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# In praise of death : history and poetry in medieval Marwar (South Asia)

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# In Praise of Death

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# *In Praise of Death*

*History and Poetry in Medieval Marwar (South Asia)*

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*Hero stones at the temple of the warrior-god Pabuji Dhamdhal Rathaur in Kolu (Rajasthan).*

# 1 Death and Deification

Rajasthani heroic and epic poetry records legends and semi-historical tales regarding the socio-religious status of the Bhil, Charan and Rajput communities of the Thar Desert in north-west India bordering present-day Pakistan. This warlike poetry documents how, even after the gradual establishment of Rajput (warrior) dominion in the area, non-Rajput groups continued to articulate claims to autonomy. The poets of cattle rearing communities and tribal peoples like the Bhil, Charan and Rajput forwarded these claims through heroic and epic poetry, giving voice to distinctive interpretations of what it means to be a warrior, some times in accord with but at times also in contradiction to dominant martial ethos. An important aspect of these medieval identity politics was the deification of warriors, a literary-historical and religious process which is the subject of the present study. Of particular interest for my research are the legendary and semi-historical tales that document the divinization of the Rajasthani warrior-hero Pabuji Dhamdhal Rathaur.

From approximately the fourteenth century onwards, the period when Pabuji is believed to have distinguished himself by his valour, his worship as a god and deified forefather by devotees of all kinds of caste backgrounds has inspired the on-going recollection of Pabuji's martial deeds and battle death. The hero's glorification and deification through oral and written Rajasthani heroic and epic (henceforth: heroic-epic) poetry continues to inspire a range of different poetic histories that contain historical fictions and divergent facts which enable us to imagine what the "lived past" of the inhabitants of the Thar Desert may have looked like.

Pabuji is first and foremost remembered as an exemplary warrior of the Dhamdhal Rathaur lineages of the Rajput (warrior) rulers of Marwar, an erstwhile desert kingdom in north-western India. His tale is part of a more than eight centuries old tradition of poems and semi-historical prose stories clustered around the medieval warriors and rulers of this former desert kingdom. The poets of the Pabuji tradition,[1] like the poets of heroic-epic poetry worldwide, accorded superlative praise to their protagonist. From their compositions, we come to know Pabuji as a an exceptionally valiant wielder of spear and sword, an outstanding brave who was at all times ready to give battle and protect cattle; a most noble man who always kept his word; a protector of his clan, family and retainers who gave his life to safeguard their honour and material interests. In addition, Pabuji is also remembered as a

[1] Considering the many different genres, performance styles, poets and singers which have been, and still are, part of the Pabuji tradition, it would be best to speak of "Pabuji traditions". For the sake of brevity, I refer to the studied contemporary and medieval genres, performance styles, poets and singers as part of one all-encompassing "Pabuji tradition".

deified forefather (*jūṃjhār*), *devā* (god) or *devatā* and *lok-devatā* (folk-god).[2] Till today, many different social groups continue to revere the Rathaur hero-god. Pabuji's Charan and Rajput devotees do this by transmitting written and oral traditions of heroic-epic poetry, prose tales and devotional songs. The hero's Bhil devotees and priestly-performers pay homage to Pabuji and his Bhil archers through the religious performance of drum and story-cloth epics. In the contemporary versions of his tale, Pabuji is identified as an incarnation of Lakhsman, the brother of Ram, the exemplary warrior and god of the *Rāmāyaṇ* epic.

*Approximate location of Kolu, north-west of Jodhpur.*

## *Pabuji's story*

Today, Pabuji's story is narrated throughout Rajasthan, Gujarat, parts of southern Punjab and Sindh. The heartland of the contemporary story-telling tradition is Kolu, a sprawling village in the Thar Desert north-west of Jodhpur (Marwar) where

[2] An account of academic transliteration standards and an overview of the orthography of Rajasthani and Hindi words can be found in chapter 2 under the headings *Academic transliteration* and *Historical orthography*.

Rajasthan's main Pabuji temple stands. Here, Pabuji's Bhil devotees orally transmit his adventures through the performance of the *mātā* (drum) epic commissioned by the Dhamdhal Rathaur villagers and temple-priests of Kolu. The focal point of most contemporary and medieval poetry and prose tales about Pabuji is his promise to protect cattle. This promise, his devotees believe, was made by Pabuji to Charani Deval, a female cattle herder and horse trader of the Charan caste. When Pabuji obtained the much-coveted black mare Kalvi (or Kesar Kalmi) from Deval, he made a promise to protect her cattle against robbers. It is this promise which (in most versions of Pabuji's tale) eventually gave rise to the battles between Pabuji and his brother-in-law and enemy, Jimda Khici (or Khimci). Because of the mare, or more precisely, Pabuji's refusal to give her in dowry to Jimda, the negotiations for Jimda's marriage to Pabuji's sister Pema broke down. Upon Pabuji's denial, Jimda decided to rob Deval's cows to revenge himself. Since Pabuji promised Deval to protect her cattle, he was asked to come to her rescue and attack Jimda. In due course, Jimda killed Pabuji though (as we shall see) not in all versions of the selected poems. The way in which Pabuji, Jimda and their respective armies battled is an important subject of the Pabuji tradition, especially of medieval manuscript versions of poetry dedicated to Pabuji.

The above summary of the focal point of medieval and contemporary renderings of Pabuji's story represents themes which are directly or indirectly part of most narrative poetry dedicated to him. In some of the poems collected by me, Pabuji's battle death earns him a place in heaven given that he gained spiritual merit by laying down his life in battle and thus fulfilling his Rajput *dharma* or religious duty. In other medieval poems, the hero has also been accorded supernatural powers and divinity. Apart from these additional themes, the Pabuji tradition knows many other plots and episodes, variant story-lines, rich collections of poetic metaphors and narrative details which expand on his exploits as a robber of camels, tamer of wild horses or bridegroom at war. The medieval and contemporary tradition also includes tales about Pabuji's family: his father Dhamdhal Rathaur, half-brother Buro, half-sister Pema, and his bride from the Sodhi Rajput lineage of Umarkot. In addition, contemporary tales link the major protagonists of the Pabuji tradition to classical hero-gods from the *Rāmāyaṇ* and goddesses from different story-telling traditions. In some versions of contemporary performances of Pabuji's epic, Deval is now portrayed as an incarnation of Shakti, and Pabuji's foe Khici has become the demon-hero Ravana incarnate. Ravana's sister Surapamkha has come to embody Pabuji's Sodhi bride. His Bhil and Rebari companions Camda, Harmal, Salji and Dhembo are believed to be the personification of, respectively, the goddesses Caumunda, Bhaisand, Visot and/or the god Hanuman and his army of monkey warriors (cf. Smith 1991: 271-72 and Hiltebeitel 2001: 91-92). The literary-historical investigation of the different story-lines, poetic images and idioms, narrative plots, poetic forms and functions of the Pabuji tradition is at the heart of the following study.

*Pabuji's Kolu temple*.

## *Approach*

My approach to the Pabuji tradition is principally inspired by, and meant as a contribution to, debates about contemporary historical, literary-historical and anthropological insights into the development stages that medieval and contemporary Rajasthani heroic-epic genres may have gone through.[3] This study refers to current discussions about the "origins" of Pabuji's story and how its symbolic content should be read. Important questions raised by these discussions concern the way in which epic heroes have been deified in South Asian traditions, and issues regarding the ascription of divinity and its relation to the historical and literary development of heroic-epic genres. I will ask whether Pabuji's deification should indeed be looked at as the outcome of a literary-historical developmental process which can be documented through the different degrees of narrative importance that the poets attached to battle-death and the martial and/or religious role ascribed to warrior-heroes.

To illustrate common developmental approaches to the Pabuji tradition, I will here consider the present-day discussion about the literary-historical stages that regional heroic and epic poetry may go through and give an overview of the main arguments involved and their implications for an understanding of the narrative development of Pabuji's story and the process of deification as documented in poetic sources.[4] The main question asked is how the Pabuji tradition may have spread from the local level of storytelling to regional performance traditions like the staging of

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[3] In particular discussions initiated by (*passim*) N.S. Bhati (1989), Blackburn (1989b, 1989a, 1986), Hiltebeitel (2002, 2001, 1989), Kothari (1989), Smith (1999, 1991, 1989a, 1980) and Srivastava (1997, 1994).

[4] The terms "regional epic" and "vernacular epic" are used interchangeably to refer to regional, martial and/or ritual, oral or written epics in one of the vernacular languages of South Asia.

Pabuji's epic at the Kolu temple. Stuart H. Blackburn (1989: 32) describes this historical development as the outcome of a process of deification "from the bottom up", when the story of the death of a local hero and his subsequent deification extends beyond the village level to broader, regional audiences and, as a result, goes through a process of narrative expansion. The outcome of this narrative process is described as Pabuji's definitive recognition as an incarnation of Lakshman (Smith 1989a: 182). However, Hiltebeitel (2001: 35) sees no explanatory power in Blackburn's "deification-by-death" thesis. He is of the opinion that the development of Pabuji's story and his deification should be understood in terms of the narrative "re-emplotment" (giving a new plot to an existing story) of classical and folk versions of the *Rāmāyaṇ* (Hiltebeitel 2001: 43-47, 88-120). Along these lines, contemporary *avatār*-linkage in epic traditions can be regarded as the result of the creation of additional or complementary plots to the story-lines of the *Rāmāyaṇ* and *Mahābhārat*.

### *Deification-by-death*

In what follows, the above debate shall be discussed further, beginning with Blackburn's theory of narrative building that aims to account for South Asian patterns of storytelling in geographical, socio-political, narrative and functional terms. Blackburn (1989, 1986) tentatively establishes a connection between "pre-epic", decidedly local narratives, and regional, "truly" epic genres. He traces the narrative development of regional epics (defined as single-story traditions consisting of long epic poems at times interspersed with prose, covering wide geographical areas and audiences) from pre-epic "multi-story traditions". The latter traditions consist of stories, songs and poems with a limited geographical and social range, which are restricted in length as well as thematic interests. To explain how local multi-story traditions develop into supra-regional single-story traditions of epic proportions, like the present-day oral epics dedicated to Pabuji, Blackburn (1989: 1-32) connects narrative changes to a story's geographical and social reach. He postulates a direct relation between the expansion of traditions of story telling to sub-regional, regional and supra-regional audiences, on the one hand, and changes in the narrative structure as well as in the socio-political or ritual purpose of a genre, on the other. Variant versions of a story are accordingly explained in terms of a "narrative building process" that advances by means of cumulative sequences of motifs. In other words, a story accumulates themes, imagery and episodes by crossing local and regional boundaries as poets and performers refurbish their narratives in order to hold the attention of new, regional audiences consisting of people from different social groups who are not necessarily interested in the purely local history of kinship ties or deified forefathers.

A story can travel along two narrative routes. At the heart of what Blackburn (1989: 21) terms narrative pattern 1 lies the "twin-theme" of death and deification.

This pattern is particularly pronounced in stories of the "violation-death-deification-revenge" type that originate as tales about the violation of proprietary rights and related themes like revenge, honour, war, and violent (battle) death. At the local level, it is the story's death motif that is generally thought to lead to a hero's deification. In time, when the transmission of a hero's story starts to spread from local to sub-regional and regional planes, the poets appeal to new audiences by adding supernatural birth stories to their protagonists' tale. At this stage of narrative development, the hero is ascribed (semi) divine origins to mask his distinctly local and human history, usually through the addition of stories about his miraculous birth. This process is believed, in due course, to give rise to the birth of new gods, cults and ritual contexts; a narrative means of "giving birth" to gods that may ultimately lead to the connection between deified local heroes and "pan-Indian" gods or the deified heroes of classical epics. The "mythification" of local history to appeal to a wider audience is fully accomplished when a hero comes to be seen as an *avatār* (reincarnation) of Vishnu, Shiva and Devi, or (like in Pabuji's case) as an incarnation of Lakshman.

Narrative development according to pattern 2 as proposed by Blackburn (1989: 27-32) concerns hero tales that do not have a death-motif and as a result do not speak of the deification of their protagonist. A story that develops according to this pattern may, nonetheless, proliferate from the local to the supra-regional level as well, but it does not attain a cultic or ritual context like it does in pattern 1 because its hero is not deified. Heroic-epic narratives that accord with pattern 2 most commonly develop into romantic epics, whereupon local warriors become romantic heroes. It seems that such stories mainly serve the purpose of entertainment, as opposed to ritual objectives. As one would expect, and Blackburn (1989: 27) also spells out, exceptions to both patterns do abound. An essentially martial hero's story may, for example, include tales of the hero's supernatural birth or his identification with pan-Indian gods or heroes. Blackburn explains this by the fact that the latter motifs are crucial for the spread of a tale to a larger area. In addition, *avatār*-linkage in pattern 1 does not always lead to the expansion of a hero's tale beyond a few villages.[5]

Blackburn describes the current, expanded epic of Pabuji as a highly developed form of narrative pattern 1.[6] Though the medieval Pabuji tradition is not part of his analysis, Blackburn nevertheless proposes that the "historical nucleus" of the contemporary *paṛ* epic of Pabuji should be traced to a local *bhomio* or *jūṃjhār*

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[5] Like, for example, in the tale of the hero Muttu Kutti, who is held to be an incarnation of Vishnu and Karl Marx, but whose story has not spread beyond the village-level (Blackburn 1989: 27, n.21)

[6] Blackburn (1989: 25): "(A)ll three motifs of Pattern I are found in the epics of Pabuji and Devnarayan, which represent highly developed forms of that pattern (…) The Pabuji tradition clearly demonstrates the historical development from local to regional tradition. Underneath the accretions of supernatural birth and identification with Lakshmana lies evidence of growth from a local tradition called *bhomiya*". Blackburn's concluding remark (*ibid.*) is more provisional: "Although further evidence is needed for a conclusive statement, the modern epic of Pabuji is quite possibly an extension of a local *bhomiya* cult".

cult.[7] In Marwar, the Jumjhar (*jūṃjhār*) is generally defined as a village hero who died in the defence of cattle against raids, and who afterwards comes to be revered as a deified forefather or local god. Devotees feel that it is essential to appease the roving spirit of a dead warrior to help him retrieve the peace that his unnatural death prevents him from finding. Through worship people hope to stop the wandering soul from developing into a malevolent ghost intent on haunting the living. Thus the beginning of divine or godlike status is conferred to ancestral heroes. Following Kothari (1989: 102) and Smith (1991: 90-91), Blackburn suggests a supernatural birth story was added to the tale of the Bhomio Pabuji as it spread to a wider geographical and social base and that it is this process of narrative expansion that eventually led to Pabuji's identification with Lakhsman.

*Avatār*-linkage connecting the heroes of vernacular epics like Pabuji with the heroes of the *Rāmāyaṇ* and *Mahābhārat* has given rise to a debate about the cultural primacy of the Sanskrit epics with reference to regional story-telling traditions. In this context, Blackburn (1989: 8) explains Pabuji's identification with Lakshman in the contemporary tradition as the result of the upwardly mobile aspirations of the hero-god's devotees. By linking their heritage to the canonical tradition of Sanskrit epic, middle- and low caste devotees are thought to aim at validating their own stories and in the process improve their socio-political standing. According to Blackburn (1989:25, 32), perhaps as part of his explicit effort to counter "devolutionary" assumptions that represent regional epics as nothing more than fragments of classical traditions, the former narrative development remains a mostly superficial connection. Devolutionary notions are obviously not helpful in describing the narrative development of heroic-epic and devotional genres, but it does seem to me that Blackburn (1989: 25) subsequently relates the dependence of the oral Pabuji tradition on the classical tradition in a comparable manner by describing the contemporary *paṛ*-epic as "a sequel" to the *Rāmāyaṇ*. The implications of the pre-eminence attributed to classical epic will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. First, let me discuss Hiltebeitel's literary study of vernacular "re-emplotments" of Sanskrit sources and consider its implications for an appraisal of the narrative poetry dedicated to Pabuji.

## *Classical signifiers*

Hiltebeitel's wide-ranging study of South-Asian traditions of martial epic in part opposes the developmental view of Pabuji's contemporary epic tradition as projected by Blackburn for, according to Hiltebeitel (2001: 19), this approach "disesteems" the connections between classical and regional epics. Hiltebeitel

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[7] *Bhomiyā*, *bhomio* or *kṣetrapāl* (guardians of village-boundaries) and *jūṃjhār* ("struggler") denote local variations. From my fieldwork, it appears that *jūṃjhār* refers to deified dead in Jaisalmer, while *bhomio a*nd *jūṃjhār* are used interchangeably in Jodhpur and bordering areas. I refer to Pabuji as a "*jūṃjhār*" because this is the term used for him in medieval texts. See also Srivastava (1997: 73, 1994: 612).

(2001: 96) holds that Pabuji's divinization did not progress from slain hero to Bhomio (Jumjhar) and folk-god and thus resulted in his contemporary identification as Lakshman's *avatār*. According to him, the Bhomio was at no point commensurate with Pabuji. In Hiltebeitel's view, the hero could equally well represent "a residual Vratya", a Vedic cattle-rustler.[8]

Hiltebeitel (2001: 43-45) explains contemporary *avatār*-linkage in terms of "re-emplotments" or "disemplotments" and "dislocations" of classical epic signifiers. He distinguishes between the narrative content of regional martial oral epics, on the one hand, and classical epics or their "folk versions", on the other, to define classical signifiers as narrative frames, images, wordings, themes and plots of the *Rāmāyaṇ* and *Mahābhārat*. From this angle, medieval and contemporary folk re-tellings of classical epics are based on classical narrative material, together forming "regional pools of classical epic signifiers". The narrative features of Sanskrit epics and of other classical sources are presented as primary process material or images which, according to Hiltebeitel (2001: 45), have been there "*von Anfang an*" and should be thought of as the indestructible and immortal constituents of South-Asian heroic-epic traditions.

In terms of narrative development, this means that the *Rāmāyaṇ* and *Mahābhārat* are not only primary in a chronological sense but should be accorded a cultural and creative precedence as well.[9] The latter kind of primacy is understood in terms of the re-emplotment (as opposed to a straightforward re-telling) of classical narratives. Hiltebeitel (2001: 46) argues that Sanskrit epics should be seen as "totalizing texts" that add force to the same narrative realities over and again. Regional epics, on the other hand, re-examine the soundness of the "classical realities" reflected by the Sanskrit epics. Also, regional story-telling traditions are consequently thought of as re-emplotments of the "original", classical versions of the *Rāmāyaṇ* and *Mahābhārat* or of their folk version, that is, versions of the classical epic told in vernacular traditions. By giving a new plot to classical story-lines, regional poets apparently aim to wrap up the unfinished business of classical epic and in the process render classical narrative material interesting for contemporary audiences. Thus Lakshman's incarnation as Pabuji may be seen as a narrative twist to a tale in the *Rāmāyaṇ*; for in some contemporary interpretation of the story, Lakshman incarnates as Pabuji to fulfill the wedding promise he made to Ravana's sister Surapamkha in some versions of the Sanskrit epic. In contemporary versions of Pabuji's tale, Surapamkha is thought to be embodied by the hero's Sodhi bride (Hiltebeitel 2001: 92 quoting Smith 1991: 93).

