

# Indian and Universal? The Significance of François-Marie de Tours for the Case of Hindi

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The present article draws from an ongoing research project based at the University of Uppsala and funded by the Swedish Research Council. Among other things, the article contextualises the potential impact this project could have on current language politics in India. The focus of this research project is on a hitherto unedited Hindustani dictionary *Thesaurus Linguae Indianae* from the French Capuchin François-Marie de Tours (16...–1709). The project shows that the language documented by him in Devanagari and called alternately *Hindustani*, *lingua mogolana*, *lingua Indiana* and *lingua vulgaris* is indeed close to Modern Standard Hindi (MSH). Furthermore, the fact that De Tours was convinced that the language documented by him was during his time the *lingua franca* of the Mughal Empire in a period of its most vast geographical extension and even along the Southern coasts somehow supports the case of Hindi: the nationalist claim on Hindi, i.e. MSH, as the sole official language of post-colonial India.

## Background

More than 70 years after the end of British colonial rule in South Asia and the emergence of India as an independent state, India does not yet have a national language in the common sense of the term. English is – besides Hindi – still “used for all the official purposes of the Union” (Government of India 2007: 212). Even though, according to the Indian constitution (1950), Hindi was supposed to be the sole “official language of the Union” after a period of 15 years, the official status of English was extended by the Official Languages Act in 1963 (Ministry of Home Affairs [1963]) and seems to be uncontested until today. And whereas the number of the officially recognised regional languages listed in the 8th schedule of the constitution has been growing from originally 14 up to 22 (incl.

Hindi), the quest for a national language and the abolishment of English for official purposes are still two highly contested fields.

The perhaps most outspoken deliberations on English being a superimposition and the removal of English to be part of the anticolonial agenda are Mahatma Gandhi's statements in his book *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (1910) (Gujarati original from 1909: *Hind svarāj*). According to Gandhi, "by receiving English education, we [Indians] have enslaved the nation" (Gandhi 1938: [79]), and hence English should be replaced by provincial languages, and Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian for "[r]eligious, that is ethical, education"; and above all, "a universal language for India should be Hindi, with the option of writing it in Persian or Nagari characters" (ibid.: [80]). However, the constitution prescribes "Hindi in Devanagari script" and the "international form of Indian numerals" (Government of India 2007: 212), i.e. the numbers globally known as "Arabic numerals". According to Amrit Rai, there was, in practical terms, no alternative to Hindi/Hindustani in its *Kharī Bolī* variant, i.e. Modern Standard Hindi (MSH), Urdu's twin sister (Rai 1984). At the same time, paragraph 351 of India's constitution, even though referring to the "composite culture of India", confirms the role of Sanskrit for the development of Hindi's vocabulary.

In his essay on "Defining Hindi", Rahul Peter Das discussed the complexity of the term "Hindi" and the difficulties to define it. Das shows how "Hindi" has been applied to several languages in past centuries. His article also outlines the process that has led towards MSH being a part of the national project by some groups, which, even though contested, got constitutional status. The idea of "Hindi" as the national language relates, first of all, to the European notion of nation and its appropriation in late colonial India (Das 2014). Declarations on the spread of Hindi, i.e. MSH, as an essential part of nation-building have become a common trope in the discourse on nation and identity. However, their impact on ground realities and particularly on personal linguistic behaviours and strategies is doubtful. Instead, allegations on "Hindi imperialism", especially from regions where MSH and/or any other variants of Hindi are not spoken as a first language, have become equally common.

Despite the official status of Hindi granted in the constitution and obligations resulting from this, such as described in Article 351<sup>1</sup> of the Indi-

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<sup>1</sup> Government of India 2007: 216f.: "351. It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and

an constitution and reaffirmed by the Rāj'bhāṣā Saṃkalp Resolution of the Indian parliament from 1968 (Department of Official Language [1968]), which should have led to various measures to promote Hindi as *the* official language in the whole of India, the effects in practical politics have remained meagre. The official status of English and its role as a prestige language in the social setup of India is more or less unchallenged until today. The ongoing breath-taking growth of the educational sector leads to more English, not less. Even though Narendra Modi is the first Indian Prime Minister who mostly uses Hindi in his statements on the national as well as international level, the ground facts on the relationship of English and Hindi as well as other regional languages in India and Hindi remain the same.

### **From an International to the National Language?**

The national project is more and more connected to an international project of Indian government institutions, namely, to establish Hindi as a "world language". For instance, while many languages which are classified as dialects of Hindi in the Census of 2011, such as Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Bundeli and Magahi, were spread during British colonial times also outside of South Asia, modified variants of them are also today spoken, taught in schools and receive some official status, particularly in Fiji, Mauritius and Surinam. A series of World Hindi Conferences (*Viśva hindī sammelan*), starting 1975 in Nagpur (India), has been an important, government-sponsored tool to reach out also to speakers of those languages and promote Modern Standard Hindi and Indian identity in the diaspora. Within India, Maithili mutated from a dialect of Hindi into a language in a gradual process cumulating in its recognition in the 8th schedule of the constitution in 2002 (cf. Jha 2018).

