

# Rāgs of Western India and Sindh

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## INTRODUCTION

**N**ORTH Indian classical music, like its South Indian counterpart, has traditionally—and not entirely without reason—been regarded as a pan-regional entity. Whether cultivated in Mumbai, Kolkata, or Delhi, Hindustani music features the same sub-genres, styles, performance formats, instruments, associated social practices, and repertoire of rāgs and tāls (roughly, modes and meters). As such, it represents a quintessential example of what Indianist scholars have called a “Great Tradition,” meaning a supra-regional cultural entity sustained by elite, literate connoisseurs and buttressed by a canonic body of written works, whether, in this case, musicological or pedagogical. Probably the most fundamental entity in this music system is rāg, meaning a mode distinguished by ascending and descending scales, pitch hierarchy, and characteristic phrases, to be used as a basis for improvisation and composition.

[2] While this pan-regional conception of Hindustani music has an obvious logic and general veracity, it is in fact marred by a significant exception, namely Western India. By “Western India,” we refer here to a pre-Partitioned cultural region that includes Punjab, Rajasthan, Sindh, and Kachchh.<sup>2</sup> In Western India, there exist unique repertoires of rāgs, distinct from what should properly be categorized as “mainstream” Hindustani music. Some of these rāgs are part of the classical repertoire, but are only, or are predominantly, performed by gharānās based in the West. Others are part of the repertoire of Sikh *gurbānī sangīt*, which should be understood as a parallel, though overlapping quasi-classical tradition. Finally, others are constituents of vernacular music traditions—especially Rajasthani Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music and Sindhi *kāfī* and *shāh jo rāg*—which have some features of a regional classical music, though lacking such explicitly elaborated and articulated music theory. Some

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1. Most portions of this article are written Peter Manuel; the section on Sindhi music is written by Brian Bond.

2. Although Maharashtra, Goa, and Gujarat are typically included in “Western India,” we are not including these in our discussion (aside from Kachchh, which is culturally distinct from eastern Gujarat and was only incorporated into that state in 1960).

of the rāgs appear to derive from folk origins; others appear to have derived from exposure—in some form in the past—to classical music, but have been either modified or else preserved as marginal survivals. Strikingly, in no other part of North India can one find counterparts to these regional modal repertoires.<sup>3</sup> The existence of these repertoires also obliges us to recognize that rāgs are entities which are not unique to Hindustani (and Karnatak) music, but can also be found in parallel and intermediate music genres.

[3] In this essay our primary goal is not to describe all of these rāgs, although we do present much information about their forms. Rather, we seek to make a set of broader observations about the implications these repertoires have for North Indian music culture. Their existence, among other things, calls for a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the nature and extent of regionalism in Indian music. For some musicologists—especially of Sikh music—, a recognition of their unique repertoire has socio-religious import, serving as a corrective to an unquestioning hegemony of mainstream Hindustani music theory that has “colonized” variant traditions. The study of these rāgs, their associated genres, and their different sorts of relations to Hindustani music also affords an enhanced understanding of the historical development of North Indian music in general. In particular, it sheds light on some of the dynamics—both socio-musical and purely formal—that shape the evolution of rāgs. It also highlights the importance and, indeed, the richness of these vernacular genres in the subcontinent’s music cultures.

[4] In an earlier essay (Manuel 2015a), one of the present authors described these vernacular genres as constituents of an “intermediate sphere” of Indian music, comprising various idioms that lie between “folk” and classical realms in terms of both formal and socio-musical features. As articulated by Harold Powers (1980), art musics—cross-culturally and in South Asia—can be characterized by their reliance on the patronage of elite connoisseurs, their grounding in a pan-regional “Great Tradition” of canonic texts and a body (whether written

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3. The closest counterpart would be the Kashmiri *Sufyāna kalām*, which, as documented by Pacholczyk (1978), is based on a repertoire of songs, in Persian or Kashmiri, set to one of around twenty “maqāms” (not “rāgs”) whose names—such as “Bayāti” and “Jinjoti”—reflect the mixture of Persian and Indian influences the region has absorbed. Orissa, though not generally regarded as part of North India, also hosts a quasi-classical music with some distinctive local rāgs (Dennon 2010). In Gujarat (aside from Kachchh), the song genre “Prabhāti” has some aspects of a mode (Thompson 1995), but if that state’s vernacular music comprises any distinctive modal system, it has yet to be documented.

or oral) of explicit theory, and the ability of music performances to stand on their own as the centerpiece of a performance (as opposed, for example, to songs embedded in theater or religious ritual). The intermediate-sphere idioms discussed all have a certain degree of theory, which can be articulated, if often inconsistently and incompletely, by performers; this theory might be unrelated to that of Hindustani music, as in the case of Hathrasi *rasiyā*, whose theory pertains primarily to prosody, though with melodic associations (Manuel 2015b). In the case of the Rajasthani and Sindhi musics discussed in this article, the theory of relevance comprises the repertoire of *rāgs*, which, however, are not as standardized or as analytically conceptualized as are their counterparts in classical music. Further, the “elite” patrons are primarily the local, provincial landowning class rather than Mughal courtiers or the urban bourgeoisie.

[5] The prominence of these intermediate-sphere genres in Western India, and the existence of a set of *rāgs* in North Indian classical music associated with this region, derive in part from the area’s distinctive geographical status. Rajasthan, the Punjab, Sindh, and Kachchh—however distinct in their histories and cultures—have always constituted particular sorts of subcontinental frontier or buffer regions, whether in relation to the Sanskrit cosmopolis, the Mughal Empire, or the modern North Indian cultural sphere (Sindh and western Punjab, of course, being ceded to Pakistan in 1947). In pre-modern and early modern times, the Gangetic Valley, the core region of the Hindustani music tradition, was sharply circumscribed in the north by the Himalayas, while to the east of Bengal it dissipated in thick tropical forests. But to the northwest and west lay regions that were habitable—Punjab, Rajasthan, and Sindh—, and indeed inhabited, hosting their own modest cities and courts since ancient times. Although somewhat remote from historic metropolitan cities such as Kashi and Pataliputra, they were not separated from those epicenters by impassable geographical obstacles. Further, although they were border regions of sorts, they were not directly adjoining distinctive foreign cultural zones, such as those of Persia or Central Asia. With the decline of the Mughal Empire in the early 1700s, courts in these regions became effectively independent, while continuing to patronize musical establishments. This particular combination of isolation and relative accessibility contributed to the cultivation of regional *rāgs*, both in local performance traditions of Hindustani music and in intermediate-sphere genres.

**REGIONALISM AND PAN-REGIONALISM IN NORTH INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC CULTURE, PAST AND PRESENT**

[6] The existence of a distinctive modal repertoire in Western India—both in intermediate-sphere genres as well as Hindustani music—should be seen in the broader historical context of regionalism and pan-regionalism in North Indian music culture as a whole. The basic geographical contours of Indian art music culture are familiar: sources—primarily Sanskrit treatises—suggest that in the first millennium and a half of the common era, Indian art music flourished as a relatively unified pan-regional entity. However, our knowledge of this cultural geography is woefully incomplete; for example, we do not even know where some of the most important texts—especially the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE–2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE?) and *Brhaddeśī* (6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> c. CE)—were written. Nevertheless, it is generally assumed that for most of this period, the epicenter of Indian court culture—including the evolution of rāgs—was the Gangetic plain, especially but not only during the Gupta Period (3<sup>rd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> c. CE). It is clear that during this period, as later, there existed a distinction between a “Great Tradition” of pan-regional elite culture, canonized in Sanskrit texts, and regional vernacular “Little Traditions.” The *Brhaddeśī* suggested such a dichotomy in contrasting *mārg* music—implicitly eternal, inherited, and perhaps even supernatural in origin—with regional *deśī* music, including the rāgs that it described. By the time of the *Saṅgītaratnākara* (13<sup>th</sup> c.), all the rāgs in practice were effectively *deśī*. In an informative early study, O.C. Gangoly (1935, 41–45, 72–74) noted that several rāg names from this era denoted specific regions or, in some cases, tribes or ethnic/linguistic groups. Richard Widdess, in his article “The Geography of Rāgas in Ancient India,” building on Gangoly’s observations, pointed out the “preponderance of names relating to the north-west and western regions,” referring to such rāgs as Mārū, Sauvīra, Saindhva, Gandhāra, and Ṭakka, essentially connoting Rajasthan, Sindh, and the Punjab.

[7] By the fifteenth century, if not earlier, protracted Muslim rule in North India had led to a broad divergence of two pan-regional art music traditions: the Northern and Southern, or Hindustani and Karnatak, which were distinguished by rāg repertoire, favored instruments, song text languages, style, patronage patterns, and other features. It could be said that the Northern modal repertoire was a syncretic product of indigenous pan-regional Indian traditions, imports from Persia, and thirdly, a particular regional tradition that happened to

encompass the imperial capital and acquire pan-regional status. Here we are speaking of a set of interrelated dhrupad traditions, especially the court music of Gwalior, the quasi-classical song traditions of Hindu temples in the Mathura area, and Mughal court music as cultivated primarily in Delhi and Agra, enriched by the presence of musicians from Gwalior. In the *‘Ain-i-Akbari* (1593), Abul Fazl contrasted the mārḡ songs—“chanted by the gods and great rishis”—with the dhrupad of Gwalior, which, though deśī in origin, had “passed into universal favor” once incorporated into Mughal court culture.

[8] Two primary factors coincided in consolidating this composite musical idiom as pan-regional. One was, of course, the status and power of the Mughal court, whose artistic culture provided the model for provincial courts. A second factor was the celebration, among Vaishnavite Hindus, of the Braj region—especially Mathura and Brindavan, near Agra—as the ancestral homeland of the god Krishna. Concomitant with this identification was the adoption of the Hindi dialect of Braj Bhasha as a pan-regional idiom for Krishnaite poetry (and song texts) and subsequently lyric verse (*rīti*) in general. A related development was the further spread of the rāg repertoire of Braj temple music, as devotees from Bengal and other regions traveled to Krishna’s homeland, imbibed the local devotional music and poetry, and then brought it back to their own regions. However, as we shall note, the idiom that would become a canonic Hindustani music norm spread in an uneven fashion, and took root in Rajasthan and the Punjab considerably earlier than in Maharashtra and Bengal, which would become centers in the early twentieth century.

[9] A complex dialectic between regional and pan-regional traditions took shape and has persisted, in modified form, from the Mughal period to the present. On the one hand, it is assumed that certain regional vernacular modes were incorporated into the pan-regional canon. Raja Man Singh, in his sixteenth-century *Mānkuṭūhala*, surmised as such, attributing rāg Mālasiri to folk origin, and Bairārī to Tirhut (in Bihar). Notably, however, it is primarily genres and styles, rather than rāgs, that Faqirallah, in his *Rāg Darpan* supplement to that text, attributes to specific regional origins (1996 [1665], 39, 47, 101–19). In general, it could be argued that most rāgs have derived from innovations in the existing urban art music repertoire rather than regional vernacular music. This observation would apply especially to all the rāgs in Pūrvī, Mārvā, and Toḍī *thāṭs*, which are not at all common in North Indian

folk music.<sup>4</sup>

[10] Meanwhile, during the Mughal period, as Sanskrit declined, regional vernacular languages such as Bengali, Marwari, Punjabi, and Avadhi were, in different forms, emerging as legitimate literary idioms, cultivated in poetry and song-texts alongside the pan-regional Braj Bhasha (as well as Persian, and, from the late eighteenth century, Urdu). In accordance with such developments, along with difficulty of travel and correspondence in the early modern period, it might be natural to expect regional potentates and nobility to take pride in their local culture and cultivate local music, perhaps in stylized form, in such realms as modal repertoire of court music. Some such cultivation certainly took place, but primarily in the realm of light entertainment rather than classical music. Mughal chronicles such as the *‘Ain-i-Akbari* document how court entertainment consisted not only of art music, but also of all manner of local folk dancers, acrobats, and rustic thespians, as was also the case elsewhere, for example, in the nineteenth-century Lucknow court of Wajid Ali Shah.

[11] In the realm of art music, however, what was sought was not some celebration of provincial traditions but rather imitation of the cosmopolitan pan-regional forms of the imperial power. Courts and regional gentry sought legitimation, status, and aesthetic pleasure in their competitive patronage of Great Tradition art music, hosting prominent musicians and occasionally commissioning music treatises. Through this promulgation they perpetuated a well-established tradition that Sheldon Pollock described in reference to the

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4. This article assumes some basic familiarity with Indian classical music elements. Hence, we shall freely use basic Hindustani nomenclature and sargam, e.g., komal=flat, shuddh=natural, tīvra=sharp. The seven scale degrees are: Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni, corresponding to (from C): C D E F G A B; the chromatic scale would be: Sa Re<sup>b</sup> Re Ga<sup>b</sup> Ga Ma Ma<sup>#</sup> Pa Dha<sup>b</sup> Dha Ni<sup>b</sup> Ni. The ten thāṭs, though less than satisfactory as frameworks for classifying the entire rāg repertoire, are convenient descriptive concepts, often referred to by musicians themselves. They are as follows:

Bilāval: Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni (Cf. “major scale”)

Khamāj: Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni<sup>b</sup> (Cf. “Mixolydian”)

Kāfi: Sa Re Ga<sup>b</sup> Ma Pa Dha Ni<sup>b</sup> (Cf. “Dorian”)

Āsāvārī: Sa Re Ga<sup>b</sup> Ma Pa Dha<sup>b</sup> Ni<sup>b</sup>

Bhairavi: Sa Re<sup>b</sup> Ga<sup>b</sup> Ma Pa Dha<sup>b</sup> Ni<sup>b</sup>

Toḍī: Sa Re<sup>b</sup> Ga<sup>b</sup> Ma<sup>#</sup> Pa Dha<sup>b</sup> Ni

Bhairav: Sa Re<sup>b</sup> Ga Ma Pa Dha<sup>b</sup> Ni

Pūrvī: Sa Re<sup>b</sup> Ga Ma<sup>#</sup> Pa Dha<sup>b</sup> Ni

Mārva: Sa Re<sup>b</sup> Ga Ma<sup>#</sup> Pa Dha Ni

Kalyān: Sa Re Ga Ma<sup>#</sup> Pa Dha Ni (Cf. “Lydian”)

Sanskrit cosmopolis in the first millennium CE. He wrote:

In many of these cases, qualifying as empire, whether imperial governance was actually exercised or not, seems to have required a language of cosmopolitan character and transethnic attraction, transcending or arresting any ethno-identity the ruling elites themselves might possess. It had to be a language capable of making the translocal claims—however imaginary these were—that defined the political imagination of this world. (Pollock 1998, 13)

[12] Such an attitude can be said to have persisted until the present in reference to North Indian music. Thus, for instance, if Bengalis might take pride in their contribution to Hindustani music culture, it would not be on the basis of having contributed some rāgs to the canonic repertoire, but rather in terms of the vibrancy (albeit now attenuated) of Kolkata as a center for performance, and the impressive number of Bengalis among the top rank of performers. Likewise, if a Bengali vocalist such as Chinmoy Lahiri (1920–84) composed rāgs such as Shyāmkos and Yogamāya that are performed primarily by his Kolkata-based disciples, these rāgs are not celebrated as regional “Bengali rāgs” per se, but rather as the creations of an artist who happens to be Bengali. It is for these reasons that the rāg repertoire of Hindustani music has constituted a relatively standardized pan-regional canon—with the partial but not insignificant exception of a small set of rāgs from the subcontinental West.

