Urdu Studies
An international, peer-reviewed, bilingual research journal
ISSN: 2583-8784 (Online)
Vol. 5 | Issue 1 | Year 2025
Pages: 69-93

The Evolution of South Asian Muslim *Tazkiras* as Memorials of Places and Persons[1]

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Abstract. The paper examines the process of "making Muslim space" in South Asia through the composition of biographical compendia celebrating the lives of local poets, saints, and other notables. It illustrates how shifts have occurred over time in the conception of these places, both in themselves and in relationship to others, particularly in the sense of permanence, security, and more recently, nationalist agenda of a space, as well as in its religious and cultural meanings.

Keywords. Tazkira, Muslim hagiography, publishing in Pakistan, Urdu biography

The compiling of biographical compendia has been a distinctive and prominent literary and religious activity in Muslim civilization from early times to the present. In Muslim South Asia, the biographical tradition both extends this tradition within new cultural and linguistic spaces and makes its own contributions, in terms of genre and thematic concerns. The spaces evoked in this literature, then, are configured on the basis of an established tradition while integrating new territory, for example, by siting South Asian Muslim individuals and landscapes according to imagined "Islamic" spaces of Mecca, Medina, the Hijaz, and so on. At the same time, the memorializing activity of the *tazkira* tradition inscribes the tradition on this new ground. While a number of biographical forms existed in the classical tradition of Islamic literature, some were more concerned with genealogy and legal authority, such as the earlier *tabaqat*,[2] while others were more concerned with defining saintly and scholarly legitimacy, such as *manaqib*[3]

[1] An earlier version of this article was published in *Studies in Contemporary Islam* 4 (2002), 2: 1-21.
[2] Literally, books of ranking or classes, to be discussed later in this paper.
[3] Compendia of saintly miracles and virtues.

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Published on August 15, 2025
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and *tazkiras*. It is these latter works, then, that are more likely to reflect elements of regional identity, although later *tabaqat*, especially those with a regional emphasis, may also contain such material.

Early sitings relative to the biographical tradition often involve the association of a figure with a place. An example would be the trope of the saint as originator of a site by choosing it, blessing it, protecting it, or being buried there.

The spaces shift and bear various relationships to the land to which they become attached. For example, early motifs consist of siting graves, building mosques, and erecting monuments and of saints giving blessings for the creation of a place, protecting it, and defining it. In later times, it is not so much the creation, but the enshrinement and remembering of a siting that is evoked.

In the case of the expansion of the Islamic tradition to further reaches such as South Asia, lines of resistance may be traced not only along oral versus written axes, but in terms of the charismatic authority of the saints who sanctify local soil and often challenge the representatives of earlier traditions. Motifs of supernatural powers acquired through the practice of austerities have ancient Indian parallels but were also imported from Central Asia, with its own substratum of local shamanic practice.[4]

It is natural that in the case of expansion of a religion to new locations, the contents of social relations are matched by new experimental models, such as utopias, new philosophical systems, and political programs.[5] On occasion, these dimensions of newness may be found intertwined as subthemes in hagiographic narratives.

The scope of this memorializing was both concrete inscription in writing and a nostalgic evocation in mood of what had been. The early *tazkiras* laid a claim to Muslim space in South Asia by Islamicizing the soil and by creating a "new" home, configuring "new" spiritual and intellectual centers, and laying out "new" circuits of pilgrimage.[6] What are some of the

[4]Simon Digby, "The Sufi Saint as a Source of Authority in Medieval India," in *Purusartha*, vol. 9, *Islam et société en Asie du sud*, ed. Marc Gaborieau (Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1986), 60.

[5]Victor Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 2.

[6] The incorporation of such pilgrimage circuits into calendars of ritual observances of saints' anniversaries is discussed in Carl W. Ernst, "An Indo-Persian Guide to Sufi Shrine Pilgrimage," in *Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam* (Istanbul: Isis, 1993), 43–68. "Whenever one comes to a town, the first thing one has to accomplish is to kiss the feet of the saints who are full of life, and after that, the honor of pilgrimage to the tombs of saints found there. If one's master's tomb is in that

ways of thinking about the interaction of the local with the Islamic biographical tradition? After all, in many cases, the local or regional collections of saintly and scholarly lives were, at the intellectual level, a vernacularization of themes and genres with classical Arabic and later Persian roots, ultimately including works in Urdu and even in local languages. Still, in regions such as South Asia, they could take on a distinctive literary character specific to the linguistic and geographic region. An example would be the South Asian *malfuzat*, the diary-like collections preserved of a saint's regular pronouncements during sessions with his followers.[7]

Local or regional identity can in some premodern cases be described in the context of a circulation of information and authority facilitated by the unusual cosmopolitanism of medieval Islam and the sanctioning of travel in the pursuit of knowledge and patronage, which linked many local environments with more prestigious centers and traditions. Often the sites of local identity were, as Richard Bulliet theorizes, most strongly marked at the edges of Islamic expansion. The theoretical discussions of this element of expansion/Islamization by Richard Eaton and Bulliet critique the old model of center and periphery in terms of Islamic lands—because of the static nature of the relationship, which seems to imply its privileging an Arab center. Bulliet notes, for example, that Baghdad, at a certain historical moment, would have been noncentral and that those persons on the edge, the outpost, or the frontier may not themselves have had that sense of their own positioning. According to this formulation, "the story of Islam has always privileged the view from the center."[8] The view from the edge, on the other hand, would enable the encompassment of elements of linguistic and cultural diversity.[9] The edge, for Bulliet, is an evolving front that creates the center through expansion and incorporation. According to Bulliet, it is the biographical dictionaries that preserve the view from the edge and are,

city, one first carries out the pilgrimage to him; otherwise, one visits the tomb of every saint shown him" (61). Quoted from Ashraf Jahangir Simnani, *Lata'ifi Ashrafi*, comp. Nizam Gharib Yamani, 2 vols. (Delhi: Nusrat al-Matabi', 1295/1878), 2:28.

[7] A discussion of early *malfuzat* may be found in Bruce B. Lawrence, *Notes from a Distant Flute: Sufi Literature in Pre-Mughal India* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978); Carl Ernst, "The Textual Formation of Oral Teachings in Early Chishti Sufism," in *Texts in Context: Traditional Hermeneutics in South Asia*, ed. Jeffrey R. Timm (Albany: State University of New York, 1992), 271-297; and Nisar Ahmad Faruqi, *Naqd-i Malfuzat* (Delhi: Maktabah-i Jami'ah, 1989).

