* or *Tārtam Vānī*).¹⁶¹ In these treatises he made extensive use of Khari Boli and in some works, such as the *Kiyāmat-nāmā* (Book of the Day of Judgement), he shows a strong preference for Perso-Arabic vocabulary.¹⁶² His acquaintance with Gujarati through his Gujarati background might account for this inclination.

The Hindavi that Vali brought to Delhi did not 'create' Rekhta poetry in north India but rather displaced the pre-existing fashion for mixed language poetry. It can be argued that it was this existing fashion which contributed to the quick acceptance of the new style introduced by Vali. Rekhta using Khari Boli or Braj Bhasha templates did continue, but was now associated with what were considered lesser genres like marsiyas or barahmasas, as the neglect of tazkira writers suggests.

¹⁵⁷Jafar and Jain 1998, vol. IV: 293–95.

¹⁵⁸Zahiruddin Madani, *Gujrī maṣnaviyā*, 1990: 25–26, quoted in Faruqi 2001: 113.

¹⁵⁹Faruqi 2001: 113–14.

¹⁶⁰McGregor 1984: 141–42. Barthwal 1978: 260–62.

¹⁶¹A manuscript in the Persian script is found at the Asafuddaula Public Library, Lucknow and a portion of it at the headquarters of his sect in Panna.

¹⁶²Ram 1996: 124.

NAGARI REKHTA IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Rekhta poetry was also composed in the Nagari script in the seventeenth century although we know much less about it than about its versions in the Persian script. Nagari Rekhta is documented from the princely court of Jaipur as well as from the syncretistic movement of Prannath. One of the earliest courtly composers.¹⁶³ Prannath Shrotriya in Jaipur who wrote his *Bejārnāmā* for Maharaja Ram Singh (r. 1667–89).¹⁶⁴ Prannath's disciple, Laldas composed his guru's biography, the *Bīṭak*, in 1694 in Khari Boli,¹⁶⁵ which at times is very close to modern usage¹⁶⁶ and at times is influenced by Braj or Punjabi.¹⁶⁷

The eighteenth century saw a particularly rich production of mixed poetry in the Nagari script, possibly influenced by the rising tide of Rekhta in the Persian script, and can be considered the heyday of Nagari Rekhta. Despite the overwhelming popularity of Braj Bhasha riti poetry, in the eighteenth century we find Nagari Rekhta all over the Hindi region, from Bihar to Rajasthan.¹⁶⁸ We can identify

¹⁶³A Rekhta in a manuscript of 21 folios is attributed to Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur in the catalogue of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad (ms no. 3–193/2145–3).

¹⁶⁴He also wrote stray Rekhta as well as works with titles that suggest a high Khari Boli input such as *Vasant kī khabri hai* and *Vaid Phajīhatī*.

¹⁶⁵McGregor 1984: 205.

¹⁶⁶E.g., *Taba gujarāta se āye dīva mē bhāī sāthī jayarāma ke ghara utha mile ānanda so baro sukha pāyo dekhkar*. (Then he arrived from Gujarat in Div to the house of his brotherly companion, Jayram. He came to receive him with joy and was overwhelmed with delight to see him.) *Bīṭak* 20,3 quoted in Ram 1996: 180.

¹⁶⁷E.g., *Bhīmasyāma bhāṭa sunī karane āye dīdāra Caracā ita barī bhāī uno kiyā barā pyāra*. (Having heard this Bhimshyam Bhatt came to see him. They had a long discussion and he showed him great affection.) *Bīṭak* 21,25 quoted in Ram 1996: 181.

¹⁶⁸Most of this Rekhta is still unpublished and the following survey is based on the various manuscript catalogues printed by the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Nagari Pracharini Sabha (Varanasi), Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Allahabad), Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad (Patna) and other smaller centres.