[13] The only scholarly work to explore the issue of regional variation in North Indian music is the 2005 dissertation of Jeffrey Grimes, “The Geography of Hindustani Music: The Influence of Region and Regionalism on the North Indian Classical Tradition.” Grimes correctly notes that Hindustani music is “primarily a national tradition with consistency, continuity, and coherence that cuts across regional or state boundaries” (37). He relates that his many informants deny that there are stylistic differences between regional renditions of Hindustani music (e.g., 211, 327); as one told him, “If you can make out that someone is a Maharashtrian when they are singing, they are doing something wrong” (27). Grimes does not discuss rāg repertoire at all, nor does he say anything about the area encompassing Rajasthan, Sindh, and the Punjab. Instead, he compares and contrasts Maharashtra and Bengal—two regions whose Hindustani music scenes did not commence until the mid-nineteenth century, and then did so in fairly distinct manners. In Maharashtra, rulers of several princely states patronized Brahmin vocalists who had learned from Gwalior founders,

such that the region—and especially Bombay and Pune—came to abound in fine Gwalior-style singers, while supporting hardly any renowned instrumental soloists (that is, of sitar and sarod). By contrast, Bengal—meaning largely Kolkatta—has generated few renowned vocalists; instead, it has been a center for instrumentalists, whether local Bengalis such as sitarist Nikhil Banerjee, or ethnic Uttar Pradesh Muslims such as the families of sitarists Inayat Khan and Vilayat Khan.<sup>5</sup>

[14] The historical development of classical music in the northwestern regions of Rajasthan and the Punjab differs in certain ways from that in both Maharashtra and Bengal. Firstly, evidence suggests that rāg-based music—whether for Hindu or Sikh devotion or for secular courtly entertainment—was cultivated considerably earlier in those former regions, especially given their relative proximity to Delhi and Gwalior. In the 1650s, much of the Pushti Marg community of Vaishnavite Hindus, persecuted by Aurangzeb, fled from the Braj region and settled in Mewar, Rajasthan, where their temples and practices flourished under the patronage of Rajput princes. These practices included the tradition of rāg-based dhrupad-style singing today called *havelī sangīt*. The initial flowering of this music in the Braj region was contemporary with and presumably linked to the emergence of dhrupad in the court of Man Singh of Gwalior, which, as mentioned, was later transplanted to the Mughal court; as Ho (2013) has discussed, evidence suggests that aspects of the Pushti Marg music tradition may well have predated the courtly dhrupad rather than being derivative of it. While Pushti Marg temples, with their associated *havelī sangīt*, remain active in Mathura and nearby Brindavan, since the seventeenth century the main strongholds of the tradition have been Rajasthan (especially Nathdwara, near Udaipur) and Gujarat. As we shall suggest, while the specifically Rajasthani character of Pushti Marg music should not be overemphasized, it is significant that some of the tradition’s rāg repertoire—such as its versions of Mārū and Dhanāsrī in Kāfi thāt—coheres with that of other distinctively western genres.

[15] With the drastic decline of the Mughal court in the early 1700s, many musicians migrated to Rajasthani princedoms. By the mid-nineteenth century, with Delhi in further

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5. Grimes goes on to make quite fanciful arguments about alleged differences in style and their supposed roots in topography, e.g., a supposed Maharashtrian preference for angular tunes and ornaments as reflecting the iconic Sahyadri mountains, as opposed to a Bengali fondness for “flowing” *mīṇḍ* (glissando) expressing that state’s “riverine” character.



decline, many Rajasthani courts became local centers of art music, under the ardent patronage of their rajas (see, e.g., Deodhar 1993, ch. 7). Before Independence, Rajasthan hosted twenty-one semi-autonomous “princely states.” Of these, Komal Kothari wrote:

Each court had its own decorum, rituals, ceremonies, customs and practices. The performing arts played a very important role in the execution of all these aspects of the court. Music, of all these performing arts, had the most important role to play not only as an object of aesthetics and arts, but also as a symbolic paraphernalia of the state and the court. (Kothari 1995, 59)

[16] While Mewat, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Udaipur, Alwar, Jhajjar, Tonk, Bikaner, and other locales hosted courts, the most extensive was that of Jaipur, which was a particular center for court music, including rāg knowledge, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Bhatkhande 1951-57, III, 107). Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh (r. 1778-1803) was especially renowned for his arts patronage, and his successors continued to employ many court musicians through the mid-twentieth century (Erdman 1978). A seminal role was played by dhrupad singer Bahram Khan, who, abandoning Delhi after the devastation inflicted by the British in 1857, resided and taught at the Rajasthani courts of Alwar and Jaipur until his death in 1880. Bahram Khan is seen as the progenitor of the lineage eventually known as the Dagar family (see Widdess and Sanyal 2004, 30, 107). Jaipur and Alwar also hosted a distinct tradition of bīn and sitar playing.

[17] Art music also took root early on in the urban Punjab, especially as the city of Lahore served as the Mughal capital—alternating with Delhi and Agra—for much of that dynasty’s sixteenth- to seventeenth-century heyday. Emperor Akbar, for example, based himself in Lahore for fourteen years. The Talwandi gharānā of dhrupad singers traces its origin to Mughal court singers who were awarded land grants in the Punjab in the sixteenth century (Widdess and Sanyal 2004, 30). After the decline of the Mughals, new Punjabi rulers supported court music in their manner, such as Ranjit Singh (r. 1799-39), who, though best known as a warrior-king, was also a patron of the arts and in the 1830s hosted the aforementioned Bahram Khan (see, e.g., Kapuria 2019). Another court musician, Irshad Ali Khan, founded the Kasur gharānā of Lahore-district dhrupad singers, and his descendants became propagators of the Patiala gharānā of khyāl and thumri singers. The Patiala court itself became a center of music patronage from the reign of Maharaja Narinder Singh (r.

1823–62) onward (van der Linden 2015, 149–50). Evidence suggests that there was a fair amount of interaction and travel between Rajasthani and Punjabi courts, with musicians such as the young Alladiya Khan (1855–1946) residing alternately in both regions.

[18] Another rāg-based music taking early root in the Punjab was the devotional music initially promoted by the first Sikh guru, Guru Nanak, from the early sixteenth century, and his successors and followers. As we shall discuss, this music, eventually known as *gurbānī sangīt* or *gurbānī kirtan*, constituted a parallel tradition to Mughal court dhrupad, while differing in its orientation toward devotion rather than secular entertainment. While the rāg repertoire of this music, along with other aspects, cohered in most respects with Mughal court music, it represented not a mere derivative tradition, and in some respects, like *havelī sangīt* it may have taken shape earlier than its courtly counterpart (Cassio 2015).

[19] Thus, the genre that would coalesce as Hindustani art music enjoyed a strong presence in Rajasthan and the Punjab from the mid-seventeenth century—some two centuries before it came to be extensively cultivated in Maharashtra and Bengal (the latter of which was characterized by Bernard Cohn, in a 1967 article on regionalism, as a “cul-de-sac”). When, in the 1800s, Hindustani music finally came to Maharashtra, it did so in a fairly uniform manner, with a uniform rāg repertoire—especially that of the Gwalior gharānā (with the exceptions being Rajasthani Jaipur-gharānā rāgs taken up by Maharashtrian disciples of that tradition). Moreover, both Rajasthan and the Punjab also hosted rāg-based “intermediate” genres—especially *Māṇḍ* and *gurbānī sangīt*—that could serve as conduits between classical music and local vernacular genres. (Both regions declined drastically as centers for fine arts from the mid-twentieth century, as concert activity became concentrated in Calcutta, Delhi, and Bombay.) Such factors allowed for the perpetuation of various distinctive and unique rāgs, whether these represented archaisms, intermediate-genre idiosyncrasies, or local creations which for whatever reasons did not travel to other regions.



Figure 1. Map of India, indicating site of Figure 2.

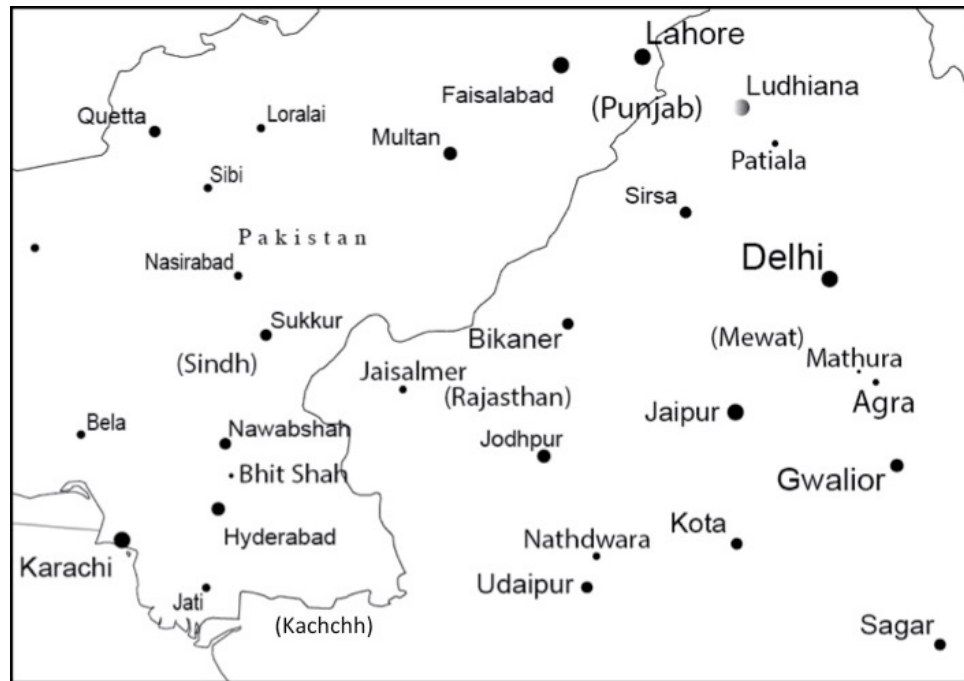


Figure 2. Map of Western India and Sindh, showing relevant places.

**HINDUSTANI RĀGS OF WESTERN INDIA**

[20] Though the names of rāgs such as Mārū, Sauvīra, Saindhva, and Gandhāra invoke Western India, their inclusion in the rāg enumerations of major Sanskrit treatises suggests that they had long been incorporated into the mainstream courtly modal repertoire, in such a way that whatever regional origins they may have once had were no longer relevant or important. (Such, for example, is also the case with modern rāgs such as Pahārī, Sindh Bhairavī, and Brindāvanī Sārang.) However, the extent to which these rāgs retained regional associations is ultimately unverifiable, since the authors of such treatises preferred to present the music system they described as a universal canon rather than one sullied by geographical variations. In the late modern period, which we may roughly date from the nineteenth century, the Hindustani rāgs associated with Western India include a few from the Sanskrit era—especially Sorath and Mārū—but are otherwise a different group, comprising especially Āsā, Champak, Husenī Toḍī, Māṇḍ, and perhaps Khokar. The cultivation of these rāgs can be further associated with a specific set of regional gharānās emerging in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from the socio-musical foundations we have just discussed.

[21] Some of these gharānās were based in the Punjab, which, as mentioned, hosted several regional courts, such as that of Patiala, fostering the emergence of the gharānā by that name in the mid-nineteenth century. Another hoary Punjabi lineage is the Talwandi gharānā, whose members, based in Ludhiana district, sang dhrupad and other genres for Sikh patrons and the Hindu court of Jammu (Widdess and Sanyal 2004, 31). A third Punjabi line was the Sham Chaurasi gharānā, whose most (indeed, only) renowned exponents were the brothers Nazakat and Salamat Ali Khan (1928–84, 1934–2001). Musicians in these lineages performed for local rajas and landlords, and for Sikh religious functions, whose related repertoire will be considered below.

[22] In Rajasthan the most important gharānā was the Jaipur khyāl gharānā, founded by the aforementioned Alladiya Khan, who was born, raised, and trained in Jaipur state.<sup>6</sup> Alladiya Khan performed—and taught to his sons and Maharashtrian disciples—a prodigious number

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6. The gharānā is often referred to as the Alladiya Khan gharānā, or the Jaipur-Atrauli gharānā. Alladiya's ancestors in the two generations preceding him lived in Jaipur state, though the ancestral home was Atrauli, in Uttar Pradesh (Grimes 2008,142). Alladiya is also said to have learned some material from the Pushti Marg kīrtan/dhrupad tradition of Nathdwara, Rajasthan.

of rāgs, many of which are not performed by other gharānās. Some of these rāgs he seems to have invented, while others were obscure traditional rāgs that he resurrected from oblivion. Often it is unclear which is the case.<sup>7</sup> However, some of the rāgs in question are also extant in other Rajasthani, Punjabi, or Sindhi traditions, including intermediate genres, and hence are clearly regional entities rather than his own idiosyncratic creations. Meanwhile, aside from his gharānā, another Rajasthani lineage is the Mewati khyāl gharānā, which, though previously obscure, came into prominence with the career of Pandit Jasraj (1930–2020).