Furthermore, since 2007, the Indian government has been active in promoting the official status of Hindi on an international level. The Ninth World Hindi Conference in Johannesburg (2012) sent an appeal to the United Nations (UN) to make Hindi one of its official languages (NDTV 2012), and since 2014, the Indian foreign minister as well as the prime

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to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages."

minister himself use Hindi whenever they speak in the General Assembly.<sup>2</sup> The late Indian foreign minister Sushma Swaraj announced in 2015, after the successful Indian initiative to introduce the UN World Yoga Day (June 21) – supported by 177 country votes in the General Assembly –, that she will make active efforts to gather the necessary 129 country votes within the UN (NDTV 2015). It seems, however, that this move has lost its incentive in the meantime. Related to these moves, the government has announced a heavily funded programme under the name “Nikash” to establish Hindi as a foreign language on a global level. Its advocates believe that this might be able to challenge the efforts of the worldwide net of Confucius Institutes for the spread of Chinese.

The fight for Hindi in the UN has gained a tremendous symbolical meaning back home in India as well as in the diaspora. Arabic (since 1982), Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are currently official languages in the UN. Nepal has declared its support for the Indian demand in 2015. The foundation of the World Hindi Secretariat (*Viśva hindī sacivālay*) in Mauritius has to be seen in the context of these efforts to push Hindi on the UN level. The secretariat became functional in 2008, and moved into an impressive government-sponsored office compound including a huge library, convention hall, and conference facilities in 2018,<sup>3</sup> right in time before the 11th World Hindi Conference in Mauritius in August 2018.

Although languages classified frequently as “Hindi” in past and present have a history in the Indian diaspora from its beginning in the middle of the 19th century and besides the long and complicated history of Hindi/Hindustani/Urdu as a *lingua franca* in North India (Chatterji 1960; Rai 1984; King 1994; McGregor 2001; Rahman 2011), the current status of Modern Standard Hindi continues to be a tricky issue. As already the title of the volume documenting two workshops on the initiative of Rahul Peter Das and edited by Agnieszka Kuskiewicz-Fraś – *Defining the Indefinable: Delimiting Hindi* (Kuskiewicz-Fraś 2014) – suggests, it is difficult to define the languages for which the terms “Hindi” and “Hindustani” have been applied for centuries and how Khaṛī Bolī/Modern Standard Hindi could rise to its present status of *the Hindi*. Beyond that, the fact that Hindi has never managed to effectively challenge the status of English as prestige language and the worries of disadvantages for non-mother tongue speakers add to problems of the national language project in India.

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<sup>2</sup> The first speech in Hindi in the UN General Assembly was made in 1977 by the then foreign minister and later prime minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. its official website on [www.vishwahindi.com](http://www.vishwahindi.com).

The modern trope of the national language, being a result of a kind of teleological development of a language with a coherent and naturally hierarchical relation to other variants that group around it as its dialects, offers a rather one-dimensional perspective on a complex historical development. The colonial and postcolonial language policy discourse is mostly concerned with the immediate needs of the nation in the making. The historical evidence, however, needs more attention, and it has to be verified whether it really supports the contemporary claims or rather questions them.

### **De Tours' Linguistic Work – New Evidence?**

The arguments surrounding the idea of *Khari Boli* being the legitimate Hindi, used under the auspices of colonial language policy formation by the anti-colonial movement and in postcolonial India with a focus on identity, find a surprising support in a hitherto rather unknown early 17th century missionary interlocutor – the early Hindustani dictionary and grammar written by the French Capuchin François-Marie de Tours, bearing the date of 1703 (dictionary) and 1704 (grammar). What makes De Tours and his linguistic work particularly interesting from the perspective of postcolonial language politics is his insight into the linguistic setup of the language De Tours himself calls “Hindustani” and “Lingua mogolana”. Not much research on the manuscripts of either the dictionary or the grammar of this French Capuchin missionary has been done. The dictionary was identified as such in an article by Ronald Stuart McGregor in 1960, but was hardly further researched until recently with the creation of the Uppsala research group.