three contexts for Nagari Rekhta activities: the circles of Nirgun Sants, a few Krishna Bhakti poets and courtly riti poets who mainly wrote in Braj Bhasha but also, significantly, experimented with Rekhta. While Nirgun Sant poets wrote in Khari Boli with a large admixture of Perso-Arabic, Panjabi and Avadhi words, riti and Krishna Bhakti poets evolved a new hybrid poetic form which 'assimilated' Perso-Arabic vocabulary, bending it to Braj Bhasha phonology and using a Khari Boli linguistic template. Titles like *Ishk-caman*, *Ishk-latā*, *Ishk-phandā* etc. suggest that what is at work now is rather a poetic curiosity towards the new, and sensational, success of Urdu/Rekhta verse than Sufi influences, which had already been present for long. High Brajbhasha literature was more open towards literary influences than towards religious ones. Hindu poets like Nagaridas were cautious not to identify the beloved overtly with God.¹⁶⁹ In his *Ishk-caman*, where he speaks about love with Islamic imagery and vocabulary, Nagaridas's interpretation is different from that of the Sufis since he considers the lover, God and the beloved to be three different entities while in Sufism, *Khudā*, God, and *maḥbūb*, the beloved, are the same,

*Āsika pīra hamesa dila lagāi casma ke tīra,
Kiyā khudā mahabūba kaū sadā sakhata bepīra.* (15)¹⁷⁰

The lover's heart is always tormented struck by the arrow of the glance;
(But) God made the beloved to be continuously hard and unfeeling.

When philosophical Sufi influences were accepted, this approach was rejected by strong circles within the Brajbhasha literary community as the case of Anandghan (or Ghan Anand, as he is also known) shows. The larger part of Anandghan's quatrains can be read as relating to both *his own* secular and transcendental love, as was done by the scribe who tried to change the word for the beloved, *sujān* into expressions like *ju syāma* to make sure that it was not read as mundane. However, when the quatrain was too overtly mundane,

¹⁶⁹On Nagaridas and the literary atmosphere at Kishangarh-Rupnagar see Bangha 2007.

¹⁷⁰Gupta 1965, vol. II: 49.

then *sujān* was changed into *su pyārī* and the like to make sure that this 'secular' poem would not have any religious reference. It never happened in Hindi literature before Anandghan that the human beloved was identified with the Absolute as Anandghan's double usage of the word *sujān* suggests. This twofold reading of the poems was peculiar to Persian and then to Urdu and was vehemently rejected by Anandghan's contemporaries.¹⁷¹

Let us now examine the various kinds of Nagari Rekhta separately. In the case of Nirgun Sants, quite often the choice for it is simply due to the fact that the spontaneously mixed language of the Sants tilted more towards Khari Boli. Dariya Sahab (c.1680–1723)¹⁷² of Bihar, who established a tradition indebted to the Kabir Panth, used a tinge of Khari Boli in his *ātmakathā*¹⁷³ and also wrote some Rekhta in the mixed Sant language.¹⁷⁴ Another poet of the same name from Mewar (1676–1758),¹⁷⁵ a Muslim weaver, often composed poems with a strong Khari Boli input,

*Dariyā guru pūrā milā nāma dikhāyā nūra;
Nisā sukha ūpajā kiyā nisānā dūra.*¹⁷⁶

Dariya found his definite guru—God's name showed the light;
I received the bliss of fulfilment and removed the sign.

As we have seen in the case of court poets and Krishna-bhaktas, Rekhta poetry flourished due to literary rather than religious influences. Nirgun Sants and syncretists, however, were more open towards Sufi ideas, imagery and terminology. One example is Charandas (c.1703–82), who was born in Kotwa in Rajasthan. He was brought up in Delhi and later he returned to his native place where he lived as a yogi and became the leader of a sect

¹⁷¹Bangha 2001: 175–90.

¹⁷²For the date of birth, see McGregor 1984: 145. Barthwal 1978: 265–66. For the date of his death see Mishra 1972: 160.

¹⁷³Mishra 1972: 164.

¹⁷⁴*Dariyā Sāheb* 1913: 9–19.

¹⁷⁵McGregor 1984: 145.

¹⁷⁶*Dariyā Sāheb* 1909: 3. The first half of the second line is hypometrical.

that combines the worship of the *Bhāgavata*'s Krishna with Sufism creating poetry that is close to that of the Nirgun Sants.¹⁷⁷ His engagement with Sufism is reflected in some technical vocabulary (*khudī*, *murśid*) and the use of composite expressions (*suhbat sādho kī*),

Do dina kā jaga mē jīnā hai, kartā hai kyō gumān; ai besahūr gīdī tuk rām
ko pichān.

Dāvā khudī kā dūr kar apāne tu dīl setī; caltā hai akār akārke jvānī kā
jos ān.

Mursid kā jñān samajh ke husiyār ho sitāb; gaflat ko chor suhbat sādho kī
khūb jān.