[23] The art music patronized in these courts and performed by these gharānās was overwhelmingly that of the pan-regional Hindustani canon. Many of the seminal performers were refugees from Delhi, whose cultural life suffered repeated blows, from Nadir Shah’s invasion of 1739 to the massacres and pillage inflicted by the British in 1857. However, the early establishment of rāg-based musics in Rajasthan and the Punjab, coupled with the distance from Delhi, seems to have occasioned the cultivation of a set of distinctive rāgs. Whether these emerged from local vernacular musics, constituted marginal survivals, or were the creations of urban court musicians, they did not enter the Delhi and Gwalior canon that was exported to Maharashtra and Bengal from the mid-nineteenth century. These rāgs, though few, are not insignificant, and they also vary in their status and their historical relations to Hindustani music. Some of the rāgs of presumed western (especially Sindhi) origin—notably Sindhūra, Sindh Kāfi, and Sindh Bhairavi—have long since been absorbed into the pan-regional Hindustani canon, and in that sense are not uniquely “western rāgs” in terms of their performance practice and the criteria used in this essay.<sup>8</sup> Our focus here lies instead on rāgs that are performed primarily or even exclusively by musicians connected in training and/or residence with the west.

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7. A similar ambiguity may pertain to Alladiya’s practice of rendering the leisurely rāg development (*barbat, vistār*) in medium-tempo *vilambit* tāl, rather than the standard *ati-vilambit* (“extremely slow”) tempo. Deodhar seems to suggest that Alladiya adopted this practice because he had ruined his voice and was incapable of singing extended slow development (1993, 30). However, it is generally believed that the *ati-vilambit* tempo only came into prominence in the mid-twentieth century, in which case Alladiya’s use of medium tempo would constitute an archaism rather than an innovation.

8. Accordingly, while Sindh Bhairavī is commonly performed by Rajasthani Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, rāg Multānī—whose name suggests an association with western Punjab—has no particular presence in the region. Yet another contrast would pertain to the light rāg Pahārī, which, though a pan-regional stylization of hill-region melodies, is not performed as a rāg per se in those regions.

[24] Perhaps the single most prominent and venerable Western Indian rāg—both in Hindustani music and in the intermediate genres discussed below—is Āsā (or, less often, Āshā), a “major-scale” (Bilāval thāt) rāg that omits the third and seventh degrees in its ascending scale (hence, Sa Re Ma Pa Dha Sa), while including them, and occasionally flat Ni, in the heptatonic descent. Āsā is of considerable antiquity, being a prominent rāg in the Sikh *Ādi Granth* compiled in 1604, as discussed below; a verse in that volume attributed to Sufi poet Shaikh Farid (1173–1265) is designated to be sung in Āsā, supposedly indicating that Farid himself sang it in that rāg, though no associated melody survives. In modern times, Āsā (or Āsā Māṇḍ) was sung by leading vocalists of the Patiala, Sham Chaurasi, and Jaipur gharānās, and by Pandit Jasraj of the Mewati gharānā.<sup>9</sup> Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (1872–1931)—with V.N. Bhakhande, one of the two great modernizers of Hindustani music—also included two bhajans in Āsā in his pedagogical book *Sangīt Bālprakāsh* (1921, 12–14). Paluskar himself was trained in the Gwalior gharānā, whose exponents, like those of essentially all gharānās outside the Western region, generally do not sing Āsā; however, Paluskar lived in the Punjab for several years and founded his first music academy, the Gandharva Sangīt Mahavidyalaya, in Lahore in 1901. It is clear that Paluskar—with his double musical identity incorporating both Gwalior and the Punjab—learned Āsā in the Punjab and deemed it logical to include it in his songbook. Āsā is also included in a 1916 text, *Sangīt Sudarshan*, by Jaipur-based sitarist Amritsen, and it is described in the *Rāg Kalpadruma* (1842, pp. 16, 25), a massive anthology of song texts in Hindi, Rajasthani dialects, and other languages. Conversely, the rāg is conspicuously absent in treatises and pedagogical works representing the pan-regional mainstream, such as the publications of V.N. Bhatkhande (1860–1936), as well as Sanskrit texts preceding the modern era.<sup>10</sup>

[25] Closely resembling Āsā is rāg Māṇḍ, another Bilāval-thāt mode. Somewhat confusingly, “Māṇḍ” denotes both this rāg and a genre, specifically, a Rajasthani court and salon counterpart to thumri and dādra, flourishing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This “*rajvārī*” (“courtly”) Māṇḍ did not differ stylistically from thumri and dādra, but featured Marwari texts, an introductory *dohā* couplet, and occasional use of distinctive

9. Renditions of Āsā Māṇḍ by Munawwar Ali Khan (Patiala), Nazakat and Salamat Ali, and Pandit Jasraj can be found on YouTube.

10. Subba Rao, in his thorough rāg encyclopedia *Rāganidhi*, mentions it in passing, saying, “Information regarding Āsā is scanty” (1993: I, 35).

tāls. It was most characteristically sung by *pātar* courtesans, in a quintessentially *bāijī* style (see Manuel 1989, 105-144). As in eastern Uttar Pradesh, the courtesan milieu of specialists and connoisseurs of light-classical music declined in the mid-twentieth century, and the best exemplars of Māṇḍ are recordings of deceased courtesans such as Allah Jilai Bai (Allajilai Bai, 1902-1992). As a genre, Māṇḍ, like thumri and dādra, could be sung in various light rāgs, such as Khamāj, Pīlū, Bhairavī, and also the eponymous rāg Māṇḍ, which is of relevance here. Rāg Māṇḍ is somewhat distinctive among the modes considered here in the sense that it is fairly well-known (though not necessarily widely performed) outside Rajasthan, while at the same time being universally recognized as originating in that state (or perhaps, more specifically, from Malwa, in the west). Māṇḍ was a popular rāg used in Maharashtrian theater songs (Subba Rao 1993, III, 124); it is also routinely included in rāg encyclopedias and song anthologies such as Bhatkhande's six-volume *Kramik Pustak Mālīka* anthology (henceforth, *KPM*, 1954-59, V, 239) and Onkarnath Thakur's *Sangīṭājījali* (1957, 179).<sup>11</sup> However, Māṇḍ is most widely performed (both as a rāg and a genre) in Rajasthan and Punjab, or among singers trained in these traditions.

[26] As a “small,” light rāg, Māṇḍ's particular form is variable and flexible, and some non-Rajasthani performers may base their interpretations on little more than a familiarity with the iconic Marwari song “Kesariya Bālam,” the first lines of which are shown in Example 1 (see Bhatt 2014, 72). Meanwhile, as will be discussed below, varieties of Māṇḍ are sung in various “intermediate” genres, especially the music of Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs of western Rajasthan.<sup>12</sup>

[27] In a somewhat different category is rāg Sorath. Like Āsā, Sorath (or Sorathī) is a venerable rāg, but unlike Āsā, it is documented in several Sanskrit treatises, both Southern and Northern, including Lochana Kavi's *Rāga-Tarangini* (15th c.?), Ksemakarna's *Rāgamālā* (16th c.), and the *Rādhagovind Sangītsār* written in Jaipur around 1803. It is also typically

11. Surprisingly, the *Rādhagovind Sangītsār*, though written in Jaipur around 1803, makes no mention of Māṇḍ, presumably because its authors, though writing in Hindi prose, wished to align it more with Sanskritic textual tradition, especially the seventeenth-century *Sangīṭ Parijata*, than with local vernacular music.

12. Meriting passing mention is the Bilāval-thāt rāg Mewārā which, as its name suggests, is, like Māṇḍ, attributed to Rajasthani origin (specifically, Mewar/Udaipur). Though included in rāg anthologies such as Bhatkhande's *KPM* (V, 243), it is effectively extinct in current Hindustani practice.

MM 110

G M P D P D N S D Nb D P P D P Nb D P M G R G S S  
 Ke - sa - ri - ya ba - la - ma a - o - ni pa -

R G P D N(♭) P D P D M G R G  
 - dha - ro ma - re des i - - - ke

**Example 1.** “Kesariya Bālam.”

included in twentieth-century rāg surveys, such as that of Subba Rao (1993), and is discussed in V.N. Bhatkhande’s monumental history of rāgs—an important resource in this article—the *Hindustāni Sangīt Shāstra* (1954–57, I, 236–39). Further, it is a rāg in the dhrupad-related Pushti Marg havelī sangīt repertoire. While these factors would seem to suggest inclusion in the pan-regional canon, other considerations link the rāg to Western India. To begin with, Sorath is the colloquial and archaic name for the Saurashtra/Kathiawar peninsula, on the southernmost part of Gujarat, itself to the south of Rajasthan and southeast of Sindh. Bhatkhande points out that Sorath song texts in treatises are often in Gujarati or Marwari, the dialect of western Rajasthan and the primary traditional poetic idiom of Rajasthan in general (1954–1957, I, 238). Several of the Sorath song-texts included in the *Rāg Kalpadruma* are in Marwari, as are some of those presented in Bhatkhande’s *KPM* (1954–1959, V, 316–19); one of the latter is addressed to Mārū, a folk-ballad hero of Rajasthan and Sindh. Further, Sorath is the name of a heroine in a romantic epic ballad popular in Rajasthan, and in Sindh, in its retelling by Shah Abdul Latif, to be sung in the eponymous *sur* or mode (as discussed below). Most significant is that however hoary the rāg may be, it is rare in the modern Hindustani repertoire, being occasionally performed only by Patiala and Jaipur gharānā exponents. Meanwhile, as we shall note, it is a basic rāg in the repertoires of Sikh gurbānī sangīt, Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music, and Sindhī kāfī and shāh jo rāg. The distinctive current prominence of Sorath in western regions strongly suggests that in spite of its customary inclusion in treatises, both Sanskrit and modern, it may have always retained the regional character suggested by its name. As we shall hypothesize, its lack of prominence in the mainstream canon may have to do with its close resemblance, depending on its form,



to either Brindāvani Sārang or else, if Ga is included in descent, Desh.

[28] Somewhat similar in this sense are rāgs Bihāgrā and Barārī (Bairārī, Varātī), which, though included in most early modern and modern rāg surveys, are sung almost exclusively by Jaipur gharānā vocalists, and by singers of Sikh gurbānī sangīt, as discussed below. Ahobal’s seventeenth-century *Sangīt Parijata* lists nine forms of Varātī, and at least three versions are present in the Jaipur gharānā tradition<sup>13</sup>; of these, one is in Pūrvī thāt (i.e., with komal Dha), one is in Mārva thāt (with raised Dha), and the third uses both raised and lowered forms of Dha.

[29] A more unambiguously western rāg is Champak. Champak appears in at least one early modern treatise—the *Rāg Darpan* (Sarmadee 1996, 28–29)—and, significantly, in the *Rādhagovind Sangītsār* from Jaipur. In modern times, Champak has been a fairly well established rāg among Punjabi and Rajasthani classical singers, as well as disciples of Paluskar.<sup>14</sup> In most versions it resembles rāg Jhinjhotī, but certain characteristic phrases—especially the leap Re-Pa—lend it a distinct and quite attractive contour (*chalan*), rather than being a redundant cognate of another more familiar rāg.<sup>15</sup>

[30] Another distinctively western rāg is Husenī Toḍī (Husainī Toḍī), which may be of Middle Eastern origin. Amir Khusrau (1253–1325) is said to have introduced it from Persian music, and Husenī remains a familiar maqām in Iraqi and Turkish systems, with a neutral second degree that would not be admissible in Indian art music. A similar rāg Husenī—though with a natural second degree—became well established in South Indian music, being outlined in various treatises (including Somnath’s 17th-c. *Rāg Vibodh* and Tulaji’s 18th-c. *Sangīt Sāramṛta*), and remaining familiar in the modern repertoire. In North India it seems to have survived—especially as “Husenī Toḍī”—only in Rajasthani traditions. Husenī is presented in the seventeenth-century treatises of Bhavbhatt (Bhava Bhatta), commissioned by

13. Jaipur vocalist Manjari Asanare Kelkar demonstrates these at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCND4p5OM80>

14. Renditions of Champak by Punjabi and Rajasthani (Jaipur gharānā) vocalists currently accessible on YouTube include those of Fateh Ali Khan and Umeed Ali Khan (both Punjabi, though of Gwalior gharānā), Roshan Abbas Khan, Ram Krishna Verma, and Khadim Hussein Khan, as well as Paluskar disciples Onkarnath Thakur and Narayanrao Vyas. Umeed Ali also sang a rāg “Tirvan,” about which we have not been able to gather information.

15. Typical Champak phrases are (with komal *ni*): sa re pa, pa dha ni dha pa, dha ma pa ga, re sa re ma.

Maharaja Anup Singh of Bikaner, and Husenī Toḍī is mentioned in the *Nāḍodadhi*, written in nineteenth-century Jaipur by Puraṇ (Purna) Kavi (in Bhatkhande 1951-1957, II, 552). The rāg was performed by early-twentieth-century Jaipur singers Ashiq Ali Khan and his father Muhammad Ali Khan, who taught it to Vilayat Hussein Khan of the Agra gharānā, and to Bhatkhande (Yodh 1978, 14, Ratanjankar 1967, 14-15). In modern times, Husenī Toḍī is sung primarily by exponents of the Jaipur gharānā.<sup>16</sup> While sharing some phrases with Jaunpūri (“Jaunpūri Toḍī”), it more closely resembles rāg Desī, indeed, to such an extent that its presence in the mainstream Hindustani repertoire might be redundant. As we discuss below, Husenī Toḍī, as a thoroughly Rajasthani entity, is also sung by some Māṅgaṇiyārs and Laṅgās, some of whom, interviewed in the 1970s by Nazir Jairazbhoy, claimed familiarity with Ashiq Ali Khan.