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[8] Hiltebeitel postulates that the Vratya collapses the distinction between Kshatriya and Brahmin and is a precursor of Rajput warrior-ascetics as described by Dirk Kolff (1990: *passim*) quoted in Hiltebeitel (2001: 92, n.15). See also Smith (1980: 53-55, 76, n.10).

[9] I take Hiltebeitel's (2001: 44-45) primary process or "poetic and cultural work" that frames stories and produces regional martial oral epic to refer to the creative, imaginative process of composition.

Hiltebeitel further underlines the creative primacy of classical signifiers by illustrating how these pervade the imaginary universe of contemporary epic traditions like Pabuji's *paṛ*-epic, an approach that results in a view of the latter tradition's use of the *Rāmāyaṇ* frame story as an artful "bardic handling of primary process folklore" (Hiltebeitel 2001: 92). Of immediate interest for the present discussion of the medieval Pabuji tradition is Hiltebeitel's (2001: 29-37) outspoken dismissal of Blackburn's "deification-by-death" theory. According to Hiltebeitel, deification does not (as Blackburn proposes) cover the relation between divine and human beings, ranging from local worship of a deceased hero to divine birth-stories, and linkage with pan-Indian gods. By using the term "deification" in this manner, writes Hiltebeitel (2001:22), gods are presented as "mere" deified mortals and their deeds as "nothing more" than an elaboration upon or glorification of human acts.[10] As an alternative, Hiltebeitel proposes that we think of the death of a hero as a primarily narrative theme that captures an audience's attention because of the "fatality, cyclicity, and divinity" accorded to death, and the way in which an audience is able to relate a hero's death to "so many memorable characters", i.e. the protagonists of classical traditions.

Local death-stories are too fragmented to spread to a wider regional level, writes Hiltebeitel (2001: 22), since these tales are linked with heroes of lineage cults that are confined to small territories and to exclusive and disparate family groups within caste communities which claim a hero as their ancestor. Different castes tell different stories about the heroes from their own ranks, and such local stories cannot take on the character of a regional epic because they do not appeal to the narrative preferences of regional caste groups. Thus the development of a hero's story from local multi-story traditions into a single-story narrative corpus should not be explained in terms of a hero's death and deification. Rather, it should be explained by studying the socio-political composition of a story's audience. What does happen (Hiltebeitel 2001: 30) is that stories centred on the martial heroes and traditions of dominant landed castes are transmitted from one region to another without the story changing appreciably as long as the caste identity of the hero remains the same. In this view, the narrative process at work in regional epics should not be described in terms of a "vertical movement" or the portrayal of deification as an "upward" movement that begins with the worship of an earthly hero and ends in heaven with

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[10] Instead, Hiltebeitel (2001: 22) proposes to distinguish between "primary, secondary and tertiary features of extended deification". The force of Hiltebeitel's argument rests on the fact that Blackburn employs a "western" (i.e. Euhemerist) notion of god to formulate his theory of deification (Hiltebeitel 2001: 23). A problematic line of reasoning since the above-quoted phrasing about what gods are *not* appears to imply that gods or God are "in reality" more than deified mortals. This argument amounts to a theological argument and as such does not add to a better understanding of the literary-historical argument at hand. No definition is forwarded to clarify how western ways of thinking about deification differ from non-western views. The few studies of early-Christian traditions of deification known to me highlight the literary-historical similarities and not the differences between South-Asian, biblical and other narrative traditions centring on deification (see, for instance, Beissinger 2002: 236-258 and Norman 1975: 15-19).

the hero's deification. By presenting the narrative process of deification in terms of a horizontal vector, Hiltebeitel (2001: 34-35) proposes a lateral (as opposed to direct) connection between epic protagonists and deities: on a narrative plane, deities are considered to move horizontally into flanking stories rather than descending "vertically" into a hero's death story.

The above argument can perhaps best be summed up by understanding Hiltebeitel's view of deification as a narrative technique to connect heaven and earth through *avatār*-linkage when God, so to speak, descends into a text and becomes human when he is reborn as a story's protagonist. Blackburn, on the other hand, makes a case for an opposite movement, one that can be traced from earth to heaven or from human to godly spheres through the deification of human beings. As I hope to show in a later stage of this study, these narrative movements are not as contradictory as they may seem.

To finish this introduction to theories about the developmental stages that poetry dedicated to Pabuji may have gone through, let me remark that both Blackburn and Hiltebeitel hold that an epic tradition may develop from a geographically circumscribed "multi-story" tradition into a single-story epic tradition with a much larger supra-regional range, albeit following different routes. As the above tentative formulations of narrative development stages suggest, it is difficult to imagine how the transition from supposedly pre-epic poetry to today's vernacular epics may have come about.[11] I feel that this difficulty arises first and foremost from the fact that above discussion is based upon a comparison between Smith's 1991 version of Pabuji *paṛ*-epic performances, on the one hand, and classical as well as vernacular versions of classical *Rāmāyaṇ* traditions, on the other. The missing link in the above discussion is of course the tradition of medieval poetry dedicated to Pabuji. To better see how the medieval and contemporary tradition can be related from a literary-historical point of view, it is moreover important to know not just one but many of the different genres contained in the medieval Pabuji tradition. This becomes apparent when we consider the fact that the inclusion in the on-going debate of one version of a medieval poem dedicated to Pabuji (the seventeenth-century *Pābūjī rī vāta*) does not help in accounting for the literary history of the contemporary *paṛ*-epic of Pabuji. On the contrary, its inclusion raises more questions than it can provide adequate answers for.[12] For example, does the *vāt*, a semi-historical prose-text, stand for an intermediary stage between local Bhomio or Jumjhar narratives and today's *paṛ*-epic (Blackburn 1989: 25)? Or is it a mythic story, as Hiltebeitel (2001: 13-14) argues, and is it "virtually certain" that its subject matter is based on an epical primary source?

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[11] Blackburn (1989: 1-37) defines "pre-epic" genres as a literature of songs of praise, satire, death laments and war songs. See also Hiltebeitel (2001: 25).

[12] *Pābūjī rī vāta* translated by Smith (1991: 481-96). See also Tessitori (1916: 110-114).

*Embedded history*

Smith (1991: 82) has argued that we will never know what precisely led to Pabuji's deification: "It is tempting to wish that more sources were available on Pābūjī and his contemporaries, but even if they were it is not likely that they would prove to be of any great assistance: like the sources we have used, they would consist of an indistinguishable mixture of facts and fictions. Traditional history is not concerned with facts as such; it is concerned not with the *right* story but with the *best* story". From the point of view of literary history, one may ask whether it is at all possible to write a "right" history based solely on facts uncoloured by the interpretations of traditional or modern historians. It seems to me that the production of historically "right stories" is most often based on the conscious or unconscious piecing together of "best stories". The following literary-historical examination of medieval poetry sources that are part of the Pabuji tradition is intended to throw some light on the way in which Pabuji's devotees, priests and poets constructed several to their mind "right" and "best" versions of his history. This I aim to do with a study of the historical background against which the Pabuji tradition took shape, with special reference to the history of socio-religious and martial identities of medieval Marwari Rajput, Bhil and Charan communities. By studying the regional martial traditions of the aforementioned communities as part of the medieval martial or military labour market of Marwar, I try to see whether the poetic concerns reflected by the poets of the Pabuji tradition represent themes typical of medieval history, in particular the history of the archetypal early-medieval Rajput warrior, the geographically and socially mobile young man who travelled Hindustan and, as I hope to show, the north-western desert regions, in search of livelihood and employment (cf. Kolff 1990: *passim*). This part of my study also draws upon Harald Tambs-Lyche's (1996, 1997, 2004a-d) analysis of Rajput-Charan relations in Kathiawar (Gujarat).

In addition, my approach to the selected manuscript and contemporary poetry sources has also been inspired by literary-historical, anthropological and literary approaches to heroic-epic genres. No up to date linguistic studies exist of the style and language of medieval poetry composed in Dimgal, the specialized poetic idiom used by the poets of the Pabuji tradition. I have therefore come to depend heavily on Luigi Pio Tessitori's *Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana* (1915-21) and grammatical notes in the *Indian Antiquary* (1914-16). Though outmoded, these works remain the most meticulous study in English of Dimgal till today. For my description of the history of the different Dimgal genres part of the Pabuji tradition, I have found particularly helpful the approaches of literary historians like Narayan Singh Bhati (1973, 1989a, 1989b, 1991), Linda Hutcheon (2002), Mario Valdes (2002) and Sheldon Pollock (2003). My assessment of the performance context of oral and written heroic-epic poetry and oral and written transmission techniques is mainly inspired by the work of the anthropologist Ruth Finnegan (1977, 1988, and 1992), Hirsch and Stewart (2005) and historians among anthropologists like Shyal Mayaram (2004) and Jan Vansina (1965, 1971, 1997).

Following Vansina (1997: 196), I have come to think of the oral and written poetry dedicated to Pabuji as "historiologies" in their own right, i.e. as the outcome of on-going reflections of people about their "lived past" that become part of collective representations of what communities hold to be factually or potentially true. This process of remembering *and* forgetting serves to establish which past experiences or events retain relevance for the present. In addition, my analysis of the function of poems dedicated to Pabuji is informed by Finnegan's (1992: 137) approach to oral narratives that brings to the fore how their content is commonly shaped by their performance context, audience-performer interaction and the weight attributed to different historical and contemporary worldviews.[13] Finnegan makes clear how, in contemporary settings, the form, content, meaning and function of heroic-epic texts can best be studied as emergent, variable categories that come into being during a performance. In other words, the meaning attributed to oral narrative is "realized" in performance, not just through words but also by means of its delivery, for example, through ritualisation, dramatisation and/or audience-performer interaction (Finnegan 1992: 92f).

In studying the medieval and contemporary sources selected by me, I do not (like Vansina (1997: 49) does) aim to establish whether the poetic sources are in the conventional sense of the word "factual" versions of Pabuji's history by trying to ascertain which poetic evidence may represent "hard" historical facts. Rather, I am inspired by Kolff's (1990: 74-85) description of the Rajput warrior-ascetic in song, ballad, and legend. My main sources are poetic "historiologies" or literary and/or mythical forms of historical consciousness. In seeing poetic sources as a form of historical knowledge that enables people to give voice to their past, present and future as mutually implicated categories, I adhere to the historian Romilla Thapar's (1999, 1979) definition of "embedded history": "Historians tend to view historical writing as conforming almost entirely to the format and pattern familiar from the last couple of centuries, or from models borrowed from particular societies such as ancient Greece and China. The more important but neglected aspect is the search for historical consciousness, irrespective of how immediately recognizable or evident it may be, in its literary from. This (...) requires a distinction between what might be termed "embedded history" forms in which historical consciousness has to be prised out - and its opposite, 'externalized history'-which tends to bring embedded consciousness into the open, as it were (...)" (Thapar 1999: 137f).

By studying the selected oral and written poems about Pabuji as records that are historically accurate (in that they "factually" represent the outcome of "acts of telling" or "narrative deeds") I am able to document medieval and present-day historical, literary and mythical interpretations of the past and present by Bhil, Charan and Rajput communities. In other words, this study of the different meanings

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[13] "Narrative" and "narration" are here used in their widest sense to include all verbal forms where temporal sequence is implied and to include scribal and oral transmissions as part of the process of narration (cf. Finnegan 1992: 14).

that may have been (and presently are) conferred to medieval heroic-epic poetry aims to offer insights into the historical consciousness or the "lived past" of some of the communities that inhabited the Thar Desert in different periods of time. Of particular interest for the study of literary forms of historical consciousness are the changing perceptions of socio-political status, power relations and religious worldviews for, as Thapar argues, "[e]ach version of the past which has been deliberately transmitted has a significance for the present, and this accounts for its legitimacy and continuity. The record may be one in which historical consciousness is embedded: as in myth, epic and genealogy; or alternatively it may refer to the more externalized forms: chronicles of families, institutions and regions, and biographies of persons in authority" (Thapar 1999: 138).

Both embedded and externalized history can be seen as narrative ways to sanction contemporary power relations, in present as well as medieval times. These two ways of interpreting the past do not necessarily represent an evolutionary continuum or development from one form to another. Embedded history can be part of externalized history like in chronicles which refer to a community's mythical beginnings to legitimize its claims to status "by tracing links with established lineages through embedded history in genealogical connections or stories of epic heroes" (Thapar 1999: 138f).

The different ways of looking at heroic-epic traditions come together in Hutcheon's literary-historical approach to poetry and prose texts as "historical events of production and reception" that may result in "fictions of power" created by social groups with different histories and political interests (Hutcheon 2002: 6, 67). By asking how the poets may have viewed their world and by looking at the way in which their views can be thought of as "mediated configurations" of their medieval world, I intend to arrive at a better understanding of the historical contexts in which poetry dedicated to Pabuji was composed.

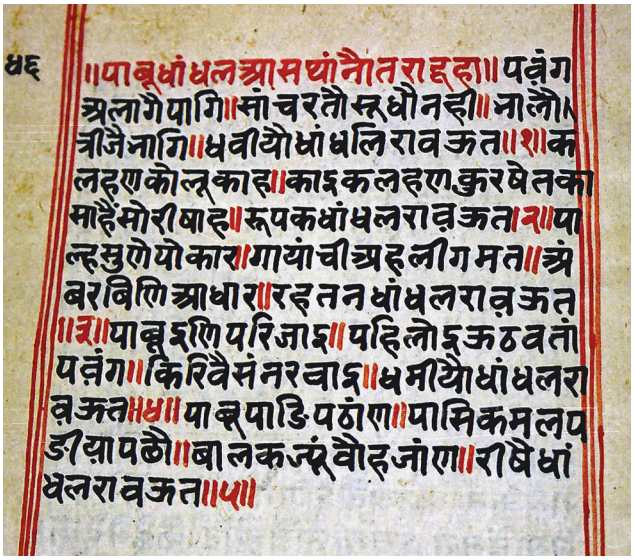
### *Outline*

In the next chapter (2), the written and oral sources selected for this study will be introduced with a discussion of their language, academic transliteration, dating and authorship. My interpretation of the poems' narrative content will be summarized in chapter 3, where I introduce the story-lines and images contained by the selected poems. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the distinctive prosodic features of medieval poetry dedicated to Pabuji, followed by a description of some aspects of the poems' symbolic content in chapter 5.[14] From this I go on to describe "Pabuji's world" in chapter 6, offering a sketch of the history of Marwar from the fourteenth century till the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this chapter, the focus lies on the historical role accorded to Rajput warriors like Pabuji in the context of regional

[14] Earlier versions of parts of chapter 4 and 5 have appeared as articles. See Kamphorst 2003, 2004 and 2006.

kingdom-formation. Chapter 7 offers an outline of what is known of the history of Pabuji's fellow protagonists, his Bhil companions and Bhopas (priestly performers). Literary and historical Charan identities will be discussed in chapter 8 in which I also deal with the relationship between Pabuji's cult and the worship of Charani Sagatis, the past and present living goddesses of Charan traditions. Other religious and devotional narrative themes are studied in chapter 9, including classical, medieval and contemporary strands of religious ideals that converge in heroic-epic genres, prose tales and devotional rites, which are part of the tradition of worship at Pabuji's Kolu temple today. Chapter 9 also offers a brief survey of epigraphic data read from hero stones and commemorative pillars preserved at Pabuji's Kolu temple. By way of conclusion (chapter 10), I deal with the manner in which the study of Pabuji's deification relates history, poetry and religion to each other.

The full academic transliteration of all the medieval manuscript poems and the contemporary oral compositions that are part of this inquiry has been provided in the appendix to this study titled: *Academic Transliterations*.



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॥पाबूधांधलआसथांनौतराहूहा॥ पवंग
अलागेपागि॥सांचरतौसूधौनही॥नालौ॥
त्रीजेनागि॥धवीयौधांधलिरावऊत॥१॥क
लहणकोलूकाह॥काइकलहणकुरषेतका
माहैंमोरीषाह॥रूपकधांधलरावऊत॥२॥पा
ल्हसुणेयोकारा॥गायांचीअहलीगमत॥अं
बरबिलिआधार॥रहतनधांधलरावऊत
॥३॥पाबूइणिपरिजाइ॥पहिलोइऊठवतां
पवंग॥किरिवैसंनरवाइ॥धमीयौधांधलरा
वऊत॥४॥पाबूपाडिपठांण॥पासिकमलप
डीयापछौ॥बालकजूंवौहजांण॥रीषेधां
धलरावऊत॥५॥

*Pābūjī dhāṃdhala āsthāṃnauta rā dūhā* (Ms. 14458).

# 2 Introduction to the Sources

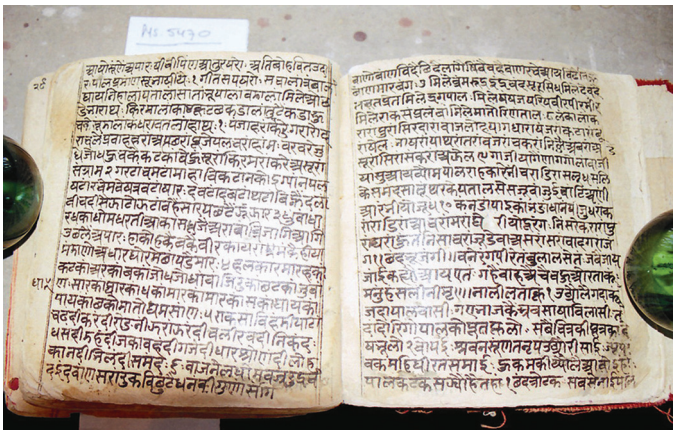
In the course of three consecutive periods of fieldwork (1998-2001) in western Rajasthan, I collected medieval and contemporary poetry which is part of the regional tradition about Pabuji and other protagonists of his story, in particular his Bhil companions, Charani Deval and Charan goddesses related to her. For this research, I worked in the archives of former princely states that were at one time or another ruled by Rathaur Rajputs, like the archives of Bikaner and Jodhpur (Rajasthan) and of Sitamau (Madhya Pradesh). The majority of medieval manuscript versions of poetry dedicated to Pabuji is now preserved in the archives of Rajasthan. Most of the medieval poems selected for this study were collected in the course of archival research at the Rajasthani Research Institute (RRI) in Chaupasni, the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute (RORI) in Bikaner, Jaipur and Jodhpur and private collections housed in Jaisalmer, Badriya and the *Sri Natnagar Sodh Samsthan* (SNSS) in Sitamau.