Daulat kā zauq aise jyō āb kā dubāb; jātā rahegā china mē pachatāyagā
nidān.

Din rāt khovtā hai duniyā ke kārbār; ik pal bhi yād sāi kī kartā nahī ajān.
Sukdev guru jñān carandās ko kahaī; bhaj rām nām sācā pad mukti kā
nidhān.¹⁷⁸

We live only for two days in this world. Why are you so self-important?
O you drowsy dim-witted one, recognise God just a little!
Remove the claim of egotism from your heart;
the moment of vigour of youth goes away crookedly.
Understand the guru's knowledge and become aware at once!
Give up negligence and recognise the speech of the true ones.
Desire for wealth is like a bubble of water,
it will go away in a moment and you will repent at the end.
You waste your days and nights in wordly chores,
and do not remember your lord even for a moment, you ignorant.
Sukhdev gives this teaching to Charandas,
worship God's name, a true object, the treasury of liberation.

¹⁷⁷McGregor 1984: 146, Menariya 1978: 295–96. Barthwal 1978: 266–67.

¹⁷⁸'Cetāvani' *shabda* 23 (*Carandās* 1908 pp. I. 113–14). 'Cetāvani' *sabdas* 22, 25 (*Carandās* 1908 pp. I. 112–15) are similar Rekhta poems. In his work about the development of Hindi language and literature Hariaudh, usually attentive to traces of modern Hindi, did not notice that Charandas used Khari Boli. Hariaudh 1934: 455.

Several other Nirgun Sants are listed in the catalogues as authors of Rekhta compositions,¹⁷⁹ in particular a very high number of Niranjanis figure amongst them,¹⁸⁰ as well as several followers of Bavri Sahab in Delhi and Avadh.¹⁸¹ Their Rekhta poetry shows that for them it was not just poetry in mixed language but also in mixed metre. Some poems in Braj Bhasha *without* any considerable Perso-Arabic input, though sometimes with a tinge of Khari Boli are classified as Rekhta in manuscripts. More research is needed to investigate the basis of this attribution. Poems by Bulla Sahab (1693–1768) mix Braj Bhasha forms with Khari Boli ones so much that even the past tense of the verb 'to be' can appear in Khari Boli (*huā*) and in Braj Bhasha (*bhai*) within the same poem.¹⁸² The *Aliphnāmā*, a poem by Bhikha Sahab (or Bhikhanand, d. 1791), a disciple of Gulal Sahab (who had been a disciple of Bulla Sahab) and followed him as the leader to the Bavri community,¹⁸³ is an interesting composition in

¹⁷⁹E.g. there are several poems attributed to Ramdas of Marwar (1726–1798), who after trying to follow the teachings of eleven various gurus found his spiritual guide in Hariramdas of the Ramsnehi school. Rasik Govind was the author of *Kalijug rāsau* (1807) a longer composition classified as *nītikāvya*, poetry on morals. He is not identical with the Sikh Guru Ramdas (b. 1534, see McGregor 1984: 55). See Bhagirath Mishra 1972: 499.

¹⁸⁰Such as e.g. (Jan) Haridas (d. c. 1645), Tursidas, Mohandas, Hariram (maybe identical with Hariramdas and/or with Kisna), Gangadas, Kisandas (maybe identical with Kisna) and Sevadas (1640?–1741?), the successor of Tursidas. For (Jan) Haridas see Menariya 1978: 307, for Sevadas see Chaturvedi 1957: 221–23.

¹⁸¹Some Rama worshippers also composed Rekhta, e.g. Tulsi Sahab (1763–1843) of Hathras, who considered himself a reincarnation of Tursidas, and (Svami) Ramcharan or Ramcharandas (b. c. 1760), who produced many works such as a commentary on the *Rāmcāritmānas*. See Gupta 1942, p. 74 and McGregor 1984: 170. The manuscript catalogues mention Rekhta by various authors about whom nothing can be known, such as Ratanlal, Kalramji Maharaj, Vallabh Gosvami, Daulesh and Jan Dhiram.

¹⁸²*Rekhta* 2 in *Bullā sāheb* 1910: 23.

