Adam’s Mirror: The Frontier in the Imperial Imagination

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To the centre of any empire, the frontier is a site of anxiety, of potential harm, of barbarians who could be marching towards the gate. The imperial imaginations of the medieval Arab dynasties, the colonial British, and now the United States have been dominated by this anxiety. We have to plant our historiographical feet in the frontier space of present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan and north India to see the concerns which emerge from within a regional imagination, in a regionally specific conversation and in regional stories. Situating ourselves in the frontier reveals varied perspectives that are invisible to the imperial eye. To pay attention to the localised production of history and memory is to decontextualise the only context that appears relevant – the imperial one. This shift in perspective reveals that the oft-designated “frontier” has a centrality all of its own.

Prologue

In az-Zubayr’s Kitāb al-Hadāyā wa al-Tuhaf (Book of Gifts and Precious Items), a catalogue, created in the 11th century, of tributes collected by Muslim kings over the centuries, is a report about a fragment of a mirror, which was received as tribute by the Umayyad caliph Mu‘awiya b Abi Sufyān (d 680) from the king of al-Qiqān near al-Sind.1 Since 660 ce (Common Era), the Arab armies were engaged in extending tributaries in the Thughr al-Hind w’al Sind (frontier of al-Hind and al-Sind), slowly making their way east of Khurūsān, Kirmān, Sāstān, and Makrān (present cities such as Kandahar in Afghanistan, Lahore, the regions of Waziristan, Baluchistan, and the port city of Sindh in Pakistan). It was Adam, az-Zubayr reports, who received this mirror from god, upon his descent from heaven, so that “he could see whatever he wished on earth”, no matter in conditions good or bad. Mu‘awiya used the mirror to examine for himself the conditions at the frontier of his dominion, to know and check on his appointed governors and commanders in the distant battlegrounds of al-Hind w’al Sind. This mirror, now a fragment of governance, remained in Mu‘awiya’s personal possession until the Abbasid times (mid-8th century onwards), after which it was reportedly lost.

A metaphorical reading of the 11th century re-imagination of the Umayyad frontier policy needs to retain both the mystery and the danger of that frontier. It ought to capture the anxiety that the frontier continuously produces in the seat of putative power – what is going on so far away?2 It is an anxiety that paradoxically internalises a peculiar fascination with the frontier even as it pushes away more robust understandings – it simultaneously keeps the frontier a known object and an unknowable terrain. The fragment of the mirror acts as an apt metaphor for this tension – a mirror that reflects not the viewer but the distant other, and not just any other but a specific other that denotes potential danger. The frontier itself is a site of anxiety, of potential harm, of barbarians who could be marching towards the gate.3 It is this anxiety, this particular reading of the frontier that tends to dominate the imperial imagination – it clouds over the historical contingencies, the particularities or the specificities, and those instated there; in its place is a caricature of the exotic, the unknown. This anxiety of the empire embeds itself in the frontier itself, waiting to be recalled, remembered and reproduced.

On 29 January 2009, at the Senate confirmation hearing for US Secretary of State nominee Hillary R Clinton, Senator John Kerry, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, made the following remarks:

We are struggling to fight with and for people with a different culture, a different language, different custom, different history, different religion,
if any. And all of those similarities exist. We don’t live there. We don’t live in the community, in a hamlet, in a small town, pocket, whatever you want to call it. And so we’re not there often at night. They are. And the night often rules with insurgencies. The complications are profound in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. And I went to both – and to India – immediately after Mumbai and was really struck by the extraordinary distance we have to travel in both places, Senator. … It left – it kept leaping out at me in ways that, over a number of years here, I really, frankly had not given enough consideration to. But recently I read a wonderful book where I commend to you by Rory Stewart, you know, *The Places in Between* and another book, *The Forever War* and a whole host of them that really give you the flavour of this if you really want it – I mean, *Gertrude Bell, the Desert Queen* is a fascinating study of sort of the region and of tribalism. And that’s really what I want to point to.⁴

Clinton’s answering remarks echoed Kerry’s reading as well as his particular teleology,