In many respects, De Tours' grammar is also much more conclusive than the other early Hindi/Hindustani grammars analysed by Tej Krishan Bhatia in his standard history of Hindi grammatical traditions (Bhatia 1987). At the time of writing his classical study, Bhatia did not even mention De Tours in his chapter on “The Dawn of Hindi Grammar: The Earliest Period (1698–1770)” (Bhatia 1987: 16–66). The dictionary is also only briefly mentioned by McGregor in his review of early Hindi lexicography (McGregor 2001: 9ff.; cf. also McGregor 2003: 947ff.). De Tours himself uses the term “Hindustani” in the Devanagari title page as well as in the dictionary, where the Devanagari column has the title “Hīndustānī” – the first “ī” is long in his spelling.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This is not necessarily astonishing since in Marathi and partly in Gujarati, which

Otherwise, it is interesting that the language is also called “lingua Indiana” or “lingua mogolana” on the manuscript title page and continuously in the extensive introduction of the grammar. Anyway, “Hindustani” (or *the* Indian language) is a term that is not astonishing. It appears, for example, also in Benjamin Schultze’s famous early grammar *Grammatica Hindostanica* published in 1745 (Schultze 1986). After all, the differentiation between “Hindi” and “Hindustani” gained prominence not before the first decade of the 19th century when John Gilchrist and the early language primer writings in and around Calcutta’s Fort William College made their appearance (Steadman-Jones 2007; Bhatia 1987: 67ff.). It is, however, clear that De Tours’ Hindustani is grammatically and lexically quite close to Modern Standard Hindi (MSH) and not as close to other transregional languages such as Braj, Marwari or Awadhi, which are today subsumed under the term “Hindi” by the Indian state, for instance in the Census of India.

Doubtlessly, this dictionary – the focus of the Uppsala project – is a singular and important contribution to the early history of Modern Standard Hindi as well as of the early forms of European encounters with South Asia. The planned “webonary” (digital online dictionary) on the basis of François-Marie de Tours’ dictionary, initiated at the University of Uppsala, is intended to be a starting point for an extended open dictionary of early Hindi/Hindustani based on word lists and dictionaries produced before the foundation of Fort William College in Calcutta (1800) and its impact on the development of Modern Standard Hindi. Beyond this direct contribution to the early history of Hindi/Hindustani, the research project will contribute to the study of text and context in the European encounters with South Asia around 1700. Hence, this article will give first insights into the findings of the research project based at the University of Uppsala and, most importantly, contextualise De Tours’ linguistic endeavours and their impact in various fields of (socio)linguistics, cultural studies, and language politics in current India.

### **Grammatical and Lexicographical Traditions**

India is proud of the history of its grammatical and lexicographical traditions, starting with the linguistic interpretation of Vedic scriptures. The Sanskrit grammarian Panini (date unclear, possibly 4th–3rd century BC)

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have influenced De Tours’ orthography as well as his grammar, the difference between long and short “i” is blurred, particularly in historical orthography.

is often regarded as the greatest grammarian in antiquity worldwide. The grammatical tradition, however, did not extend to the New Indo-Aryan languages (Steadman-Jones 233ff.). Therefore, the Hindi grammatical tradition is “alien in origin and largely adopted non-native paradigms during the course of its development” (Bhatia 1987: 204).

From the 16th century onwards, Europeans started to study Indian languages and write grammars and dictionaries. But while in the 16th and early 17th centuries, the writing and studying of grammars and dictionaries was not yet common among missionaries and sometimes seen with suspicion among the Portuguese and even within the Catholic Church itself, by the time of De Tours missionaries had systematically started to study the languages of their missionary engagement as a second phase in what Ángela Barreto Xavier and Ines G. Županov have called “Catholic Orientalism” (Županov 2007: 88ff.; Xavier & Županov 2015). Protestant missionary activities, which started in the early 18th century with the very first mission in the Danish colony of Tranquebar at the Eastern coast, similarly started with two missionaries that were deeply devoted to the study of the language in their missionary field, i.e. Tamil. Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plütschau started the (ongoing) tradition of protestant missionary linguistics (Campbell 1858; Neil 1984; Frykenberg 2003; Onenkala 2015).

De Tours marks the turning point of earlier and more *ad hoc* forms of missionary linguistics towards much more systematic and even theologically reflected forms of language studies. However, Joan Josua Ketelaar’s grammar and dictionary, completed in 1698, has been coined “The oldest grammar of Hindustānī” by the famous Indian linguist Suniti Kumar Chatterjee in an article in 1933 (Chatterjee 1933) and again by the editors of one of the edition of 2008 in three volumes (Bhatia & Machida 2008; cf. also Bhatia 1987: 21ff.; Bhatia 2018). Ketelaar’s grammar and dictionary are almost half a century older than Benjamin Schultze’s *Grammatica Hindostanica* of 1745, written in Latin, which until 1893 was believed to be the earliest grammar of Hindustani (cf. Bhatia 1987: 50ff.).