An overwhelming number of written and printed manuscript versions of poems dedicated to Pabuji is housed at the listed archives. The amount of medieval manuscripts, containing handwritten versions of heroic-epic poems dedicated to Pabuji proved to be daunting, especially since I had set myself the task of collecting as many versions of Pabuji's adventures as possible at the onset of my research. It soon became apparent that there exist more manuscripts versions of Pabuji's story than I could hope to collect during one lifetime. As will be discussed in more detail below, upon introducing questions of chronology, authorship, orthography and academic transliteration of the medieval sources, I have strived for a qualitative selection that represents the common themes, storylines, images and poetic forms of the medieval Pabuji tradition.

### *Medieval manuscript sources*

The centre and reach of the medieval Pabuji story-telling tradition can no longer be established but it seems probable that the Pabuji temple at Kolu fulfilled as important a role for Pabuji's medieval devotees as it does for his contemporary worshippers. Judging from my archival research, and from the catalogues published by different archives and research institutes in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, only a few seventeenth-century manuscripts recording poems dedicated to Pabuji have been preserved while several more manuscripts can be dated to the eighteenth century. As one might expect, nineteenth and twentieth century manuscript versions

of Pabuji's story abound. In addition, numerous shorter and longer poems dedicated to Pabuji have been available in print since the nineteenth century.[15] The *pābujī rā chaṃda* is the earliest medieval composition that is part of my selection. This poem was composed in praise of the Rathaur hero's martial deeds and can be traced to the second half of the sixteenth century. It is ascribed to the Charan poet Meha Vithu. This *chamd* knows dozens of manuscript versions preserved in the main archives of Rajasthan.[16]



*Pābujī rā chaṃda (Ms. 5470).*

For the present study, I examine two versions of the *chamd* ascribed to Vithu. First, an undated manuscript titled *atha mehā viṭhū rā kahīyā shrī pābujī rā chaṃda*[17]

[15] For example, the probably nineteenth-century *Pābū kamadha* in the *Shakti-suyash* edited by Bai (n.d.), the twentieth-century *Kavi pūṃjojī bārahaṭa haṛavecāṃ virtī chaṃd pābūjī raṭhauṛ rau* edited by Girdardan Ratnu (1997: 25-29) and *Pābūjī rī velī* by Vidhadhar Shasthri (1997: 30). Tessitori (1916: 68f) purchased two versions of Pabuji's *chamd* and one version of the *duha* in 1915 and dated the oldest of these manuscripts to the end of the sixteenth century. More recent works include several poems titled *Pābū prakāśa* by twentieth century poets like Bhaktavar Motisar, Khanuji Barhat and Moraji Ashiya. The later work has been edited by N.S. Bhati in 1983. The most recent works to be inspired by Pabuji's tale include Chamd Dharana's 1992 poem *Laukik sūktiyāṃ*, a devotional poem dedicated to Pabuji and Deval by the Charan poetess Nanhi Bai Samaur (1999) tiled *Deval bāī dyo naiṃ pābū naiṃ āsīs,* and the nationalist play *Prāṇavīr pābūjī* by Nirmohi Vyas (1999).

[16] Like nineteenth-century versions of Vithu's *chaṃd* preserved in the archives of Jodhpur and Chaupasni, for example: RORI Ms. 17777-8, titled *gīta saṃgraha*, including a poem titled *pābujī ro chaṃda*, and RORI Ms. 25149, titled *etihasika kavittā saṃgraha* (including a composition named *pābujī rā chaṃda*, ascribed to a Motisar poet) and an undated, anonymous composition (RRI Ms. 3632) also titled *pābujī rā chaṃda*.

[17] "Verses (dedicated to) Pabuji (and) recited (by) Meha Vithu".

referred to throughout this study as "*chamd* I".[18] Second is *chamd* II, an undated manuscript titled *atha pābujhī ro chaṃda mehaijhī rā kahyā*.[19] As will become apparent in the next chapter, the narrative content and prosodic form of *chamd* I and II differs considereably, so much so that we may think of both *chamd*s as very different outcomes of processes of transmission which may have (or may not have) commenced with a poem ascribed to Vithu in the sixteenth century.

The earliest dated manuscript at my disposal is *gīta pābūjī rau*[20] a short late seventeenth-century poem in praise of the Rathaur hero, which is referred to as "*git* I" in this study.[21] This anonymous work (noted down in 1689) is part of a collection of praise poems dedicated to historical Rathaur rulers, titled: *rāṭhauṛa guṇagānā*.[22] The longest poem studied here is titled *pābūjī rā duhā*[23] composed around 1650. Most manuscript versions of this poem seem to include a shorter poem titled *pābū rā prāvāṛā*[24] appended to the last verse of the *duhā*. Both poems know numerous manuscript versions dated, as far as I could see, from 1770 onwards up to the beginning of the twentieth century.[25] My source manuscript, RRI Ms. 402, is an eighteenth-century manuscript attributed (by its scribe) to Ladhraj, the minister of the seventeenth century Rathaur king of Marwar, Jaswant Singh, and to the unknown poet Mohandas.[26] From the last verse-lines of the *parvaro*, it can be read that *duha* I and *parvaro* were noted down or copied from an older manuscript by a man named Pamdit Khusyal of village Cariasra in 1827 VS (1769 CE) while they were recited in 1778 VS (1720 CE).[27] Both the *pābūjī rā duhā* and the *pābū rā prāvāṛā* are part of Ms. 402 and will be referred to respectively as *duha* I and *parvaro* throughout this study. As shall become apparent in chapter 3, when I discuss the narrative content of the selected sources, the *pābūjī rā duhā* and the *pābū rā prāvāṛā* document how Pabuji has been worshipped at his temple in Kolu as one

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[18] Ms. 5470 is described in Catalogue 4-1027 of the Rajasthani Research Institute (RRI) (B. Sharma 1976). Neither manuscript nor catalogue contains any data about this poem's scribe or its place and date of copying.

[19] "Verses (dedicated to) Pabuji (and) recited (by) Meha Vithu". (RRI) Ms. 9727(17) is described in RRI catalogue 8-164 (1989). Neither the manuscript nor the catalogue provides information about its scribe or place and date of copying.

[20] "Pabuji's song".

[21] (RRI Ms. 15009) "Pabuji's song", listed in a handwritten, unpublished register of the Rajasthani Research Institute, dating this two-page long manuscript to 1689.

[22] A praise poem composed in honour of the Rathaur rulers Raja Surya Singh, by an anonymous poet, Raja Gaj Singh, recited by Josi Gangadas and Rav Maldev, a poem written by Barath Harsur.

[23] "Couplets (dedicated to) Pabuji".

[24] "Pabuji's divine miracles" (or: "Pabuji's heroic deeds").

[25] For example: (RRI) Mss. 2271, 3271, 6499, all titled *pābūjī rā duhā*, and (RRI) Ms. 8216-262, *duhā pābūjī dhāṃdhalot rā sorathā.* Nineteenth-century manuscripts preserved at RORI include Ms. 3550 (*pābūjī rī nīsanī*) that contains a short composition titled *pābūjī rā duhā*, and Mss. 11013-27, 8823, two eighteenth-century versions of Ladhraj's composition.

[26] (RRI) Ms. 402 described in RRI catalogue 1-717 (N.S. Bhati: 1967).

[27] *Parvaro* (v. 80-81): "pābū krīta puṇīha, satrau(ṃ) sai āṛhāro tarai. cavadasa cāṃda raṇīha, caitra māsi citrāna kṣatra", and *parvaro* (v. 85) "saṃ 1827 vi sai rā vaisākha vada 10 dine likhatu paṃ khusyala carī āsarāmadhye".

of the numerous folk-gods of Rajasthan from the seventeenth century onwards, and probably even earlier.[28]

To my knowledge, one published edition of the *pābūjī rā duhā* (including the *pābū rā prāvāṛā*) is available: a critical text edition of three manuscript versions edited by N.S. Bhati (1973). This version is based on [a] RRI Ms. 634 (dated 1687), [b] RRI Ms. 402 (the manuscript studied by me), and [c] an unnumbered manuscript from the private collection of one Deva Karanji (dated to 1731). I have consulted this 1973 transliteration and Hindi rendition by N.S. Bhati for my own academic transliteration and interpretation of RRI Ms. 402. However, my approach to the manuscript rather differs from N.S. Bhati's reading in that I (unlike Bhati, who aimed at a philological reconstruction of the manuscript text) transliterate the actual scribal form of the *duhā* and *prāvāṛā* and note the manuscript's actual spelling, orthography and punctuation to present a historical transliteration of Ms. 402. Below (under the heading *Oral-cum-scribal culture*) my approach to the historical transliterations of the selected manuscripts will be further explained.

Of the many short compositions dedicated to Pabuji and kept in the Rajasthani archives or published in Rajasthani anthologies, I selected five *git*s and one short *duha*. As mentioned just now, Ms. 15009 (*gīta pābūjī rau*) is referred to as *git* I throughout this study. *Git* II refers to the untitled Ms. 8234, a poem about Pabuji's wedding.[29] *Git* III, titled *gīta pābūjī rai vivāha samai rau sāṃdū cainajī rau kahiyo*[30] and ascribed to the poet Samdu Cainaji is a printed version of a poem very similar to *git* II. Though the manuscript version (*git* II) and the printed text (*git* III) of this Dimgal *git* do not vary greatly, except for the different titles and apart from the use of a few different words and distinct spellings, I do treat *git* I and II as different "versions" of a same or similar poem, and offer a historical transliteration of both the scribal and printed form of the poem as one of many possible outcomes or products of the historical process of oral and scribal transmission (see my definition of oral-cum-scribal cultures below).

*Git* III, IV and V were all published by N.S. Bhati (1973: 83). *Git* IV is the *gīta pābūjī raṭhauṛa bhārahaṭa amaradāsajī rau kahiyau*[31] and was also published in 1973 by N.S. Bhati (1973: 78) just like *git* V, titled *gīta pābūjī rau āsiyā bāṃkīdāsa rau kahyau*[32] (N.S. Bhati 1973: 85). Last is the nineteenth-century

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[28] The Rajasthani chronicler Nainsi mentions the worship of Pabuji by sixteenth-century Bhopas (Smith 1991: 72). A seventeenth century chronicle of Marwar's history furthermore refers to the grant of Kolu to Pabu's Bhopas by Gamga, a sixteenth-century ruler of Jodhpur (Tessitori 1916: 109).

[29] Ms. 8234, RRI catalogue 6-390 (V.S. Rathaur: 1991). This manuscript gives no information about its scribe nor about its place and date of copying.

[30] "Poem (about) Pabuji's wedding recited by Samdu Caina".

[31] "Poem (about) Pabuji Rathaur recited by Amardas Bharahat".

[32] "Poem (about) Pabuji Rathaur recited by Asiya Bamkidas".

manuscript *duha* II (RORI Ms. 14458) titled *pābūjī dhāṃdhala āsthāṃnauta rā dūhā*.[33]

Compared with the amount of manuscript sources available, the presented selection of poetic sources for this study is limited, especially from a quantative point of view. However, the above-listed selection does represent the commonest storylines and plots of those compositions most regularly preserved in the archives of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh visited by me. My selection is also representative of the most customary poetic forms of poems dedicated to Pabuji, in particular the *chaṃda*s, *duhā*s, *prāvāṛo*s and *gīta*s. This selection was in the first place intended to give an evocative, though evidently partial, impression of the historical background against which the medieval Pabuji tradition may have grown by documenting which narrative themes the selected poems have in common, and by giving an idea of the historical and contemporary functions that can be ascribed to them. The poets' evocation of Pabuji's warrior status and his elevation to divine status through their compositions has proved to be of particular interest for a description of the poems' historical context and function.

The customary poetic forms that are part of the medieval Pabuji tradition illustrate the use of *chaṃd*, *duhā* and *gīt* metrical structures by the poets of this tradition while the word *prāvāṛo* may be translated as "battle", "heroic deed" or "divine miracle" and is a genre that is most commonly defined by its heroic and devotional content, comprising heroic battle deeds and divine miracle tales.[34] The *prāvāṛo*'s metrical structure (as shall be argued further in chapter 4) somewhat resembles the structure of *duha* I. In chapter 4, I shall discuss the prosodic rules that govern the form of all the selected poems and illustrate how a discussion of Dimgal prosody assists in documenting the politico-military function of the selected poems. The above selection has (lastly) also been inspired by the wish to better understand the socio-religious background of the tradition with a study of the different sectarian interpolations in the poems that help in documenting the different worship practices that have been (and in most instances still are) part of the Pabuji tradition.

### *Dimgal*

All selected poems are part of the medieval tradition of Dimgal heroic-epic poetry, also referred to as the Charan tradition after the poets of the Charan communities. Of Charan poets, coined "The Homers of the Rajput bravery" by Tessitori (1915: 375), it is said that they stood at the cradle of Dimgal, the poetic language, dialect or style of the region. The medieval *chaṃda*s, *duhā*s, *prāvāṛo*s and *gīta*s dedicated to Pabuji

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[33] "Couplets (dedicated to) Pabuji (the son of) Asthan's son Dhamdhal". (RORI) Ms. 14458 is described in the RORI catalogue number 128-4 dating the manuscript to the nineteenth century. The manuscript itself contains no information about its scribe or the place and date of copying.

[34] In the medieval prose-tradition, *pravāṛā* refers to descriptions of battles, like in "Manoharadāsarā pravāṛā", a list of battles between the Rajput Manoharadas and his adversaries (Sakariya 1984: 103).

can also be thought of as part of Rajasthan's Dimgal *vīrakāvy* tradition, a genre classification that defines the tradition according to its main subject matter: martial heroism.

Dimgal is a New Indo-Aryan (NIA) poetic language or style. The linguistic status of Dimgal and its origins at present gives rise to heated debates: the main questions relating to the origins of Dimgal and whether it should be seen as a proper language or as a poetic style, a counterpart of the prose language of the region coined "Pimgal". There exists no consensus on this subject among linguists. In what follows, I therefore limit my description of the debates about Dimgal to an overview of secondary studies of Dimgal poetry (i.e. studies not based on primary sources), Dimgal grammar and prosody, and published manuscript annotations in Hindi. It should be kept in mind that the partial overview of historical data available thus far is not intended as an up-to-date or authentic linguistic analysis of Dimgal or its literary forms, since this kind of analysis has yet to be undertaken and modern studies of Dimgal manuscripts inspired by manuscriptology or epigraphy lack.

In Prabhakar's (1976: 64) oft-cited study of the Charan tradition (to a great extend based on Tessitori's fieldwork) one reads that Dimgal existed from the late fourteenth century onwards. Kaviya (1997:1-7), on the other hand, opines that Dimgal has been in evidence from circa the ninth century onwards when it developed from the local language of Marwar, Marubhasha, which is believed to have replaced Apabhramsa as one of the literary languages of the region and became known as Dimgal, a name first mentioned in the eighth-century *Kuvalayāmāl* composed by Udhyotanasuri. As further proof for the early existence of Dimgal, Kaviya (1997: 4f) also cites thirteenth-century Dimgal poems about Rava Sihaji of Marwar and the (to me unknown) *Lakh Phulavāṇī* of Gujarat. The implications of this standpoint are unclear since I have no access to Kaviya's sources and his argument has yet to be confirmed. The same can be said of Tessitori's (1915: 375-76, 1917a: 229-231) dating of Dimgal to the early-medieval period, from approximately the thirteenth century onwards, as he does little to document his suggestion that Dimgal *gīt*s may have existed in oral form from the thirteenth century onwards. Since earlier primary Dimgal sources have not been the subject of serious study as yet, it is also difficult to judge the likelihood of Tessitori's distinction between early-medieval "Old Dimgal" and, from approximately the sixteenth-century onwards, "Later Dimgal" (1914-1916: 21-25).

Smith's limited but up-to-date study of Dimgal seems the most reliable in this respect since his findings are based on primary research of original Dimgal poetry. On the basis of this research, Smith dates the coming into existence of Dimgal as a poetic language to a later period, defining it as vernacular "Old Rajasthani", which began to supersede "Old Gujarati" as the poetical language of Rajasthan in the fifteenth century (Smith 1975: 434). According to Smith (1975: 434f), Dimgal distinguishes itself from other NIA languages since it contains older language forms and also incorporates novel grammatical and lexical constructs, adding that "a grammar of

Dimgal would consist less of a set of forms than a set of possibilities". If further linguistic research would prove this thought to be true then it is easy to see why an in-depth study of Dimgal remains lacking till date.

Another question, which none of the studies consulted by me answers, is whether Dimgal is a language or a "dialect". Tessitori (1915: 376-77, 1914-1916: 24) is most outspoken on this subject, defining Old Dimgal as a "dead language" that originated with "Old Western Rajasthani" or "the old local speech of Western Rajputana". Smith (1975: 437) also defines Dimgal as a language, i.e. a stylized literary language, the characteristics of which were drawn from several dialect-areas and embedded in a "Marwari under-structure". One of the main distinctive features of Dimgal vocabulary apparently is that it consists of words derived from languages like Sindhi, Persian and Sanskrit and from various regional languages or dialects of Rajasthan, including Marwari, Marubhasha and Jaisalmeri.[35] Another distinctive feature attributed to Dimgal is that it preserves archaic words that are not contained by Pimgal, the prose language of medieval Rajasthani chronicles and semi-historic tales. As Smith proposes: Dimgal (like Pimgal) is a form of Western Rajasthani or "Middle Marwari" that "does not answer to any single geographically definable form of speech, but is rather a compilation of features drawn from several distinct dialect-areas", (Smith 1975: 436).[36]

The third question asked about Dimgal is whether it should be seen as a proper language or as a poetic style. Tessitori (1915: 375) held that Dimgal and Pimgal, as used by Charan poets, were not "mere" poetic styles but "two distinct languages, the former being the local *bhāṣā* of Rajputana, and the latter the Braja *bhāṣā*, more or less vitiated under the influence of the former". It does seem to me, however, that Sohan Dan Charan's argument that Dimgal is not so much a language as it is a poetic style with its own poetic idiom does deserve some serious linguistic study (personal communication S. D. Charan, Jodhpur 2000). All the more so when one takes into account the existence of a Gujarati tradition of Dimgal poetry composed in Gujarati and according to Dimgal prosodic rules, a fact which perhaps

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[35] Tessitori (1917c: v-vi) explains the archaic vocabulary of Dimgal poets as follows: "The bards have been more conservative in the matter of lexicon than in the matter of grammar, and most of the poetical and archaic words which were used by them five hundred years ago, can still be used by the bards of the present day, though their meaning may be no longer intelligible to any of his hearers or readers, but the initiated. This fact of the preservation of archaic words in Ḍiṇgaḷa is easily explained by the existence of the poetical glossaries such as the *Hamīranāmamālā* and the *Mānamañjarināmamālā*, etc., and the large part they have been playing in the curriculum of the studies of the bards for the last three centuries or more. A great part of these obsolete words are borrowed from the vocabulary of the Sanskrit poetry, and it is chiefly to these that the extraordinary richness in synonyms of Ḍiṇgaḷa is ultimately due".