Sitting here today, when I think about my trips to Afghanistan, my flying over that terrain, my awareness of the history going back to Alexander the Great and, certainly, the imperial British military and Rudyard Kipling’s memorable poems about Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, which put in more troops than we’re thinking about present, the very same gestures of framing the frontier as can be seen in the British or the US cases. In what follows, I want to interrupt time as it flows in Clinton’s formulation. I want to bring into the conversation the Umayyad empire and its relationship to the frontier. I do so to highlight that particular ways of knowing and unknowing the frontier are constitutive of imperial experience, and tracing these pathways of knowledge illustrates the unknown terrain to which frontiers are routinely confined. Next, I want to plant our historiographical feet in the frontier space itself to see the concerns which emerge from within a regional imagination, in a regionally specific conversation and in regional stories. Situating ourselves in the frontier reveals new topographies, varied perspectives, networks and routes that are invisible to the imperial eye.

**The First Frontier**

The Arab expansion towards the frontier of *al-Hind w’al-Sind* – roughly peninsular southern Asia, using the Indus River as a natural boundary between *al-Sind* (the regions to the north and west) and *al-Hind* (the regions to the east) – began largely as a result of the re-entrenchment of the last of the Sasanid nobility in the eastern hinterlands of Khurūsān and Kirmān in the mid-seventh century. By 700 CE, the regions of Sīstān and Makrān – with important garrison sites such as Kandahar – were constantly switching alliances, revolting, and both attracting and exporting rebellious elements, ideologies and assassins against the Umayyad court in Damascus and the major cities of Basra and Kufa. Efforts to “control” this region eventually led to the successful campaign of 712 CE that established Umayyad garrisons in the ports on the Indus River and opened a secure naval route from Aden to Sindh. The victory, like all previous victories in the region, was short-lived and throughout the eighth century, numerous expeditions were dispatched to the frontier, as the Gurjara-Parthahras in the north-west and the Rashtrakutas in the Deccan maintained a tumultuous coexistence with the Arab-Muslim principality.

The anxiety of harm that exists on the military frontier is aptly captured in Arabic historical and exegetical tradition. In the section on the frontier of *al-Hind wa’l Sīnd* in the *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān* (The Book of Conquest of Lands) by al-Baladhuri (d 892), there are repeated invocations of the many failures and setbacks suffered by the Arab armies in the region of Zabulistan, Sīstān and Makrān. At the outset, al-Baladhurī reproduces a caution given to the third caliph ‘Uthman (d 655), who hoped to restrict the movement of rebellious forces to and from the region, and received this report from a scout to the region: “O Commander of the Believers, I examined it and know it well.’ The caliph said, ‘Describe it’. He said, ‘The water supply is sparse; the dates are high camera on an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) and the ambulatory viewpoint of British academic, author and politician Rory Stewart.

Viewed through the drone’s camera, the frontier is both utterly knowable and maddeningly unknown. This capacity to crowd out all other narratives about the space it demarcates as “frontier” belongs only to the empire, and so it is to imperial history that we must first turn. Not to explain imperial histories but to showcase, in the archives of an empire far removed from our present, the very same gestures of framing the frontier as can be seen in the British or the US cases. In what follows, I want to interrupt time as it flows in Clinton’s formulation. I want to bring into the conversation the Umayyad empire and its relationship to the frontier. I do so to highlight that particular ways of knowing and unknowing the frontier are constitutive of imperial experience, and tracing these pathways of knowledge illustrates the unknown terrain to which frontiers are routinely confined. Next, I want to plant our historiographical feet in the frontier space itself to see the concerns which emerge from within a regional imagination, in a regionally specific conversation and in regional stories. Situating ourselves in the frontier reveals new topographies, varied perspectives, networks and routes that are invisible to the imperial eye.

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inferior; and the robbers are bold. A small army would be lost there, and a large army would starve.”¹⁹ That caution shadows the narration of the various Muslim campaigns to the region – al-Baladhuri repeatedly refers to the breaking of frontier treaties, the decimation of established garrison cities, the assassination of governors or their removal due to corruption. In his narrative, this eastern frontier of the Umayyad empire remains volatile and unsettled, continuously draining the coffers. The list of armies and commanders given by al-Baladhuri illustrates the continual pressure the frontier exerted on the Umayyads. In 663-64, ’AbdAllah b Sawwâr al-‘Abdi leads two expeditions to Kâfûn, perishing in the second. In 665, Sinân ibn Salamah reaches Makrân and establishes a fort. Sinân’s conquest, however, is short-lived, as the fort goes in and out of Arab control until 672 when al-Mundhir ibn al-Jarûd al-‘Abdiis is able to recapture it. The local political and social powers, such as the Zunbîl of Zamîn-dawar and Zâbulistân, and the Kâbulshâhîs of Kabul, were sometimes persuaded to pay tribute but, according to al-Baladhuri, due to the lack of a standing Arab army, they often changed their minds and remained ferocious opponents.