It is possible that the head of the first Jesuit mission at the court of Akbar (reigned 1556–1605), Jerónimo Xavier (1549–1617), or one of his successors may have produced a dictionary and a grammar of Hindustani (Subrahmaniam 2005: 2ff.; Maclagan 1932: 50ff. & 193ff.). This again may have survived unnoticed in some archive and may come to the light of the day at some point in the future. The word list of Hindustani preserved in the Marsden Collection in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, the SOAS library, MS 11952 in London bearing the

name of Jerome (Jerónimo) Xavier appears to be much younger, but eventually may be a copy of an earlier word list from the Jesuit mission to the Mughal court.<sup>5</sup>

This issue needs further research, but for the time being the earliest grammar and dictionary of Hindustani (with less than 2000 headwords) goes to Ketelaar. Ketelaar produced word lists on different fields, all in a rather vague transliteration into Roman script, and informed by the orthography of the Dutch of his days. However, compared to Ketelaar's linguistic work, François-Marie de Tours' is much more conclusive in many respects. Another interesting aspect is that De Tours and Ketelaar were not only contemporaries but for some time even based in the same city, in Surat, and thus might have known each other, a circumstance which will be discussed below.

### The Manuscripts

François-Marie de Tours' dictionary *Thesaurus Linguae Indianae* (De Tours 1703) consists of 424 pages. Its layout is in four columns: Latin key word, Hindi gloss in Indic script (a kind of Moī, close to Devanagari), French rendering, and a phonological transcription with a self-styled set of diacritics. In about 780 cases of Arabic or Persian loanwords, Arabic glosses in Arabic script are added to the last of the four columns in two or eventually three different handwritings in Naskh and Nastaliq script. As his grammar illustrates, De Tours knew also Hebrew and Hebrew script.

However, it is not clear whether he himself has written everything on his own, even though at least one of these three handwritings as well as the writing in Indic script itself are arguably De Tours' own handwriting. Latin and Moī are *recto*, while the French gloss and the transliteration are *verso*. De Tours used a form of Moī that is close to Devanagari script as well as a rather accurate transliteration with a self-developed system of diacritics that allow an insight into the pronunciation of the Early Modern Hindustani spoken in Surat around 1700.

Additionally, both documents display a setup that was obviously meant for the printer. In the case of the dictionary, the numbering of each line on each page was probably meant to facilitate printing. The numbering of the pages is also very accurate, with the first word of the following page and the last word of the preceding page given at the page bottom in order to avoid confusion of the pages. However, both documents seemed to have

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<sup>5</sup> Thanks to Paolo Aranha, who drew my attention to this manuscript.



never been taken to the press for obscure reasons that are perhaps related to the concurrency between the Jesuit and Capuchin orders (Aranha 2016).

The manuscript of the dictionary survived in the original version of 1703, which is kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (MS 840), while his grammar *Grammatica Linguae Indianae Vulgaris sive Mogolanae* (De Tours 1704), consisting of 74 leaves (148 pages), is kept in the Vatican missionary archive in Rome, the *Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide*. Before its journey to Paris, the manuscript of the dictionary was also preserved in the *Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide* among other manuscripts in Vol XII Miscellanea (cf. Kowalsky & Metzler 1988).<sup>6</sup> It seems that the dictionary was separated from the grammar towards the end of the 18th century, and earlier research literature had reported that it was lost. However, it obviously had come to Paris after 1792, where the original and a copy from the hand of the famous Orientalist Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805), including an introduction to the Devanagari script, are preserved in the Oriental Manuscript Collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale (cf. De Tours 1784).

In a brief French introduction to the manuscript, Anquetil-Duperron mentions that he had seen a version of the dictionary (in form of a manuscript) during his stay in Surat in 1758 in the course of his study of the Zoroastrian textual traditions, and he regrets not having made a copy then. Unfortunately, this manuscript together with the archive of the Capuchins in Surat is lost. However, Anquetil-Duperron prepared a handwritten copy of the dictionary after he had received the manuscript from Rome in 1784 – a loan that was apparently never returned. The history of the two manuscripts, the handwritten copy of both by Anquetil-Duperron, and the reason for their division between Rome and Paris forms a sub-project of the Uppsala research group by Gunilla Gren-Eklund.

## Colonialism and Cosmopolitanism

Colonialism did not only change political, administrative and judicial structures. It also had its deep impact on knowledge systems, perceptions and identity. As a kind of fallout of the discourse on Orientalism that started with Edward Said's famous study of 1978, the interaction between

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<sup>6</sup> More precisely, this volume of Miscellanea is, according to the inventory, part II of the volumes *Miscellanea Pastrizio* (Kowalsky & Metzler 1988: 76). Thanks for this information to Gunilla Gren-Eklund who discovered the manuscript, which is today in the archives of the Pontifical Urbana University.

colonialism and indigenous knowledge systems has been studied from different angles in recent years.

One of the most inspiring researchers in the changing knowledge economies in early colonial South Asia is Sheldon Pollock. In a number of articles and books as author and editor, particularly in a massive edited volume under the title *Literary Cultures in History*, Pollock's main focus has been the exploration of the "vernaculars", i.e. modern languages, in the knowledge economies of the 18th century (Pollock 2002; Pollock 2011).