[36] Compare Grierson's survey of South-Asian languages defining Marwari as a language that is a mixture of a number of forms of speech, especially Marwari and the Dardic subfamily of the Aryan languages as spoken in Sindh. Grierson (Varma 1973: 980) holds that Marwari, Mewari, Jaisalmeri, and so forth, form a group amongst themselves and are entitled to being classed as a separate language and adds that *if* the Rajasthani languages are dialects, then they are dialects of Gujarati. See also Shapiro's (2003: 254f) description of Dimgal as one of five "pre-modern Hindi literary dialects", listed together with Braj, Avadhi, Sadhu Bhasa and Maithili.

signifies that Dimgal is best seen as a style employed by the speakers of different regional tongues. As a historian, I am clearly not equipped to settle such linguistic issue. For the purpose of this study, suffice it to note that, Dimgal, like other specialized language-registers, has been used by Charan poets to voice the heroic-epic heritage of different communities in various periods of time, employing a distinctive vocabulary and prosodic style.[37]

Socio-linguistic data indicate that Dimgal and Pimgal have been most commonly portrayed along communal lines. Late-medieval sources, like a nineteenth-century poem by Udairam Bharath, stress that Charans were proficient in Dimgal while Bhat genealogists and chroniclers (who asserted Brahminical status) laid claim to Pimgal (Kaviya 1997: 15). However, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Tessitori got the impression that "by far the most influential class of bards in Rajputana (…) are the Cāraṇa (…) In the Marwar State, where their influence is most felt, they continue to enjoy not less than about 350 villages, whilst the villages of the Bhāṭas are only seven or eight. And their superiority is not less in literary achievements. Whilst the Bhāṭas are nowadays generally confined to keeping genealogies and possess no literary education, Cāraṇas are still found who are good composers, and besides having command of Diṇgaḷa and Piṇgaḷa, have also some knowledge of Sanskrit language and literature" (Tessitori 1915: 378).

The differences attributed to Dimgal and Pimgal in the eighteenth century can be read from a heroic poem dedicated to Rathaur Ratan Singh by the Charan Khidiya Jaga and edited by K. Sharma and S. Singh (1982). In this poem Jaga sheds light on the different services performed by Charan, Bhat and Brahmin protégés of Rajput warriors in late-medieval Rajasthan. The poet describes how, at the beginning of the battle between Rathaur Ratan Singh and the joined forces of Mughal princes Aurangzeb and Murad, Charan and Bhat poets, and Brahmin Pamdits come to "brighten the war-scene" at Ujjain. The Brahmins are portrayed while performing a ritual to invoke the gods' blessings for the battle, while the Charan poet Jasraj is shown to recite heroic verses to praise his patron and fire up the assembled warriors, and the assembled Bhat poets offer the combatants encouragement by praising the deeds of the heroes of the *Mahābhārat* and by reciting befitting Vedic verses (Sharma & Singh 1982: 28-31, 37-39, 65).

I have not yet located sources that document the aforementioned division in earlier times (i.e. before the eighteenth century) but it is clear that Dimgal poetry traditions, when portrayed as the "solid", "strong", "rustic", "authentic" tradition of Charan poets, have commonly been considered as inferior to Pimgal, the "refined, literary language" of the Bhat at Rajput courts (Prabhakar 1976: 45f) or, as Tessitori

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[37] On specialized bardic languages in general, see Blackburn (1989: 79), Ong (1999: 23, 1982: 92-120). With regard to the unique status ascribed to the prosodic features of Dimgal, see Kaviya (1997: 1-6). For a description of the distinctiveness of Dimgal grammatical and lexical constructs see Smith (1975: 434) and Tessitori (1914-1916: *passim*, 1915: 374-379, 1917c: iv-vii).

(1919b:xiii) coined it: "emasculated" Pimgal.[38] Along these lines, brawny Dimgal is the language most suitable for the versification of the battle deeds of valiant Rajput heroes, while Pimgal prose works, in particular late-medieval chronicles, are seen as works of true literary and historical qualities (Banerjee 1962: 17). Vaudeville (1996: 274), on the other hand, is of the opinion that Dimgal was a literary language, an archaic form of "old Marwari" that never had a "popular" character.[39]

The idea that Dimgal was considered inferior to Pimgal can also be read from Motilal Menariya's contention, as quoted in Kaviya (1997: 17), that Pimgal was the learned language of Pamdits who considered Dimgal an ignoble language, its poetical style too flowery and its content rather farfetched. Accordingly, the word Dimgal is thought to derive of Rajasthani *diṃga* ("exaggeration") while Dimgal poetry is described as "fakelore" full of hyperbole.[40] Tessitori (1917a: 228) commented on this aspect of Dimgal poems by writing that "(…) generally speaking, there is probably no bardic literature in any part of the world, in which truth is so masked by fiction and disfigured by hyperboles, as in the bardic language of Rajputana. In the magniloquent strains of a Cāraṇa, everything takes a gigantic form, as if he was seeing the world through a magnifying glass; every skirmish becomes a Mahābhārata, every little hamlet a Laṇkā, every warrior a giant who with his arms upholds the sky". Tessitori (1919b: xii) did however endorse the historical value of Charan "bardic literature" written in the "literary bhāṣā" of Marwar. He believed that a "kernel of truth" was "lurking" inside Dimgal poems, in particular those composed during or immediately after the event that they record (Tessitori 1917a: 229). All one needs to do is tone down the poetical, "magnified" view of events by "reducing things to their natural size, and at the same time denude the facts of all the fiction with which they are coated" and thus glean the poems' historical "truth" (Tessitori 1917a: 228). As I have argued in the introduction to this study, and hope to show in the chapters ahead, the literary-historical value of Charan Dimgal poetry should not be limited to the factual data that may or may not be at the heart of this kind of compositions.

At the root of the conflicting evaluations of Dimgal and Pimgal is the rigid distinction between oral folk-traditions and written classical traditions, or oral (or orally derived) "little traditions" and "folk-art" on the one hand, and classical written legacies of "High Culture" or "Great Tradition" on the other. From this

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[38] In contrast to his opinion of the early-medieval Charan tradition as the craft of mere "parasites", Prabhakar (1976: 45) describes the Charan heritage of later medieval times as a "classical tradition", when the medieval vernacular of the desert, influenced by Persian historiography, was "elevated to the dignity of a literary language", the aristocratic court language Dimgal.

[39] Vaudeville (1996: 247) supports this contention by rendering the meaning of Dimgal (from "*diṃga*") as "arrogance", which, it seems, is thought to connote "unpopular" and by implication "not folk".

[40] Tessitori rather condescendingly spurns such and other "fantastic etymologies proposed by the bards and pamdits of Rajputana" and thinks of "dimgala" as a "mere adjective meaning probably "irregular", i.e. "not in accordance with the standard poetry", or possibly "vulgar" was applied to it when the use of Braja Bhāṣā (Piṇgala) as a polite language of the poets was in general vogue" (Tessitori 1915: 376).

angle, Rajput "Great Tradition" is thought of as a heritage of classical, written texts, elaborating on elite Rajput dharma, while oral traditions are understood to mirror the "folk reality" of marginalized communities. As I hope to show in the course of this study, it is not very constructive to contrast Dimgal oral and written poetry in this manner.

### *Chronology*

Here, and in the next chapters and in the appendix, the selected poems will be presented in a (to a very limited extent) chronological manner, based on the selected poems' hypothetical date of composition and not on their assumed date of notation. This means that I will first look at the different story-lines, episodes, themes and images of the two selected versions of Vithu's *chamd*, probably composed at the end of the first half of the sixteenth century and written down in the eighteenth-century (*chamd* I). Next is the undated *chamd* II, followed by the late-sixteenth century *git* I (*gīta pābūjī rau*). Subsequently, I study the eighteenth-century manuscript version of Ladhraj's seventeenth-century composition, *duha* I, followed by the *parvaro*, a version which appears to have been recited (and perhaps composed) in the early eighteenth century. Next, the undated manuscript poem *git* II will be discussed together with a printed version of this poem as represented by *git* III, followed by a study of the undated poems published by N.S. Bhati (1973: 78-85): *git* IV and *git* V. Last of all, *duha* II will be considered. This *duha* (together with *git* V) is the most recent composition at my disposal, in all probability composed in the late eighteenth century and/or beginning of the nineteenth century.

By presenting the selected poems in a, to some extent, chronological manner, I hope to give some idea of the sequence of Pabuji's deification as represented by the selected poems. The study of Pabuji's deification as a chronological process helps in imagining what the initial stages of Pabuji's medieval tradition may have been like, even if the dating of the selected poems remains rather uncertain. As shall become clear in the course of this thesis, this kind of study raises several new questions regarding the development of the Pabuji tradition that assist in broadening our understanding of the way in which the tradition may have grown. I will ask whether a developmental view of regional manuscript traditions like Pabuji's (including poetry that was composed orally or in writing) is the best way to evaluate the different genres that are part of the medieval and contemporary tradition.

Since the poems do not represent a body of texts linked to each other through an unbroken "chain of transmissions" or the sequential transmission of written texts, matters of dating and authorship have proved difficult to resolve. The best way to appraise the transmission of the selected poems is by thinking of them as fairly loose collection of texts transmitted in different or concurrent periods of time. This view can be documented, if only in a rather indirect way, by quoting the Italian linguist Tessitori who published wide-ranging reports of his fieldwork in Rajasthan

in the *Journal & Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, the *Bibliotheca Indica* and the *Indian Antiquary* between 1914 and 1920.[41] In his still often quoted "Bardic and historical surveys of Rajputana" (1917b, 1917c, 1918a, 1918b, 1919b, 1920), Tessitori attempted to piece together the chronology of heroic-epic poetry composed in Dimgal, by describing the manuscript tradition according to what he understood as "the elementary canon in philology" of his time. The Italian scholar soon discovered that his efforts to trace different versions of a Dimgal poem to one archetype were in vain, for he wrote: "I have tried hard to trace the pedigree of each of these (…) manuscripts and ascertain the degree of their dependency on the archetype and on one another, but have been unsuccessful. The reason of the failure is to be sought partly in the great number of manuscripts in existence, and partly in the peculiar conditions under which bardic works are handed down, subject to every sort of alterations by the copyist who are generally bards themselves, and often think themselves authorized to modify or, as they would say, improve, any text they copy, to suit their tastes or ignorance, as the case may be" (Tessitori 1917c: ix).

Though contemporary studies of traditional poetry make clear that questions about the origins and poetic originality of chirographic sources are of little importance when discussing poetic genres that were composed and transmitted orally and in writing, it does even so seem important to stress the indefinite character of the time of composition of most Dimgal poetry here, bearing in mind that relatively recent contemporary studies of the Rajasthani heroic-epic tradition continue to be inspired by Tessitori's remarks and quests for early beginnings and original material.[42] Tessitori (1915: 377, 382-87, 1916: 82, 1919b: xiii) felt that there ought to exist original versions of the Dimgal poems collected by him and he continued his attempts to trace medieval "versions" of such poems to original, older texts. Disregarding the many manuscript-versions and oral versions of poems, the confusion about composers, and the differing opinions about dates, Tessitori continued to believe in textual archetypes even though he was well aware of the fact that this undertaking held little interest for the Charan poets and scholars who were his contemporaries and who, instead, strived to "update" the content and form of the transmitted texts to the tastes of their audiences. Tessitori, troubled by the many different forms a composition could take, charged the poets of Rajasthan with "barefaced plagiarism", "lack of common sense", "absurd interpretations", and so on (Tessitori 1915: 376-377, 1917c: vii, 1919a: 48, 1919b: 92, 107-111). Tessitori (1919b: i, 1921: x) did, even so, also acclaim the "poetical ingenuity" of the bards in

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[41] Tessitori's report of his work done during 1918 was published in 1921, after his death (*Journal & Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal Vol. XVI/6* (*n.s.*): 251-279).

[42] For contemporary discussions of questions about the origins and originality of heroic-epic and other oral and written literary sources see: Beissinger (2002: 236-258), Colm Hogan (1995a: 14), Ebbesen (1995: 47-62), Finnegan (1992: 27-32, 1977: 30f, 266), Nagler (1979: 451-59), Pollock (2003: 76), Todorov (2000 193-210) and Yashachandra (2003: 568). For discussions about the origins of medieval Rajasthani heroic-epic poetry see, for example, Kaviya (1997:1-7) and Prabhakar (1976: 45f).

many other instances and he also recorded that he considered "minor poetical inaccuracies and exaggerations" excusable.

Tessitori's at times censorious judgment of Rajasthan's "bards" is plainly beside the point today. His remarks do, however, help in further illustrating the shared character of the Dimgal tradition and will for this reason be quoted below at some length to document the "peculiar conditions" (Tessitori) of Dimgal manuscript poetry transmission. Tessitori's views help understand why a Dimgal composition attributed to a certain poet or period does not inevitably refer to an "original" work composed by only one author, or to one particular point in time. This can, for example, be understood from Tessitori's (1917c: viii) observation that "[I]mitations and plagiarisms have always played an important part in the bardic literature since the earliest times, a fact that is not at all surprising in the case of hereditary poets who transmit their literary profession from father to son". Clearly, the observed "plagiarism" as well as variations in content and form between different manuscript versions of what appears to be one poem, attributed to one poet, should be, as Smith (1979: 353f) notes, attributed to the fact that Rajasthani manuscript texts contain orally-derived literature. As we shall see in the next section, the poems dedicated to Pabuji are best seen in this light as well, that is, as texts that have been composed orally and written down later by their poets, by subsequent generations of scribes and/or poets who felt free to add their own verse-lines to a composition.

### *Oral-cum-scribal culture*

Medieval Charan heroic-epic compositions are best thought of as orally-composed or orally-derived scribal texts that used to be part of a culture where literate and illiterate forms of transmission exist simultaneously (cf. Finnegan 1992: *passim*, Ong 1999: 11f, Reynolds 1999: 155-168 and Schipper 1989: 11). Different elements of authorship are explicit in oral-cum-scribal traditions informed by performance, which result in "mixed forms", including texts composed orally or in writing by a poet individually or as the result of "corporate authorship" in the context of a performance when a received poem may be improvized upon with the active input of audiences (Novetzske 2003: 221f). The fact that medieval oral-cum-scribal vernacular traditions were created and preserved by various agents (including poets, scribes, audiences and patrons) and transmitted in oral and written forms throughout different periods of time means that the approach to the academic transliteration of manuscript versions of vernacular poetry dedicated to Pabuji is different from classical philological reconstructions of scribal texts. It should therefore be stressed that I do not aim to address what classical philologist see as "corrupting processes of transmission" that lead to textual "contaminations" like incongruent orthography and punctuation or anachronistic additions (cf. McGann 1983: 40-42). Rather, the

transliterations[43] of the selected poems offered in the following chapters and in the appendix should be seen as an attempt at a historical transliteration of the manuscript texts, representing the actual scribal form of the selected poems by departing as little as possible from the written text.

My historical approach to scribal texts is inspired by the idea that each of the selected manuscripts represents one of many authoritative and possible versions of a poem (or several poems), the result of varying historical purposes, intentions and contexts. To preserve the historicity of the selected compositions, the actual medieval spelling practices and orthographic and punctuation usages are transliterated, including the mistakes or slips of the tongue (and pen) made by poets and scribes in the process of noting down an oral poem or copying a scribal manuscript version of a poem.[44] As a result, the transliterations offered in this study document the poets' and/or scribes' actual spelling practices, historical orthographic and punctuation habits. And I also note scribal additions in the manuscript margins and blotched letters and words or letters which were crossed out. By offering such a factual (as opposed to reconstructed) transliteration of the manuscript texts, I aim to underline that the scribal forms of the poems are one of many possible outcomes or products of historical processes of oral and scribal transmissions and that the selected scribal forms exist side-by-side with other (scribal, oral and/or oral-cum-scribal) outcomes of the same transmission processes (cf. McGann 1983: 62, 103f).

### *Academic transliteration*

Now, let me introduce the standards employed for the academic transliteration of Rajasthani manuscript sources and contemporary oral poetry. As shall become clear, a straightforward reading or even interpretation of the selected sources is encumbered by the deliberate ambiguity inherent in the special use of poetical vocabulary, the occurrence of metrically derived forms and by unintentional ambiguities that result from unclear handwriting or blotched and/or faded letters and words. If the gist of a word or verse-line remains unclear, because the writing is blotched, or because a letter is hard to decipher or could be read in different ways, alternative possibilities have been listed in the footnotes. The deliberate ambiguities that result from Dimgal and contemporary Rajasthani poetic use of words and/or exceptionally conflicting interpretations of verse-lines that impede an appropriate assessment of a text's gist, are also commented upon in the main text or through

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[43] In writing "transliterate" and "transliteration", I refer to the standard academic transliteration of Rajasthani and Hindi as proposed by (respectively) Sita Ram Lalas (1962-1988) and McGregor (1993) and further discussed below under the heading *Academic Transliteration*.

[44] Textual critics apply this approach to reproduce scribal or printed texts with as much fidelity as possible to arrive at a historical edition or "Überlieferungskritische Edition" as Kraft (1990: 40) terms it or the reconstruction of the historical form and transmission of a text including its historical orthography and punctuation.

footnotes. When in doubt, I most often follow Subh Karan Deval's interpretations of a word, at least when his interpretation assists a logical interpretation of the verse-line as a whole. For the same reason I also at times refer to Shekavat's (1968: 25) publication of a version of *gīta pābū dhāṃdhaḷauta rāṭhauṛa rau* and N.S. Bhati's (1973: 78-85) Hindi translation of manuscript versions of *duha* I, the *parvaro* and to the poems published by N.S. Bhati (*git* III, *git* IV and *git* V).

When divergent spellings cause confusion, I adhere to the alternative forms of Rajasthani spelling for one word as documented by Sita Ram Lalas throughout his dictionary and in his introduction to Rajasthani notations in part one of the reprint of his unabridged Rajasthani-Hindi dictionary (1988: 61-62). I transliterate words according to Hindi spelling standards as recorded by McGregor (1993) when this spelling is in fact used in Dimgal manuscripts or modern Rajasthani oral texts and/or secondary literature, or by referents in the field (or, obviously, when I quote Hindi sources). Not transliterated are anglicized Hindi, Urdu, Persian or Sanskrit words that have become part of common English usage like dharma, guru, raja, sadhu or saree. Nor do I transliterate proper names, geographic names, caste names and/or occupational titles in the aforementioned languages. I transliterate Rajasthani and Hindi titles of poems, books and articles but not Rajasthani, Hindi, Urdu, Persian or Sanskrit words that are part of the English titles of books or other texts. And in references to the selected sources, I quote their short title in italics but without diacritics throughout the subsequent chapters (*chamd* I, *duha* I, *paravaro*, and so forth).