The Zâbulistân campaigns left a deeper historical mark – the Umayyad sent the governor ’Ubaidallah b Abi Bakra to Zâbulistân at the head of the Jaish al-Tawâwis (Army of Destruction) to subdue the region in 698. They were caught, captured and largely decimated, putting an end to Umayyad expeditions to the region for the next decade.⁷ It provoked a number of poetical and mythical accounts of the doomed army. One of these is preserved in the early 10th century geographical treatise Kitâb al-Masâlik wâl-Mamâlik (Book of Roads and Kingdoms) by Ibn Khurûldibhî (d 913), where he reproduces a popular lament about the many graves of fallen Arab soldiers in Kandahar.⁸

This engagement – military and political – also stimulated a production of knowledge about this frontier in all the genres that usually constitute imperial knowledge, the historical, the administrative, the geographical, and the wondrous. As mentioned earlier, the first reported embassy from Baghdad to the al-Hind and al-Sind departed in 800, and became the basis of numerous geographical and historical accounts. A number of key Arab geographers visited Arab Sind in the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries. However, there is a general deficiency in “official” Muslim accounts when it comes to this frontier. The universal histories, such as those of al-Tabarî (d 923) and al-Ya‘qîbî (d 897), provide little coverage of al-Hind wâl-Sind. This scarcity in the historical and geographical texts is read, in secondary literature, as indicating the lack of political and religious significance of Sind to the Arab polity. Khalid Blankinship, for example, notes that there is an “overwhelming geographical bias” towards the metropolitan cities of Iraq, with the consequence that “the importance of events is only measured by their nearness to and impact on the capital city”⁹ But that seems to be a limited understanding of both the frontier and the centre – or at least a decidedly atomic one, with concretised stable notions of “centre” and “frontier”.

As is apparent from the various geographical and historical accounts, Arab Sind, especially during the time of Arab political and military presence, played a powerful role in the genre of literature known as ‘ajâib wa gharîb (wonders and miracles). The ‘ajâib al-Hind (marvels of India) texts, which emerge in the late ninth century, act as a well-noted locus of historical, geographical and exotic information on this frontier. In this genre, which also contains a large number of mercantile and naval accounts, lies an exotic landscape that is filled with gold-carrying ants, giant eagles and other terrible creatures – some in Kashmir, some in Kabul, some in Multan. An examination of the wondrous tales in the ‘ajâib al-Hind genre reveals that it borrowed heavily from Greek accounts, often reproducing tales from the second or third centuries BCE (Before the Common Era), with slight modifications, in Arabo-Islamic guises.¹⁰ That these fantastic elements mingled, within the same text, with dynamically produced nautical reports on distances, wind currents, and port conditions reflect the carefully calibrated knowing/unknowing that situated itself in the empire’s frontier.

It is to the persistence of this literary and political imagination of the thughr (frontier) that we can credit the appearance of Adam’s mirror in the 11th century text. And it is a similar literary and political imagination, which rests uncomfortably in the imperial heart that shapes our present-day understandings of that same frontier. For more than 250 years, the frontier of al-Hind wâl-Sind remained static in the imperial vision, onto which could be projected the fantastic, the bizarre, and the incomprehensible. During that same period, the Indian Ocean trade re-emerged as a dominant link; and a vast intellectual and ideological transfer of communities occurred, generating site-specific knowledge. That this frontier, though within the confines of the empire, retained the allure of the exotic and the fear, reflected the balance of power. Any recuperative act against the empire, any historiographical corrective to the imperial narratives, must begin by examining this imagination, but it cannot stop there. It has to situate itself on the frontier, locating itself outside Adam’s mirror.