Bernard S. Cohn (Cohn 1996) argues that the British Orientalists' study of Indian languages was of primary importance to the colonial project of control and command. The travelling friars and missionaries of 17th and 18th century have often been interpreted as agents of colonialism, but it has to be added that the anti-Orientalist and post-colonial gaze is more applicable to the later epoch of colonial domination after the drastic decline of the Mughal Empire and the simultaneous rise of the East India Company Raj.

The complex nature of early colonial forms of interaction in South Asia have been discussed by Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Alam & Subrahmanyam 2007). Joan-Paul Rubiés (Rubiés 2001) has investigated early modern travellers and friars in India, demonstrating the scope of research on intercultural encounters before the rise of British colonial power. Rubiés has particularly pointed out the Jesuit discovery of Hinduism in the reports of one of the primary European intercultural brokers of the early 17th century – Antonio Rubino and his account of the history and religion of Vijayanagara from 1608.

Sumit Guha (Guha 2001) explains how "lexical awareness", a central issue in missionary linguistics, has to be interpreted in a broader historical context that goes beyond the binary of the coloniser and the colonised. Pollock (Pollock 2002) sees similarities in the development of what he calls the "vernacular millennium" in Europe and India leading to a new form of cosmopolitanism.

In recent years, the term "cosmopolitanism" has been explored as an analytical tool in the study of cultural dynamics of Early Modern India (cf. Lefèvre, Županov & Flores 2015). The focus is on the complexities of the interaction between different discourses, their languages and literatures, and on the interest bearers in the interaction between South Asia, Europe and Central Asia.

Cosmopolitanism signals a shift from sociality to humanity, and from primordial identities as terms of reference for group solidarity towards open discourse in a pluralist setup. The presence of Catholic missionaries

in India around 1700 at the outskirts of the Mughal Empire has recently been discussed, as already mentioned above, in the context of “Catholic Orientalism” (Xavier & Županov 2015). The Uppsala project aims to demonstrate how missionary-driven linguists in an overwhelmingly non-Christian context before the advent of large-scale colonialism can be interpreted as arbiters of intercultural exchange.

The town of Surat in modern Gujarat, then the blossoming sea harbour of the Mughal Empire on the West coast, was a prominent place of this kind of exchange in the 17th and early 18th centuries (Das Gupta 1979; Gokhale 1979; Maloni 2003; Subrahmanyam 2005).<sup>7</sup> It hosted a number of offices of European East India companies, including – at a later stage, i.e. from 1741 onwards, – the Swedish East India Company. The Dutch graveyard and the old fort at Surat are the two main surviving remnants of this extremely interesting chapter of what is sometimes called “connected history” of the 17th and 18th centuries.<sup>8</sup> This characterises the space in which François-Marie de Tours can be interpreted as an agent of a new form of cosmopolitanism, and his dictionary as a tool to broker the translatability of cultures (Assmann 1996) between Europe and India around 1700.

Part of this endeavour was the linguistic and lexicographical research in New Indo-Aryan languages. This is the starting point of the Hindi grammatical tradition, which Tej Krishan Bhatia therefore calls “an alien tradition” (Bhatia 1987: 15). Given that Europeans had started to study Indian languages, including Dravidian languages, and write grammars and dictionaries, already from the 16th century onwards, it is astonishing that this endeavour appears not to have been extended to Hindi/Hindustani. However, it is possible that a grammar in Persian language of Braj, today often considered to be a dialect of Hindi, as part of the *Tuhfat ul-hind* by Mirzā Khān ibn-Fakkr ud-Dīn, was composed about the same time as Ketelaar’s and François-Marie de Tours’ grammars and dictionaries, or perhaps even earlier. The editor of the critical edition of 1935, M. Ziāuddīn, believes that Mirzā Khān’s grammar was written in or before 1676. Bhatia, however, clearly shows that the given evidence may rather refer to the year 1711, or later (Bhatia 1987: 19; McGregor 2003: 942ff.).

The question of historical priority is, however, not so important. More important are the descriptions of the language itself and their background in hotspots of intercultural encounters. It is not astonishing that

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<sup>7</sup> Subrahmanyam (2005: 42–69) uses “Mughal Gujarat” as a descriptive term for the provincial Mughal rulership in this part of the Indian west coast.

<sup>8</sup> On the term “connected history” compare Subrahmanyam 2005.

Ketelaar and De Tours were active in the same seaport, namely in Surat. Until the beginning of the 18th century, Surat was a much more important harbour and coastal town than Bombay on the Western coast, and not only the residence of a large number of European merchants but also missionaries (Maloni 2003). Being part of the Mughal Empire, it was less than 400 km away from Aurangzeb's newly created capital Aurangabad, where Wali Aurangabadi (1667–1707) was active, the author whose works practically established the breakthrough for Urdu literature as a main competitor to Persian as a literary language in North India.