¹⁸³McGregor 1984: 144. His autobiography is claimed to be Rekhta by a cataloguer of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, *Samkṣipt vivaran* II: 332. The selection as published in the *Hindī sāhitya kā brhat itihās*, however, does not show any input of Perso-Arabic vocabulary but rather a mixture of Braj Bhasha, Khari

which each line starts with a consecutive letter of the Arabic alphabet (modelled on his *Kakaharā*, a composition on the Sanskrit alphabet). Though Bhikha is not bothered by the subtleties of the Arabic alphabet and does not distinguish between characters like *īm*, *zāl*, *ze*, *zāl* and *zo'e*, the *Aliphnāmā* abounds in Perso-Arabic vocabulary. As in the case of Bulla Sahab, the use of Khari Boli varies in Bhikha's poetry as well. The following poem in the *jhūlnā* metre (similarly to many other quatrains) is classified as Rekhta but is actually in Braj Bhasha,

*Pāpa au punna nara jhulata hīḍolanā, ūca aru nīca saba deha dhārī.
Pāca aru tīni paccīsa ke basa paro, rāma ko nāma sahajai bisārī.
Mahā kavalesa dukha vāra aru pāra nahī, māri jama dūta dē trāsa bhārī.
Mana tohī dhirakāra dhirakāra hai tohī, dhṛga binā hari bhajana jivana
bhikhārī.*¹⁸⁴

Man swings on the swing of sin and virtue and takes high and low bodies.
Controlled by the five substances the three qualities and the twenty-five elements he easily forgot God's name.

He suffers much anguish and grief and does not find the other shore.
When he dies Death's messengers heavily torture him.

Shame on you, o soul, shame on you, shame, you wasted your life
without worshipping God.

It was not only the Nirgun Sants and related poets that wrote in Rekhta, but there were also Krishna-bhaktas who continued the tradition of Svami Haridas, and we even find some mixed language compositions, this time with Punjabi elements, current under the signature of Surdas.¹⁸⁵ One of the earliest documented authors is the Gaudiya Vaishnava Manohardas (fl. 1700) whose following quatrain resembles those of Vajid,

Boli, Avadhi and Punjabi thus nearing Sadhukkari. Examples are found in Chaturvedi 1968: 239-40.

¹⁸⁴Bhikhā sāhab 1909: 61.

¹⁸⁵Rāmji kā bārahmāsā ms no. 4241/1 at the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad.

*Khosavakta dekhyā māi pharajamda bābā namda jī kā
Phaimṭā dhotī jarda bamṣi charī hātha kīyā hai.
Sāvalā nāma kīnā jara javāhira makambūla
Jauvana kī maujē phaila jevāisa dīyā hai.
Jīva garakāva khūbhsūrata dariyāva bīca
Saboroja mahajūja mastahāla kīyā hai.
Aba sahī jindagānī mahabūba dilajānī
Su huī dīdāvanī dāsa manohara jīyā hai.
(Gaurangagunāvālī)¹⁸⁶*

In a happy moment I caught sight of Nanda's son
wearing a small turban and a yellow dhoti and holding a
flute and a stick in his hands.

The 'Black One' makes the names of 'gold' and 'jewel' shine.

The surges and delights of prime youth spread ...¹⁸⁷

My soul drowned in the middle of the beautiful river.

He made my days and nights happily intoxicated.

Now my life is true, my love of the heart,

I have a glimpse of you, and your servant, Manohar, lives.

The Krishna devotees normally wrote Rekhta with a Khari Boli template, though it could also be Punjabi as in the case of Anandghan's *Ishk-latā*,

*Ānāda ke ghana tuma binā mujanū nahī bhāvai.
Nayana asāde lāganai tujahī nū dhāvai.
Huna kīyā kījai lādīle vekhana nahī pāvai.
Julama karāi ye bāvare mujanū tarasāvai.
Tāide mukha para tila abe ati khūna karādā.
Alakāi taimḍī yaū chuṭī dvai nāgina lasādā.... (Ishk-latā 35-36)¹⁸⁸*

Cloud of bliss, without you I get no pleasure.

My searching eyes run to you.

¹⁸⁶Bansal 1988: 20-21—quoted from an undated manuscript (no. 4487-GI at the Vrindaban Research Institute).

¹⁸⁷The text is unclear at this point.

¹⁸⁸Mishra 1952: 180.

What shall I do now? I cannot glimpse my beloved.
These naive ones oppress and torture me.

Alas, the black spot on your face slays me.
Your loose locks of hair shine as two snakes....