[8] Richard W. Bulliet, *Islam, the View from the Edge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 5.

[9] Ibid., 8.

thus, a better place to look for the local rather than for other genres.

Eaton, in particular in his work on Bengal, is interested in changing frontiers and in examining how Dar al-Harb areas become transformed into Dar al-Islam institutionally, economically, and ideologically.[10] Changing frontiers are strongly implicated in shifts in the concept of the local, and these frontiers and boundaries combine geographical and imagined spaces. The frontier mentality also crystallizes against the image of the extraterritorial image; for example, at times of threat, the trope of the saint as the warrior reemerges.[11] One may, thus, expect evidences of binary or conflictual spaces preserved in local hagiography of expansion as well as a possibility of the emergence of ternary ones that have been mediated and stabilized. Thus, a shrine may provide the third, mediating element that reconciles the clash of new and previous traditions.[12]

In this paper, the focus is on South Asian materials that imagine the space or siting of biography and the shifting of these sites and boundaries during the premodern, modern, and nationalist periods. One way to spatially conceive of this shift is in terms of a movement from city to nation as locations of significant spheres for the enactment or celebration of a broader Muslim identity. It must be clarified, however, that, even in the era of the nation, the city theme persists as an important defining element in the literature of memorialization and that local shrines and particular interest groups circulate their countermemories in the face of overarching narratives of national identity.

South Asian Examples of the Local in Historical Review

While biographical literature is not exclusive to Islamic societies, it fulfills a particularly prominent and significant role in their literary historical traditions. The persistence of certain general cultural themes typical of Islamic civilization are evident in the *tazkira* genre in Muslim South Asia, an example being the moods of nostalgia or boasting which we can trace back even to the Jahiliyyah poetry of the Arabs.[13] The genealogical preoccupation of the Arabs merged with the creation of a sacred history

[10] Richard Maxwell Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[11] Richard Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 19-44.

[12] Michel De Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 272.

[13] Discussed, for example, in Jaroslav Stetkevych, *The Zephyrs of Nejd: The Poetics of Nostalgia in the Classical Arabian Nasib* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1993) and Michael Sells, *Desert Tracings; Six Classical Arabian Odes* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989).

embodied by the early Muslim community in early biographical compendia written in Arabic, such as the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'd (ca. 784), as well as the practice of extensively listing sometimes very ordinary participants in the Muslim community, as if to somehow represent its existence and significance by remembering even the names of those who had been present.[14] In terms of thematic characteristics, the nature of Islamic civilization, at least from the perspective of the celebrators of its intellectual vibrancy, had an overwhelmingly urban focus, and the memorialization of cities is a feature of this literature, which expanded into the space of Muslim South Asia.[15]

Nobles, intellectuals, poets, and saints are major categories of persons memorialized in Islamic biographical literature, and this is also the case in South Asia. Principles of organization of these compendia, known first in Arabic as *tabaqat* (ranks or classes)[16] and later in the Persianate tradition as *tazkirat*, included the rank, affiliation, profession, year or century of death,

[14] H. A. R. Gibb stated that "the biographical dictionary is a wholly indigenous creation of the Islamic community." "Islamic Biographical Literature," in B. Lewis and P. M. Holt, *Historians of the Middle East* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 54. Reflecting on the inclusion of very ordinary persons in the biographical dictionaries (*tabaqat*), Gibb further observes that the history of the Islamic community is essentially the contribution of individual men and women to the building up and transmission of its specific culture. That is, it is these persons (rather than the political governors) who represent or reflect the active force of Muslim society (ibid., 54-58).

[15] "Urdu literature, almost from its very beginnings, has been concerned with city life. The language has functioned for a long time as an urban-centred, but non-regional language." Leslie Fleming, "Two Pakistani Women Writers View the City: The Short Stories of Bano Qudsiyya and Farkhandah Lodhi," in *Journal of South Asian Literature* 25 (1990), 1:1, quoting A. K. Ramanujan, "Towards an Anthology of City Images," in *Urban India: Society, Space and Images*, ed. Richard G. Fox (Winston-Salem, NC: Duke University Press, 1970), 224-244

[16] An extensive review article on the *tabaqat* genre is Ibrahim Hafsi's "Recherches sur le genre 'Tabaqat' dans la littérature arabe," *Arabica*, 23 (1976), 227-265; 24 (1977), 1-41, 150-186. Hafsi lists and classifies the major *tabaqat* according to types of persons included (i.e., hadith transmitters, mystics, or poets) and century of composition. He then formulates his own classification of *tabaqat* compilers as initiators, innovators, or imitators. Under principles of ranking or classification, Hafsi cites some basic examples of schemata for arranging Sunni *tabaqat*, such as the ordering of Companions of the Prophet, Followers, Successors to the Followers, and later generations. This is, of course, a common way of thinking of merit and authority in early Islam. Parallel Shi'i ranking systems are also cited, including: Companions of the Prophet, Companions of 'Ali, then Hasan, and Husain; or, alternatively, the Pure Ones (asfiya'), Saints (Auliya'), Ones Promised Paradise by 'Ali, and his Companions.

and locality of the individual's primary activities.

The word *tadhkira* means "a memorial." *Tazkira* (the Persian form) collections of the lives of poets, mystics, or scholars are common in later periods, especially in Iran and South Asia. *Tazkirat* (Urdu: *tazkire*) are similar to the Arabic *tabaqat* genre in that they present lives through anecdotes and offer further narrative biographical material on the subject of the notice. But they do not necessarily incorporate ranking systems as *tabaqat* do, although in the Persianate/Urdu context, generational, alphabetical, or other factors of ordering by affinity or family relationships may be used.