[31] Meriting passing mention here is Khokar. Like Husenī and Champak, this rāg is cited in at least one medieval treatise, the *Rāg Darpan*, and is also described in the aforementioned *Rādhagovind Saṅgītsar*, and though mentioned in such rāg surveys as those of Subba Rao (1993) and Kaufmann (1968, 585)—who describes it as “rare”—, it is standard only in the repertoire of Jaipur gharānā singers (several of whose renditions are available on YouTube). Like Husenī Toḍī and Champak, it closely resembles another more familiar rāg—in this case, Bihāgrā—, indeed, to the extent that the two rāgs and their names may be essentially interchangeable.<sup>17</sup> This redundancy may explain its absence in the mainstream canon, and its presence only among Jaipur singers who have perpetuated Alladiya Khan’s cultivation of a wide rāg repertoire encompassing many otherwise obscure modes. Note, however, that we are characterizing as “western” only rāgs that are performed in more than one gharānā or genre; thus, if Hindol-Bahār may be characterized as a mere “Jaipur-gharānā rāg,” Husenī Toḍī has a broader western character manifest in its presence in Rajasthani treatises and Māṅgaṇiyār/Laṅgā repertoires as well as Jaipur-gharānā music.

[32] Passing mention should also be made of a set of now extinct rāgs that seem to have been current in nineteenth-century Rajasthan, especially in the realm of light-classical bhajan singing. The *Brahmanand Bhajan Māla*, an anthology of song lyrics published in Ajmer

16. YouTube currently offers renditions of this rāg by Kishori Amonkar, Manjiri Asanare Kelkar, and Arun Dravid, all of the Jaipur gharānā. For further discussion of Husenī and Husenī Toḍī, see Manuel 1981, 22-24.

17. See, e.g., Deepak Raja’s comments in his blog: <http://swaratala.blogspot.com/2011/03/bihagda-and-khokar-whats-difference.html>

around 1900, prefaces many of its verses with headings specifying the rāg in which they are to be sung; these headings include such local archaisms as Banjāra, Kasūrī, Rāśra, Punjabi Kāfi, and Mangal, along with the more familiar Rajasthani rāgs Māṇḍ and Janglā.

[33] A number of observations could be made or reiterated about the existence of this distinct set of Western Indian rāgs. First, as we have noted, no other region can claim such a presence in Hindustani music; that is, for example, there are no “Bengali rāgs” or “Maharashtrian rāgs” per se. In this regard, it is also significant that the only language other than Braj Bhasha that has been used in khyāl and dhrupad is Marwari (which, in such contexts, is roughly intelligible to Hindi speakers). Thus, for example, Bhatkhande’s massive *KPM* contains several khyāls and dhrupads in Marwari, but none in any other languages; in Hindustani music per se, with a very few idiosyncratic exceptions, there is no tradition of composing or singing classical khyāls or dhrupads in Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, or Punjabi (aside from devotional gurbānī sangīt), but the Marwari tradition is well enough entrenched as to persist, especially in the context of its special rāg repertoire.<sup>18</sup>

[34] Secondly, as we have suggested, the “Western” rāgs discussed are not notably distinctive in form, and indeed, they all resemble other more common Hindustani rāgs. It is as if the “space” that the Hindustani system allowed, or even desired, for certain modal entities came to be occupied by canonic rāgs in the mainstream, but alternately or additionally by a distinctive set of rāgs in the west. Their existence also suggests that such a regional dimension may have existed for centuries. Thus, while the Sanskrit treatises opted to present art music as a canon unsullied by regional irregularities, it is quite possible, for instance, that Sorath was always more popular in the west than elsewhere.

### GURBĀNĪ SANGĪT

[35] As we have noted, Mughal court dhrupad evolved as a transplanted elaboration of the dhrupad cultivated in the Gwalior court of Man Singh Tomar (r. 1486-1516). This Gwalior tradition itself evolved in some sort of interaction with the similar music cultivated in the wealthy Vaishnavite temples in Mathura and nearby pilgrimage sites (Thielemann 2001). This latter music—especially the Pushti Marg tradition of kīrtan-singing or havelī sangīt—

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18 An idiosyncratic composition is the Punjabi *choṭā khyāl* “Sāḍe nāl ve miyāñ.”

developed as a form of dhrupad, featuring four-part compositions in classical rāgs, set to “large” tāls, with predominantly Krishnaite lyrics in Braj Bhasha, anthologized in editions organized according to rāg. It differed from court dhrupad primarily in emphasizing devotional bhakti, as conveyed in the lyrics, rather than abstract elaboration of rāg and tāl. In the Punjab, a similar and closely related form of temple dhrupad singing was adopted by the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak. In collaboration with classical vocalists, Nanak set almost a thousand devotional hymns (*shabads*, *shabds*) to nineteen rāgs, creating a repertoire that came to be known as gurbānī kīrtan (or gurbānī sangīt). His equally prolific successors—especially the fifth Guru, Arjan (1563-1606)—amplified this repertoire, adding their own compositions and settings of lyrics, in more than twenty languages, attributed to other poet-saints, including Kabir, Mira Bai, and Shaikh Farid. Guru Arjan also established norms for daily singing of these compositions—anthologized in his *Ādi Granth* compilation—at the Sikh shrine. A subsequent and definitive version of the repertoire was formalized in the early 1700s in the *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib* (henceforth, *GGŚ*) by the tenth and last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). This anthology suggested an appropriate rāg and tāl for each hymn, using a repertoire of thirty-one basic rāgs and another thirty-one derivative compound rāgs. However, the Gurus also countenanced the setting of hymns to contemporary popular folk tunes. As we shall discuss, most of the rāgs are canonic in Hindustani music, though a significant minority are unique to gurbānī sangīt, or, while not entirely unknown in Hindustani sangīt, are rare in that idiom.

[36] Meanwhile, over the centuries, many temple singers—whether Sikh *rāgīs* or Muslim *dhārīs*—perpetuated their own orally transmitted “*paramparik*” (“family tradition”) repertoire, which included both the canonic *GGŚ* settings as well as their own renditions, and which employed around forty rāgs (including Māṇḍ and Champak) not included in the *GGŚ* guidelines. In 1979, two eleventh-generation custodians of this repertoire, the brothers Avtar Singh (1926-2006) and Gurcharan Singh (1915-2017), sons of Jwala Singh, recorded around five hundred of their songs and notated them in a published anthology, the *Gurbānī Sangīt: Prachīn Rīt Ratnāvalī*. Several of their recordings are accessible on YouTube, along with others made by their disciple and grand-nephew, Bhai Baldeep Singh, an energetic vocalist, scholar, and pedagogue. Other song anthologies include those of Principal Dayal Singh and Master Tara Singh (Inderjit Kaur, p.c.).

[37] Gurbānī kīrtan, like havelī sangīt, is a text-driven (*shabd-pradhān*) genre, with primary emphasis on the sentiment of the devotional lyrics rather than abstract or virtuosic elaboration of rāg and tāl. In this respect, and in that it is traditionally performed in religious contexts rather than as stand-alone presentations, it has the character of an “intermediate sphere” genre, though its grounding in rāg and tāl is a distinctively classical feature (Manuel 2015a).

[38] As with havelī sangīt, the precise historical relationship between gurbānī kīrtan (including its rāg repertoire) and the Mughal court idiom which became mainstream Hindustani music has been in many respects unclear, and indeed has been a subject of lively disputation in some circles. On one side are those—especially Bob van der Linden (2015)—who have argued that gurbānī kīrtan, in its formal aspects, developed essentially as a regional efflorescence of Mughal court music and is best regarded as Hindustani music rather than as any sort of distinct tradition. Linden asserts that despite the frequent conflicts between the Sikhs and the Mughals, “the Sikh gurus and later Sikh maharajas increasingly took the Mughal court (*darbār*) as a point of reference for their own culture” (2015, 143). However, Bhai Baldeep Singh takes umbrage at this viewpoint, arguing instead that gurbānī kīrtan evolved in a parallel rather than derivative relationship to Mughal art music. Singh points to the unique rāgs and tāls in the Sikh repertoire, and to the refusal of many gurbānī musicians to accept Mughal patronage (2011, 270, 272-73). Similarly, Francesca Cassio argues that aspects of the gurbānī dhrupad tradition may have actually emerged before both its Mughal counterpart as well as havelī sangīt; she points out, for example, that Guru Nanak himself was born thirty-seven years before Tansen, the celebrated vocalist of Akbar’s court (2015, 10-11).

[39] For purposes of the present study, we need not dwell extensively on this debate, much less attempt to resolve it. Obviously court music of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries was a shared idiom in the Punjabi as well as Mughal courts, and some of the rāg repertoire may have originated in the Punjab. However, with the liberation of Punjabi courts from Mughal dominance, the Punjabi repertoire may have developed or preserved distinctive elements, especially as cultivated in Sikh contexts, which were distinct from the secular entertainment ones. What is of particular interest here is that for someone such as Baldeep Singh, the unique rāg repertoire of gurbānī kīrtan is a matter of pride, and a cherished tradition that

should be protected against the “colonizing” hegemony of the mainstream canon (p.c.).

[40] In modern times, the GGS hymns have come to be sung in a wide variety of styles—collectively called *gurmat sangīt*—ranging from settings using film tunes to *khyāl*-style renderings of the specified *rāgs*, with much showy display of virtuoso technique. Since the years around 1900, the Singh Sabha, an influential Sikh reformist organization, has attempted to standardize and formalize many aspects of Sikh devotional practice, including the music performed in *gurdwāra* shrines. In 1991 a group of concerned scholars and musicians met at Jawaddi Taksal, in Ludhiana (Punjab), forming the “Rāg Nirnayak Committee” (RNC), which sought to re-establish tradition and impose order on *gurmat sangīt* by insisting that the shabads be taught and performed in the *rāgs* specified in the GGS. They also promoted standardized versions of these *rāgs* which, however, either cohered with modern Bhatkhande-style Hindustani music or, in a few cases, were modern inventions, in contrast to the paramparik traditions. (These “reformed” *rāg* versions are presented at [jawadditaksal.org](http://jawadditaksal.org).) The result has been a sort of “hermeneutic chaos” that, as has been noted, has exhibited some of the contradictions and distortions as are found in the European early music movement (see Khalsa 2014; van der Linden 2013, ch. 5, Cassio 2015; Kalra 2014, ch. 4). Bhai Baldeep Singh has been particularly critical of the “colonizing” reform movement, which has devalued and dismissed the distinctive *rāg* versions perpetuated and laboriously documented by the Jwala Singh lineage. In yet another debate, van der Linden (2008, 12; 2012; 2013, 148) has argued that this orally transmitted repertoire cannot be assumed to faithfully represent the music of the sixteenth- to seventeenth-century gurus, to which Baldeep Singh replied that the consistency of song versions of distinct paramparik performers illustrates the fidelity of their transmission (Singh 2011, 268).

[41] The thirty-one basic *rāgs* in the GGS are: *Srī rāga*, *Mājh* (*Mānjh*), *Gaurī*, *Aśā*, *Gujrī*, *Devghandhārī*, *Bihāgrā*, *Barhaṅs*, *Soraṭh*, *Dhanāshrī*, *Jaiṭsrī*, *Toḍī*, *Bairārī*, *Tilang*, *Sūhī*, *Bilāval*, *Gonḍ*, *Rāmkalī*, *Naṭ Narāyan*, *Mālī Gaura*, *Mārū*, *Tukhārī*, *Kedār*, *Bhairo*, *Basant*, *Sārang*, *Malhār*, *Kānṛa*, *Kalyān*, *Prabhāti*, and *Jaijivantī*. Most of these are mainstream Hindustani *rāgs*, but around a dozen are distinct either to Sikh tradition or to Western India in general, and are thus of interest in the present study. (Most of the other thirty-one *rāgs* are relatively obscure *chhāya-lag* compounds of the basic set, such as the eleven *Gaurī* mixed *rāgs*,

and will not be discussed here.<sup>19)</sup> The GGS concludes with an extended lyric, the “rāgmāla,” which enumerates these and other rāgs, including “Suhav” and the aforementioned Champak.

[42] The gurbānī rāgs are diverse in origin as well as form. Previously discussed are Aśā and Champak, which have the status of uniquely Punjabi and Rajasthani rāgs, also performed by Hindustani vocalists of that region. In a related category, as mentioned earlier, are Bihāgra, Barārī (Bairārī, Varātī), and Sorath, which, though recognized as legitimate Hindustani rāgs, are performed almost exclusively by musicians of western origin or training, especially those of Patiala or Jaipur gharānās, aside from being basic gurbānī kīrtan rāgs; significantly, however, they are also sung in Pushti Marg havelī sangīt, suggesting a historical connection between these two devotional dhrupad idioms. Also sung in both devotional genres are Kānrā (Kānrā) and Mārū, two rāgs cited in various Sanskrit treatises (such as the *Sangiṭ Parijāta*), though being effectively extinct in modern Hindustani music. Kānrā, in its most common form, features the *vakra* “crooked” Gab-Ma-Re-Sa phrase iconic in modern Kānrā variants (such as Dārbārī), and most closely resembles the modern (though obscure) rāg Sūghrāi in its passing use of *shuddh* Dha.

[43] For its part, the gurbānī rāg Mārū, in its distinct versions, illustrates the “hermeneutic chaos” mentioned earlier. The most prevalent form (several renditions of which can be heard on YouTube) is particularly distinctive, using both raised and lowered forms of Ma, Dha, and Ni, along with *shuddh* Re. One might be inclined to posit intriguing parallels with the somewhat similar Pushti Marg version of Mārū, which, however, has komal Re, in accordance with the Bhairav-thāt (Gauri *melā* or scale) version presented in the seventeenth century by Pundarika Vitthala. However, this gurbānī version (according to Bhai Baldeep Singh, p.c.) appears to be a thoroughly modern concoction. By contrast, the paramparik Mārū versions are in either Kalyān or Khamāj *ang* (style, form), with no particular resemblance to either the haveli sangīt or Pundarika forms.

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19. The compound rāgs are: Gaurī Guārārī, Gaurī Dakhnī, Gaurī Chaitī, Gaurī Birāgan, Gaurī Dīpakī, Gaurī Purbī Dīpakī, Gaurī Pūrbī, Gaurī Māhī, Gaurī Mālwa, Gaurī Mālā, Gaurī Sorathī, Aśā Kāfi, Aśāvarī, Aśāvarī Sudhang, Devgandhār, Baṛhaṅs Dakhnī, Tilang Kāfi, Sūhī Kāfi, Sūhī Lalit, Bilāval Dakhnī, Bilāval Mangal, Bilāval Gonḍ, Rāmkalī Dakhnī, Naṭ, Mārū Kāfi, Mārū Dakhnī, Basant Hindol, Kalyān Bhūpālī, Prabhātī Bibhās, Bibhās Prabhātī, and Prabhātī Dakhnī.