We can conclude our survey of Nagari Rekhta devotional verse with two Haridasi ascetics belonging to the community of Tatiya Sthan in Vrindaban writing Rekhta in the early nineteenth century. In his *Saras mañjāvālī* Sahacharisharan, the abbot of the Tatiya Sthan between 1821 and 1837, continued the tradition of the *māñjh* (or *mānj*) metre with slight admixture of Punjabi. Sitaldas, a disciple of Thakurdas (1799–1811) who was allegedly infatuated with a boy called Lal Bihari (the name Lal Bihari occurs in his poems as a name for Krishna) used Khari Boli and a wide range of cultural referents in his *Gulzār-caman*, *Ānand-caman* and *Bihār-caman*,

Majanū Pharahāda Mādhavānala ye the maharama isa bastī ke;
Lalai Shirā mē lina hue ura kāmakandalā kistī ke;
Yaha ishka candrikā chāya rahī aba taka bāyasa isa mastī ke;
Jānī dhūḍhe hī milate hai gāhaka is husnaparastī ke.

(Ānand-caman 20)¹⁸⁹

Majnun, Farhad and Mādhavānal were the relatives of this settlement, Their heart was absorbed in Laila and Shirin and in the boat of Kāmkanalā.

This moon of love is still shining over the tree of this passion.

My friend, costumers of this worship of beauty can only be found with difficulty.

Finally, we find Nagari Rekhta literary activity at princely courts in Rajasthan already in the seventeenth century in all probability prompted by similar experiments at the Mughal court and by the popularity of the Nirgun Sants' poetry, while Jaipur (Amber) regularly patronised Rekhta writing, as the manuscript collection of the City Palace attests. A few decades after Prannath Shrotriya (fl. 1680),

¹⁸⁹Published in Albelisharan and Sharma 1999: 113.

Kavikalanidhi Shrikrishna Bhatt composed *Ishk-mahtāb*, which used a wide range of vocabulary including Avadhi, Braj Bhasha, Apabhramsha, Persian depending on the sentiments evoked in the poem.¹⁹⁰ In fact, by the eighteenth century the leading Braj Bhasha poets of the time wrote Nagari Rekhta, not just as occasional poems but even as longer works such as Nagaridas's *Ishk-caman*, Anandghan's *Ishk-latā*, Brajnidhi's *Rekhtā samgrah* and *Rās kā rekhtā* and Rasrashi Ramnarayan's *Ishk-phanda*,¹⁹¹ *Ishk-latā*,¹⁹² *Ishk-paccīsī* and *Māhai mālik mukām kī* or *Ishk-daryāv*.¹⁹³ The high number of manuscripts of his *Ishk-daryāv*, written in the 'Rekhta' and 'Ghazal' metres during the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh (r. 1778–1803), testifies to the popularity of this work.¹⁹⁴ One of the latest Rekhta authors in Rajasthan was (Gangadas) Bakhtavar (1823–96) who served at the Udaipur court.¹⁹⁵ Brajnidhi's interest in Rekhta is also shown by the fact that he asked his court poet Rasrashi to compose similar verses. One such work composed for Brajnidhi is the *Rasik-* (or *Rasrāshi-*) *Paccīsī*.¹⁹⁶

A somewhat intermediary position between Rekhta and Braj was occupied by poems which had a Braj template with a high input of Perso-Arabic vocabulary, such as in this passage from the

¹⁹⁰In battle descriptions for example he imitated *Prthvirāj Rāsau* both in dialect and verse form. Chaturvedi 1968: 5 and 389. His other known work, the *Durgā-bhakti-taramgīnī* (1712) is based on the Sanskrit *Durgā Śaptasatī*.

¹⁹¹Ms no. 27787 (9) at Jodhpur RORI ff. 106–08 (copied in VS1857).

¹⁹²Ms no. 9720 (5) at Jodhpur RORI ff. 14–16.

¹⁹³Ms no. 30075 (1) at Jodhpur RORI ff. 1–5 (copied in VS1916).

¹⁹⁴Four manuscripts are found in the Khasmohar Collection in the City Palace of Jaipur (Nr. 2367, 2373, 7799(2), 1546(1)) and one in the Wellcome Library, London (Ms. Hindi 365.03)—erronously given under the name of Ghananand in the catalogue). His *Kavitta ratnamālikā samgrah* comprising 801 poems by earlier authors and 108 by Rasrashi was compiled for Singi Jivraj, Pratap Singh's divan. The *Mishrabandhu Vinod* (p. 839, no. 950) puts his floruit around 1770 (VS1827).