A distinctive biographical genre that developed in India within the Chishti Sufi order is the *malfuzat*, or collections of sessions of prominent Sufi masters as preserved and recorded by their disciples.[17] Carl Ernst has made a useful distinction between the early *malfuzat* collections preserved for didactic purposes and later, often spurious works which, through their reinforcing the authoritativeness of the teachings and the order, became included in the canon of South Asian Sufi memory.[18]

Tazkiras are biographical compendia of lives, often of a hagiographical nature, but also celebrating skills (such as those of calligraphers and poets), ulema groups, residents of particular cities, etc. They were, as their name suggests, primarily intended to memorialize individuals, and they simultaneously located these individuals in imagined spaces that enabled the sanctification of new soil. The trope of the city sanctified, ennobled, and defined by those who had passed there and especially those who were buried within its precincts was one form of the inscription of this communal memory on local sites. In the case of *tazkiras* of poets, the language and imagery of a city's poets inscribed a sort of privileged space and often set the scene for a particular "state of mind" associated with that place.[19] There, thus, exists a possibility of mapping the changing sense and shape of this inscribed space and identity in the premodern, colonial, and postindependence periods of South Asian history through tracing the spatial orientation as it develops in the contemporary poetic and Sufi *tazkiras*.[20]

[17] Lawrence *Notes from a Distant Flute*, and Carl Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center*, especially Ch. 4, "Oral Teachings in the Early Chishti Order" (Albany: State University of New York, 1992), 62-84.
[18] Ernst, *Eternal Garden*, 82-83.
[19] The phrase was used by Stekevych in *The Zephyrs of Nejd*, 121.
[20] A further argument may be made about the relationship of "space" and "landscape" in that landscape, in its usual Western usages, implies a Western visual perspective of surface features. "Landscapes are created by people—through their experience and engagement with the world around them. They may be close

Muslims over time imagined their space in South Asia differently as their sense of identity changed in the light of social and political developments. As Barbara Bender observes, "the landscape (space) is never inert, people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate and contest it. It is part of the way identities are created and disputed, whether as individual, group, or nation-state."[21] Such changes may be traced, I argue, in the organizing and structuring principles of the *tazkira* genre.

The impulse behind this genre is memorialization. One key element in this is inscription, which is done through the writing of memory on new spaces whose imagined shape is also subject to reconfiguration. Critical also in the South Asian *tazkira* tradition is the language of inscription, which serves to define a space even as it is the medium for writing it. Thus, even in the late twentieth century, when the command of Persian is increasingly rare, *tazkiras* written in Urdu may open with Persian couplets. The composition of texts in regional languages is even more rare, and such "local" texts may only be represented by small quotations or poetic interludes within larger Persian or Urdu works. One example of such a work is a Chishti[22] *tazkira* written in Urdu that includes some Punjabi verses and a rhymed list of the previous saints in the lineages written in Punjabi for illiterate/female disciples.[23] In another case, the Sindhi Literary Board

grained, worked-upon, lived-in places, or they may be distant and half-fantasised. In contemporary western societies they involve only the surface of the land; in other parts of the world, or in pre-modern Europe, what lies above the surface, or below, may be as imporatnt. In the contemporary western world, we 'perceive' landscapes, we are the point from where the 'seeing' occurs. It is thus an ego-centred landscape, a landscape of views and vistas. In other times and places the visual may not be the most significant aspect, and the conception of the land may not be ego-centred." Barbara Bender, ed., *Landscape Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford: Berg, 1996), 1.

[21] Ibid, 3.

[22] The Chishti or Chishtiyyah Sufi order has been particularly prominent in South Asia.

[23] *Maulana Mahbub-i Ilahi Tuhfah-yi Sa'adiyya* (Lahore: Idara Sa'diyya Mujaddadiyya, 1979), 127, mentions the Sufi Hajji Abu Sa'd Ahmad Khan's (d. 1941) favorite Punjabi verses. The text explains that while many of his followers were well educated in Islamic disciplines, some had only basic education or were illiterate. "Therefore, when he explained complicated concepts such as the transitory nature of existence, inner perfection, the knowledge of God, or the stages of Sufism to them he would only be able to do this in Punjabi, especially since the words of the warm hearted and enlightened Punjabi poets could be put to use in facilitating their understanding." Indeed, it would not be out of place to mention here that, in addition to his competence in the usual disciplines, he had a mastery of the Punjabi language and its literature.

sponsored the publication of an early Persian *tazkira*, and the introduction and notes are in the Sindhi language.[24] Each of these cases of diglossia can be interpreted as reflecting an imagined space for local identity. Persian stands as the prestige or "religion" marker, whereas Sindhi and Punjabi function as signifiers of local identity, [25] signifying, respectively, local literary heritage and the "quaintness" or "accessibility" of the saint to local or more humble followers.

As noted by Victor Turner, in plural societies, each linguistic or ethnic group has its own favored pilgrimage places.[26] In the literate tradition in Islamic South Asia, literacy tended to define groups by religious orientation rather than by ethnicity so that Muslim ethnic groups would either participate in the prestige language (Persian) or lose the possibility of creating a collective memory for themselves. As De Certeau notes, memory protects a group from dispersion[27] and points to the relation of the group to other groups. The celebration of cities and the urge to memorialization are felt both in times of expansion and in times of crisis or despair, as reflected in the laments over chaos in the poetic *shahr ashob* tradition.[28] In his work, *Nalah-i Dard* (The Moan of Pain), Khwajah Mir Dard, the famous Sufi poet of eighteenth-century Delhi, provides the following lament for the catastrophes that have befallen his city.

> May God preserve it (Delhi) inhabited until Judgement Day. It had been a wonderful rose garden and now the trampling of the autumn of the vicissitudes of time has passed over it, leaving the lovely rivers and trees of all varieties in the districts

The *tazkirah* also includes some Punjabi poems in honor of Abu Sa'd Ahmad Khan as well as the rhymed *Shajarah Sa'idiyyah*, 275. The author of the *shajarah*, presumably the compiler of the biographical notice, writes in a footnote, "This Punjabi *shajarah* was written in view of the needs of some Punjabi ladies or other folk who only know a little Qur'an and would find Urdu and the Urdu script difficult. Since this person (the author) has never composed even one hemstitch in Punjabi, there is a strong possibility of error in it—so, readers, please forgive this."

[24] Rashid Burhanpuri, *Burhanpur ke Sindhi Auliya' (Tazkirah-i Auliya-i Sindh)* (Jamshoro: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1987).

[25] Christopher Shackle, "Punjabi in Lahore," *Modern Asian Studies* 4 (1970), 3:239-267 and "Rival Linguistic Identities in Pakistan Punjab," in *Rule, Protest, Identity Aspects of Modern South Asia*, ed. Peter Robb and David Taylor (London: Curzon Press, 1978), 213-234.

[26] Turner, 6.

[27] De Certeau, 272.