Ketelaar, who was in the service of the Dutch East India Company, as well as François-Marie de Tours maintained relationships with higher dignitaries of the Mughal administration and even with the court itself. A manuscript kept in the University library in Uppsala from the Christopher Henrik Braad (1728–1781) collection, extracted from the French Capuchin diaries in Surat starting about 1650, mentions the name of Ketelaar, and thus it is not impossible that Ketelaar and De Tours might have known each other (Franks 2009). There is, however, no indication that the protestant lay Ketelaar and the Capuchin friar De Tours ever engaged in a dialogue on linguistic or lexicographical issues.

### **François-Marie de Tours – the Missionary**

François-Marie de Tours was a Capuchin friar, catholic priest and missionary of French origin. He was from the town of Tours, but joined the order in Italy. The reason for his shift to Italy and much of his biography altogether are still widely unknown, but it is estimated that he arrived in India in the 1680s. Like in the case of other Capuchins of the 17th and 18th century, De Tours probably reached India not by the sea route (like the Jesuits), but had travelled to the Near East to stay for some years possibly in the Levant and in Safavid Empire's capital Isfahan, where his order maintained postings and where Capuchins used to get training in Oriental languages. He probably learnt the Arabic script there or perhaps even earlier in Rome, where there were teachers for Arabic. Since he knew also Hebrew and Hebrew script, he definitely had access to Semitic languages. Once in India, where the order had been active since 1632, he was based in Surat. He also travelled to other places where his order maintained posts.

He returned to Rome in 1703 together with an Indian convert who was introduced as a Brahmanic convert. As far as we know, the only publication written by François-Marie de Tours during his stay in Rome in 1703–1704 which was printed is a thin brochure published in Liège

(Belgium). It is a pamphlet, containing 36 “doubts” (*dubio*), which argues against certain forms of “accommodation” that the Jesuits advocated since the start of the Madurai Mission in the beginning of the 17th century by the Italian Jesuit Roberto Nobili (1577–1656). Actually, the main purpose of his stay in the Vatican appears to have been to argue against the Jesuit position in this controversy – on the adaptation of the so-called Malabarian rites into Indian Christianity (cf. Aranha 2016).

The printed pamphlet clearly takes position in a controversy that was theological in nature, but fought out between Capuchins and Jesuits, and may have been the reason why further publications of François-Marie de Tours were blocked from within the Vatican, their value as important documents in missionary linguistics notwithstanding. However, the Capuchin position on the Malabar rites controversy found more and more support in the Vatican, which culminated in the Papal Constitution *Omnium sollicitudinum* by Benedict XIV from 1744, which restricted accommodative practices of the Catholic mission to a large extent.

However, more than 40 years earlier, De Tours’ stay in the Vatican was less successful than expected. Instead of gaining success in his order’s attempts to convince the Vatican to take a tough stand in the issue of accommodation in India, he had to return almost empty-handed. Furthermore, the *Congregatio* decided to expel the Jesuits from Surat, but this decision could not count as a solution of the serious theological issue that De Tours was fighting against (Zwilling 2010: 21). Receiving the order to leave India and go to Tibet must have been a tough test of De Tours’ obedience. As a member of the first group of Catholic missionaries appointed by the Holy Sea for Tibet, he crossed the Himalaya and reached Lhasa in 1704, where he soon started to compose a grammar and dictionary of Tibetan, but passed away after his return from Tibet in Patna in May 1709 (Mukherjee 2015: 140ff.; Kaschewsky 2020).

The adventurous Capuchin, who devoted his life to the Catholic mission in the East, and religious missionaries of his time in general, can also be interpreted as professional brokers of intercultural exchange and cultural diversity, evoking debates on multiculturalism and encounters of cultures. His stay in the region was only interrupted by a return to Rome in 1703 as acting procurator of the French Capuchin missionaries in South Asia, and his grammar and dictionary were obviously finished for the occasion to be submitted personally to the papal chair. Several notes for the printer in the manuscript (already mentioned above) demonstrate that it was meant to be handed over to the printing press for publication. Why his grammar and dictionary were not printed, but disappeared in

the archives of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* is not clear, but it might be related on the rivalries between the different orders engaged in India. Further research on the life and activities of François-Marie might reveal, among others, more details on the reasons why De Tours' linguistic works were not printed.

### **Hindi/Hindustani's Identity**

The Uppsala project makes this unique dictionary available in digitalised form and initiates research in the semantics, orthography, phonetics and grammatical aspects of the Hindustani that its author is trying to describe. François-Marie de Tours' dictionary "has the scope of a substantial reference work", as McGregor rightly concludes (McGregor 2001: 11). The digital edition will be a basis for a conclusive webonary of Hindi in the planned Early Modern phase of Indian history, i.e. before the Battle of Plassey (1757) and the growth of the British East India Company Raj.