¹⁹⁵RORI, Jodhpur Ms. no. 10847(2) 33–4.

¹⁹⁶This work on the *Bhramargīt* theme is preserved in manuscripts at some branches of the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute: Jodhpur 9720(1) ff 1–5, Udaipur 31, ff 1–9, 465 ff 1–12 and 3029 ff 1–3. His other preserved works are his *Prem Patrikā* and *Chandāṣṭak*. Jodhpur RORI 9720 (3–4).

Ishk-nāmā of Bodha (1748?–1803?),¹⁹⁷ a court poet from Panna in Bundelkhand,

*Pahicāne prema rakāne je beparadā darada dariyāva hilai;
Magarūra dikhāte ākhira yā dilasūra prema ko paṁtha pilai;
Taki tabiyedāra udāra vāhi aru ganai na dhaka dai naina jhilai;
Taba khūba iska bodhā āsika jaba mahirabāna mahabūba milai.*

(*Ishk-nāmā* 33)¹⁹⁸

The one who openly drowns in the river of pain knows the ways of love. Even if the beloved appears proud, the lover after all trod the path of love. Deeming the beloved a generous companion, he does not count betrayals but his eyes are absorbed.

The love of the lover, Bodha, is great when he meets the compassionate beloved.

This tradition continued well until the emergence of modern Khari Boli literature, and miscellaneous Rekhta under the name of several poets can be found in Nagari manuscripts dating from the nineteenth century. All these poets were primarily Brajbhasha poets who experimented with Rekhta. In their case this normally meant a Khari Boli template, though it could also be Punjabi as in the case of Anandghan's *Ishk-latā*.

CONCLUSION

Hindavi was a literary language in India along with Persian since the fourteenth century, though there are strong indications that it has been used already some decades after the Muslim conquest of north India. Hindavi songs were sung along with Persian ones in Sufi sama' and maybe in other gatherings despite the initial opposition of leading masters such as Sharafuddin Maneri. However, Hindavi did not reach the same status as Persian, and the scarcity of Hindavi material also suggests that Hindavi works were considered inferior to Persian ones in prestige and remained limited in quantity. The

¹⁹⁷Also called *Virahī-subhān-dampati-vilās*. See Mishra 1974: 2.

¹⁹⁸Mishra 1974: 6.

few extant examples of Hindavi used at these gatherings are very close to Braj Bhasha both in language and poetic form, not to Khari Boli, which only later became more closely associated with Muslims.

Indeed, the earliest use of Khari Boli and of the mixed language in north India can only be documented from the sixteenth-century Mughal court, although there are indications that it had been promoted somewhat earlier in Sufi circles. This suggests that, contrary to perceived notions, Khari Boli literature was cultivated in north India almost parallel to its counterparts in the South, namely Dakkani and Gujri. In north India under Mughal patronage it took the form of macaronic poetry written in Persian metres mixing phrases and half-lines of Hindavi and Persian. Although the normal templates of Rekhta were that of Persian or Khari Boli and the languages used are Hindavi and Persian, there was in fact a wide range of possibilities within Rekhta, including Braj or Punjabi templates and the mixing of more than two languages or dialects.

It was in the experimental and syncretistic environment of the Mughal court, which as Allison Bush also shows in this volume was receptive to Braj Bhasha riti poetry as well, that we find Mughal noblemen writing light-hearted poems with words and phrases from Hindavi. Often these words, phrases and images have to do with the feminine. 'Ishqi Khan's poem suggests a mimetic use mirroring the multilingual Mughal court. The example of Abdurrahim Khankhanan demonstrates, that composing in Hindi is a show of virtuosity for the multilingual poet. These are the compositions that can be most pertinently called 'macaronic', since they seem to have a mimetic/ironic bend.