I do not quote the mute or inherent "a" at the end of words, except in the transliteration of primary sources and in the chapters when I cite words or verse-lines from primary written and oral sources. Thus direct quotes from primary sources are represented through transliteration and italics, including their inherent "a", while this usage is not followed for transliterations from secondary sources. This usage may now and then lead to puzzling usage, for example, when I refer to *chaṃda troṭaka* (as written in the *chamd* I and II) and *chaṃd troṭak* (as written in medieval poetry manuals) in one sentence. On the whole, however, the retention of the mute "a" at the end of words in quotes from manuscript sources alone does assist in distinguishing these quotes from secondary Dimgal, Rajasthani and Hindi sources. Within all transliterated words, whether from primary or secondary sources, the mute "a" is retained throughout.

In Dimgal and contemporary Rajasthani verse-quotes and in the transliterations in the appendix, I do not employ capital letters at the beginnings of verse-lines nor for the names of people or gods, place names, and so forth, thus reflecting the nonexistence of capital letters in the studied texts. I also do not follow the scribes' numbering of the manuscript poems since most poets employed irregular or nonexistent numbering. Instead, all manuscript poetry has been numbered per verse-line and will be referred to thus: *chamd* I (v. 33), *duha* I (v. 34),

and so forth, to allow easy reference between cited verse-lines and their transliteration in the appendix.

### *Spelling*

In trying to keep my transliteration of the selected manuscripts as factual as possible, I remark on words and letters which the poets inserted or crossed out and note blotched letters or words in the footnotes to my transliterations. I transliterate Dimgal and contemporary Rajasthani texts according to their spelling as documented by the studied manuscript and oral sources. Variant spelling practices in different manuscripts are noted as are the different notations and spellings encountered within one manuscript. Apart from difficulties arising from different and/or unclear notations or blotched handwritings, complications also surface because of the different spellings that the scribes employed for one word, at times in one sentence; like the scribe and/or poet of *chamd* II (v. 5-6), who spelled: *jhagajheṭhī*, *jhagajaiṭhī* amd *jagajheṭhī* and *jagajeṭhī*. I have tried to keep to the spelling as noted down in the medieval sources and to represent "inconsistencies" or non-standardized notations and spellings inspired by different chirographic practices and metrical needs to reflect the fact that the poets and/or scribes of the manuscripts did not know (or feel the need to employ) one standardized form of written language. The variant spellings also illustrate that the metrical needs of the verse-lines dictated the spelling of words to a great extent. Dimgal poets often shortened vowels for prosodic value or added an *anusvār* for prosodic value to metrically determined forms (cf. Smith 1992: 268 n.11, Tessitori 1916: 77, 1917c: 87f).

The fact that more than a few manuscripts are rather blotched and that some manuscripts appear to have been written over an older text, perhaps in order to save paper, and that the *anusvār*s of older texts still shine through subsequent texts, makes it difficult to establish whether a dot should be read as an *anusvār*. At times, it also proved difficult to establish whether, if a dot does indeed represent an *anusvār*, it has been added for grammatical or prosodic reasons. When in doubt, I have bracketed indistinct notations of *anusvār*s thus: *kā*(*ṃ*)*la*. I bracket blotched or faded letters or unknown notations in the same way: "*aṃgi*(*da*)". These unclear notations are remarked upon through footnotes. Whole words or sentences between angle-brackets refer to words or sentences that have been inserted when insert signs were added by the scribes in the manuscript margins to indicate that a word or sentence needs to be incorporated. For example (*duha* I v. 50): "kava[lā][45]de tata kā(ṃ)la, vīkhāṃ bhari coṛe viṛaṃga".

[45] An insert-sign follows *kava*, indicating "lā" in the manuscript margin.

### *Historical orthography*

The orthography of the Rajasthani alphabet differs from Hindi in a few respects (see Lalas 1988: 21-36 and Metzger 2003: 17-22). Specific Rajasthani usage includes "ḷa", "ja", "jja" and "jjha", and "cca", "ccha". The latter are at times used interchangeably.[46] However, neither the orthography described by Lalas, nor Metzger's rendition of different Rajasthani scripts, is at all times reflected by the scripts of the manuscripts under review. Hindi "ṣa" and "śa", according to Lalas (1988: 31), are represented by "sa" in Rajasthani, are indeed hardly ever employed in the manuscripts under review but they are not entirely unknown either. In the first verse-lines of *chamd* I (ms. 5470), "śa" appears four times.[47] In this instance, this usage can be explained as inspired by the use of a Sanskritic grammatical form (*gurabhyau*), but this explanation does not shed light on the usage of "śa" in *chamd* II (v. 47) "nikṣatra" or in *chamd* I (v. 23: "sihaśāṃ").

The notation of "ḍa" and "ḍha", "ṛa" and "ṛha" is ambiguous in most manuscripts since these are not always distinguished from each other by a dot next to or underneath the letter (cf. Metzger 2003: 20). See, for example, *git* I in which the scribe differentiated between "ṛa" and "ḍa" in a variable manner, spelling "camels" as *sāṃḍhaḍiyā* (v.2) and *sāṃḍhīṛīyā* (v.4). In addition, "ṛa" appears to have two different written forms, at times representing "ḍa" and "ṛa" that can be read as either in most manuscripts under review. When no clear distinction can be made between "ḍa" and "ṛa", or "ḍha" and "ṛha", I transcribe "ṛa" and "ṛha" since "ḍa" and "ḍha" have not been included in the reprint of the first part of Lalas's dictionary (one only finds the lemmas: "ṛa", "ṛha" and "ṇa"). In some manuscripts the difference between "ṛa" and "ḍa" (and so forth) is clear, like in *duha* I and the *parvaro*. The difference between "ṛha" and "ḍha" is, however, not at all times clear in this manuscript either since "ṛha", which is used throughout *duha* I and the *parvaro*, now and then seems to signify "ḍha".[48]

In most manuscripts (but especially in *chamd* II) it is at times difficult to distinguish between "gha", "dha" and "tha". Moreover, as noted above, "ca", "cca", "ccha", and "ja", "jja" and "jha" are at times used interchangeably and are written in several different ways. Likewise in most manuscripts it is difficult to distinguish between "va" and "ba", like in *duha* I (v. 28), where it is unclear whether "vasai" or "basai" was meant. When both readings ("va" or "ba") result in the same meaning, this usage has not been commented upon through footnotes. When the different notations affect the meaning of the words (which they as a rule do not) this is remarked upon in footnotes, using "blotched" to signify blemishes or faded signs,

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[46] For example: "Caraṇ" or "Charaṇ" or "Ccharaṇ".

[47] *Chamd* I (v. 1-2): "śrī rāmāya nama, śrī sarasvatya nama, śrī gurabhyau nama, atha mehā viṭhū rā kahīyā śrī pābujī rā chaṃda".

[48] In the *parvaro*, for example, *ṛhola* seems to be a clear reference to the Bhopa's drum (*ḍhola*) (v.4): "dhāṃgaṛavā thī ṛhola, māḍāṃ vāghai maṃgāṛīyo".

"unclear" to signify unknown notations or unclearly written or otherwise unidentifiable letters, and "probably" to signify probable readings.

Other specific notations include the use of *daṃda*s within words, for example when a *daṃda* separates syllables within one word. This usage is also noted in the footnotes, like in *duha* I (v. 236) "devaladehā", where a *daṃda* precedes "de" and "hā" is followed by two *daṃdas*: "devalade/hā//". This usage was probably inspired by the need to stress the metrical pattern and/or meaning of the verse-line, for the same notation is found in the next verse-line (v. 237) where *daṃda*s precede and follow "ha", reading "marade/hā//". And a *daṃda* in the manuscript margin (outside the text proper) often signifies, as noted in footnotes, the completion of the letters "ā" and "ī", like in *duha* I (v. 248), where one reads "vīsari". If the *daṃda* in the manuscript margin is interpreted as completing the "a" (which it most probably was intended to do) one reads: *vīsāri*.

### *Tentative dating*

In view of the lack of modern linguistic or literary studies on the subject, it is not at all clear how much value can be attributed to the above-quoted tentative dating of the selected manuscript poetry and printed material by, for example, scholars of the Rajasthani Research Institute. Bhalcandra Sharma's dating of the copying of *chamd* I to the eighteenth century in RRI catalogue 4-1027 (1976) represents a date which is not contained by the manuscript itself. Perhaps this date was arrived at on the basis of a linguistic, prosodic or orthographic study which may have helped in establishing the given date. However, the RRI catalogue, like the catalogues of most archives visited by me, does not document the criteria upon which the dating of the manuscripts has been based. Thus there is no saying (at least not with much certainty) when most of the selected manuscript versions of poems dedicated to Pabuji were really fixed in writing. The available chronological accounts of the development of Dimgal poetry do not offer much assistance either since they frequently contradict each other and often consist of rather unsubstantiated compendiums of the names of poets, their works and the time of composition, recurrently based on unverifiable references to manuscripts kept in private collections or based on nineteenth and early-twentieth century research that still awaits up-to-date linguistic scrutiny.[49] Matters of chronology have been further complicated by the conflicting claims that have been made, and are still made, about the historicity of Dimgal as a language or the antiquity and distinctive features of its body of texts and prosody.

To give an idea of one of the proposed chronologies for the development of the Dimgal tradition, I will here quote N.S. Bhati's (1989: 63-72) not always properly documented but best researched and consistent study based on primary

[49] See for instance (*passim*): Kaviya (1997), Maheshwari (1980), Mali "Ashanta" (1994), Menariya (1968), Prabhakar (1976).

Dimgal sources available at present. N.S. Bhati (1989: 61f, 70) traces the initial stages of the Dimgal tradition to the thirteenth century when Dimgal compositions are thought to have been part of a largely oral heroic-epic tradition. In the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Dimgal tradition expanded and more and more compositions were committed to paper. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are seen by N.S. Bhati as the time when Dimgal heroic and epic poetry reached maturity and when, from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, the Dimgal tradition (that had been largely oral till then) started to develop into a written literary tradition, the domain of court poets who composed "high class narrative poetry".

It is the marked proliferation of different poetical genres in the sixteenth century and (most importantly) the amount of compositions that were preserved in writing from that time onwards that leads N.S. Bhati to describe this period as the apex of the tradition. Subsequently, the beginning of Aurangzeb's rule till the end of the nineteenth century is seen as the period when, with the growing power of the British colonial regime, the Dimgal tradition began to wane and in due course became moribund since Dimgal poets could no longer find royal or other patrons for their poetry. It is thought that Rajput rulers and other patrons of Dimgal poetry began to look to more "modern" sources of legitimacy during British rule, and therefore no longer felt the need to patronize Dimgal poets. Erdman (1992: 174f), for instance, argues that royal patrons of Rajasthani artists no longer required traditional performers to substantiate their rule after their authority came to be underwritten through pacts with the British colonial administrators and imperial confirmation ceremonies (cf. Tessitori 1915: 379 and 1919b: 5).

The chronology proposed by N.S. Bhati accords well with the chronological description of the development of Hindi literature as put forward by McGregor (1984: 1-3). Maheshwari (1980: 20, 47, 193), on the other hand, dates the "early period" of Dimgal literature to 1050-1450, the medieval period from 1450 to 1850 and the modern period (in which Dimgal poetry is thought to have waned) from 1850 onwards. However, the written Pabuji tradition of Dimgal poetry continued to flourish until well into the twentieth century when the poet Modiya Asiya composed his *pābū prakāś* (1932), a truly epic poem dedicated to Pabuji and written in accordance with medieval prosody. Besides, as will also become apparent in the ensuing chapters, the contemporary oral and written tradition of poetry dedicated to Pabuji also documents that medieval prosody remains in use till today. Thus the modern period is not necessarily one of decline, as shall be documented further in chapter 8.

The many questions about the chronology of the Dimgal poetic heritage and its development will not be solved in the course of this study. I would like to note, however, that the above assertions, in particular those dating Dimgal to a very early period of history, seem to have been inspired by contemporary language politics: the felt need to shield oneself against what is seen as the imposition of Hindi on

speakers of regional tongues by the central government.[50] Till date, the regional varieties of Rajasthani (Marwari, Mewari, Dungari, etcetera), are classed as Hindi dialects under schedule eighth of the constitution. Though independent linguistic status was accorded to Rajasthani by the regional state assembly in 2004, Rajasthani has yet to receive national recognition. In this context, it seems good to note that by pointing out the problems of chronology that came up during my study of poems dedicated to Pabuji, I do not intend to add to the arguments involved in discussions about the antiquity of the Dimgal but merely seek to note the problems that a chronological account of medieval Dimgal poetry entails.

### *Authorship*

Several of the selected manuscripts contain signature phrases or references to their poets' names, either in the title or elsewhere in the text, like in the title of *chamd* I and II or in the last verses of the *paravaro*. On the basis of a poets' names, the time of composition or the period when undated poems were fixed in writing (especially earlier works) is often conjecturally arrived at and made to coincide with the rule of a poet's Rajput patron. Thus the commonly held notion that Vithu composed his *chaṃd* somewhere "around 1550", appears to be based upon the idea that he was a contemporary of Rao Maldev of Jodhpur, who is thought to have ruled from circa 1532 till 1562. Such assumptions are perhaps also inspired by the consideration that Vithu was granted the village of Khedi by Rao Maldev, as can be gathered from an undocumented reference in Maheshwari's (1980: 59) history of Rajasthani literature, till date the most comprehensive (though not well-documented) literary history of Rajasthani poetry and prose traditions.

Other information cited about Meha Vithu suggests that this poet not only composed the *pābūjī rā duhā* but also composed poems in honour of Rajput heroes like the Rathaur Camda and deities like Goga and the Charan goddess Karni (Maheshwari 1989: 59, N.S. Bhati 1989: 78). And Kaviya (1997: 251) lists Vithu Padmo Patavat as the name of the composer of an eighteenth-century manuscript version of a poem titled *pābūjī rā chaṃda*. Likewise, Datta (1987: 58, 973) refers to one Vithu Meha Nagarajota as the author of *rāva jaitasī ro padhadī baṃdha chaṃda*. While "Nagarajota", as Datta suggests, may have referred to Vithu's place of birth or residence, this is not common usage.[51] In addition, Datta's ascription of

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[50] It seems to me that many of the assertions about the antiquity of the Dimgal tradition as proposed by Rajasthani scholars, poets and other interested parties mainly serve to strengthen the demand for an independent linguistic status for Rajasthani and its literary culture. In 2001, for example, D. Bhatia of the *Centre for Rajasthan Studies* (Jaipur) launched the movement for "The Self-Respect of Rajasthani" to campaign for the inclusion of Rajasthani as an Indian language under schedule 38 of the Indian constitution by ascribing it the status of a proper language, with a reputable, i.e. "very old", literary heritage.

[51] Bhanavat (n.d.: 85) identifies the poet as Vithu Meha Dusalani, the son of Dusla, or a descendant of the (to me unknown) Dusla Charan lineage.

the *rāva jaitasī ro chaṃd* to Meha Vithu is also problematic for this attribution is based on the subtitle of the eighteenth-century manuscript preserved in the Darbar library of Bikaner fort that is reportedly titled: *jaitasī rā nai pābūjī rā chaṃda* ("Verses (dedicated to) Jaitasi and Pabuji"). While a manuscript title alone does not necessarily document that either or both compositions were indeed composed by, or can be attributed to, Vithu, the fact that the *rāva jaitasī ro chaṃd* is more commonly attributed to Suja Vithu (or: Vithu Sujo), a Charan poet from Bikaner, than to Meha Vithu, by Pranesh (1991), who edited one version of the *rāva jaitasī ro chaṃd*, also renders Datta's ascription rather problematic.

The fact that "Meha" and "Vithu" are rather common Rajasthani poets' names gives rise to further confusion.[52] What is clear is that the Vithu branch of Charan poets has been connected with the Rajput Rathaur lineages of Bikaner and Jodhpur since the early beginnings of their rise to power. A tale recorded by Tambs-Lyche (2004c: 67) traces the Vithu lineage to Mangh Bhati, a Bhati-Rohadiya Rajput, whose mother was Charan by adoption. Mangh Bhati was forced to become the poet of one of the founding fathers of the Rathaur lineage, Dhuhad of Kher, when the latter was in need of a Charan and no one but Mangh Bhati was available for the position. The Vithu Charans are also connected to the ruling house of Bikaner through its tutelary deity Karni, a Charan goddess, who is believed to have married Depal Vithu thus furthering the socio-political and religious ties between Rathaur Rajput and Vithu Charan lineages (Tambs-Lyche 1997: 185, 2004c: 78, Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 174). Several "foundation tales" of Rathaur rule in Bikaner commemorate how Karni helped the Rathaur establish their sway over desert territories (Samaur 1999: 520f). Karni is also worshipped as the clan goddess or guarantor and defender of Rajput supremacy by the Rathaur rulers of Jodhpur. In short: while the attribution of the above-quoted names and compositions attributed to Meha Vithu is possible, I feel one should, nevertheless, continue to be cautious and think of Vithu as one of the poets (not the only poet) to whom the above compositions could be attributed. In noting this, I do not mean to imply that all the quoted data are inevitably fictitious since these data do refer to rich and often accurate oral genealogies upon which much of Charan ancestral histories are based.[53] What I do intend to say is that not all data are verifiable or have been verified as yet.

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[52] Confusion exists about whether the poet was named Vithu Meha or Meha Vithu. In this study, the poet is throughout referred to as Meha Vithu since this is common usage in the manuscripts studied by me. It is also relevant to note in this context that in the contemporary oral and written tradition, many more titles have been attributed to Meha Vithu; titles which can not be traced to the medieval manuscript tradition, like the oral compositions *Sagatā tuma ambā* and *Ramata dharatī marha rāmevā* noted down by Samaur (1999: 113-118) and the poem *Biṭhu meha krīta* (Bai n.d.: 281-283).

[53] During my fieldwork in Rajasthan, I noted that many data about their forefathers cited by different Charan poets proved to be rather consistent, especially when one asked a Charan of a particular lineage about his ancestry or consulted a Motisar, the poets who are patronized by the Charans and keep the genealogical records of different Charan lineages. Since these records (as the Motisars of Marwah village

A somewhat similar, though less detailed, account can be given of the data known about Ladhraj, the poet to whom the *pābūjī rā duhā* has been attributed. Apart from the fact that he was a contemporary of the ruler of Marwar, Jaswant Singh (1638-1678), not much is known about Ladhraj either. N.S. Bhati (1989: 15f) suggests that Ladhraj may have become Jaswant Singh's minister after his predecessor, the well-known chronicler Muhnta Nainsi, killed himself to protest against his imprisonment by Jaswant Singh.[54] This can be understood, N.S. Bhati (1989: 16) argues, from the fact that Nainsi does not mention Ladhraj in any of his historical works. Nainsi appears to have served eight years as the diwan of Marwar court, from 1658 until 1667, after which Jaswant Singh put him in prison. The fact that Nainsi successfully led military campaigns against Jaisalmer and Bikaner reportedly gained him the jealousy of other courtiers who conspired to turn Jaswant Singh against him (Qanungo 1971: 80-95).[55] Other, on the whole undocumented, references abound. Lalas (1988: 152f), for example, holds that Ladhraj wrote his *pābūjī rā duhā* in 1652 and notes that Ladhraj was a resident of Sojat and a Kocar, an Oswal caste-group portrayed as Rajput warriors converted to Jainism or as money-lenders and traders (Mahajans) who claim Rajput ancestry (Hardyal Singh 2000: 128f).[56] Both groups commonly found employment as court scribes.