[44] A more probable anachronism is represented by a version of *Srī rāg* in *Kāfi thāt*, which is performed in the paramparik tradition alongside the *Pūrvī-thāt* *Srī rāg* standard in both the GGS canon and modern Hindustani music. The historical relationship between these two entirely different *rāgs* of the same name is enigmatic (as discussed by Bhatkhande 1951-1957, III, 41-64). Sanskrit texts describe only the *Kāfi-thāt* version, which is maintained in modern Karnatak music (with the corresponding *melā* being renamed *Kharaharapriya*). At some point—presumably the nineteenth century—the *Pūrvī-thāt* *Srī rāg* coalesced in the North,<sup>20</sup> with the *Kāfi-thāt* version surviving only in the Sikh tradition, together with several GGS compound *rāgs* whose names—such as *Bilāval Dakhnī* (“southern *Bilāval*”)—also suggest some sort of Karnatak connection.

[45] In a special category are *rāgs* *Tukhārī* and *Sūhī*, which exist only in *gurbānī* music. *Tukhārī*, like *Mārū*, is another *rāg* whose form has been confounded by modern revisionism. It is often rendered in a manner nearly identical to Hindustani *Madhūvantī*, but the paramparik version introduces *komal Ni* and *shuddh Ma* in quite a distinctive manner, as shown in Example 2.<sup>21</sup> Though *Tukhārī* is certainly obscure in comparison to *Madhūvantī*, it actually features much more of the tetrachordal symmetry Nazir Jairazbhoy (1971) astutely showed to characterize most Hindustani *rāgs*. While *Madhūvantī*’s lower and upper tetrachords are completely unbalanced, those of *Tukhārī* achieve clear symmetry with

MM 60

P M M P S Ṇ D P M# G<sup>b</sup> R S Ṇ S

S Ṃ P Ḍ Ṇ Ḍ P M# G<sup>b</sup> R S Ṇ S

**Example 2.** *Rāg* *Tukhārī*, *sthāi* and *antarā* of *gurbānī* shabad “*Gol Ghumāi*,” in *chārtāl* (12 beats).

20. In the *Sarmāya-i Ishrat ma’aruf Qānun-i Mūsīqī* (Delhi, 1869), *Srī* has the scale of *Bhairav thāt*, differing only from *Pūrvī-thāt* in its lowered fourth degree. See presentation by Allyn Miner, at:

[https://archive.org/details/calauem\\_200201\\_omvf0000220\\_ac](https://archive.org/details/calauem_200201_omvf0000220_ac)

21. Sung by Bhai Avtar Singh and Gurcharan Singh, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12hlhsMrecE>



the phrases Sa-Ma and Gab-Re-Sa being intervallically duplicated in the upper tetrachord by Pa-Sa and Nib-Dha-Pa.

[46] For its part, Sūhī (which bears no relation to Hindustani Sūhā)<sup>22</sup> features the distinctive phrase Nib-Dha-Niḥ-Sa (as in rāg Miān ki Malhār, though Sūhī features shuddh rather than komal Ga). The GGS contains a poem attributed to Shaikh Farid, to be sung in Sūhī, whose specific melody survives in the paramparik tradition and is thus believed to be that performed by Farid himself (Bhai Baldeep Singh, p.c.), though this alleged perpetuation of a thirteenth-century tune certainly cannot be verified. (GGS verses composed by the Sikh gurus were set by them and their associates to original tunes, but, according to oral tradition, verses incorporated from other saints and poets, such as Farid, retained their extant melodies and rāg settings.)

[47] The gurbāni rāg Naṭ Narāyan might constitute another distinctively “western” entity in that at present, as a Hindustani rāg it seems to survive almost exclusively in the repertoires of Jaipur, Mewati, and Patiala gharāna musicians, despite appearing in several Sanskrit texts. However, the gurbāni version of this, somewhat resembling Shām Kalyān, differs from that Hindustani namesake (sometimes called Naṭ Narāyani).

[48] In general, the distinctive gurbānī rāgs, like the Hindustani rāgs discussed in the previous section, are of diverse origins. Some, such as Champak and Aśā, are also sung by classical vocalists of Western gharānās. Others, especially Bihāgrā, Barārī, and Sorath, are relatively canonic Hindustani rāgs which, however, are rarely performed by non-western musicians. Still others—especially Kāfi-thāṭ Srī rāg and Kānrā—appear to be atavisms, the latter of which could be “western” in the sense that it is also perpetuated in the Pushti Marg tradition, with its epicenter in Nathdwara, Rajasthan.

[49] Most renditions of gurbānī and gurmat sangīt, as text-driven shabd-pradhān genres, consist primarily of reiterations of the composition rather than extended elaboration of the rāg in question. Hence some people might be inclined to dismiss the distinctive gurbānī rāgs

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22. It scarcely needs to be pointed out that similar-looking words may or may not be cognates. Thus, as Bhatkhande notes (1951–57, IV, 167–69), historical documents verify that “Bairārī,” “Barārī,” “Barātī,” “Varātī,” and “Varālī” have all denoted versions of the same basic rāg, but there does not appear to be any etymological or musical relationship between gurbānī “Sūhī,” Rajasthani “Sūb,” and the “Sūhvī” and “Sūhā” of Sanskrit texts and Hindustani music, respectively.

as simple modal categorizations of songs rather than the fully fleshed-out *rāgs* of classical music. However, an activist such as Bhai Baldeep Singh would counter that some renditions, whether in *dhrupad* or *khyāl* style, do in fact develop the *rāg* in depth and illustrate how the *gurbānī rāgs* are just as legitimate as are *Hindustani rāgs*.

#### LAṄĀ AND MĀṄGAṆĪYĀR MUSIC OF WESTERN RAJASTHAN

[50] The *rāgs* discussed thus far have included some associated with traditions originating or effectively based in Rajasthan, including the Jaipur and Mewati *gharānās*, courtly *Māṇḍ* singing, and *Pushti Marg havelī sangīt*. Meanwhile, western Rajasthan is host to a particularly remarkable music genre—with a particularly distinctive *rāg* repertoire—, namely, that associated with the *Laṅgā* (*Laṅghā*) and *Māṅgaṇiyār* (*Māṅgaṇhār*) musician castes. Hereditary Muslim performers of the arid Jaisalmer, Barmer, and western Jodhpur districts, *Laṅgās* and *Māṅgaṇiyārs* have traditionally provided ritual, ceremonial, and entertainment music for their more affluent patrons in towns and villages. Since the 1970s, while many such patrons have ceased employing traditional performers, quite a few *Laṅgās* and *Māṅgaṇiyārs* have found work performing for tourists and at urban festivals (e.g., of “Sufi Music” and even “Gypsy music”), and some have even toured the West, where they are appreciated for their virtuoso singing, catchy tunes, animated performance style, and the dulcet timbres of the *sārangī* and *kamāichā* fiddles played by the *Laṅgās* and *Māṅgaṇiyārs*, respectively. (The two castes are endogamous, serve different patrons, dress differently, and have different song repertoires, but their performance styles are similar and their *rāg* repertoire is more or less shared.<sup>23</sup>)

[51] *Laṅgā* and *Māṅgaṇiyār* music (insofar as it can be regarded as a unified tradition) is a quintessential intermediate-sphere idiom in the way it combines features of classical music with others normally associated with folk music (see Manuel 2015a). Much of the repertoire consists of traditional songs, in many cases stylized versions of women’s songs, which Indian scholars would categorize as *lok gīt*, that is “folksong.” However, musicians identify many of their more elaborate songs (especially those categorized as *jāṅgdā*, *moṭā gīt* or *barā gīt*—“big song”) with specific *rāgs*, some of which correspond to *Hindustani* equivalents, but others of

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23. Davies (2017, Ch. 4) makes a solid attempt to address the extent to which *Laṅgā* and *Māṅgaṇiyār rāg* conceptions and repertoires are shared.

which are unique. Many vocalists cultivate formidable vocal technique enabling them to adorn their songs with impressive khyāl-style *tāns*. Another affinity with art music is the traditional dependence on elite patronage—in this case, the local, often rural gentry, rather than the urban upper class. At the same time, musicians do not articulate the sort of explicit theory that is characteristic of a classical music. When queried by researchers, they are not able to enumerate beats of meters nor specify names of notes, nor are they able to describe in formal terms the distinctions between *rāgs*—which themselves are often unclear in performance; indeed, their versions of *rāgs* (and their *rāg* repertoires) may vary from one village or even family to another. Many performers are illiterate, and hardly any have had any direct exposure to or familiarity with Hindustani music per se. Morgan Davies, in his insightful dissertation on *rāg* in *Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār* music, notes that many performers do not conceive of *rāg* as an important element in their music, but rather as a mere descriptive aspect of their extant song repertoire.<sup>24</sup> The knowledgeable elderly *kamāicha* players he worked with had more extensive knowledge of *rāg* than many performers, but even their solo instrumental renditions of *rāgs* tended to consist of strings of established, fixed phrases interspersed with other stock phrases that were not *rāg*-specific (Davies 2017, 135, 212).

[52] As Davies and others have noted, it is likely that the *Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār* *rāg* repertoire derives less from inventions by their own communities than from contact, however incomplete and sporadic, with more elaborate and formalized genres—especially Hindustani music, but also Sindhi *surs*, *gurbānī sangīt*, and possibly *Pushti Marg havelī sangīt*. This contact may well have occurred over the course of several centuries, such that some of the borrowed *rāgs* have long since acquired (or lost) their own distinctive features. It is evident that in the past at least a few members of these communities had some sort of engagement with classical musicians in local courts such as that of Jaisalmer and nineteenth-century Jaipur, where both folk and classical performers were patronized (see, e.g., Jairazbhoy 1980, Erdman 1985). Through such interactions they acquired some knowledge of *rāgs*—or at least

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24. Aside from Davies' dissertation, some basic information and observations about *rāg* usage in *Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār* music are provided by Verma (1987), Rajhans (n.d.), Kothari (1995), Neuman and Chaudhury (2006, 94–111), and Bhatt (2014). Nazir Jairazbhoy gathered substantial data on *rāg* repertoire in the 1970s, but did not publish his findings, though one of the present authors worked with him and published an early article on *Toḍī rāgs* (Manuel 1981) drawing from this research; for his part, Bond conducted productive interviews with *Māṅgaṇiyār*s in western Rajasthan and *Laṅgās* in Kachchh (who are distinct from the *Laṅgās* of western Rajasthan).

rāg names—, which they conveyed to their rural kinsmen. The performers incorporated these materials, albeit in an inconsistent and idiosyncratic manner, into their art, lending it a prestige and sophistication uncharacteristic of other village song idioms. These features qualified them to provide music for rural landlords and other gentry, who, in accordance with their own status, for their weddings and other occasions sought music that was more elaborate and prestigious than, say, the lively but unpretentious songs of the Kalbelia “gypsies.”

[53] Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs do not perform rāgs per se, but if asked to do so, will typically render songs, or a prefatory dohā (lit., couplet, but also the prosodic meter typically used therein), that they regard as being in certain rāgs. The dohā verses either cohere in subject matter with the subsequent song, or, like the contemplative *rāg-dhyān* verses appended to *rāgmālā* (*rāgamālā*) paintings, they praise or personify the rāg in question, as in these examples (from Bhatt 2014, 44):

*Nadiyā meṅ Gangābarī, tirath baro Kedār*

*Runkhā meṅ chandana baro, rāga Gūṅḍ Malhār.*

Greatest of rivers is Ganga, of pilgrimage sites Kedarnath

Greatest of trees is the sandalwood, the greatest rāga Gūṅḍ Malhār.

*Āsā mhārī lādli, jhīlan gayī tālāb*

*Mailā to sab dho liyā, viraha na dhoyo jāī*

Lovely Āsā went to the pond for a dip, all her clothes and herself were washed

except she could not wash away the feeling of separation from her beloved.

[54] In several North Indian vernacular genres—such as Hathrasi rasiyā (see Manuel 2015b)—it is customary to preface a metered song with a free-rhythmic dohā, which has something of the character of a brief introductory ālāp. In such genres, the dohās typically pertain to the subject matter of the song; by contrast, the Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār practice of singing dohās regarding rāgs is unique to their music and presumably derives from distinctive features of early modern Rajasthani court culture. The tradition of penning metered verses about rāgs is itself ancient; Sanskrit treatises about music were written entirely in verse (for ease of memorization), and they typically described the rāgs both in formal features (especially scale) as well as with fanciful poetic imagery. After the sixteenth century the art of penning such iconographic descriptions (e.g., portraying Toḍī as a damsel in the woods) came to be greatly elaborated by poets of diverse Hindi dialects—including Marwari—, both as a literary idiom and for insertion in rāgmāla paintings. From the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries, Rajasthan was the primary center for rāgmāla painting and the allied literary art of rāg-dhyān verses. In Rajasthani courts and homes of nobles, such paintings and poetry manuscripts would be passed around, relished, and discussed. On the whole, these arts were conventional pictorial and literary genres whose composition and consumption might have little or nothing to do with music per se.<sup>25</sup> It is clear, however, that as dynamic and valued parts of western Rajasthani court culture, rāg-dhyān verses were picked up by such literate Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs who were connected, in whatever capacity, to court culture; transmitted to others in the community, the dohās were adopted as markers of prestige, along with rāg time-theory and, in idiosyncratic forms, the rāgs themselves. As Davies notes, some of the dohās reference Shah Abdul Latif sūrs such as “Sūr Rāno,” or they invoke certain Sindhi ballad personages such as the tragic heroine Sorath, suggesting that the rāg by that name may have developed as a stylization of a mode traditionally used in singing the eponymous tale (Davies 2017, 69–71, 344–46, 351–59).

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25. Thus, for example, an artist painting “rāg Kāmod” would base his picture not on pensively listening to that rāg but on a tracing—often complete with paint-by-number color indications—that would circulate and be used as a template by many artists (see Beach 1992, 160–62, Gangoly 1935, 96–104, Miner 2015). Similarly, a Hindi poet could even compose a treatise on music—as a conventional literary topic—without knowing anything of that art, rewriting in his own style and language material cribbed from one or more Sanskrit texts. Such an author, like the rāgmāla painter, the poet writing rāg-dhyāns, and the patron who enjoyed such projects, could all easily be deaf, or at any rate ignorant of and indifferent to rāg-based music. Hence the unique nature of the Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār practice of singing rāg-dhyān lyrics which might otherwise be independent of music.