[28] Carla Petievich, "Poetry of the Declining Mughals: The Shahr Ashob," *Journal of South Asian Literature* 25 (1990), 99-111.

of its people plundered by the blows of fate.

In every aspect, on the entire face of the earth it was like the countenance of moon- faced beauties and like the heart-attracting newly-sprouted beards. O God, preserve it from all calamities and disasters and make it a peaceful city, bestow fruits (thamarat) upon its people--and may whoever enters there enter in peace.

Ruba'i (poem)

Delhi has now been destroyed by fate Tears flowed in place of its rivers

The city had been like the faces of beauties,

Adorned by suburbs like newly-sprouting beards on the cheeks of those lovely idols.[29]

Following the British reprisals of 1857, the poet Altaf Husain Hali composed for his city a lament (*marthiyah*) which was recited at a poetic gathering (*musha'arah*) in 1874.

Oh friend, don't begin memorializing (*tazkira*) the late Delhi,
We will never be the ones to relate this sad tale.

O nightingale, don't sing the song of the rose in autumn time,
We will never be able to make the laughing oppressor weep.[30]

In the course of South Asian Muslim history, spaces have expanded from cities to regions to nations, while the principles of socioreligious affiliation (frontier of conversion/Sufi orders) have loosened from being direct initiation, to contiguity in space and time, to a sense of "imagined community," as suggested by Benedict Anderson's study of the construction of nationalist identities.[31]

Premodern Examples

From an early period, cities played a role in defining the scope of *tazkiras*. This reflects the impulse to create "new" sacred spaces. For example, Ajmer was recast as Madina[32] in the biography of Mu'in ad-Din

[29] Khwajah Mir Dard, *Nalah-i Dard* (Bhopal: Matba' Shahjahani, 1892). Nalah nos. 20 and 104.

[30] Narayani Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires 1803-1931: Society, Government, and Urban Growth (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), xviii-xix.*

[31] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*
(London: Verso, 1991).

[32] Lawrence, *Notes from a Distant Flute*, 20.

Chishti, the Sufi saint of the thirteenth century whose shrine gradually became associated with the Islamization of India.

A further example of South Asian centers as the "new holy cities" is to be found in *Kalimat as-Sadiqin* of Muhammad Sadiq Dihlavi Kashmiri Hamadani.[33] The work is about the Sufis buried in Delhi up to the year 1023 H/1614. The author was a student of Baqi Bi'llah, Naqshbandi *shaykh* of Ahmad Sirhindi, and the work is said to be modeled on the Naqshbandi model, *Rashahat* of Kashifi.[34] I would like to cite from the author's preface about the city of Delhi as an example of the sanctification of the city as Muslim "sacred space."

> Preface in the description of Delhi, May God protect it from calamities
>
> Know, may God support you with the light of gnosis, that Delhi is a very large and noble city and that certain of the saints of the nation (ummat) have said things about it like, "One in a thousand and very few out of the multitude recognize its greatness." Thus, whoever has the least understanding and the slightest knowledge will surely recognize that after the two holy cities, (of Mecca and Madina) if there is any nobility to be found in a place or greatness in a land, it is in this noble land which is distinguished completely over the rest of cities. Therefore, it is said by the common folk that Delhi is a little Mecca and even the elite have no doubt of its greatness. Everyone asserts its exaltedness, whether due to the fact that the great ones of the religion, the ulema among the people of certainty, the great shaikhs, the reputable wise men, the powerful rulers, and the exalted nobles have filled this city and have been buried here, or due to its fine buildings, delightful gardens and pleasant localities.
>
> According to some esteemed personages, since one of the people of mystical intuition said in elaboration, "All of Delhi is declared to be a mosque," all of this city is distinguished from other places by its greatness and nobility. In summary, these verses of Khwaja Khusrau inform us of the greatness of this

[33] Muhammad Sadiq Dihlavi Kashmiri Hamadani, *Kalimat as-Sadiqin: Tazkirah-i Safiyan-i Madfun dar Dihli ta Sal-i 1023 Hijri*, ed. Muhammad Saleem Akhtar (Islamabad: Iran Pakistan Research Center, 1988).

[34] Jo-Ann Gross, "Khoja Ahrar: A Study of the Perceptions of Religious Power and Prestige in the Late Timurid Period" (unpublished Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1982) discusses this *tazkirah*. 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Kashifi, *Rashahat* (Lukhnow: Newal Kishore, 1890).

city and certain of its sites.

Noble Delhi, shelter of religion and treasure,
It is the Garden of Eden, may it last forever.
A veritable earthy Paradise in all its qualities
May Allah protect it from calamities.
If it but heard the tale of this garden,
Mecca would make the pilgrimage to Hindustan.[35]

The city-centered *tazkira* is a spatial configuration that persists into the colonial and postcolonial periods. An example of a premodern *tazkira* combining regional and urban spaces is the *Mirat-e Ahmadi,* a historical work about Gujerat by Ali Muhammad Khan, of which a second appendix is dedicated to the city of Ahmedabad and the second chapter to the saints "buried in this land and invited to settle there.

The story of the founding of the city includes both the city's horoscope (auspicious) and the role of Shaykh Ahmad Khattu (d. 1445), one of the four Ahmads involved in its beginning.[36]

Bazaars, mosques, and gardens are named and described, but there is also a sense of the loss of past glories; indeed, the work, written in 1750-1760, states that many places mentioned in the text are neglected and in disrepair. This work was one of the first to be translated by the British. Interestingly, the section on the saints was omitted just as it was in the case of the early British translation of Abu'l Fazl's chronicle, *Ayeen al-Akbari.*[37] As for this section on saints, an early notice tells of a pronouncement by the saint Burhanud din Bukhari that the "city will last forever."[38] Other notices refer to saints' founding towns in Gujerat through miraculous intervention and to familiar tropes of conversion.

Examples of Tazkiras from the Colonial Period

In the late 1800s, Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Lahori composed *Khazinat al-*

[35] Amir Khusrau, *Divan-i Kamil*, ed. Sa'id Nafisi (Tehran: Intisharat-i Javidan, 1965). Muhammad Sadiq, *Kalimat al-Sadiqin* (Islamabad: Markaz-i Tahqiqat-i Farsi-i Iran va Pakistan, 1988). All translations of Persian and Urdu poetry in this article are by the author (Hermansen) unless others sources are cited in the notes.
[36] 'Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mir'at-i Ahmadi* II, (Bombay: Matba 'Nami Garami, 1888), 22. English translation (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1928-1930).
[37] Abu'l Fazl, *Ayeen al-Akbari or the Institutes of the Emporer Akbar*, trans. Francis Gladwin (London: J. Swan & Co., 1800).
[38] *Mir'at-i Ahmadi,* English.