While the earliest documented Rekhta poetry developed within Muslim circles, later in the sixteenth century the Nirgun Sant tradition that blended Muslim and Hindu ideas also developed its own Rekhta, written down not in the Persian script but in Nagari and using Indian metres rather than Persian ones. Their Rekhta, just like in the South and probably prompted by similar poems of wandering Sufis, mixed Persian words and phrases into a Hindavi grammar. The Persian-script version of this variety developed into the literary language today called Urdu. The earliest extant Nagari Rekhta texts originated in Rajasthan, namely with Dadu Dayal and his disciples. This use of Rekhta spread mostly among Nirgun Sants but we also find a stray

example among the songs of a leading Vaishnava of Vrindaban in the sixteenth century, Svami Haridas. Due to the burgeoning world of Sadhukkari poetry Dadu's disciples, with a few exceptions, did not continue with Nagari Rekhta and its occurrence remained scarce until the eighteenth century.

The earliest extended composition in north India that can be considered Khari Boli is a work by Vajid, the 'Rekhta of the Lord', which survives in several early manuscripts and whose composition in all probability predates that of the *Bikaṭ kahānī*. The fairly complex structure of Vajid's Rekhta suggests that by the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries Rekhta had become an independent genre and Nagari Khari Boli literature existed not simply as occasional rambles into the field but in highly developed compositions. In Vajid's case we see a move just opposite to Svami Haridas, a Krishna devotee who wrote a poem like the Nirgun Sants. Vajid was a Nirgun Sant who wrote Krishna poetry. Both authors seem to have been at home in the world of music, and it can be fruitful to examine further the earliest links between the use of Rekhta and music.

Material from the seventeenth century suggests that Mughal macaronic poetry integrated the achievements of the Nirgun Sants' experiments with a Khari Boli template. The best example of this integration is the *Bikaṭ Kahānī*. By the end of the century mixed poetry in Rekhta, and the domain of Hindavi, had spread quite widely in north India in popular Muslim and syncretic religious groups like Prannath's sect. Even in Mughal aristocratic circles Persian poets dabbled with Rekhta. The existence of this kind of poetry in north India before 1700 suggests that the fashion for Persianised Hindavi that Vali brought to Delhi did not create Rekhta poetry in north India but rather displaced the pre-existing fashion for mixed language poetry.

In the next century more and more examples of Nagari Rekhta are attested, both from courts and by Krishna devotees, showing that Rekhta pervaded all fields of Hindi literature. It was the court of Amber and Jaipur, perhaps the Hindu court most open to Mughal culture, that provided patronage to Rekhta activities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while among Krishna devotees the leaders of the Haridasi school produced some memorable Rekhtas. In the case of Vaishnavas Perso-Arabic vocabulary was normally assimilated into a familiar Braj Bhasha template.

Rekhta production was less in quantity than that of poetry in Braj Bhasha or in Sadhukkari. Yet a careful sifting through manuscript catalogues reveals a significant number of Rekhta works, probably comparable to the heritage of other literary dialects such as Avadhi. We know, however, little about its readership, although several theories can be found attempting to explain the motives for its use. The motives lying behind the use of Nagari Rekhta vis-a-vis Braj or Sadhukkari Bhasha and other Hindi dialects are not entirely clear. Probably the growing success of its use by Muslims prompted some Hindu authors to experiment with it—perhaps to evoke a courtly atmosphere since the court par excellence was a Muslim one, that of the Mughals. The use of Hindavi within the world of Persian is relatively better researched—Hindavi was used to reach out to people who may have been little acquainted with Persian and more importantly it was considered more effective than Persian in evoking emotions and was also perceived as closer to the world of women. Raja Rao said in his Foreword to *Kanthapura* that English is the language of our intellectual make-up—like Sanskrit or Persian were before—but not of our emotional make-up.

Similarly, in early modern India, Persian may not have provided the same emotive strength as did Hindi and hence there was a continuous need of a mother-tongue for expressing emotions.

Since the modern meaning of Urdu implies separation from and contrast to Hindi, it is unfortunate to refer to the language with this word before the late eighteenth or nineteenth century, when this contrast was not felt so markedly by its speakers and when the language was not even called Urdu. Instead of referring to the separate early histories of Hindi and Urdu, I propose to make a different distinction. The word Hindavi (or even Hindustani) can be used to refer generally to the varieties of Hindi and Urdu prior to the articulation of their separate identity and the linguistically neutral phase Khari Boli can refer to the idiom using the template of modern Hindi and Urdu. In all its various forms, Rekhta literature, though neglected by modern scholarship, is more than one of the most important meeting points between Hindi and Urdu; it is the shared early life of the two gradually separated languages.