The online dictionary will be a first step towards a conclusive dictionary of 17th and 18th century Hindi thesaurus. Since the webonary is open to extension to further authors and dictionaries, it can develop a much broader approach towards an early form of Hindi in dictionaries produced for speakers of European languages, as well as Persian and Indian languages.

Hindi – or to be precise Modern Standard Hindi/Khaṛī Bolī – claims a literary tradition that goes back at least to the 12th century, but much of its earlier tradition is connected with languages that are grammatically and lexicographically quite distinct from Modern Standard Hindi. The language represented by the grammar and dictionary of François-Marie de Tours is, however, quite close to this modern language. In other words, the hitherto unnoticed dictionary is of great importance for the early history of Khaṛī Bolī as "a transregional idiom", as McGregor calls it without referring to our lexicographer (McGregor 2003).

Beyond that, it is extremely interesting how François-Marie de Tours places the language he describes, i.e. Hindustani, in the setup of languages in the Mughal Empire at a time of its largest expansion. Firstly, he sees Hindi/Hindustani as the *lingua mogolana*, the Mughal Empire's own language. Secondly, he claims that this language is the *lingua franca* (*lingua vulgaris*) not only all over the Empire, but also along the coasts south to the Empire. He clearly divides between provincial languages and Hindustani, which appears to be parallel to the contemporary binary between regional languages and the official language of the Indian Union according to the constitution of India. Beyond that, there is Sanskrit as

the language of academic discourse, perhaps in analogy to the function of Latin in European science of his days.

It is somehow surprising that Persian is not at all mentioned in De Tours' cursory overview on the linguistic setup of the Mughal Empire, even though a substantial number of Arabic/Persian glosses are to be found in the dictionary manuscript, at least partly going back to the original composition. Persian must have been present in some way or the other in Surat, for example as language of the higher judiciary. De Tours must have been aware that Persian was the common language at the Mughal court, and that the Jesuits were active in Persian learning and translating in relation to their mission at the Mughal court. The reasons for this visible omission are not explained in the manuscript. The concurrency between Jesuits and Capuchins may be responsible for this bias. Further research may throw more light on this issue.

The Hindi-Urdu or Hindi-Hindustani binary question does not arise in De Tours' introduction, and neither in his grammar itself nor in the dictionary. The later controversy on language identity was not important for de Tours. He does not explain, why he uses *Moī* as script, or whether *Nastaliq* can be used as an alternative or not. Of course, the name "Urdu" or any other earlier statement on "the language of the camp" or anything of this kind is absent. The century of a blossoming early Urdu poetry had just begun with Wali Aurangabadi's *Kuliyāt* gaining popularity in Delhi. What is particularly interesting is that De Tours does not go into the language of the intellectual elite in the Mughal Empire, i.e. Persian. Unlike Ketelaar, who described Hindustani as well as Persian, De Tours is interested in Hindustani only.

British colonialism had a tremendous impact on the perception of the linguistic setup and on language identity in India (Brass 1974; King 1994; King 2008). The definition of separate identities of Hindi, Urdu, and Hindustani in Calcutta's Fort William College (Steadman-Jones 2007), the establishment of English-medium schools and colleges since the 1820s, the changing relationship between English and the so-called vernaculars marked by Lord Macaulay's notorious "Minute on Education" of 1835, the change from Persian to Urdu as language of administration in the East India Company's North Indian territories in 1837, and the ascent of Hindi in opposition to Urdu and Hindustani had disturbing consequences. On one hand, English became the heir of Persian as a prestige language, quickly adopted particularly by parts of the Hindu elite. On the other hand, the anti-colonial movement opened new spaces for the predecessor of Modern Standard Hindi – *Khaī Bolī*. The definition of a re-

gional language as official language is probably a natural consequence of the self-definition of the modern Indian state with its effort to create a homogenous population. The printing press, the enormous growth in education, the development of a reading middle class, and the blossoming of film, radio and contemporary forms of social communication also contribute to the spread of a homogenised language, to whose thesaurus of wisdom many more speakers, readers and writers contribute than ever before in history. The spread of Modern Standard Hindi in its various forms, orally and printed, in current India is immense.

### Universal Language

De Tours' occupation with his Hindustani is a strong statement on the significance of Modern Standard Hindi long before the days of Fort William College's *Bhākhā munśīs*, before Bhāratendu Hariścandra (1850–1885), Mahāvīrprasād Dvivedī (1864–1938), Rāmcandra Śukla (1884–1940), Kāmtāprasād Guru (1875–1947) and others, who constructed Modern Standard Hindi and its literature as part of the project of the Indian nation and shaped its identity in opposition to Urdu and Hindustani.