Asfiya' (Treasury of the Pure Ones) as an essentially Lahore-centered *tazkira*. As Bruce Lawrence noted, "Even more than the *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, which is a Delhi oriented work, *Khazinat al-Asfiya* is Lahore directed, but by extension it includes the entire region to the north and northwest of Delhi."[39] Maulana Hakim Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Lahori was the third son of Mufti Ghulam Muhammad. He was born at his ancestral locality, Kotli Muftian, Lahore, in 1837 (1244 H.) and acquired his primary education as well as medical training (*tibb*) from his father. He was also initiated by him in the Suhrawardi Sufi order. Later, he joined Maulana Ghulam Allah Lahori's study circle and completed the course in the disciplines of Qur'an interpretation, hadith, *fiqh*, *adab*, composition and grammar, philosophy, logic, and history. He was known in his time as an unparalleled scholar, *belle literateur*, poet, master composer of historical dating couplets (*tarikh-gu*),[40] and historian. He was widely renowned as a compiler of biographical compendia. He spent his entire life writing and compiling. Early in his career, he combined this with administrative positions. He, however, left this type of activity after a short time, for only writing and literary pursuits really suited his temperament. In June of 1890, he departed for the *hajj*, where he died of cholera near Madina. His many works chronicle the saints and history of Muslim South Asia, especially the Punjab. He wrote in both Persian and Urdu and made translations into Urdu as well.

The titles of other *tazkiras* of saints, such as *Gulzar al-Abrar* (Rose Garden of the Pious),[41] *Hadiqat al-Auliya'* (Garden of the Saints),[42] and *Madinat al-Auliya'* (City of the Saints),[43] provide direct associations among the motifs of the holy city/Madina, the city of saints, and the garden (*hadiqah*) with its resonances of the paradisaical garden. The *tazkiras* often evoke paradisaical utopian spaces of cities as gardens, which, in turn, are set off against the heterotopias (i.e., a space that is marginal, contested, a

[39] Bruce Lawrence, "Biography and the 17th Century Qadiriyya of North India," *Islam and Indian Regions*, ed. Anna Libera Dallapiccola and Stephanie Zengel-Ave Lallemant (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993), 402.
[40] On chronograms in Urdu, see Khalid Hasan Qadiri, "Maulana Hamid Hasan Qadiri and the Art of the Chronogram," in *Urdu and Muslim South Asia: Studies in Honour of Ralph Russell*, ed. Christopher Shackle (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1989), 151-166.
[41] A sixteenth-century *tazkirah* of Shattari Sufis by Muhammad Ghauthi Shattari.
[42] Mufti Ghulam Sarwar, *Hadiqat al-Auliya'*, ed. Muhammad Iqbal Mujaddidi (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1976). The Introduction contains a biography of Sarwar and a list of his writings.
[43] By Muhammad ad-Din Kalim, *Madinat al-Auliya'* is about 636 saints buried in Lahore and is about seven hundred pages long.

problem, an inversion) of the city as cemetery.[44]

"The dominant Islamic vision of the after-life was not so much a vision of a *civitas dei*, but rather of a *hortus dei*, not the city of God but the garden of God, meaning not in a perfect community but in a perfect nature."[45] Qazvini[46] writes how the Sufis supposedly shunned city life, but Ibn Asakir and al-Khatib al-Baghdadi had tried to warn off conquerors by listing the tombs and shrines of saints, thus underlining the sacred character of the city.[47]

The symbolic resonance of the cemetery in South Asian Islam is both a transitional space between the higher world and this one and a symbol of distinctive Muslim identity in the Indian context (since Hindus cremate their dead). Graveyards as sites, then, are both a locus of inscription for local communal memory and the means of this inscription.

In the case of the *tazkira Hadiqat al-Auliya',* Sarwar chronicled the saints of the Punjab, this time in the Urdu language, and here again the motif of the garden is played on repeatedly. For example, the work is arranged in seven plots (*chamans*), each *chaman* holding the saints of a specific order except for the final two, where "grow" love-crazed or God- intoxicated Sufis (*majanin* and *majdhubin*) and the righteous women. Indeed, the Whorfian hypothesis seems to be borne out by the number of words available in Urdu, many of Persian or Arabic origin, for spaces which English would simply term "gardens." Sarwar composed his own *qit'ah-i ta'rikh*, a poem that is a chronogram for the composition of the *tazkira* (in 1875).

> How nice is Sarwar's garden (*hadiqat*),
>
> What a garden (*bagh*) and flourishing are found in the saints,
> Autumn cannot enter that garden (*bustan*)
>
> Which is the garden (*bagh*) of the pious and pure,
>
> Where would you ever find another garden (*bagh*) like this
>
> The rose garden (*gulzar*) of the spiritual effulgence of the great saints,
>
> This is the verdant garden (*bagh*) of the people of gnosis,
>
> For whom the nightingale of the heart would sacrifice itself,

[44] Michel Foucault, "In Other Spaces," *Diacritics*, nos. 16, 22-27.
[45] Tarif Khalidi, "Some Classical Islamic Views of the City," in *Studia Arabica and Islamica: Festscrift for Ihsan 'Abbas*, ed. Wadad al-Qadi (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), 271.
[46] In his *Athar al-Bilad* (Beirut, 1960), quoted by Khalidi, 274.
[47] Khalidi, 274.

Where greenery, the bud, the rose,
The hyacinth, and the tulip are blossoming.

In short, on the face of the earth, Sarwar had fashioned this garden (*bustan*) To be a model of the garden of Paradise (*firdaus*)

The angel of Paradise (*Ridwan*) has spoken the seal of the year of the composition,
Of that colorful garden (*hadiqat*) which displays so much beauty.[48]

Examples of the Creation of Space in Nationalist Hagiography

In the nation-building period, cities as locations acquire a renewed importance in the creation of Pakistani national sacred space. With the allocation of Ajmer, the main shrine city of the Chishti Sufi order, to India, the role of Lahore and its "patron," 'Ali Hujwiri, and his tomb, the Data Darbar, was increasingly celebrated.