The authorship of the *pābū rā prāvāṛā* poses yet another problem. From the last verse-lines of the *parvaro*, it can be read that *duha* I and *parvaro* were noted down by a man named Pamdit Khusyal of village Cariasra in 1827 VS (1769 CE) while they were recited in 1778 VS (1720 CE). In the concluding verse-line it becomes apparent that this work was noted down as an integral part of *duha* I, for it reads (v. 84): "iti pābūjī rā dūhā sampuraṇaṃ", here Pabuji's *duha* (not *parvaro*) ends.[57] I have not been able to establish the identity of one of the poets or reciters named in the *parvaro* as Mohandas Kavi. Mohandas Kavi is introduced in verse-line 26: "Mohandas Kavi praises the fame (of your) lineage. The son of King Dhamdhal, 'pleased with' (the poet's recitation) gave (him) a coin". And from verse-line 28, it could be understood that it is Mohandas who recited verse-lines attributed to Ladhraj: "Pabu! There is no one like you, your fame (has spread) among the people. Hearing (about your) wisdom, I will complete (the praise of) the Lord (as) sung by Ladhraj". This verse-line may suggest that Mohandas intended to finish his

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told me during visits in 2000) can only be consulted by Motisars, I have not been able to study these kinds of sources.

[54] According to Lalas (1988: 152-53), Ladhraj's father also served as a minister of state during Jaswant Singh's rule.

[55] Nainsi is believed to have committed suicide after four years in prison in 1671. As historical rumour has it, Nainsi stabbed himself in the stomach with a knife.

[56] Tod (1972 II: 186, n4) describes the Oswal as a Jain merchant class of Rajput origin named after the merchants' place of origin, Ossi in Rajasthan.

[57] In these last verse-lines, the poet mentions that his recitation contains all 302 couplets dedicated to Pabuji. Though the script under review contains only 301 couplets; *duha* I counts 260 couplets, and the *parvaro* counts 41 couplets, it is, nevertheless, clear that both poems were thought of as one composition by the poet.

recitation of Ladhraj's *duha* by reciting his own composition, the *parvaro*. But in the subsequent verse-lines it is less clear whether we are here reading a poem attributed to or written by Ladhraj, like in verse-line 29: "O, Warrior! Your glory has been praised (with my) tongue," thus spoke Ladhraj". Maybe the poet Mohandas, or the scribe Khusyal, quotes Ladhraj, or perhaps this verse-line should be understood as the rendition of his own words by Ladhraj, speaking of himself in the third person? The reference to the ruler Jaswant in verse-line 39 gives reason to think that the *parvaro* was composed by Ladhraj too, granted that he was a poet or minister at Jaswant's court. In these verse-lines, the ruler Jaswant Singh is praised and the poet recounts how Ladhraj, a courtier of Jaswant, praises Pabuji's glory. Given that it was common for medieval poets to include the praise of their patron in their compositions, it may be imagined that it is Ladhraj who is here praising his patron.

Further references to historical figures in the *parvaro* are not so helpful either like when the poet narrates how Pabuji extended his help to the Rathaur ruler of Jodhpur, Rao Gamga (c. 1483-1531), in his battle with "Sekho" and "Daulat".[58] One could imagine that the reference to Rao Gamga in the seventeenth-century *parvaro* reflects the time of composition of earlier, sixteenth-century versions of the *parvaro*, i.e. after the year 1529 when Rao Gamga's battle is thought to have taken place. But there is really no way of establishing the probability of such a conjecture. Even if I could verify this assumption, the fact remains that I will still have to deal with the problem that there exists no consensus about the date when Rao Gamga battled with Rao Sekho and Daulat Khan.

In short, on the basis of the evidence provided by the manuscript versions of the selected poems, it is no longer possible to properly document who composed or recited them. I feel that the primary data available from the manuscript versions of *duha* I and the *parvaro* suggest three possible interpretations: (1) the scribe of this manuscript-version of the *parvaro*, Pamdit Khusyal, noted down a poem as composed by Ladhraj and recited by a poet named Mohandas or, (2), Khusyal copied the written work of a poet named Mohandas of whom it is unknown when he composed the *parvaro* and quoted Ladhraj's work or, (3), Mohandas began his recitation with Ladhraj's *duha*, and added his own *parvaro* to round off his account of Ladhraj's work. I have not been able to ascertain proper dates about Ladhraj's life and I do not know how long Ladhraj lived. But if Ladhraj did indeed compose his *duha* circa 1650 while, as it has been recorded in Ms. 402, *duha* I and the *parvaro* were written down in 1769 and recited in 1720, it seems most likely that the scribe Khusyal recorded a version of the *duha* and *parvaro* as recited by Mohandas who

[58] This reference to Sekho may refer to prince Shekha, the uncle of the Rathaur Gamga Vaghavat who ruled Marwar from c. 1515-1532), who battled with the Rao over the rights to Jodhpur's throne and lost his life in the battle at Ganghani. According to Nainsi, Shekha was the son of Rao Suja, who ruled from 1492 (or 1498) till 1515, and ascended the Jodhpur throne after the death of his brother, Rao Satal (1489-1492), the eldest son of Jodha. See also G.D. Sharma (1977: 7) and Tessitori (1919a: 70).

began his recitation with Ladhraj's *duha*, and added his own *parvaro* to the end of his recitation.

About some poets of the compositions selected by me, nothing seems to be known at all. I have not been able to uncover any data about Barhata Amardas to whom the authorship of *git* IV has been attributed. About the anonymous, undated *git*s I and II, all I can say is that it has been noted in the handwritten Catalogue 2 of the Rajasthani Research Institute that the first composition was committed to paper by an unknown scribe and/or poet in 1689. Somewhat more is known about the Charan poet Samdu Cain (or Cain Samdu), whose name has been mentioned in the title of g*it* III (*gīta pābūjī rai vivāha samai rau sāṃdū cainajī rau kahiyo*). According to N.S. Bhati (1989: 300), this poet lived in nineteenth-century Marwar as the contemporary of three Rathaur rulers, Bhimsingh, Mansingh and Takhatsingh, for whom (it is said) he composed Dimgal poetry of great quality and in great quantity.[59]

There is no dearth of data about the life and works of the poet Bamkidas (1781-1833) of the Charan lineage Asiya, to whom the short *git* V has been attributed by N.S. Bhati (1989: 85).[60] This poet wrote most of his poetry at the court of the ruler Mansingh of Jodhpur (1803-1843), where he was awarded the title Kavi-raja (king-poet). According to the tradition, Bamkidas was the poet-mentor of Mansingh, who also wrote poetry. Bamkidas lost favour in Mansingh's eyes when he backed Mansingh's son Chatrasingh in his quest of the throne and got himself exiled and stripped of his land-grant. But, or so it is said, Mansingh eventually reinstated Bamkidas and forgave him "since he was a Charan poet" (N.S. Bhati 1989: 289). Bamkidas was accorded considerable fame during his lifetime and by subsequent generations of poets and historians. Thus, much of Bamkidas's work and data about his life have been well-researched, in particular through the compilation of his religious poetry, eulogies and historical prose-chronicles intermixed with poetry published under the title *Baṃkidāsa Graṃthavalī*, which continues to be an important source for the writing of Rajasthani history (cf. Shekavat1987: *passim*, 1985: *passim*). Maheshwari (1980: 75) thinks of Bamkidas as one of the last great, traditional poets of the Dimgal tradition and one of the first "modern" poets who voiced nationalist sentiments, for Bamkidas apparently employed medieval martial ideals to express anti-British sentiments.

Yet another problem that can be mentioned regarding authorship is the fact that the poet to whom a Dimgal composition has been attributed was not necessarily the poet who did indeed compose that poem or all known versions of the poem attributed to him. The attribution of a poem to a particular poet can also reflect the

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[59] The Rathaur Bhimsingh ruled Marwar from c. 1793-1803, Mansingh ruled from c. 1803 until 1843, and Takhatsingh from c. 1843 to 1873 (V.S. Rathaur 1991: 13, Dhananajaya Singh 1994: 45, 63).

[60] According to an undocumented reference in Menariya (2000: 116) Bamkidas was an *āśu-kavi*, an extempore poet who could compose poetry off-hand (i.e. without preparation). Bamkidas is also known as a chronicler of history and a knowledgeable scholar of Sanskrit, Dimgal, Prakrit, Pharsi and Braj Bhasa.

custom of performers and poets to cite the name of a contemporary or historical poet of popular acclaim to enhance the status and authenticity of their own performance or composition. A poet's name in the title of a poem may indicate a genealogy or a tradition while his name represents an "ideograph" or "a symbol that represents the idea of authorship within a particular tradition" (Novetzske 2003: 216).

As will be made apparent in the next chapter, this practice is underlined by a study of the rather different narrative content of *chamd* I and II. The titles of both *chamds* indicate that they were attributed to Meha Vithu at the time of the writing or copying of the manuscripts.[61] However, upon reading the two rather different versions of the *chamd*, questions about Vithu's authorship of both *chamd*s arise. Although the *chamd*s have some standard expressions and couplets in common, the narrative content and use of metaphors and prosodic rules in both versions are rather different. While it is not unthinkable that Vithu composed two or more different versions of poems in praise of Pabuji, the differences between the versions are such that it seems more likely that the content of both poems has been added to and was considerably changed through the centuries by several poets, reciters, scribes and/or other redactors. A more detailed discussion of the content of the *chamd*s and the differences between the two poems will be undertaken in the next chapter.

Another example of problems which may arise when trying to establish the authorship of a Dimgal poem can be read from two versions of a poem about Pabuji's wedding; the untitled, undated and anonymous manuscript version of *git* II and, secondly, *git* III, a printed version of a very similar composition, titled *gīta pābūjī rai vīvāha samai rau* (N.S. Bhati 1973: 83-84). In the handwritten version, the name of the composer, references to the name of the scribe, or the date of the manuscript are all lacking. N.S. Bhati, however, attributes the published version of this poem to the poet Samdu Cain, as can be understood from the subtitle of the published poem: *sāṃdū cainajī rau kahiyo* ("Recited by Samdu Caina"). The manuscript version and the printed text of this *git* do not vary greatly, except for the different titles and apart from the use of a few different words and distinct spellings. The fact that, in the contemporary oral tradition, yet other versions of this composition are attributed to yet other poets and are known by some reciters to count 12 instead of 11 couplets, further underlines the notion that the written manuscript poems, like contemporary printed poems, represent a tradition of "orally-derived" poems that "belong" to many different poets, and should not in all instances be thought of as the composition of one originator. This thought is further underlined by the fact that, in the contemporary oral tradition, a couplet is commonly added to the 11-couplet printed version of Samdu's poem, which, according to the poets Subh Karan Deval and Lakshmandan Samdu, was not printed

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[61] *Chamd* I: *atha mehā viṭhū rā kahīyā shrī pābujī rā chaṃda* ("Verses (dedicated to) Pabuji, recited (by) Meha Vithu") and *chamd* II, *atha pābujhī ro chaṃda mehaijhī rā kahyā* ("Verses (dedicated to) Pabuji, recited (by) Mehai Vithu"), suggesting that both compositions were either recited or composed (or both) by Meha Vithu.

in full. Both poets agreed that the following lines complete the version of *git* II known to them: "sagata tha hukamī dhinojī dhāṃdhala sutana, jagata dhina māṭa piṭa jikāṃ jiṇiyo. kahai kāḷi giravarau ukata para māṃ raga katha, samaṃdrā lagga bārakāṃṇa sugiyau sabha" (personal communication of the poets, January 2001).

The ascription of dates and authorship cannot be relied upon too heavily for, as the above discussions illustrate and my summary of Rajput history in chapter 5 also documents, it is at present difficult to establish a consensus about the names of poets, the works ascribed to them, or the dating of the lives and times of their patrons, the Rajput rulers and other lords of Marwar. This does not mean that the poets listed above were not the composer of the selected poetry or of earlier or other versions of the poems. As remarked just now, though the above-quoted names of poets and the attribution of works to one particular poet can no longer be verified beyond doubt, they do refer to a rich and often accurate oral tradition of genealogies upon which much of Charan ancestral histories, including the history of poets and their works, are based. My fieldwork in Rajasthan clarified that many oral data quoted about forefathers by different Charan poets proved to be rather consistent when compared with written accounts. Thus, while I continue to treat the above and like data with caution, I do, nevertheless, think of the listed poets' names, their works and their patrons as representing reasonably accurate oral and written records of semi-historical and historical Charan traditions, which allow us to see the selected poems as versions of compositions ascribed to (and probably indeed composed by) Vithu, Ladhraj, Mohandas, Bamkidas, Caina and Amardas. Compositions that have been added to or changed by previous and subsequent generations of traditional poets, have all become part of the medieval Pabuji tradition over the last six hundred years. And so, while I continue to attribute the compositions under review to Vithu, Ladhraj and so on, I do in referring to the poets by name also refer to unspecified poets, scribes and other redactors who composed and re-composed, recited, modified, wrote and re-wrote traditionally received poetry. All the poets, scribes and other redactors who orally and/or in writing transmitted the selected manuscript versions of the selected poems were, I imagine, at one time inspired by a shared poetic heritage that each of them felt free to treat as his own.

### *Contemporary sources*

Before turning our attention to the narrative content of the selected poems in the next chapter, let me add a few remarks about the contemporary Pabuji tradition. The above-mentioned medieval manuscript versions of poetry dedicated to Pabuji are the focus of this study. But since very little is known about the context in which medieval heroic-epic poetry about Pabuji grew, I have also studied some aspects of the extant Pabuji tradition, to better appraise the content, symbolic meaning and socio-political and religious function, which may be attributed to the medieval compositions. By combining the study of written data with oral sources I hope,

following Seneviratne (1997b: 3-23) and Vansina (1971: 442-268, 1980: 262-279), to add to the present understanding of the written tradition, in particular by asking people which function and meaning (or meanings) they currently attribute to the narrative content of their heroic-epic tradition and its performance (cf. Miner 1990: 51).

I collected written and oral poetry dedicated to Pabuji during anthropological fieldwork in Jodhpur, Kolu, Jaisalmer, Bikaner and surrounding villages. These data will not, in this or following chapters, be introduced in as much detail as the medieval sources. Instead, my recordings of the contemporary *mātā* epic dedicated to Pabuji, interviews with the Rathaur hero's Rajput devotees, and my study of contemporary Charan traditions about Pabuji and Charani goddesses will be briefly introduced in chapter 9 and 10 in which these data serve to document the meaning that may be ascribed to medieval and contemporary Charan and Bhil traditions about Pabuji. The selection of these sources for the purpose of this study has been motivated by the fact that they have proven most useful in interpreting some of the socio-political and religious, ritual aspects of Pabuji worship.

Most of the contemporary sources used for this study were collected in the heartland of the contemporary story-telling tradition about Pabuji, in Kolu, the desert village where Rajasthan's main Pabuji temple stands. Here, I collected data concerning the little-studied *mātā* (drum) epic tradition performed in the main Pabuji temple in Kolu today by the hero-god's Bhil Bhopas. The description of this tradition is part of chapter 10. In the appendix, I have included the transliterations of four contemporary *mātā* epic *paravāṛau*s[62] recorded during visits to the Kolu temple (1999-2001) titled: *Jalama rau paravāṛau*, *Byāva rau paravāṛau*, *Vāhara rau paravāṛau* (also referred to as *Ḍhaiṃbā rai sūrāpaṃṇa rau*) and *Jhararājī rau paravāṛau*. These episodes commemorate the story of Pabuji's birth and marriage, the heroic deeds of Pabuji and his Bhil companions, the revenge taken by Pabuji's nephew Jhararo. My inquiry into the *mātā* epic tradition further included conversations with the *mātā* epic performers Asha Ram, Bonne Ram, Khumbha Ram, Rupa Ram and Jetha Ram, and with their patron, the temple priest Tulsi Singh Rathaur, and conversations with several Rajput and Jat, Rebari, Nath and Brahmin devotees of Pabuji.

This study is also based upon data about the contemporary Charan tradition gathered in Jodhpur, Ajmer and Deshnok (near Bikaner). I recorded recitations of heroic poems and the performance of devotional songs by Charan poets and singers, most notably the linguist and Charan poet Subh Karan Deval (Jodhpur), the composer of traditional and contemporary Charan poetry Lakshmandan Kaviya (Kemn) and the Charan poet Shivdatta Samdu (Shiv). At Charani goddess temples in and around Deshnok, Jaisalmer and Marhwa, I was able to study many

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[62] I use *paravāṛau* to refer to the contemporary *mātā* tradition and to differentiate between this tradition's *paravāṛau*s and the earlier-discussed medieval *parvaro*.

contemporary forms of poetry, epic performance, song, semi-historical and miracle-tales and prayers transmitted by several poets, singers and other devotees of Pabuji.

*Handwritten* dohā *(contemporary Charan tradition).*

*Makeshift altar with hero stones dedicated to Pabuji (Malunga).*

# 3 Narrative Content

None of the medieval and contemporary sources selected for this study have been published in English so far though one published version exists of the *duha* I and the *parvaro* annotated in Hindi by N.S. Bhati (1973: 15-16). In addition, two published and Hindi annotated versions of *git* I (Ms. 15009) and *git* II (Ms. 8234) have also been taken into consideration for this study. The Hindi annotations of these texts, while very helpful in coming to a first understanding of the compositions, remain provisional in that several readings can not be documented through Lalas's nine-volume Rajasthani-Hindi dictionary (1962-88). My interpretation of the selected Dimgal and contemporary Rajasthani (Marwari) poems is, in the first place, based on Lalas's dictionary. Apart from Lalas's dictionary (1962-88), and his introduction to Rajasthani grammar (1988), John D. Smith's (1975, 1976, 1979) descriptions of the language of medieval prose and contemporary poetry have proved most helpful. In addition, I have also consulted Tessitori's (1914-1921) *Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana* and grammatical notes in the *Indian Antiquary*, which, though out of date, continue to be helpful especially in the absence of exhaustive modern studies on the subject. Most existing studies of Rajasthani are either based on Tessitori's survey or limited to medieval prose-texts (Pimgal) or to a narrow discussion of phonological or grammatical aspects of Rajasthani vernaculars, often not including Dimgal.[63] To appraise the content, form and context of the medieval manuscript tradition, a study of the prosody of the medieval tradition proved necessary. For matters of Dimgal prosody I have consulted Narayan Singh Bhati's (1989) *Pracin Dimgal Git Sahity*, and two nineteenth-century works on Dimgal prosody, firstly the *Raghunāth Rūpak*, a poets' manual composed by Mamch Kavi from Jodhpur and edited by Kharair (1999: 12). Secondly, Lalas's (1960) edition of the rather complex prosodic manual *Raghuvarajasaprakās* composed in 1823 by Kisana Arha also proved helpful.