The title page of the grammar describes the language as "the language of the Mughals", later on in François-Marie de Tours' introduction the language is explained as being spoken in the whole Mughal Empire. One has to keep in mind that the Mughal Empire reached an enormous size under the late Mughal Aurangzeb (1618–1707, reigned 1658–1707), who expanded its borders to the vastest size in its history – from Afghanistan to the modern Indian North East, and from Kashmir to the present Northern Tamil Nadu. Beyond that, De Tours argues that it was spoken "along the neighbouring coasts" (*viciniis marisque littoribus*), i.e. beyond the Mughal Empire in the last years of the reign of Aurangzeb. De Tours travelled a lot in India, including South India – the Capuchins had a house in Pondicherry. Hence, therefore is good reason that he argues from first-hand experience "along the neighbouring coasts".

He makes a point in the introduction in stating that there were three languages, or three types of languages in India: first, the language of knowledge (*lingua scientifica*), the common language (*lingua vulgaris seu universalis*) and the regional languages of the people (*gentilitia*). This refers to Sanskrit, Hindustani – also simply called *lingua Indiana* or *lingua mogolana* (i.e. not Persian!) by De Tours – and provincial languages. I am not aware of any other similar statement in the Early Modern period that gives Hindustani such an importance as this.



This characterisation of Hindi/Hindustani – and clearly De Tours does not differentiate between the two – as a universal language on the Indian subcontinent could serve as perfect fodder for the modern nationalist effort to establish Hindi as the link language of the Indian Union. This brings us back to the beginning of this article. The historical support for modern claims on the function of Hindi through De Tours is yet in a state of neglect. It falls in line with John Gilchrist argument in his Hindustani grammar of 1796 (Bhatia 1987: 79ff.) that the language he describes could serve as a medium of administration in the East India Company's territories better than the traditional Persian.<sup>9</sup> However, the Hindustani of Gilchrist and the Fort William College was not exactly the same as Mahatma Gandhi's or postcolonial India's. Gilchrist's Hindustani was written in Nastaliq script. Arabic script was in any case the dominating script in the Northern part of the subcontinent during that time.

The question of script as an identity marker of language was not important in the early phase of grammars and dictionaries of Hindi/Hindustani from Ketelaar (who used Latin script only) until the time of Gilchrist. De Tours does not explain the choice of script of his "universal language". Arabic script had been another option. Even George Hadley in his Hindustani grammar of 1772 – almost 70 years later – attaches no importance to the writing system yet. He does not even mention it, nor does he hint to any bias or controversy relating to the question of script (Bhatia 1987: 72ff.). James Ferguson's grammar, published one year later (1773), uses transliteration in Latin script for the language he describes, but introduces Devanagari as an adequate script that helps the learner to understand the language's phonology better. Beyond that, he follows a typical colonial discourse argument by arguing that the use of Perso-Arabic script was a sign of slavery (Bhatia 1987: 78).

Today's discourse on Hindi fills many superimposed purposes. On one side, there is Hindi/Hindustani as the *lingua franca* in many parts of India with a certain degree of intelligibility with its twin language Urdu, which played an important role in its development into Modern Standard Hindi, replacing Braj as the most important transregional variant of Hindi in the 19th century (King 1994; King 2008; McGregor 2003). On the other side, there are the controversial claims on Hindi as official language of the Indian Union according to paragraph 341 of the Indian constitution, and on the necessity to develop Hindi primarily on the basis of San-

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<sup>9</sup> Steadman-Jones (2007: 261) points to Gilchrist's personal ambition, which made him into an advocate of Hindustani.

skrit according to paragraph 351 of the constitution. Hindi's connection with the Devanagari script is now undisputable. A change to Latin script, as suggested once by India's perhaps most prominent linguist in history, Suniti Kumar Chatterji, similarly to Turkish or Indonesian, is unthinkable (Chatterji 1960: 137–139).

Beyond that, there is the Indian government's continued effort to establish it as an official language in the United Nations and the pleasant labelling of Hindi as "world language", accompanying India's development as an economic, military and political superpower. Chatterji's claim on Hindi as "the representative speech of modern India" (Chatterji 1960: 133–154) is much less ambitious and finds support in De Tours' statements on his *lingua universalis* in the Mughal Empire and beyond. Hindi's history is not teleological, but much of the claims on it are already visible in De Tours Hindustani. The lexical awareness that developed around 1700 at a cosmopolitan space like Surat was, in other words, the fertile ground of what was to come. The nationalisation of Modern Standard Hindi and the claims on its internationalisation grew from the language De Tours describes as Hindustani: a language mirroring its multicultural context in its glossary, and with an inbuilt lexical awareness to combine elements of Perso-Arabic and Sanskrit within the New Indo-Aryan stock.

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