An example of a city-based *tazkira* from the twentieth century is the *tazkira Kamilan-i Rampur* (the Perfect Ones of Rampur) by Hafiz 'Ali Khan Shauq. In a brief preface, Shauq explains his methodological attempt to obtain accurate information from local families about their ancestors by sending out some six hundred questionnaires to which he was disappointed to receive only about a dozen responses. One aspect about the role of *tazkiras* in the creation of space is found in the reissue of this *tazkira* in 1986[49] with the addition of a postnationalist preface added to the original composition. In this, the writer of the preface develops the concept of Rampuri Urdu poetry as a "third school" aside from Delhi and Lucknow[50] and evokes symbols of Rampuri identity, such as a Rampuri cap (*topi*), knife, and a particular style of knife-fighting.[51] At the same time, he notes the *tazkira's* omission of elements of Rampur identity significant for the national space, such as the fact that the prominent freedom activists, the 'Ali brothers, were from there.

Older motifs, such as the city as a second Mecca or Madina, or the paradisaical garden persist into the contemporary period, along with new

[48] Sarwar, *Hadiqat al-Auliya'*, 26.
[49] Hafiz 'Ali Khan Shauq, *Tazkirah-i Kamilan-i Rampur* (Delhi: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1986), 4; first published by Hamdard Steam Press of Delhi in 1925.
[50] Tajammul Hussain Khan, *Urdu Shai'ri ka Tisra Skul* (Karachi: Jauhar Academy, 1976); Kalb-i 'Ali Khan Fa'iq, "Rampur ka Shi'ri Skul," in *Ma'arif* 76 (October 1955), 285-295; Raz Yazdani, "Rampur ka Mahaul," in *Nigar* 67-68 (1955).
[51] Shauq, 4.

elements of political, nationalist, and even anticolonial references. An example from Pakistan is a work entitled *Auliya-i Multan,* (Saints of Multan),[52] which opens with several poems incorporating the traditional elements of imagined Muslim space, for example:

> Our Multan is equal to the Exalted Garden,
>
> Tread softly, because angels are performing their prostrations here.[53]

On the opposite page, a Persian poem stands in dedication, celebrating the city in themes both familiar and new:

> The pristine region of Multan and Sind
>
> Is the image of the Arab in the land of Hind
>
> Look toward the desert sands and the palm groves too
> The vision of the Hijaz comes into view.
>
> Every lofty palm tree declares,
>
> "This territory in the blessings of Yathrib shares".
>
> I'm delighted by the camels' stately pace
>
> They remind me of Najd and desert space.
>
> See how the spirit of the qualities of the Hijazi
>
> Is concealed within the truthful Multani.
>
> The people of Multan are free from formality
>
> Openhearted, eloquent, and full of hospitality.
>
> The essence of elegance is the lot of this place
>
> The footprint of Ibn Qasim[54] is on its face.
>
> Here in the ruins of Hindustan
>
> Was the first cradle of the Musalman.
>
> This land of the saints will be, it is sure
>
> The direction of prayer for those who are pure.
>
> O Creator, protect this sacred land today

[52] Farhat Multani, *Auliya-i Multan* (Multan: Kutubkhana Hajji Niyaz Ahmad, 1980).
[53] Ibid., 7. This seems to be a popular theme as at least three other works were published under the same title: Bashir Nazim (Lahore, 1971), Nazar Muhammad Sairani (Multan, 1982), and Muhammad Awlad 'Ali Gilani (Lahore: Sang-i Mil, 1963).
[54] Muhammad b. Qasim, conqueror of Sind.

From the Western winds, blowing our way.[55]

The saints of Multan are not conceived of solely as reminders of past blessings— "who knows how many jewels are concealed in this earth"[56]—but extend into the nationalist period. An example is the Naqshbandi Sufi and activist Hamid 'Ali Khan (1906-1980), whose notice is the last one in the volume. Originally from Rampur, Hamid 'Ali Khan migrated to Pakistan in 1959, and his various political activities in religious movements, such as the *tahrik-i khatm an-nubuwwat*, and his winning of a parliamentary seat form part of his biographical notice.[57]

Another *tazkira* memorializing the "Saints of Multan"[58] is a 1930 compilation reissued in 1963 with a new preface explaining how the original collection had been made in honor of the coronation of King George the Sixth[59] and had included biographical notices of various individuals involved in departments of the British administration in both official and nonofficial capacities. These elements, as well as material on some of the prominent Muslim and non-Muslim families of Multan, were removed from the new edition as they were no longer considered useful or interesting.[60]

The modern/postmodern space imagined through this literature consists both of an aggressive retrieval of memory—for example, translations of old *tazkiras* from Persian into Urdu in Pakistan—and of attempts to erase that memory. As for the poetic *tazkiras*, they have been rendered obsolete by new canons of literary appreciation[61] and even by an altered mode of eloquent expression. In his work on Urdu poetry, *Ab-i Hayat*, Muhammad Husain Azad (d. 1910) already mourns the fact that "the page of history would be turned—the old families destroyed, their offspring so ignorant that they would no longer know even their own family

[55] Ibid., 6. The Persian poem is by Asad Multani; the English rendition is my own. The poetic celebration of Multan inevitably calls to mind the more familiar Persion couplet, which characterizes the city as the home of the four *G*'s: beggars (*gada*), dust (*ghubar*), graves (*gur*), and heat (*garmi*).
[56] Ibid., 6
[57] Ibid., 157.
[58] Muhammad Awlad 'Ali Gilani, *Auliya-i Multan* (Lahore: Sang-i Mil, 1963).
[59] Ibid., 6.
[60] Ibid., 9-10.
[61] On the influence of English literary canons on India and for a postcolonial critique, see Gauri Vishvanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989) and Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992).

traditions."[62] In terms of this shift in taste and comprehensibility, Frances Pritchett observes that "the critical attitudes and vocabulary used by the *tazkiras* are all but unintelligible to most scholars—and in fact they arouse considerable disdain."[63] The poetic *tazkiras* have dried up as a literary genre, while Sufi *tazkiras* not only continue to be produced, but are produced in greater numbers than before and are translated from Persian into Urdu in Pakistan, republished, excerpted and recombined, set in computerized type, embellished with photographs, and so on.