When I could not trace particular word-usages to Lalas's extended Rajasthani dictionary, contemporary poets and scholars have been my major source of reference, in particular: Subh Karan Deval (Jodhpur), Chamdra Prakash Deval (Charan Research Institute, Ajmer), Sohan Dan Charan (University of Jodhpur) and Bhamvar Singh Samaur (Taranagar College). The interpretation of the poets

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[63] The following works deal with one or more aspects of medieval Rajasthani prose and/or Dimgal poetry: Allen (1957, 1960), Asopa (1950), Bahal (1972, 1989), Bender (1992: 34), Lalas (1960, 1962-88), Menariya (1968, 2000), K. Sharma and S. Singh (1982), Smith (1975, 1976, 1979), Varma (1973) and Ziegler (1976a, 1976b). As is to be expected, contemporary Marwari by Bhal (1980, 1972), Gusain (2004), Khokholva (2002), Mali "Ashanta" (1994) and Saint (1986, 1988) do not refer to the content and form of Dimgal poetry.

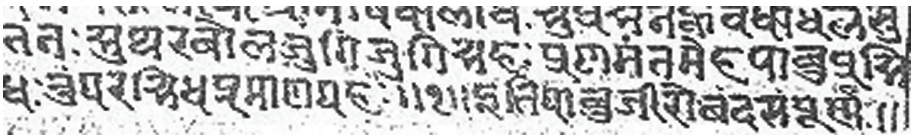
consulted by me, in particular their assessment of poetic metaphors, is based upon their professional knowledge of the contemporary Pabuji tradition, including oral and written transmission of medieval poetry. Despite all this help, some transliterative inaccuracies and debatable interpretations may have remained. Needless to say, all such oversights are wholly my responsibility.

Before turning our attention to the overview of the medieval poems' subject matter, it should also be noted here that the following synopsis is aimed at giving an idea of the content and narrative modes of the poems but not of their prosodic form. The English elucidation of the content of the medieval sources and the quotations of Dimgal verse-lines in this chapter (and in the further course of this study) are emphatically presented as interpretations and not as translations. The latter enterprise would require a far more detailed knowledge of Dimgal grammatical forms, spelling and vocabulary than I can lay claim to. Nor does the present scholarly appraisal of Dimgal poetry allow for such a claim.

The English prose rendition of my interpretations of Dimgal verse-lines have been kept as unembellished as possible to give an idea of the (to my mind and ears) vibrant and forceful quality of the language used by the poets, a quality which is brought to mind by their choice of words and images and, most of all, by the alliterative rhythm of their verse-lines. I illustrate my prose interpretations with evocative quotations of Dimgal verse-lines but I make no attempt to render the poems' rhythm and rhyme. An idea of the poems' expressive qualities can be gleaned from chapter 4, in which I discuss Dimgal prosody and the way it shaped medieval poetry.

My effort to keep my English prose renditions of Dimgal as plain and straightforward as possible also means that I usually opt to represent only one interpretation of a verse-line (the interpretation which to my mind is the most likely one) and not several possible interpretations, save when the different interpretations result in evidently contradictory meanings. I have endeavoured to present the reader with interpretations which require as little as possible additional speculation about likely connotations. When viable, I opt for the primary meaning listed in Lalas's Rajasthani dictionaries (1962-1988) and do not discus the many secondary meanings and poetic synonyms listed by Lalas, thus hoping to avoid conjecture as far as one can avoid speculation when trying to reconstruct meanings from texts informed by other communities' histories, representing very different periods of time and languages and a complex poetic style.

One example of the different ways in which a Dimgal verse-line can be interpreted is the interpretation of verse-line 101 of *chamd* II:

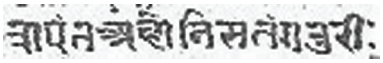


*101. praṇamaṃta meha pābu prasidha,(t)uṃ parasidha pramāṇa paha(ṃ).*

In this line, the undecided notation of *tuṃ*/ *uṃ* may result in two readings. First, if *tuṃ parasidha* is read as *uṃpara sidha*, and *uṃpara* is subsequently read as *ūṃpara*, "upon", "over" (cf. Metzger 2003: 54) or as *upara* (a form of Sanskrit *ūparī* or of Rajasthani *ūpara*) the verse-line could be interpreted as: "Meha 'salutes' Pabuji('s) glory, 'in heaven'[64] (he is) a semi-divine being[65] comparable to God". But, taking in to account the word-order of this verse-line ("tuṃ parasidha pramāṇa paha(ṃ)") would result in the literal interpretation: "you glory[66] equal to lord". Thus, yet another (and to my mind more likely) interpretation suggests itself: "*Meha 'salutes' Pabuji('s) glory (saying): "You (have) glory like god"*. In my experience, word order is often the best way to deduct what the meaning of the sentence may be, especially in the absence of verbs or clear grammatical indications to interpret full or half verse-lines. I therefore try to adhere to the original order of the words in a verse-line as much as I can, especially when a verse-line can be interpreted in several different ways. I therefore interpret v. 101 as listed just now (that is, as "*Meha 'salutes' Pabuji('s) glory (saying): "You (have) glory like god"*). In addition, I am inclined to read *"You (have) glory like god"* as "your glory is similar to god's glory". Though one could read this verse-line as a way to point up Pabuji's deification by defining him as God, I give preference to a more straightforward interpretation: the poet intended to glorify Pabuji's heroism by comparing his fame to divine glory.

My reading of the first half of the second verse-line as *tuṃ parasidha* and not as *uṃpara sidha* is also based on a comparison of the orthography of *tu* and *u* and *ū* which were written in two distinct ways throughout *chamd* II. "Tu" occurs four times in c*hamd* II, in v. 28: *turī*, v. 40: *turaṃga*, v. 51: *turaṃga*, and v. 101: *tuṃ*, while "u" and "uu" occur ten times in *chamd* II: v. 27: *u(ṃ)laṭīyaṃ*, v. 31: *vāhā-u*, v. 32: *upāṛai*, 33: *uṭhīyau*, v. 56: *ukara* and *ūpaḍi*, v. 59: *ūraṛīyai*, v. 76: *u(ṃ)tha*, v. 86: *uṃchāla*, v. 97: *ūja*. The four occurrences of *tu* have been written in one of the following two ways:

See, for example, *chamd* II (v. 28) *turī* (in "trāpaṃta aho nisa taṃga turī"):

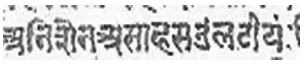


The ten occurrences of *u* and *ū* in *chamd* II have been written in one of the following

[64] Interpreting *ūpara* ("upper", "above") as 'in heaven'.
[65] Taking *sidha* to be a form of *siddha* (a semi-divine being, an accomplished being or powerfull ascetic).
[66] Reading *parasidha* as *parasiddha* (glory, fame).

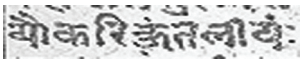
three ways:

See for example *u(ṃ)laṭīyaṃ* ((*chamd* II, v. 27: "ani ona asā hasa u(ṃ)laṭīyāṃ"):



There is, as is often the case with the manuscript poems studied here, an exception to the above findings for in *chamd* II, v. 41, *ū* has been written in a manner similar to *tū*:

*Chamd* II, v. 41, *ūṃta līyaṃ*:



On the basis of above arguments, I would suggest that verse-line 101 is best read as: "tuṃ parasidha pramāṇa paha(ṃ)". Though it is of course conceivable that the poet or scribe of *chamd* II meant to write *uṃpara* in v. 101, I feel that it is more likely that the poet or scribe meant to write *tuṃ para* and that in this case, as in many other instances, a straightforward interpretation is the most logical and judicious.

To finish this introduction to my interpretation of the selected sources, it should be noted that I use single quotations marks to denote non-literal interpretations (as compared with Lalas's translations of the words) of Dimgal words. Words between brackets indicate necessary additions to create comprehensible English sentences. See, for example, the above-listed rendition of my interpretation of verse-line 101 (*chamd* II): "*Meha 'salutes' Pabuji('s) glory (saying): "You (have) glory like god"*.

*Chamd* I

My summary of the content of the *chamd*s, *duha*s, *git*s and *parvaro* begins with an outline of two versions of the *chamd* attributed to the Charan poet Meha Vithu. The poet(s) and/or scribe(s) of both works focus attention on the martial disposition of the warriors and the exaltation of their passion for war. Some of the opening verse-lines of *chamd* I and II resemble each other to a great extent. Both poets commence with an evocation of the glory of Pabuji's lineage and his valour as a warrior and protector of cattle. Next in the *chaṃda troṭaka* of both manuscripts, we read how the heroes prepare for battle as the poets evoke the warriors' challenges, enmity, pride and anger. But from *chamd* I verse-line 13 and *chamd* II verse-line 11 onwards, the wording of the two poems ascribed to Vithu shows little resemblance.[67]

The poet of *chamd* I commences with Vithu's praise of Ram, Sarasvati and his unnamed gurus (v. 1) followed by 6 verse-lines composed under the heading *gāhā cosara*[68] which introduce Pabuji as a "glorious warrior" and "protector of cows". The poet then pays tribute to the valour of both the heroes Pabuji Dhamdhal Rathaur and Jimda Khici.[69] Both are portrayed as the champions of their lineage who proved their heroism in war:

7. jīṃdā pāla vi(ṃ)nai jagajeṭhī, jūdha jaivaṃta vinai jagajeṭhī
8. juṛasī judha vinai jagajeṭhī, jāgai vaira vinai jagajeṭhī
9. jagajeṭhīyaṃ jīdā pāla jage, adhapati anamīṃya āpa vage

I interpret these lines as follows:

*7. Jimda (and) the protector (Pabu) (you are) both heroes,*[70] *both heroes (are) victorious (in) battle.*
*8. Both heroes will fight the battle, in both heroes enmity burns.*
9. *The glorious heroes Jimda and the protector (Pabu) prepare (for battle), and the mighty king attacks (the enemy) himself.*

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[67] Though there continues to be some similarities in imagery and/or word choice, as will be remarked upon through footnotes below.

[68] A metre which has also been termed "aryā chaṃda", described in chapter 3.

[69] The names accorded to the main protagonists differ from manuscript to manuscript; sometimes as the result of the addition of titles (like when Jimda Khici has *rāva* ("king") added to his name in *chamd* I) or as the result of different spellings. I do not note the different spellings, and throughout this study refer to the main protagonists as follows: Pabuji Dhamdhal Rathaur, Jimda Khici, Camda, Deval and Jhararo. Pabuji is the only protagonist who has the honorific suffix *jī* added to his name, a custom which is not always followed in the manuscript tradition but which is common practice in Rajasthan today.

[70] I take both *jīṃdā* and *pāla* to be direct forms., bearing in mind Smith's (1975: 451) finding that Rajasthani proper names may retain a direct form in all functions.

The subsequent verse-lines (v. 9 to 58) have been composed under the heading *chaṃda troṭaka*.[71] In these verse-lines, the poet evokes the adversaries' preparations for war and how they engage in battle with boundless anger and with hostility "blazing like a forest fire".[72] In verse-lines 14 and 15, two references to Jimda's theft of cattle are found; first, in the account of Pabuji's attack on the (cattle) thief Jimda and second in the allusion to "a woman" who exhorts Pabuji to attack the Khici warrior, if Pabuji feels he is brave enough. It seems probable that the woman mentioned stands for Deval, the Charani cattle keeper who turns to Pabuji for help after Jimda robs her of her cows. On hearing the woman's appeal, Pabuji's anger flares as if clarified butter was poured on it. His eyes redden with anger and he attacks the enemy while the ends of his moustache move upwards and meet his eyebrows in a frightful scowl. Vithu further underlines Pabuji's strength by narrating how the hero's arms reach the sky and by comparing his mighty appearance to Vishnu's fifth incarnation, the dwarf Tikam:

17. bhita cola cakhīya ata rosa bhile, mukha mūṃcha aṇīṃ jāya mūṃha mile
18. vadhiyā bhuja vyauma lagai vimalā, krama detaha ṭīkama jema kalā

17. *(With) very red eyes (due to) anger, he fights the fearful (enemy), the ends (of his) moustache move (upwards) (and) meet (his) eyebrows.*
18. *(His) outstretched arm(s) touch the sky (and) (the goddess) Vimala,*[73]*(his) power (is) like (the power of Vishnu's avatar) Tikam, he effects (good) deeds.*

In verse-lines 19 to 22, Pabuji's attack on Jimda is described, the way in which he leads his army while uttering war cries and the assembled warriors' longing for death, which can be read from the fact that they have smeared their bodies with ashes thus following the example set by the ascetic Shiva. The poet also brings to mind how the warriors' horses gallop and cause dust to fly up. In verse-line 23 Pabuji's anger is described thus: "The fiery red face (of) the (Rathaur) warrior 'shone' like a ray of sunlight (through) clouds".[74] Then the poet praises the bravery of the Rathaur warrior and his 140 Bhil heroes (*sātavīsīya sūra*) [75] and he also extols the speeds of the heroes' horses by comparing it to the swiftness of birds of prey (v. 24-27).

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[71] The metrical form of the *chaṃda trotaka* is described in chapter 3.
[72] I read *laggi* as *lāgi* in verse-line 13 ("vaya saṃdara laggi dhramaṃga vikhaiṃ").
[73] The name occurs as *vrimalā* in a comparable verse-line in *chamd* II (v. 35): "vadhīyā bhujha(ṃ) vauma lagai vrimalā, krama detai tīkama jhema kalā". In both chamds, the *ā*-ending perhaps presents an example of a logical feminine form showing a masculine ending, perhaps as a token of respect for the goddess (cf. Smith 1975: 449).
[74] *Chamd* I (v. 23): "kamadhaja vadaṃna udāta kirā, kari sūrija nīṃsarīyo sihashāṃ".
[75] The title *sātavīsīya sūra* ("7 x 20 = 140 heroes") has remained in use for Pabuji's Bhil companions who are today identified as "sātabīsī Thorī" ("140 Thoris").

During the struggle, blood gushes like water and young warriors marry nymphs, that is: they die in battle. Narada[76] and Simbha (Shiva) express their delight at the bloodshed. From verse-line 28 onwards, Shakti and thousands of battle-loving Yoginis (Khecaris) join the struggle:

28. patra pūri sakatīya rata pīyai, lakha khecara(ṃ) bhūcara bhakhalīyai
29. kei yaṃkhaṇa grihyaṇa koḍa karaiṃ, pala guda gila gila peṭa bharai

28. *Filling (her) begging-bowl, Shakti drinks (the warriors') blood, (while) countless Khecaris devour*[77] *(the) demons.*
29. *Several (Khecaris) 'delight (in)'* [78] *digging out the eyes (of demons),*[79] *(and) fill (their) stomach(s) (by) clawing (at) the (demons') flesh (and) eating greedily.*

The poet describes how the Khecaris cut the demon-army's swords to pieces with their swords and break their enemy's helmets. To illustrate the Goddess's craving for the blood of fallen warriors, her begging bowl is compared to the vessel of a *paṇihāri* (a woman carrying water). And the water which would ordinarily fill a *paṇihāri*'s vessel is equated with the warrior's blood: "paṇiṃhāri sakatīya kūbhaṃ patrāṃ, ghaṇa ghāṭa bharaiṃ jala rūka ratrāṃ" (v. 34).

The warriors - probably from both Pabuji's and Jimda's army - ride elephants and horses and are shown to wield clubs and maces (v. 35-38). They die fighting, while their heads fall to the ground and "roll round and round 'serving' (as) cushion (for) some (of the headless) torso(s)".[80] Pabuji expresses his desire to confront the enemy through loud battle cries. Musical war instruments resonate. Many more warriors perish from the wounds inflicted by countless swords. The ascetic Shiva collects the skulls of the vanquished warriors. All the while, warriors continue to give battle. They take out arrows from the arrow holders around their waist and place them upon their bows. Holding the arrows in his hand, a young warrior (*javāna*) enters the battle. Though it is not very clear to whom *javāna* was meant to refer, it is probably Pabuji since he is commonly portrayed as "young" (12 to 14 years old) in the contemporary tradition.

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[76] Narada may refer to a mythic sage, to one of the four sons of Brahma or may be used in a transferred sense as tale-bearer or troublemaker, refering to the sage Narada as the first singer of devotional songs who, according to the Sant tradition, was a musician, storyteller, a witness of events and a traveler who carried news (Novetzske (2003: 222).

[77] A more literal interpretation is: "they take food" (*bhakhalīyai*). I read "līyai" as *liyai*, the inflected present of *liyaṇau*, a form of *laiṇau* (to take).

[78] A more literal interpretation is: "delight because of" (*grihyaṇa*).

[79] In this and the following verse-line it is uncertain whether the Khecaris are feasting on the eyes and bodies of demons or fallen warriors who are portrayed as demons, or on other kinds of flesh.

[80] *Chamd* I (v. 36): "taṛaphaiṃ dhaṛa hekaṃ dīyaiṃ takīyā, chalakā judha heka karaiṃ chakīyā".

My interpretation of the next verse-line (40) remains ambiguous, since I have not been able to establish whether or not *lagarī*, *baharī*, *gaharī* and *laharī* are Charani goddesses (as opined by contemporary poets), or whether we are dealing with verbs when we read: "lagarī baharī gaharī laharī, tira vāṃsuri vāṃ tahiṃ jāya tirī". Lagari could be understood as a reference to the Charani goddesses Lamgari but I have not been able to trace goddesses named Bahari, Gahari or Lahari. If we are not dealing with goddesses, this verse-line was perhaps meant to say: "Swiftly the terrifying goddess(es) appeared, (and) feeling thirsty, they go (and) arrive at the 'blood vessels'".[81] This interpretation does seem appropriate, for in the poet's subsequent verse-lines (41-43) angry Rupanis[82] and Yoginis tear apart the warriors' bodies with their teeth, an illustration of the goddessess' blood-thirst in verse-line 40. And it is described how the ascetic Shiva (Jaṭa) wanders among the goddesses collecting the warriors' skulls.

Verse-lines 42 to 47 evoke the clash between Pabuji's and Jimda's armies and the way in which Rupanis join the Yoginis and Narada in applauding the heroes and sounding the *ḍāka*, the musical instrument of the god of war. Then, Pabuji's army advances upon the enemy and the subsequent collision of the two armies is compared to the dismal scene that ensues when vultures meet their impoverished maternal family (verse-line 45).[83] From this image it may be inferred that the enemies are wholly intent upon destroying each other, for their hostility and voracity are comparable to those of vultures that loot their maternal in-laws of even the few possessions left to them after paying the substantial dowry involved in their daughter's marriage (personal communication Subh Karan Deval, June 2001). From verse-line 47 onwards, the battle proceeds. The enemy army is surrounded by three army divisions as if submerged by a waterfall, while "Bodies (and) heads fall (with) a thud (and) continue to fall upon the earth, plunging (into) streams (of) blood with a splash" (v. 49).[84] Warriors strike out with swords and swordsticks. Warriors from the thirty-six Rajput lineages perish and thus come to meet the god of the death, Yama.[85] Other warriors continue to clash time and again while arrows rain down like raindrops; "the glory (of) the cloud-army".[86]

At the site where Jimda stole the cows, the warriors' sword blades are washed, probably with the blood shed by the enemy. The two armies continue to clash. Some warriors burn with anger, other die in battle. Some warriors take flight, others

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[81] Reading *vāṃtahiṃ* as *vātahī*.