The View from the Frontier

In 1868, in an essay titled “Democratic Vistas”, poet-philosopher Walt Whitman made a prediction about the American frontier.

In a few years the dominion-heart of America will be far inland, toward the West. Our future national capital may not be where the present one is. It is possible, nay likely, that in less than 50 years, it will migrate a thousand or two miles, will be re-founded, and every thing belonging to it made on a different plan, original, far more superb.¹¹

This magnetic pull of the frontier on the centre, which is powered by the demand for new talent, for new energy, for new “stock”, is rarely remarked upon in the literature on centre-periphery models. In Whitman is a subtext worth explicitly noting – the frontier is not empty. The inhabitants of this frontier, the space towards which the empire must advance, are the necessary fodder to propel the movement. It is quite possible to read, in this sense, the movement of Islamicate capitals towards the frontier of al-Hind wâl-Sind – from Damascus to Baghdad to Samarra to Ghazna and Ghur and the influx of Persian, of Turkic, of Indian populations, found at the “frontier”, who settle the characteristics of the empire “with all the old retain’d, but more expanded, grafted on newer, hardier, purely native stock.”¹² The logical extension of such a reading would be to place ourselves on the
frontier and examine the ways in which the empire is reflected and refracted in histories and policies. To pay attention to the localised production of history and memory is not just a passive scholarly act of locating “agency” in archives. It is to arrest the narratives that the empire generates about itself. It is to decontextualise the only context that appears relevant – the imperial one. This shift in perspective is not merely a corrective, but a critical one, as it reveals that the oft-designated “frontier” has a centrality all of its own.

By the time of al-Mu'taṣim (813-33), the ‘Abbāsids had sent a long list of governors to the region of al-Hind w'al Sind. The period between the death of al-Mu'taṣim and the assassination of al-Mutawakil (833-61) is one of a fairly stable court in Baghdad. A large influx of ḥadīth scholars, grammarians, and theologians made their way to the port cities in Gujarāt and Sindh, and up towards Lahore. Similarly, the traffic from al-Hind across the Arabian Gulf to the cities of Baghdad and Cairo flourished. Pottery and coins gathered from Sāmārā, Fustāt, Daybūl and Mansūra show that a cross-regional trade flourished during this period. One sign of the stability of this trade was the numerous regional power centres that flourished in the 9th and 10th centuries – the Mahānīya in Gujarāt, the Hābārī in Sindh, and the Saffārīds and the Sāmānīds from Ghazna to Multan. The Ghaznawīds (962-1186) are perhaps most well known for extending their empire across most of al-Hind wa'l Sind, threading together all the cities from Ghazna to Lahore to the lower Indus valley. The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, out of the fragments of the Ghurid empire, once again created a new political space in the broader region encompassing the frontier. The 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th centuries saw the establishment of polities with political and social bases in Sindh, Baluchistan and southern Afghanistan – the Sumrā and the Sāmā (based in Makrān), the Arghnān (based in Kandahār), and the Tarkhān. Surrounding them were the gunpowder empires – the Uzbek (1500-1785), the Mughal (1526-1858) and the Safavid (1501-1722), who often insisted that this was a frontier – a meeting of borders, conflict zones, and uncontrollable chaos. Hence the adventures of Babar in 1520, Akbar in 1592, Nadir Shah in 1739, Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1753, and, perhaps most relevantly, the East India Company in 1843.

The above string of political dynasties and concerns each left their traces in history – built environments, circulated objects, cultural memories. All of which provide a radically different conception of space, boundaries and belonging than the view from the capitals of Baghdad, Delhi, Agra or London. Consider the early 13th century Persian text, written in Thatta, Sindh, and popularly known as Chachnama. Describing for its courtly audience, a portrait of seventh century al-Sind, it presents a strictly bounded vision of the polity that existed before Islam’s arrival.

Narrators of reports and historians write that the city of Aror, which was the capital of al-Hind and al-Sind, was a great city by the river Sindh (which we call Mehran), filled with varied palaces, colourful pastures, canals, fountains, gardens, and flower gardens. And in this lively city was a Hindu Raja by the name of Rai Sehras b Sehasi who had immeasurable treasures and riches. His justice was known around the world and his philanthropy was legendary. To the East, his kingdom extended to Kashmir; in the west to Makran, in the south to Daybul and the sea shore, and to the north to the Qīqāns. To each frontier, he had appointed four governors – one in Brahmanabad, one in Sistan, one in Iskandari, and one in the great city of Multan. He himself remained in the capital and kept a close relationship with his frontier governors, supplying them with troops and arms. He gave them strict orders to guard the borders of their domains so that no outsider could break through.