[55] Several of the rāgs, as abstracted from songs and dohās, lack consistently performed distinctive modal features. Quite possibly, musicians of earlier generations encountered these Hindustani rāgs or rāg-names in some context, and then applied these names to items in their extant song repertoire. Thus, for example, though the catchy and popular song “Mūmal” is said by some Laṅgās to be in rāg Māṇḍ (Rajhans n.d., 13), it does not exhibit any particular distinctive features of that rāg, and its attribution might be akin to saying that the song “Amazing Grace” is in rāg Durgā.<sup>26</sup> However, other rāgs in their repertoire—especially those in Bhairav and Pūrvī thāṭs—are quite distinctive, and in their modes they are quite uncharacteristic of any sort of North Indian folk or vernacular music.

[56] A few of the more common Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār rāgs, such as (Sindhi) Bhairavī and Khamāichī (Cf. Khamāj), may roughly cohere with their namesakes in Hindustani music, and versions of Gūṇḍ Malhār, Birbhās/Burwās, Sālang, and Jangla may loosely resemble Gaur Malhār, Vibhās, Brindāvanī Sārang, and Hindustani Janglā, respectively (the latter being in any case an obscure archaism in North Indian music). However, other rāgs differ conspicuously from their classical namesakes. Kalyān (Cf. Yaman Kalyān, Karnatak “Kalyānī”) lacks the distinctive raised fourth degree of its classical counterparts, Kāfi is in the “major-scale” Bilāval thāṭ rather than the “Dorian” eponymous thāṭ, Tilang includes the notes Re and Dha (absent in khyāl-style Tilang, though present in old thumri renditions), and Jog resembles not Hindustani Jog—a twentieth-century invention—but the older rāg Jogiya (see Davies 2017, 183, 252)

[57] More relevant to the present article are the Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār rāgs that correspond to the western rāgs we have discussed. Rāg Māṇḍ, being more associated with eastern Rajasthan court culture, is not a specialty of Laṅgās/Māṅgaṇiyārs, though eclectic as they are, they can certainly sing “Kesariya Bālam” and a few other Māṇḍ songs on request. Also in their repertoire are songs performers identify as exemplars of the distinctively western rāgs Āsā, Sorath, Husenī Toḍī, and Mārū, though their versions of the latter tend to resemble the Bhairav-thāṭ havelī sangīt rāg more than its gurbānī sangīt namesake. While Sindh(i) Bhairavi might be a familiar, if uncommon, rāg throughout the Hindustani music ecumene,

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26. Similarly, some Indian folklorists (e.g., Nag 1987, 23) have stated that some Rajasthani songs are “based on” Hindustani rāgs such as Pīlu, Tilak Kāmod, and Durgā. In this article, by contrast, we are discussing rāgs as identified and named by the performers themselves.

its name certainly suggests a western provenance, and it is basic in the Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār repertoire, as in the popular song “Hīchkī” (Hīnchkī, “hiccup,” also identified as rāg Jāṅglā by some). Other rāgs are idiosyncratic. Gūṇḍ Malhār, Shām Kalyān, Kāfi, and some versions of Toḍī are what some might call “nondescript” Bilāval/Khamāj-thāṭ entities, though Davies endeavors, through detailed analysis, to abstract distinctive phrases from the renditions of such rāgs by senior kamāicha players. Lūr Sārang has some character of Hindustani Sārang, though with some use of komal Ga. Sūb, like Mārū, is mostly in Bhairav thāṭ but, in some versions, tīvra Ma is judiciously introduced, sometimes in ways that suggest shuddh Ma as a secondary tonic, as in rāg Lalit. Shuddh Dha can also appear, lending the upper tetrachord some similarity with Māṇḍ, such that some Laṅgās refer to “Sūb Māṇḍ,” along with “Āsā Māṇḍ,” “Sāmerī Māṇḍ” and the like insofar as they bear similar affinities (see, e.g., Rajhans n.d., 42–44). Given the inconsistency of versions, renderings of Sūb, Mārū, and Jog may be essentially indistinguishable (see, e.g., Davies 2017, 206). A few Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār rāgs—especially Kohiyārī/Sasu’ī, Kachchhi Kāfi, Rāṇo, and possibly Sāmunḍī—are shared with and presumably derived from Sindhi music, as many hereditary musicians of western Rajasthan historically had ties with Sindhi-speaking patron communities or lived and performed in Sindh itself. Finally, Jairazbhoy encountered Māṅgaṇiyārs whose especially large rāg repertoire included versions of Toḍī in Āsāvārī thāṭ, Sāverī in Bhairav thāṭ, and Paraj in Khamāj thāṭ, all of which might constitute either idiosyncrasies or else remarkable survivals of medieval forms of these rāgs.<sup>27</sup>

### SINDH AND KACHCHH

[58] Sindh is home to multiple performance traditions that, like gurbānī sangīt and the repertoire of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians in western Rajasthan, evince connections with the Hindustani music tradition through shared rāg names but are distinguished from it by the melodic content and stylistic delivery of these rāgs. We focus in this section on the performance of rāgs—or *surs*, as they are called in Sindhi—in the kāfi and shāh jo

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27. See Manuel (1981). Lochana’s *Rāga-Tarangini* places Paraj in Karnāta melā (modern Khamāj thāṭ); modern Paraj is in Purvi thāṭ. Most sixteenth-century treatises place Āsāvārī/Sāverī in Bhairav thāṭ rather than its current eponymous thāṭ.

rāg<sup>28</sup> genres. These genres are distinct from one another but have substantial overlap in poetic content and melodic repertoire. Like the musical practices discussed in previous sections, *kāfi* and *shāh jo rāg* may be considered intermediate-sphere genres insofar as they are clearly linked to the Hindustani tradition but emphasize poetic texts over *rāg* elaboration and other forms of musical improvisation. It is worth noting, though, that some stylistic variants of the *kāfi* genre—namely those performed by artists with training in the classical tradition—could be described as “light classical” to the extent that they feature virtuosic and improvisatory vocal and drumming practices.

[59] Due to historical migration patterns as well as mediatization in the post-Partition era, Sindhi music traditions are found not only in Sindh but also among Muslim communities in Kachchh and western Rajasthan. Kachchh, now a border district of Gujarat, was historically a kingdom—and later a princely state under the British—that had close cultural and economic connections with Sindh. Almost all of Kachchh’s myriad endogamous Muslim communities trace their ancestry to Sindh and speak Kachchhi—a southern dialect of Sindhi—or other variants of Sindhi. Since Partition, many Muslims in Kachchh have sustained their Sindhi musical and poetic heritage by listening to recordings of Sindhi artists from Pakistan on cassettes and, until the late 1990s, on cross-border Pakistani radio. Although Sindhi language literacy has declined in Kachchh since Partition, there are countless enthusiasts of Sindhi music and poetry in the region. Performers from the Laṅgā community of Muslim hereditary musicians, who mostly perform as drummers and *soṇā’īn* (*shehnā’ī*) players, are a particularly important source of musical knowledge in Kachchh. Although Laṅgās typically do not sing in public, local *kāfi* singers—who are almost all from agriculturalist and pastoralist castes—often look to them for their knowledge of both Sindhi *surs* and Hindustani *rāgs*.

[60] In western Rajasthan, communities known collectively as Sindhi Sipahi, many of whom are Marwari-speaking, have also maintained an interest in Sindhi language, poetry, and music. The Marwari-speaking hereditary musicians who provide musical services for these communities continue to perform Sindhi songs for their patrons. In the past, members of these communities often migrated to Sindh for musical work. On a research trip to Jaisalmer

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28. Rāg<sup>u</sup> in Sindhi is pronounced with an implosive /g/. One also encounters *rāgīṇī* in discussions of melodic types in Sindhi musicological literature, in which it is typically used as a synonym of *sur*.



district in early 2018, one of the present authors (BB) met two Māṅgaṇiyār musicians who had lived in Pakistan up until their early teens before returning to India in the 1970s, when the border was more porous than it is today. As mentioned in the previous section, Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār musicians in Jaisalmer and Barmer districts perform numerous Sindhi melody types, some of which they explicitly identify with the suffix “Sindhi”—e.g., Sindhi Sorath, which is distinct from the local variant that hereditary musicians there call Sorath.

[61] The Sindhi music genres we discuss here rest on the musico-poetic foundation established by the Sufi poet-saint Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (Shāh ‘Abdul Latīf Bhitā’ī, 1689–1752). The shāh jo rāg genre in particular revolves almost entirely around Shah Bhitai’s poetry.<sup>29</sup> And while Sindhi kāfī repertoire includes countless poetic texts by later poets, Shah Bhitai is the primary touchstone in that genre too; Sindhi kāfī singers typically sing one or more of Shah Bhitai’s *bait*s (verses) as a preface to a song composition (*kalām*), whether by Shah Bhitai or another poet. Shah Bhitai’s poetic compendium, *Shāh Jo Risālo*—usually translated as “Shah’s Message” (also known as *Ganj*, “treasure”)—is organized into discrete groupings of thematically related poems (*bait*) and strophic song texts (*vā’ī*). Each of these groupings is referred to as a *sur*. Before continuing, it is worth noting that *sur* in Sindhi has a meaning equivalent to *rāg* as it is used elsewhere in South Asia—i.e., “melodic type” (Powers 1980)—, while the term *rāg* in Sindhi usually denotes “music” in a general sense. *Sur* in this usage appears to be related to the Persian term *surūd* (melody, song, singing), which was used to denote these groupings in early manuscripts of Shah’s poetry. It is not clear precisely why or when the transition from *surūd* to *sur* occurred, except that Ernest Trumpp used the term *sur* in his influential 1866 edition of *Shah Jo Risālo*.<sup>30</sup>

[62] Editions of Shah’s *Risālo* typically contain between twenty-nine and thirty-six *surs*, as some editors have excised certain *surs* on the grounds of inauthenticity. Most of Shah’s *surs* are based on regional tales (Sindhi *qiṣṣo*). While *surs* are often described as “chapters” of the *Risālo*, it is important to stress that Shah’s *surs* are firstly performance entities. A *sur* in this sense is a hybrid entity that is at once a melodic type and a set of linked texts. (The term *sur* is also used to refer to melodic types not included in or associated with Shah’s *Risālo*.) Shah’s

29. Shah’s poetic compendium has absorbed some verses by other poets, such as Kabir (1398/1440–1448/1518) and Shah Husain (1538–1599).

30. Akhtar Dargahi pointed this out in an April 2018 Sindhi-language lecture entitled “Surs of Shah Latif and their Raagas.” (<https://www.facebook.com/ElectronicDiary/videos/415454445923910/>)

surs are made up of varying numbers of baits (verses) and *vā'īs* (song texts), which are intended to be sung in their associated melody type. While the *shāh jo rāg* tradition has preserved the practice of singing each of Shāh Bhitā'ī's sur-texts in its associated sur-melody, the *kāfī* genre is more flexible in this regard, with *kāfī* singers taking creative license to perform some poetic texts/topics in a variety of melodic types.

[63] Like Guru Nanak, Shah Bhitai is said to have received assistance in the process of musically organizing his poetry. According to Agha (1985, 2), Shah Bhitai was close with “two noted musicians from Delhi” named Atal and Chanchal, who stayed with him and his disciples and would sing Shah's verses for them. Agha writes:

two Indian musicians [...] who visited the court of Miyan Noor Muhammad [Kalhoṛo] and later Shah, had considerably helped [Shāh] in the selection of the Indian melodies for his *Risalo*. In fact they split up the *Ganj* [manuscript of Shah's poetry] in appropriate melodies and the verses were sung accordingly. That arrangement has not been disturbed so far. (1985, 53)<sup>31</sup>

[64] In an essay on the connections between Shah Bhitai's musico-poetic repertoire and Sindhi musical drama, Tirathdas Hotchand has posited that Atal and Chanchal were members of a *bhagat*—a traveling band of Muslim and Hindu male performers who wore ankle bells and gowns to “indicate that they were females” ([1960] 1988, 89).<sup>32</sup> According to Hotchand, these two Hindu musicians traveled with Shah Bhitai everywhere he went. Shah Bhitai's interest in the Sindhi tradition of musical drama is evident in his choice to allegorize the major tales of the region. Reflecting on Shah Bhitai's creative repurposing of regional narrative performance traditions, in which stories were associated with specific melodies, the Sindhi scholar Aziz Baloch accurately described Sindhi music as a “thematic music” (1988, 24). Table 1 lists the sur names included in *Shāh Jo Risālo* and the topical content of their respective dominant poetic themes, about half of which are allegorical poetic reflections on regional stories. This list includes all thirty-six surs traditionally credited to Shah Bhitai,

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31. Pei-ling Huang discussed these two musicians with Ustad Ameer Ali Khan of Hyderabad, a Māṅgaṅhār hereditary musician whose family is originally from the Jaisalmer region of western Rajasthan. Khan claimed that the two musicians' names were Añtarīo and Cañcarīo, and that they were Māṅgaṅhār ancestors of his from Jaisalmer, not Delhi (Huang, pers. comm.). Bond asked hereditary musicians about this when visiting Jaisalmer in January 2018, but none could confirm the account.

32. Members of a *bhagat* were also known as *bhagats*, a title still used for many Sindhi Hindu singers.

some of which have been excised from certain published editions of the *Risālo* on the basis of inauthenticity. From this list, twenty-one surs share names with, or include the names of, Hindustani rāgs, as shown in Table 1; however, these correspondences do not imply that the rāgs are identical.