A brief explanation of this phenomenon and its relationship to imagining spaces may be in order. Poetry as a means of expression must compete today both with Westernized literary forms, such as short stories and novels, and with new media, such as films and television dramas, for popular attention. In one sense, the earlier *tazkiras* represented a project of retrieval and preservation of the Urdu literary heritage, and the poets who celebrated certain places were in turn patronized by their rulers and nobility.

The print culture of contemporary Sufi biography reaches a much broader literate public due to mass education, at one level confirming the thesis of a national public or imagined community along the lines of Anderson's argument.[64] On the other hand, the relative accessibility of text production due to technologies of printing enables a contrasting movement of an increasingly localized production and distribution of such works. In this case, the purpose is not primarily the dissemination of historical and religious information or the celebration of a specific city or region. In contrast, to a large degree, these works facilitate symbolic exchanges of cultural capital, which promote loyalty and legitimacy to particular local shrine cults and their custodians. As I have argued elsewhere, the *tazkira* tradition, even in classical times, was not so much a historical knowledge project, but an activity of inscribing collective memory.[65] In addition to Sufi *tazkiras*, biographical compendia may be written, listing cohorts of religious scholars and even members of particular *baradaris* or kin groups and sectarian or ethnic localities. These, in turn, operate in potential tension with broader forms of national unity.

Pakistani space as represented in the *tazkiras* has at times been configured so as to place more or less emphasis on regional spaces. During the 1960s, under Ayyub Khan and in the 1970s "Bhutto era," there seems

[62] Frances Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and Its Critics* (Berkeley: University of Caifornia, 1994), 75.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Anderson, *Imagined Communities.*
[65] Marcia Hermansen, "Religious Literature and the Inscription of Identity: The Sufi Tazkira Tradition in Muslim South Asia," *Muslim World,* 87 (1997), 3-4:315-329.

to have been government support for publishing a number of works in Urdu on "Sufis of Sindh,"[66] "Sufis of the Punjab,"[67] "Sufis of Baluchistan,"[68] "Sufis of the Frontier,"[69] "Sufis of Bengal,"[70] and so on.[71] Katherine Ewing studied pamphlets, written in English, that the Pakistan government had issued in honor of various national and regional saints during both the Bhutto and Zia al-Haqq periods. The thesis of her article is that successive governments interpreted the biographies of the saints in terms of their own slogans, policies, and agendas. Clearly, the evocation of the saints as revolutionaries or crusaders for social justice echoed Pakistan People's Party rhetoric; the portrayal of the same saints as Islamic educators and affirming of Islamic legal injunctions was resonant with a theme of Zia's reforms.[72] In the nationalist space, print, language, and media promotion weave at least some threads of the *tazkira* tradition into the fabric of imagined Pakistani space. *Tazkiras* of saints of Kashmir[73] and of East Pakistan composed during the same period testify to the contested space of saint worship.

The local sitings of saint cults take on new literary presence in a context where the production and distribution of texts becomes accessible to custodians of the most remote of shrines. In practical terms, the literary activities of devotees of certain orders can affect the status of the order. For example, the reputation of the Naushahi order of Sahanpul was enhanced when a literary and historically inclined leader, Syed Sharafat Naushahi,[74] spent his life gathering and publishing the literary heritage of this branch. The son of the late Naqshbandi *pir* and political activist of

[66] I'jaz ud-din Quddusi, *Tazkirah-i Sufiya-i Sindh*, 2nd ed. (Karachi: Urdu Academy Sindh, 1975).
[67] I'jaz ud-din Quddusi, *Tazkirah-i Sufiya-i Panjab* (Karachi: Salman Academy, 1962).
[68] In'am ud-din Kausar, *Tazkirah-i Sufiya-i Baluchistan* (Lahore: Markazi Urdu Board, 1976).
[69] I'jaz ud-din Quddusi, *Tazkirah-i Sufiya-i Sarhadd* (Lahore: Markazi Urdu Board, 1966).
[70] I'jaz ud-din Quddusi, *Tazkirah-i Sufiya-i Bangal* (Lahore: Markazi Urdu Board, 1965).
[71] For many Pakistanis, promoting regional cultures and languages is identified with espousing leftist ideology.
[72] Katherine P. Ewing, "The Politics of Sufism: Redefining the Saints of Pakistan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 42 (1983), 2: 251-268.
[73] Muhammad Tayyib Husain, *Auliya'-i Kashmir* (Lahore: Nazir Sons Publishers, 1986).
[74] Sharafat's biography and a bibliography of his works may be found in Sayyid 'Arif Naushahi, *Ba-Yad-i-Sharafat Naushahi* (Lahore: Markaz-i Tahqiqat-i Farsi-i Iran va Pakistan, 1984).

Multan, Hamid 'Ali Khan, attributes the fact that *tazkira* production is so much more popular among the Muslims of Pakistan than it is in India to the fact that the sectarian differences among Pakistani Muslims are perceived as more acute and controversial.[75] In other words, this increased production reflects the polemical value of *tazkiras* among those of the Barelvi, Deobandi, or Ahl al-Hadith persuasions. In Pakistani Islam, these distinctions are considered very important. The Barelvis are those South Asian Muslims who tend to be devoted to saints and their cults and support various practices surrounding these cults, which, in the eyes of more literalist interpreters, are the survivals or accretions from pre-Islamic Hindu traditions or are merely inventions. Most persons in Pakistan are of this persuasion. While it is often characterized as the popular Islam of the masses, one should not overlook the fact that there is a highly literate and active segment of the Barelvi group that supports the publication of works such as biographical literature. The Deobandis are a smaller group who do not oppose the veneration of Sufi saints, but who do criticize innovative practices involved in the saint cults. They tend overall to be better-educated and of a higher socioeconomic status. The Ahl al-Hadith are also a fairly small but important group. As their name suggests, they prefer a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and the Prophet's sayings (hadith). In general, they oppose any form of saint veneration. On the other hand, the Indian Muslims, due to their minority position, are less likely to polemicize their differences, or, in our terms here, to contest the unity of their space through *tazkiras* that emphasize sectarian loyalties and divisions among Muslims.[76]

In Pakistan today, one notes the extremely high amount of literary production for a relatively small literate audience. This high level of interest in the printed word is not restricted to religious literature. Still, it is the most popular genre. According to Awais Suhrawardi, a young publisher and graphics designer in Lahore who uses the latest computerized equipment to issue Islamic magazines and books,[77] those who have a real scholarly or intellectual interest in *tazkira* production or distribution, such as Mian Jamil Ahmad Sharqpuri (d. 2013) or Hakim Muhammad Musa Amritsari (d.1999),

[75] Interview, Multan, April 1990. The author's research on "the Vernacularization of Sacred Tradition" was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education Fulbright Program.