The text goes on to describe the rule of a brahmin king Chach, who conquers this kingdom and proceeds to visit the borders of his new polity.

At Kashmir, he planted two trees – one oak and one beech and he waited for them to grow and their branches to entangle with each other. This, he declared, was the border between the Raja of Kashmir and us. No one will go across without permission. At Makran he planted a bushel of date trees and inscribed on the trunk an insignia of his court – marking the limit of his rule. By Sistan, he had erected a bell tower with five trumpets which would sound at dawn and at dusk.

This already-realised picture of kingship is markedly different, of course, from the claims of a Chakravartin, a Sultan-e Kamil or a Badshah-e Alam or other designations reserved for kings, conquerors and rulers, whose domain was always the world in its entirety. Its careful delineation of terrain is also largely invisible to scholarship because it does not fit the centre-periphery or the frontier model.

Keeping in mind that this Persian text was produced on the frontier, we can add a string of such localised texts, which are not concerned with the imperial capitals but with their own region. The Tarikh-i Tabakāt-i Mubarakshahi, written in early 16th century, which is our only primary source for the Sammā, and the Tarikh-i Tahiri, written in the mid-16th century, were both produced in the town of Thatta. In both, the Mughal empire, the doings of Humayun and Akbar, are mere backgrounds against which regional concerns are paramount – the tales of ascensions and victories, the descriptions of forts, cities and ports (especially of Thatta, Multan, Lahore, and Kandahar), the recounting of folk romances and biographical notes on notable poets and Sufis. Unlike the materials completed in the capital, these texts are not focused on exoticia or anxiety, but on the lived lives of the communities that surround them. In the 17th century, Tarikh-i Ma’sumi and Beglarna; in the 18th century, Tuhfat ul-Kirām; and in the 19th century, Lubb-e Tarikh-i Sind were some of the key texts produced in the frontier of al-Sind.

The most critical intervention these frontier texts provide is information on local customs, local culture and biographies of notables. It seems a banal point to make that the imperial gaze to the frontier always aimed to generalise from the particular, to deduce patterns, to predict behaviour. The power of these particular texts lies in shifting the descriptive focus away from the diagnostic or the programmatic to the lived and the social. It is a perception of space utterly lacking in Adam’s mirror.

Take Tuhfat ul-Kirām (Gifts of the Generous) by Mir ‘Ali Sher Qānī (1727-1788), a history attuned to the spiritual and mystical leaders of Sindh – narrating folk epics and oral histories of various towns, centres and graveyards. Qānī authored more than 42 works, including numerous compendiums of poetry (he excelled in the mathnāvi and qasidā); a dictionary of Persian poets in Sindh, Muqallāt-e Shurā (1760); a history from the ‘Abbāsids to the Kalhōra, Tarikh-i ‘Abbasi (1761); and a truly unique cultural
history of Sindh, incorporating everything from fashion to culinary skills and means of relaxation, *Nisâb ul-Bulghâ* (1783). *Tuhfât ul-Kirâm* (1761) comprises three volumes. The first deals with the history of the prophets down to the early Caliphs. The second is divided into seven sections – each containing histories of cities and towns in Sindh, Baluchistan, and Afghanistan, along with their spiritual and ruling elite. The third volume is dedicated to the history of the region, ending with the Kalhorâ dynasty. *Tuhfât ul-Kirâm* concerns itself primarily with cultural and spiritual aspects, intertwining romances, culinary practices, Sufi hagiographies and discussions of the magical properties of everyday objects. In all, Qâni uses the history of the region, of institutions, of households, to illustrate the “pre-eminence” of certain practices and to promote a regional viewpoint, which he laments is absent in the works on history composed at the courts.