[65] Although Shah Bhitai’s sur repertoire is certainly the best known and most imitated example of the “thematic music” of greater Sindh, he was not the first to set his poetry to specific melodic types. Shah Bhitai’s older contemporary Shah ‘Inayat (or ‘Inat) Rizvi of Nasarpur (1622–1712) composed poetry along thematic lines that was to be performed in particular melodic types (*surūd*), and his repertoire was a model for Shah Bhitai (Sayed [1988] 2000, 9; N. Baloch 1978, 134). Later poets of Sindh and Kachchh wrote poetry modeled on the thematic basis that Shah Bhitai so firmly established. The Sindhi verses of Sachal Sarmast (1739–1827), for instance, are organized according to melody and theme. In Kachchh, poets such as Umar Luhar of Mathal village (early twentieth century) followed Shah’s model, albeit in the Kachchhi dialect. Luhar’s verses were performed in a now virtually extinct local musical style known as *kacchī rāg* (“Kachchhi music”), a musical tradition that operated on the same thematic, melodic, and temporal organizational principles as Sindhi music, with singers performing poetic topics in their accompanying melodic types at specific times of night.

[66] One of the present authors conducted field research with *kāfi* and *shāh jo rāg* performers in Sindh in summer 2022 and in Kachchh from 2014–2018 (see Bond 2020a), and with *Māngañiyār* musicians in western Rajasthan with knowledge of Sindhi *kāfi* repertoire. Of the two genres, *shāh jo rāg* is the most closely associated with the legacy of Shah Bhitai. While in Pakistan there are around 150 *shāh jo rāgī faqīrs*—as singers of the genre are respectfully called—, there are only four *faqīrs* left on the Indian side of the border, all living in a single remote village.<sup>33</sup> In a typical performance of a sur, *faqīrs* take turns singing baits solo and then perform a *vā’ī* (strophic song) as an ensemble. *Faqīrs* accompany themselves on the *danbūro*, a five-stringed unfretted instrument that provides a tonic-fifth drone

<i>Sur</i>	Dominant themes, associations	Corresponding Hindustani <i>rāg</i>

33. Two other *shāh jo rāg* singers have passed away since 2018.

		name
Kalyāṇ	Oneness of God; devotion to God & Prophet	Kalyāṇ (Yaman)
Yaman Kalyāṇ	Physician and patient; wine; sacrifice	Yaman Kalyāṇ
Khambhāt	Moon (confidant); camel (ego); the name also references the Gulf of Khambhāt	Khamāj
Surirāg	Dangers of seafaring	Srirāg
Sāmundī	Woman longing for her seafarer husband	
Suhñī	Suhñī-Mehār <i>qiṣṣo</i>	Sohñī
Sāraṅg (“rainy season”)	Longing for rain; praise of the Prophet	Sāraṅg
Kedāro	Battle of Karbala	Kedār
Ābrī (“weak”)	Sasu’ī-Punhūn <i>qiṣṣo</i>	
Mā’zurī (“helpless”)	Sasu’ī-Punhūn <i>qiṣṣo</i>	
Desī (“native”)	Sasu’ī-Punhūn <i>qiṣṣo</i>	Desī
Kohiyārī (“mountaineer”)	Sasu’ī-Punhūn <i>qiṣṣo</i>	
Ḥusainī	Sasu’ī-Punhūn <i>qiṣṣo</i>	Ḥusenī
Soraṭh	<i>Qiṣṣo</i> of Rāi Diyāch, who ruled in Saurashṭra	Soraṭh
Barvo Hindī	Story of renunciant Barvo <i>faqīr</i>	Barva
Barvo Sindhī	Story of renunciant Barvo <i>faqīr</i>	Barva
Mūmal-Rāṇo	Mumal-Rāṇo <i>qiṣṣo</i>	
Ḍhol-Mārū*	Ḍhol-Mārū <i>qiṣṣo</i>	
Khāhoṛī	Yogis	

Rāmkalī	Yogis	
Rip (“pain”)	Lonely wife longing for husband	Rāmkalī
Līlāñ-Canesar	Līlā-Canesar <i>qiṣṣo</i>	
Bilāval	Characters from the end of the Dodo-Canesar <i>qiṣṣo</i> ; praise of the Prophet	Bilāval
Ḍahar (“valley”)	Multi-themed: references to bandits of Kachchh; dried-up valley; the Prophet	
Kapā’itī	Women’s thread spinning	
Pirbhātī (“morning”)	Traveling musician; name refers to early morning	Prabhātī
Ghātū	Morīro (a fisherman) <i>qiṣṣo</i> ; dangers of sea	
Shīñh Keḍāro*	Assorted animal imagery (lion, dog, birds)	Kedār
Āsā (“hope”)	Multi-themed: mystical knowledge, hypocrisy, etc.	Āsā
‘Umar-Māru’ī	‘Umar-Māru’ī <i>qiṣṣo</i>	
Dhanāsirī	Praise of spiritual teacher ( <i>murshid</i> ), specifically Abdul Qādir Jilānī (1078–1166) and Bahā’uddīn Zakariyā (1170–1262)	Dhanāsirī
Pūrab (“east”)	Crow as messenger bird for longing woman; yogis	Pūrab
Kāmod (“love”)	Nūrī-Jām Tamācī <i>qiṣṣo</i>	Kāmod
Karāyal	Swan as symbol of spiritual purity	
Basant Bahār* (“spring”)	Arrival of spring (coming of the Prophet)	Basant Bahār

**Table 1. Thematic Associations and Transregional Musical Connections of the 36 Surs**

\* = not included in many editions of the *Risālo*

spanning two octaves. In Pakistan, the singing portion of a performance is often preceded by *tañd* (“string”), an introductory non-metrical instrumental exposition of the melody type played on the *zabān* string of the *danbūro*. The *rāgī* faqīrs in Kachchh very rarely perform

tañd.<sup>34</sup>

[67] Kāfi is the major Sufi music genre of the Indus Valley region and refers to the performance of song texts composed in the kāfi poetic form, in which strophes alternate with a refrain. Kāfi is performed in the Punjabi, Siraiki, Sindhi, and Kachchhi languages, and Sindhi kāfi is by far the most popular Sufi musical genre in Kachchh. Sindhi-language kāfi is performed in a variety of styles with varying degrees of proximity to Hindustani musical practices. Numerous Sindhi kāfi artists of the twentieth century performed Sindhi-language Sufi texts in a “classicized” form of kāfi, notably Ustad Manzoor Ali Khan, Ustad Muhammad Juman, Ustad Waheed Ali, and Ustad Muhammad Yusuf. Across the stylistic spectrum, kāfi performances typically begin with a brief exposition of the melodic type (ālāp), after which the singer performs a bait, followed by the main song text (kalām). The form of kāfi most popular in Kachchh is based on recorded performances of artists based in southern Sindh, most notably Ustad Mithoo Kachi and his brothers Haji Usman Kachi and Ustad Hashim Kachi. The Kachi brothers were Laṅgā hereditary musicians originally from northwestern Kachchh who incorporated recited storytelling and/or the explication of the metaphorical Islamic meanings of baits in their performances (see Bond 2020b).

[68] Space does not permit a detailed discussion of the differences between surs as performed in shāh jo rāg and kāfi, but one can make a few generalizations. Most importantly, in comparison to shāh jo rāg, surs performed in contemporary kāfi usually sound more similar to Hindustani rāgs of the same name. For instance, Sur Kalyāṇ in shāh jo rāg draws from notes in Bilāval and Khamāj thāṭṣ.<sup>35</sup> Sur Kalyāṇ as performed in contemporary kāfi, however, sounds substantially close or identical to rāg Yaman, depending on the performer and their training. (Kalyāṇ is an older name for rāg Yaman.) In general, versions of surs as performed in contemporary shāh jo rāg are less diverse in terms of pitch class set, with many surs drawing from the notes of Khamāj and Bilāval thāṭṣ, and sometimes also incorporating flat Ga.<sup>36</sup> By comparison, surs as performed in the kāfi genre are more distinct from one another in terms of pitch class set and chalan.

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34. For a more in-depth discussion of shāh jo rāg performance form, see Bond (2020a) and Huang (2021).

35. For a detailed discussion of melodic performance in shāh jo rāg; see Huang (2021).

36. Aside from melodic content, surs in shāh jo rāg are distinguished by verbal cues particular to each sur, which are sung at the beginning and end of baits. The verbal cue sung prior to a bait is called *sad*, and the cue sung after a bait is called *hungāro*.

[69] The respective differences in the melodic execution of surs in *shāh jo rāg* and *kāfi* make it difficult, in turn, to generalize about the relationship between Hindustani *rāgs* and the Sindhi sur repertoire. In some cases, a sur may sound quite different from a *rāg* of the same or similar name, but can nonetheless be recognizably related. This is the case with Sur *Kalyāṇ* in *shāh jo rāg*, which contains signature phrases also found in *rāg Shuddh Kalyāṇ* (see Huang 2021, 183–191). In other cases, a sur will have a completely different pitch class set from the Hindustani *rāg* of the same name. The version of *Tilaṅ* performed by *kāfi* singers, for instance, draws from the notes of *Kāfi thāt*, while the Hindustani version of *Tilaṅ* is set in *Khamāj thāt*. (*Tilaṅ* is not included in the *Risālo* and is thus not performed in *shāh jo rāg*.)

[70] Addressing these sorts of discrepancies, the renowned Sindhi researcher and writer Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baloch (also known as N.A. Baloch) posited that Shah Bhitai “retained Kalyan, Bilawal, and Khambhat [i.e., Khamāj] in their classical (shuddh) form” and that the other fourteen surs that share names with the Hindustani tradition were “retained in the form in which they were being sung by the people” (N. Baloch 1988 [1973], 65). Baloch concluded that “the functional composition of each of these melodies under Shah’s *rāga* does not necessarily conform exactly to its classical composition” (ibid.). The names of the surs, therefore, should not be read as transparently denoting the same melodic types as the *rāgs* with which they share names.

[71] The complex and often murky relationship between Sindhi surs and Hindustani *rāgs* is particularly apparent when reviewing Sindhi musicological texts that attempt to pin down the melodic content of the surs. A comparison of the essay “Sindhī Sangīt Jo Saṅvārīndar Bhiṭā’ī” (“Sindhi Music’s Arranger, Bhitai”) by Abdul Aziz Shaikh (1992) with the monograph *Sur, Shāh, Samuṇḍ* (“Sur, Shah, Ocean”) by Ustad Ameer Ali Khan (2007) reveals that, out of twenty-four surs notated by them, the two authors disagree on the pitch class sets of fourteen surs. (It is possible that the differences between *kāfi* and *shāh jo rāg* performance may have contributed to this discrepancy.) Khan seems to base his account of the surs’ melodic content on Hindustani musical practice. For example, whereas Shaikh observes how, “in classical music *Pirbhātī* is classified as belonging to *Bhairav thāt*, it falls in *Bilāwal thāt* according to the notes of the Sindhi version” (Shaikh 1992, 129), Khan asserts that

Pirbhātī is in Bhairav thāt.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the pitch-class set that Khan provides for *sur* Pūrāb (Sa Reb Ga Ma# Pa Dhab Ni) is derived from Hindustani Purvī (Purbī) thāt, which is rarely if ever heard in Sindhi music (though, as noted, it occurs in Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār music). For Surīrāg, Khan again follows Hindustani practice and writes that the Sindhi version is in Purvī thāt (Khan 2007, 147), while Shaikh writes that it is in Khamāj thāt (Shaikh 1992, 134–35).<sup>38</sup> For these reasons, it seems fair to conclude that Khan’s account of the surs is less reflective of contemporary Sindhi musical practice than the accounts of Shaikh and Baloch.

[72] A survey of performances and musicological descriptions of *sur* Āsā illustrates the difficulty in determining a definitive version of a *sur*. Shaikh (1992, 130), who wrote that “this *rāgiṇī* is a special creation (*khās pedāvar*) of Sindh,” described the Sindhi version of Āsā as largely in Bilāval thāt, but with occasional use of the komal Ni from Khamāj thāt. Khan (2007, 267), meanwhile, asserts that there are two versions of Āsā in circulation in Sindh: one in Bilāval thāt and another in Āsāvārī thāt. The version of Āsā performed by the masterful kāfi singer Abida Parveen, is set in Bilāval thāt but diverges from other western examples of this melody type with its use of Ga in ascent.<sup>39</sup> A shāh jo rāg version of Āsā diverges greatly from Parveen’s performance, with prominent use of the flat Ni as well as the flat Ga.<sup>40</sup> For its part, the Āsāvārī thāt version might suggest that certain performers came to identify the name “Āsā” with the similar (though probably historically unrelated) Hindustani name “Āsāvārī” and revised their performance tradition accordingly. In Rajasthani Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār music, similar phonetic linking may have been involved in the case of the obscure rāg Sāmerī, resembling the local Sāverī—an old Hindustani alternate name of Āsāvārī (Manuel 1981, 17–20). Lest such jumbling of phonetic and musical similarities seem indicative of the confusion of poorly educated provincials, it is entirely likely that such transformations and adaptations have been central to the evolution of Indian classical music from its very inception.