[76] Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

[77] Subsequent to this research Syed Ali Awais Suhrawardi went on to publish several books on spirituality in his own right before his untimely death in 2023.

are rare.[78] The costs of producing *tazkiras* are relatively minimal since calligraphy, paper, and printing are quite inexpensive.[79] Many of the costs are borne by private donations from friends of the writer. Sometimes, *tazkiras* may be commissioned and the donors' names cited and even their pictures and some biographical facts about them presented, but, in general, they are written as a labor of love and devotion. On the other hand, a young publisher who frequents *tazkira* writing circles felt that the recent spate of rehashed *tazkiras*, in which a writer will patch together previously existing materials with no real unifying principle to produce a voluminous tome, might have a commercial basis since the number of private and public libraries that buy these works is increasing. Judging from the state of the libraries that I visited, this seems unlikely, but there is assuredly a large market for *tazkiras* of all types. There are particular stores and publishing houses that specialize in this type of literature. In Lahore, these are clustered on Ganj Bakhsh road, near the tomb of the patron saint of Lahore, 'Ali Hujwiri, fondly known as Data Sahib. Many more *tazkiras* are produced and distributed by small groups in the smaller cities of Pakistan, mainly for disciples—for example, the Chishtiyyah Book House in Taunsa, a shrine city in Panjab.

The late *tazkira* compiler Muhammad ad-Din Kalim (d. 1989), was given the honorific title "Historian of Lahore." His compilation, *Madinat al-Auliya'* (City of Saints), includes his own biography. Kalim was born in 1917 in Dalilpur, Gurdaspur (East Panjab). As a young man, he visited many *shaykhs* in India in search of knowledge and spiritual blessings. After partition, he moved first to Faisalabad and then settled in Lahore. He

[78] Mian Jamil Ahmad was the Naqshbandi *pir* of the shrine at Sharqpur. Hakim Muhammad Musa Amritsari was a traditional hakim and a bibliophile with a vast knowledge of Islamic works in Pakistan. His honorific title was *Hakim-i Ahl-i Sunnat*—*Ahl-i Sunnat* being another name for the Barelvi movement. In Lahore, a network of Sufis, scholars, and publishers seems to be interconnected with most of the religious biographical activity taking place in Pakistan. Subsequent to Hakim Amritsari's passing away, numerous biographical works and commemorative numbers of journals have appeared in his honor, for example: Syed Jamil Ahmad Rizvi, *Majalis-e Ḥakim Muhhammad Musa Amritsarii: yaadashton ke a'ine men.* (Lahore:Dar-ul Faiz Ganj Bakhsh, 2003); Jalaluddin Dervi, *Ḥakim-i ahl-i sunnat aur taḥrik-i Pakistan*. (Lahore, Hamad Ahmad Javeed Publishers, 2014).

[79] A large tome of 680 pages with a gold-embossed binding might cost 36 rupees (1990), or about $2, to produce. The retail cost of this volume (*Arbab-i Tariqat*), which was a rehash and not an original work, was 200 rupees, or about $10—an expensive price in today's Pakistan. An 86-page pamphlet cost 4.5 rupees ($0.25), and, thus, a printing run of 1,000 pamphlets would cost about $220 (1990 prices).

worked for the Lahore municipal corporation and, finally, in the Lahore development agency as an accounts officer, thereafter retiring with honor in 1975. He was a disciple of Muhyi d-Din Qadiri Gilani of Dera Ghazi Khan. Over two hundred of his books and articles have been published, and as many remain unpublished. At the time of his death, he was working on a three-thousand-page manuscript on the Chishtis.

In the preface to *Madinat al-Auliya'*, Kalim compares previous *tazkiras* in terms of the numbers of Lahori saints they mention. Many of these, he notes, were in fact copied from standard works, such as Ghulam Sarwar's *Khazinat al-Asfiya'*. While most works merely mention that a given saint is buried in Lahore, Kalim gives the exact location of sites so that the visitor will have no problem in locating the tombs and shrines.

The threat of chaos[80] looms in the background of Kalim's project. In response to space carelessly rendered and prevailing social disintegration, the sites of Kalim's Lahore are rendered precise, specific, and historically accurate:

> Wherever you see an old grave, the keepers or greedy persons have spent quite a bit of money on fixing it up, popularizing it, and giving it some name which is unknown in the old sources so that they make it a means of earning money (he then lists several such shrines saying) "God knows who is really buried there."
>
> Nowadays the style of constructing new tombs has incorporated a lot of use of marble and other expensive stones and even the use of inlaid mirrors in some, so that you don't feel that you are in a graveyard but rather in a Shish Mahal (hall of mirrors). These tombs have proliferated to the point that they are found in every lane, street, bazaar, field, government park, and even in cinemas and government offices etc., even though there is no historical mention of them for some years I have been shocked by the lamentable situation that certain dissolute persons have pitched tents in the public graveyards out of which they deal in drugs.[81]

In response, Kalim writes of the special features of his work as a *tazkira*

[80] Jonathan Z. Smith, in his study of "place" in religion, writes concerning the Jewish and Christian understandings of sacred centers in Jerusalem: "For each there was a triumphant, ideological literature that perceived in their construction a cosmogonic act. For each, there was a literature of indigenous lamentation. . . that found, in the destruction or loss of the sites, a plunge into chaos." *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987), 3.

[81] Muhammad ad-Din Kalim, *Madinat al-Auliya'* (Lahore: Ma'arif, 1982), 78-79.

compiler, saying that he personally visited the shrines he writes about, investigated the accurate names of the persons whom he mentions, and reported the names of *pirs* falsely attributed to shrines when no such individuals were ever known to exist.[82]

I believe that this well illustrates one impulse behind contemporary local hagiography in Muslim South Asia. In this case, the response to the contemporary threat of chaos is the quest for a recovery of local history rather than the fundamentalists' urge to eradicate local custom and promote normative uniformity. The memory of the group, a local group defined by its saints and spaces, works to constitute a community through a localized configuration of collective memory that must compete today with the overarching narratives of modern constructions of nationhood, pan-Islamism, and globalization.

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[82] Ibid.

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