These histories, these tombs, these political philosophies, political theologies, manuals of governance, and genealogies of rule are the missing links in Clinton’s historical narrative (“my flying over that terrain, my awareness of the history going back to Alexander the Great and, certainly, the imperial British military”). My attempt to fill in the gap is not an attempt at bibliographic or encyclopedic completeness. It is an attempt to reduce the teleological distance (the more than 2,100 years that separate Alexander from imperial Britain in that “terrain”), to give valence to contexts more valid to this particular imperial adventure.

### At the Edges of the US Empire

The debate about the “empire-ness” of the post-1989 US acquired momentum during the 2001-03 period, when its military and political retaliation to the 11 September 2001 attacks created a starkly new geopolitical world. Taking the late 19th century British Empire as the yardstick for all imperial measurements, historian Niall Ferguson declared in October 2001 that the US had to become a colonial imperial power or risk losing the world to chaos. This judgment did not catch on per se, as despite administrators such as Zalmay Khalilzad, Jay Garner and L Paul Bremer, the US decided to restrict the colonial angle of its imperial processes. Hence, the petulant declaration by then Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld in April 2003, “We don’t seek empires … We’re not imperialistic. We never have been.” Taken at face value, such protestations are taken as evidence that the US is an “anti-colonial” empire, one that has never been interested in possessing colonies (hence, never developed an administrative or service core of colonial bureaucracies). But, it does not take away the imperial vision on a global scale that has bound successive us
regimes and the public since the very beginning. Here, as a crude example, is an ode, written by Francis Hopkinson, printed on pamphlets and distributed at the Independence Day parade on 4 July 1788, in Philadelphia: “O for a muse of fire! to mount the skies/And to a listening world proclaim! Behold! behold! an empire rise!” The ode was titled “Columbia’s Triumph”, using the now almost forgotten title for a us that extended its triumph beyond the seas.

‘Tis done! ’tis done! my sons, she cries, In war are valiant and in council wise. Wisdom and valour shall my rights defend, And o’er my vast domain those rights extend. Science shall flourish, genius stretch her wing, In native strains Columbian muses sing: Wealth crown the arts, and Justice cleanse her scales, Commerce her portrōus anchor weigh … Wide spread her sails, And in far distant seas her flag display.

This vision of a global imperial reach was clearly articulated early. The world beyond was always visible, always attainable – Jedidiah Morse’s The American Universal Geography (1797) had by its fifth edition a long chapter on “Sindetic Hindoostan”, covering the cities of “Lahore, Cashmere, Cabul, Ghisni, or Gasna, Candahar, Moulunt, and Tatta”. This awareness of a global geography and the availability of global capital are most clearly visible in the 1856 Guano Islands Act. Goaded by that same spirit, the graphy and the availability of global capital are most clearly visible in the 1856 Guano Islands Act. Goaded by that same spirit, the

5 Same as Note 4.
6 al-Balādhūrī (988): Futūḥ al-Buldān (Beirut: Maktaba al-Hilālī); 416-17.
8 The retelling of this episode was retold by Orientalists who found echoes of it in the Anglo-Afghan wars of the mid-to-late 19th century: “In the time of al-Muqtada (916), during the digging for the foundation of a tower in Kandahar, a subterranean cave was discovered, in which were a thousand Arab heads, all attached to the same chain, which had evidently remained in good preservation since the year 70/698, for a paper with this date upon it was found attached by a silken thread to the ears of the 29 most important skulls, with their proper names. This would indicate that the Arabs at first met with no great success in their enterprise against this town: nevertheless they became masters of it.” Of course, that note of eventual triumph at the end seemed prophetic for their enterprise, and the anecdote functioned less as a historical echo and more as a showcase for the friction caused by the invocation of savagery at the frontier. See H D Seymour and J P Ferrier (1856), Caravan Journey and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Beloochistan, (London: John Murray): 324.
10 See S Maqbul Ahmad (1989), Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study).
12 Same as Note 11.
17 This is the first analytical point in Engseng Ho’s remarkable essay on the US empire. I owe much here to Ho’s critical thinking. See Engseng Ho (2004), “Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat” in Comparative Studies in Society and History, 46 (2): 210-46.
19 Same as Note 18.
20 It is unclear whether this is in response to traders and merchants in the region or missionary activities. Churches based in the US had heavily invested in sending missions to Punjab and Sindh during the period. See, for example, The First Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States (New York, 1838).