[73] Some Sindhi surs are distinctly regional and have no equivalent in Hindustani music, most notably Kohiyārī and Rāṇo. These surs are popular in Sindh and Kachchh and are also performed by Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs in western Rajasthan, where Kohiyārī is called

37. South Asian authors have used different spellings of *thāt* / *thāṭh*. *Thāṭh* is the Sindhi spelling.

38. Shāh jo rāg example of Surīrāg: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rca0KgIBOoc> .

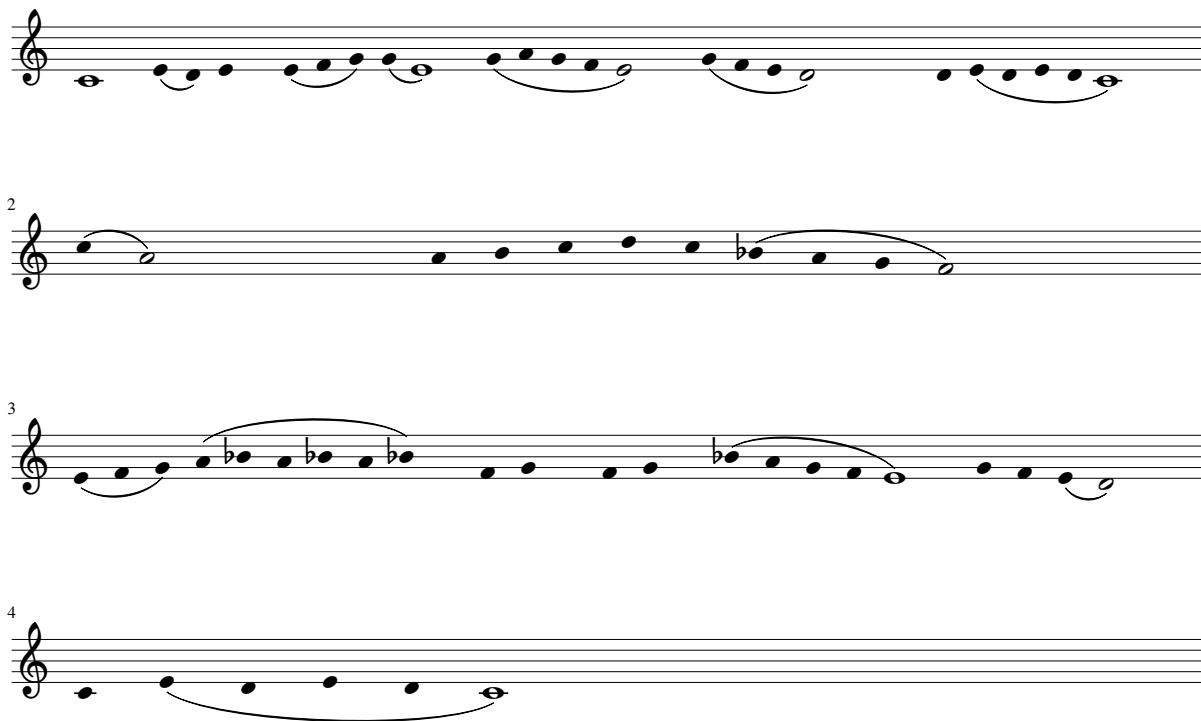
39. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SpWxDIXixM>

40. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIHbY2QAutY>



“Sasu’ī” because of its indelible association with the Sasu’ī-Punhūn tale. Referring to the version of Kohiyārī performed by kāfī singers and instrumentalists such as *alghozo* (double flute) players, Shaikh (1992, 122) reflected, “This rāgiṇī is said to be Sindhi music’s representative (*numā’indā*) rāgiṇī, and this is not incorrect.” A primarily Bilāval thāt melodic type, Kohiyārī ascends with a natural Ni and descends with a flat Ni. The signature melody of Kohiyārī is very distinct, and listeners in Sindh and Kachchh instantly recognize it when kāfī singers perform it as a brief introductory ālāp or use its descending phrases as a melodic vehicle for singing *baitis* (Example 3).

[74] Rāṇo is another sur that has no equivalent in Hindustani music. This Kāfī-thāt melody



**Example 3. Signature Melody of sur Kohiyārī.**

type is associated with the story of Mūmal and Rāṇo (also known as Mendhro), which takes place in the Jaisalmer area of Rajasthan in the fourteenth century. The version of Rāṇo performed in the kāfī genre shares a pitch class set with, and is clearly related to, the version of Rāṇo performed in shāh jo rāg, but the two versions diverge slightly in their melodic

contours. In Kachchh and Sindh, Rāṇo and Kohiyārī are exclusively reserved for singing the Mūmal-Rāṇo and Sasu’ī-Punhūñ stories, respectively, while singers in western Rajasthan also use these melody types for singing other poetic topics.

[75] In addition to the surs discussed above, there are a few notable regional surs not mentioned in the modern version of the *Risālo*. Māñjh, a rāg name also found in Sikh gurbānī sangīt, is a popular Bilāval-thāṭ melody type.<sup>41</sup> Ilyas Ishqie ([1973] 1988, 58) observed a resemblance between Māñjh and rāg Māñd as sung by musicians of Rajasthan. The version of Māñjh performed in contemporary Sindhi kāfī includes an occasional *andolan* on Pa that touches Ma#. A classic example of this melody type is Noor Banu’s famous rendition of the kāfī composition “Kaḍh Koṭana Māñ.”<sup>42</sup> Loṛā’o is another popular Bilāval-thāṭ rāg popular in Sindh and Kachchh. According to Aziz Baloch (1988, 24–25), Loṛā’o is one of the oldest melody types of Sindh and its name is derived from the nomadic Loṛā/Loṛī community (of modern-day Iran and western Pakistan), which historically included musicians. Loṛā’o bears similarities to Māñjh but is sung in a higher register and has a smaller melodic range.

[76] Other Sindhi surs share names with some of the distinctively western rāgs mentioned in sections above. The Sindhi version of Pirbhātī is set in Bilāval thāṭ and focuses on the figure of the traveling musician in Shāh Bhiṭā’ī’s *Risālo*. Dhanāsiri—the text of which focuses on praise of the spiritual master in Shāh’s *Risālo*—is harder to pin down: both Shaikh (1992) and Khan (2007) state that this sur is in Kāfī thāṭ (like the gurbānī sangīt namesake), but renditions by shāh jo rāgī singers suggest that the version in that genre draws from Bilāval and Khamāj thāṭs, albeit with touches of Re and Dha natural. Shah Bhitai’s Sur Sorath is an allegorical retelling of a story concerning the hereditary musician Bījal and King Dīyāc, which takes place in and around Junagadh, on the Saurashtra peninsula. In Sindh and Kachchh, the Sorath melody is exclusively reserved for singing poetry based on this story. The Sindhi version of Sorath performed by kāfī singers such as Ustad Manzoor Ali Khan and Abida Parveen is essentially equivalent to rāg Desh of the Hindustani tradition.<sup>43</sup> The version

41. Surūd Māñjh is included in the 1793 manuscript of Shāh’s *Ganj* (Huang 2021, 135). This was the older name for Sur Hīr-Rāñjho.

42. “Kaḍh Kotan Man Umar Noor Banu” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yql3vISjzQ>

43. “Ustad Manzoor Ali Khan, Dino Rai Diyach (Surr Soorath).” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9swG5ybjBs>

of Sorath performed by shāh jo rāgī faqīrs shares some melodic movements with the kāfī genre version of this sur, such as the ascending line Re-Ma-Pa-Nib-Dha-Pa, but includes touches of flat Ga, a melodic tendency that is common to many surs in the shāh jo rāg genre. In addition to these surs, kāfī singers also perform a number of additional melody types not included among the surs of Shah’s *Risālo*, such as Jilo (Zilā), Durgā, Kalingro, and Bhairavī.

[77] For all its connections and parallels to other practices discussed in this article, the Sindhi sur repertoire constitutes a thoroughly regional tradition with much internal variation and diversity. Certainly, it has some affinity with the Sikh gurbānī sangīt repertoire in that both revolve around a compendium of texts that are intended to be sung in particular melody types. And like some Hindustani rāgs, most Sindhi surs have temporal and sometimes seasonal associations, such as Sur Sārang, which is sung in the rainy season. But the Sindhi sur repertoire is unique among the musics discussed here insofar as most Sindhi surs have deep extramusical associations with regional folktales and other themes. While some sur melodies—particularly those not included in the *Risālo*, such as Loṛā’o and Bhairavī—are used as melodic vehicles for a range of topics in kāfī performance, others such as Rāṇo, Kohiyārī, and Sorath have such strong thematic associations that singers consider it improper to use them for singing any other topic.

### CONCLUSIONS

[78] When one of the present authors attempted, via email, to engage a respected Indian Hindustani music savant on the subject of regional rāgs, the latter curtly dismissed the topic with a categorical, “There are no ‘regional rāgs’.” The authors hope that in this essay they have shown that there is in fact a small but significant category of Western Indian and Sindhi rāgs, involving both Hindustani music as well as regional intermediate-sphere genres which have their own sort of legitimacy. The existence of this category reveals a hitherto ignored regional dimension of Hindustani music culture, and of the musical geography of North India in general.

[79] As we have mentioned, some of these rāgs, such as Champak, may constitute archaic survivals of entities documented in Sanskrit texts, or in regional Hindi treatises and song anthologies of nineteenth-century Rajasthan. Some, such as Sorath and Mārū, may always have had a regional character, which Sanskrit writers chose not to acknowledge. Still other

rāgs, such as Tukhārī, constitute unique creations of regional communities—in this case, the early Sikhs—which never spread to other regions. In a related category are the repertoires of the intermediate-sphere genres of Sindh and western Rajasthan, which appear to have evolved less through relative proximity to foreign realms—e.g., Persia—than through the specific historical circumstances, including geographical factors and the early presence of art music. Thus, there is nothing particularly “Persian” about Sūb or Sasu’ī, which emerge rather as products of a particular combination of regional isolation and connections.

[80] The rāgs discussed here vary not only in terms of form and origin, but also in their relative status and importance as structural entities in performance. It is clear that for many musicians in the intermediate-sphere genres, the notion of “rāg” functions primarily as a descriptive designation applied to extant songs, rather than a conceptual entity that actively inspires and regulates improvisation and composition. Relevant here is John Baily’s (1981) distinction between “representational” and “operational” models, respectively (see also Davies 2017, 57). Hence, in an intermediate genre such as Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār music, performers may be unlikely to describe rāgs in formal terms, and their conception of it may be intuitive rather than explicit; however, in a genre such as gurbānī kīrtan, the original songs might certainly have been composed by musicians with clear understanding of rāg, in the classical sense.

[81] As noted, the Hindustani rāgs in question are specialties of Punjabi vocal gharānās and of the Jaipur gharānā, whose regional origins are somewhat obscured by the fact that most of its current exponents are Maharashtrian. These rāgs are performed primarily by vocalists, not instrumentalists. Of particular regional character, and of special interest in this essay, are rāgs that are performed in more than one western genre, rather than being idiosyncratic items in the repertoire of a single gharānā or community. Thus, some of the rāgs in question are also components of gurbānī sangīt, most of whose versions differ from Hindustani music in their emphasis on devotional texts, but whose venerability and, in some cases, performance style, bestow ample status on its rāg repertoire. Hence, performer-scholar Baldeep Singh would not be the only Sikh tradition-bearer to criticize histories of Hindustani music that “ignore everything west of Gwalior.” The occasional rendering of rāgs such as Tukhārī and Mārū in dhrupad and khyāl styles certainly effectuates their legitimacy, and a logical next step would be for instrumentalists and non-Sikh performers to take them up and explore their melodic

potential. Indeed, in recent years a few Hindustani vocalists have taken to performing items from the havelī sangīt repertoire (Ho 2013), and sitarist Krishna Bhatt has included in his book on Māṇḍ a CD in which he performs Sūb Māṇḍ and other Rajasthani specialties.

[82] The relationships between regional rāgs and the Hindustani mainstream canon may vary. Hindustani music is in general a sufficiently open and flexible system that it can accommodate new and diverse rāgs. Thus, for example, despite the standardizing effects of Bhatkhande’s works, several new rāgs have entered the mainstream since his time, and some of the rāgs he described have changed in form. Hence, rāgs such as Champak and Husenī Toḍī could certainly continue to be cultivated. However, as has been shown by the attempts of Sikh reformists to align the gurmat sangīt rāg repertoire with the North Indian mainstream, relations with Hindustani music can be problematic and controversial. On the whole, it could be said that gurmat sangīt is sufficiently vital and popular among Sikhs that it can flourish in several forms, including its distinctive rāg repertoire. It is not inconceivable that organizations might emerge among Laṅgās, Māṅgaṇiyārs, and Sindhi singers seeking to standardize their repertoire and perhaps “legitimize” it by shoehorning their regional rāg versions into Hindustani versions. Davies notes that some of the events organized by Rajasthani folklorist Komal Kothari for Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs may have inadvertently promoted various classical-type approaches and conceptions, despite his enjoinders to the musicians that they preserve their own rāg forms (2017, 143). One of the present authors has written of a similar sort of tension operant in Trinidad involving the relation between Hindustani music and that island’s “local-classical music,” which has its own prodigious charm and beauty (Manuel 2000). One can only hope that such revitalizing movements can enrich distinctive traditions without erasing or devaluing their unique features.

Rāg	Hindustani	Gurbānī	W. Raj.	SJR	Kāfī	Pushtī
Aṣā	X	X	X	X	X	
Bairārī/Varātī		X				X
Bihāgrā/Vihāgrō/ Bihāg	X	X		X	X	X
Birbhās/Burwās			X			
Barvo Hindī/Sindhī				X		
Champak	X	X				
Dahar				X		
Devghandhārī		X				
Dhanāsri (Kāfī thāt)		X		X	X	X
Durgā	X				X	
Gonḍ		X				
Gūnḍ Malhār			X			
Hīr				X		
Husenī Toḍī/Husenī	X		X	X		
Jangla/Jhanglo	X		X		X	X
Jog			X		X	
Kalingarō/Kalingarā	X				X	
Kalyāṇ	X			X	X	
Kāmod/Kāmod	X			X	X	

Kānra		X				X
Kārāyāl				X	X	
Kachchhi Kāfi			X			
Kedār / Keḍāro	X			X		
Khahorī				X		
Khambhāt				X	X	
Khokar	X					
Kohiyāri / Sasu'ī			X	X	X	
Lilān			X	X	X	
Lūr Sārang			X			
Mājḥ (Māñḥ)		X			X	
Māṇḍ	X	X	X			
Mārū		X	X			X
Māru'ī				X	X	
Ḍholā-Mārū				X		
Ma'zūrī				X		
Pahārī	X				X	
Prabhātī		X	X	X	X	
Pūrab				X		
Rāmkalī	X	X		X		

Rāṇo			X	X	X	
Rīp				X		
Sālang			X			
Sāmeri			X			X
Sāmunḍī			X	X		
Sindh(i) Bhairavi	X		X		X	
Soraṭh	X	X	X	X	X	X
Srī rāga (Kāfi thāṭ)		X		X		
Sūb			X			
Sūhi		X				
Suhṇī				X		
Tilaṅg		X	X		X	
Toḍī (Bilāval thāṭ)			X			
Tukhāri		X				
Zilo / Jilo (Kāfi)	X				X	

**Table 2. Distinctive Western Rāgs.** “Hind.”=Hindustani music; “Gurbānī”=gurbānī sangīṭ; “W. Raj.”=Langhā/Māṅgaṇiyār music; “SJR”=Shāh jo rāg; “Kāfi”=Sindhi Kāfi; “Pushti”= Pushti Mārg. This table includes Durgā, Kalyāṇ, Kāmod, Kedār, Rāmkalī, Tilang, and Srī rāga (Kāfi thāṭ) because their western versions are clearly distinct from their Hindustani namesakes.



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