[82] Probably a reference to Shakti's local incarnations known as Charani Sagatis.

[83] *Chamd* I (v. 45):"māṃsāla bhukhāla paṃkhāla miḷe".

[84] *Chamd* I (v. 49): "paṛa vesa daṛa daṛa sīsa paṛai, dhari dhāri ragata guṛika dhaṛai(ṃ)".

[85] With the symbolic number "thirty-six" (*chatrisa*), the poet most likely meant to refer to the thirty-six clans of medieval Rajput genealogies (Chattopadhyaya 1994: 56-60).

[86] *Chamd* I (v. 52): "ati dhīra maṃḍaiṃ rāṃṇavīca aṛai, paṇagāṃ ghaṇa nīra jyuṃ tī paṛai". I interpret *ghaṇa* ("cloud", "group" or "army") as "cloud-army".

continue their attacks on the enemy. Daggers come down like thunderbolts.[87] In the last two verse-lines, the poet evokes the terror felt by horses and cows amid the din of battle. Many warriors flee upon being attacked by Pabuji. Thus Pabuji attacked Jimda, concludes the poet. This interpretation of *chamd* I does not include Pabuji's death and subsequent ascent to heaven, a common theme of the tradition. However, if "parai(ṃ)" in verse-line 58 can be read as *pa-r-ai(ṃ)*, this last verse-line may also be taken to mean: "Jimda 'causes' Pabu 'to be killed'".[88] In view of the sentence's word order [*pābu jiṃdarāva suṃ āya parai(ṃ)*] the verse-line could also be taken to mean: "Pabuji 'causes' Jimda 'to be killed'". This construal seems the most obvious but it is not at all common to either the medieval or the contemporary Pabuji tradition. To my knowledge, there exist no versions of Pabuji's tale which end with Jimda's death at the hands of Pabuji. Thus, considering the not so forthright reading of *parai(ṃ)* and the atypical theme of Jimda's death at Pabuji's hands, I feel that neither of the offered interpretations (either "Jimda 'causes' Pabu 'to be killed'", or "Pabuji 'causes' Jimda 'to be killed'") can be presented as more plausible than the other.

### *Chamd* II

The undated *chamd* II begins, not with the praise of gods, like *chamd* I, but with the portrayal of the battle preparations and war-deeds of the Rajput protagonists. The initial verse-lines closely resemble the *gāhā cosara* of *chamd* I but the verse-lines have not (like in *chamd* I) been composed under the heading. Verse-lines 7 to 95 were composed under the heading *chaṃda troṭaka*, and include an account of the valour of Pabuji's Bhil warriors and a description of the battle proceedings. Compared with the narrative of *chamd* I, the narrative progression of the *chaṃda troṭaka* of *chamd* II is very slow and at times ambiguous. And this version of the *chamd* (unlike *chamd* I) does not seem to have been composed to present, to some extent, a chronological account of the warriors' battle deeds. On the contrary, the detailed evocation of the warriors' moods and the clamour of battle in *chamd* II often results in a indistinct narrative sequence, not just because of the effusive descriptions of the clash of arms but also (as will be specified in chapter 4) because of the abundant use of alliteration, onomatopoeia and forceful rhyme schemes. Another difference between the two *chamd*s is that *chamd* II (but not *chamd* I) is

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[87] *Chamd* I (v.56): "riṃṇātāla vahaiṃ ghaṇa rosarīyā, ulāṃ jiṃma golāya u sarīyā". I interpret *golāya* as a form of *goliyau* (a kind of dagger) and *ulāṃ* as *olāṃ* ("thunderbolt"). A more straightforward and modern reading is suggested by Hindi *golāya* ("cannon ball, shell") or Rajasthani *golī* ("a round lump or ball") which would allow the following interpretation: "shells come down like hailstones" or "(canon) balls come down like hailstones". Though the first-mentioned interpretation is clearly problematic, I prefer it to the latter interpretations, since the medieval poets do not make any other references to shells, canons or guns, in this or any of the other selected compositions.

[88] *Chamd* I (v.58): "pharaḷaṃta ghaṛā masalaṃta phirai, pābu jiṃdarāva suṃ āya parai(ṃ)".

drawn to a close with a 6 verse-lines long *kalasa (kailash ro chappai*) in which the poet gives a summary of the battle between Pabuji and Jimda and once again glorifies the Rathaur hero.

The narrative content of *chamd* II is also distinctly different from the above rendering of Pabuji's story, for its poet accords a central role to Pabuji's Bhil companions through the praise of their war skills. Besides, the poet not only portrays the Bhil hero and Pabuji's army commander Camda, as is the case in most of the other poems, but also mentions the Bhil warriors Khamku, Pemal, Khamdhar, Mehal, Pail and Vishal. *Chamd* II is also different from *chamd* I because of its onomatopoeic rendition of battle, rendering the atmosphere and sounds of warfare in a manner unlike any of the other studied manuscripts. The attention given to the poetic and aural particulars of war, now and then, causes confusion since it is not always easy to make out which event or which protagonist the poet had in mind. I shall come back to this point later when discussing some of the more ambiguous verse-lines of *chamd* II in their context.

As remarked just now: it appears that *chamd* II was not composed to give a sequential account of battle but to evoke the warriors' moods and the clamour of battle in great detail through poetic descriptions of the clash of arms, profuse onomatopoeia and vigorous rhyme. Because of its style, and because of its, at times, rather indistinct and blotched handwriting, as well as the lack of an obvious story-line, *chamd* II proved to be the least easily accessible composition studied by me.

The poet of *chamd* II introduces Pabuji and Jimda in much the same manner as the poet of *chamd* I (see above) and then continues to list the poetic particulars of the warriors' armour and weaponry, noting the warriors' saffron-coloured body armour and chain mail, the way in which they prepare for battle by buckling their armour-belts, donning helmets, shields for their thighs, protective coverings for their hands and girding on swords whet by blacksmiths.

15. bhala hoi huka(ṃ)ma sanāha bhara(ṃ), kasīya(ṃ)(ta)[89] jarada kaṛī bakaṛaṃ[90]
16. kisi ṭopa raṃgāvali kaṃga[91] līyāṃ, sira hāṃthala soha sirai kasīyaṃ

15. *The warriors [with] armour, the weapon-wielders [with] saffron-coloured armour [and] armour [of] heavy metal rings, 'became' numerous [on] command.*
16. *All the best [warriors] [were] ready, wearing helmets [and] thigh protection, adorned with protection for the fingers, taking their swords.*

The array of splendidly decked out warriors is again (like in *chamd* I) referred to as the "thirty-six" (Rajput lineages). The saddling and decoration of the horses are

[89] Unclear. Perhaps: *te*.
[90] Perhaps: *chakaṛaṃ*.
[91] Unclear. Perhaps*: kraṃga* or *kūṃga*.

versified, including the use of saddles and brittles, horse armour and war-bells. Attendants are urged to bring the saddled horses.[92] The warriors mount their horses and ride against the enemy. The earth lowers under the weight of the manoeuvring army, and Shesnag, the mythological snake who upholds the earth, can no longer support his burden. Resembling the god of the dead Yama, Jimda also presses on and reaches Pabuji's realm with an army as large as the sacred mountain Sumeru.

One of the two armies (probably Jimda's army) seizes wealth (probably cattle). Then Pabuji and Jimda clash, issuing challenges and pledging to conquer their enemy. Jimda crosses the border of Pabuji's territory and faces the Rathaur army. At this point (v. 34), we once more encounter a description of Pabuji's facial expression which (like in *chamd* I) serves to evoke the hero's anger:

34. bhrita cola cakhī ati rosa bhilī, mukha muṃcha aṃṇī jāi bhuṃha milī[93]
35. vadhīyā bhujha(ṃ) vauma lagai v(r)imalā, krama detai tīkama jhema kalā[94]

34. *(He is) very angry, (with) very red eyes he attacks, (his) moustache moving (upwards), goes (to his) eyebrows (and) meets (his eyebrows).*[95]
35. *(His) outstretched arm(s) touch the sky (and) (the goddess) Vrimala, (his) power (is) like (the power of Vishnu's avatar) Tikam, he effects good deeds.*

Pabuji exhorts his men to attack as fast as clouds and the war-zealous combatants race their horses. At this stage (v. 38-40), the poet digresses from his sequential account of the battle proceedings and the story-line becomes redundant; the poet once again describes how Pabuji's horse is decorated and the saddle straps tightened, after which Pabuji's servants salute their lord. [96]And the poet again evokes how the Rathaur hero puts on his armour, before resuming his narrative with an account of how Pabuji takes his spear in hand and spurs on his horse (v. 41). Here, almost halfway-through *chamd* II, the Bhil warriors are introduced (v. 42), and their qualities extolled. Pabuji's valiant Paradhi (Bhil) companions are shown to fight as valiantly as their lord, for their courage does not waver, not even when confronted with vultures crowding the battlefield and devouring fallen warriors, picking at the eyes of corpses with their beaks:

42. bha-(u) pālha taṇā pārādha bhaṛaṃ, āghā anabhaṃga jhisā anaṛaṃ
43. varīyāma saṃgrāma jhihāṃma va(ṃ)pe, kīyā tili kaṃdīla su cīla kape

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[92] *Chamd* II (v. 19): "19. kari vāra ma lāvau vega kahai, vīṇāra viṛa(ṃ)gāṃ jīṇa vahai". It is not clear who urges whom.
[93] Compare *chamd* I (v. 17): "bhita cola cakhīya ata rosa bhile, mukha mūṃcha aṇīṃ jāya mūṃha mile".
[94] Compare *chamd* I (v. 18): "vadhiyā bhuja vyauma lagai vimalā, krama deta ha ṭīkama jema kalā".
[95] That is to say: his moustache moves upwards to meet his eyebrows in a terrifying scowl.
[96] Here and in other instances, I use the term "redundant" as a technical term to refer to digressions from a narrative's sequential order and not as an aesthetic judgement of such digressions.

42. *Pabuji's Paradhi warrior(s) attacked as heroically (as) the hero (Pabuji)*
43. *'There', near the bodie(s) (of) the glorious (warriors), the vultures cut with (their) beaks (at) the pupils (of) eyes*[97]

The poet emphasizes that the 140 Bhil archers never weary of battle. Decked out like the god of the dead, the great warrior Yam, they present a fearsome picture. Among the Bhil warriors, Camda, Pabuji's commander-in-chief, is decked out most splendidly for "he shines (like) the full moon amid stars".[98] The poet also lists the names and virtues of the Bhil warriors Khamku, Pemal, Khamdhar, Visal:[99]

48. khākhu[100] pemala khaṃdhāra khalai, vagavālata vīsala vīsavalai
49. bhaṛa hekā heka vasekha bhaṛaṃ, pāradhī pāyaka pālha taṇa(ṃ)

48. *The mighty warrior(s) Khamku, Pemal (and) Khamdhar, attack (and) confront the army (and) Visal 'conquers the earth'.*
49. *We recite the (Bhil) warriors' matchless (qualities) one by one, the Paradhi (are) the servants of the protector (Pabuji)*[101]

The Bhils are further described as loyal to their "very praiseworthy (and) virtuous lord" Pabuji. Together the Paradhi make up an army of archers, which makes the earth tremble once they are on the move. The poet of *chamd* II has the Paradhi wield bows and arrows, daggers and swords and an unspecified weapon "to strike and throw with": *karjora* (cf. Lalas 1962-1988).

The Paradhi army confronts Jimda's soldiers in verse-line 54. The latter are described as Lodhi warriors, perhaps to suggest that Jimda and/or some of his men owed allegiance to the Sultanate. Time and again, the warriors from both armies attack. Thus they accomplish their desire "to obtain heaven", i.e. they die. While the

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[97] This verse-line could also be understood as a portent of the Bhil's heroic death after which they will fall prey to vultures or as an illustration of the bravery of the Bhil warriors who fight on amid vultures feasting on the bodies of fallen soldiers. It is also possible that the poet meant to evoke an image of Bhil warriors who fight on while vultures peck at their eyes to highlight the warriors' heroism in a manner comparable to imagery that evoked warriors stoically rolling their moustaches and uttering battle cries even after their entrails spilled out of their cut abdomen and attracted hungry vultures that began to circle above the warriors (Kaviya 1997: 162).

[98] *Chamd* II (v. 41): "suhaṛāṃ caṃdīyau iṇa rūpa sajhe, mila pūnima caṃda nikṣatra majhai".

[99] Visalai is not a name used in any of the other sources known to me, but could be a form of "Vaasalo", listed by Tessitori's (1916: 110) as the name of one of the seven Bhil in Pabuji's retinue.

[100] Unclear. Probably *khāṃkhu* (cf. *chamd* II, v. 93: "lo(ṃ)hāṃ baliyā vaka sraga lahe, riṇa khāṃkhu pemala sati rahai").

[101] This verse-line could also be interpreted as: "we recite (the names) of the matchless warriors one by one".

army thunders in rage and clouds of dust fly up to the sky, Pabuji stands firm, his body covered with dust and ashes like Mahesh (Shiva). The hero's face "broke (through) amidst clouds like (a) blazing sunray".[102] Issuing taunts, Pabuji disbands the enemy vanguard. Then, both armies have war-drums played and the assembled vultures "smirk" for they look forward to an extensive meal. Narad's[103] heroes also arrive at the theatre of battle and rejoice, clapping their hands, while Yoginis thump their drums. The two armies clash and the warriors' anger flashes like lightning between dark clouds. Arrow-volleys cast dark shadows over the battle scene. In the next verse-line (67), the poet appears to suggest that the Paradhi decapitate "the army of the thief (Jimda)" by swallowing the enemy warriors' heads.[104] This (to me not altogether clear) verse-line was perhaps meant to imply that the Paradhi devoured their opponents' heads just like the sun and the moon are thought to be devoured by the mythological demon Rahu (who together with Ketu) is believed to cause eclipses by capturing the sun and moon in his mouth.

From verse-line 60 to verse-line 81, the poet evokes the battle between Pabuji, Jimda and their armies in some detail. Blood flows, warriors fall and gods assemble and praise their conduct of war. At this point, the aural details of battle are added to the poetic descriptions of the clash of arms. With an abundant use of onomatopoeia, the poet evokes the roar of warriors, the swish of arrows, the clash and clang of weapons, the sound of cloth tearing when body armour is ripped apart by arrowheads, the "peacock-like" cry of horses and the thuds that resound when dead bodies fall to the ground. The poet directs all attention towards the forceful evocation of the din and clamour of battle, and it is for this reason, I imagine, that the chronological account of the battle proceedings becomes a bit hazy at this point for it is, at times, difficult to tell which of the protagonists or which army is manoeuvring.

In verse-lines 60 to 67, it is still clear that the poet is speaking of Pabuji's army on the verge of attack but in the subsequent verse-lines (68-76) the poet gives few clues to establish which army retreats in terror or who brandishes weapons, clashes, staggers and exchanges hostile glances. It is equally unclear whether it is Pabuji's or Jimda's army that is meant when the poet describes how warriors are brought to a halt (79-80):

79. nīyachaṭa pahaṭa nihaṭa nare, sara sāra saṃbāra samāra sa(ṃ)re
80. khalakaṭa vikaṭa āvaṭa khisai, vīya chaṭa sobhaṭa maṃsaṭa vasai

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[102] *Chamd* II (v. 58): "kamadhaja vadana sajoti karāṃ, suraji nīsarīyo seharā". See also *chamd* I (v. 23): "kamadhaja vadaṃna udāta kirā, kari sūrija nīṃsarīyo sihashāṃ".

[103] It is not clear whether Narad in this instance refers to the sage Narad or whether it is used in a transferred sense, denoting "tale-bearer", "causer of quarrels" or "argumentative person".

[104] *Chamd* II (v. 67): "samarī gaṇī pāradhīye savare, kīyā kuṃḍala rāha ganāma karai".

79. *They bring (the) warriors to a halt (with) (an) attack, (they) hurl weapons, they sharpen swords and arrows (and) inflict wounds.*
80. *They drive back the great army (during) the carnage, and the great heroe(s) (are) 'beleaguered' (and) brought to a standstill.*

The references to a "great army" and "great heroes" seem to suggest that the poet here describes the army and heroes of his main protagonist Pabuji. But it is also possible that he meant to describe Jimda's army and warriors in the above terms. For, as we saw just now, both Pabuji and Jimda are introduced as equal heroes: the champions of their lineage who proved their heroism in war. Consequently, it is not unimaginable that the poet would have described Jimda's army as a great army of heroes and it is, therefore, not really evident whether it is Pabuji's or Jimda's army, which eventually conquers its enemy in the above-quoted verse-lines. The latter interpretation seems the most likely one, keeping in mind that in most versions of the story it is not Pabuji who wins the battle but Jimda.

From verse-line 82 onwards, it becomes clear again whom the poet intended to describe since it is stated that the "Protector Pabuji" battles with sword in hand alongside his warriors. In the last twelve verse-lines (83-95) of the *chaṃda troṭaka*, the poet draws his battle description to a close with, once again, a comprehensive recording of the heroic stance of Pabuji and his Paradhi warriors and, in conclusion, with the portrayal of their death. Pabuji, stained with blood and roaring, jumps into the middle of the battlefield and breathes his last during the ensuing battle. Around him warriors fall like a watercourse flowing down. This is a festive occasion for the heavenly nymphs who are stringing garlands to court the fallen warriors with. And on earth, the vultures also celebrate because they get to feast on "juicy meatballs" (*gudāla rasāla*), i.e. the combatants' corpses. Then (in verse-line 91) the poet expressly describes the battle and fall of the "great warrior" (Pabuji) as a libation (*dhārāṃ*) and a way to renounce the world.[105]

Pabuji's companions Camda, Khamkhu and Pemal also die fighting for their lord. The earlier-mentioned Paradhi warrior Vishal is not referred to by name here but we may, even so, imagine that he also expired since all 140 Paradhi warriors eventually die heroic deaths and thus make their names immortal. The poet winds up his composition with a *kalasa*, a 6 verse-lines long composition summarizing Pabuji's deeds: the manner in which the hero added to the fame of the Dhamdhal Rathaur lineage, his gallant fight to salvage cows, his choice to follow a hero's road and the fact that he remained true to his word. In these last verse-lines Pabuji is presented as the winner of the battle: "(Pabuji) wins the battle with Jimda, (and) he adds to the fame (of his) sword".[106] The poet again talks about the heavenly nymphs who are dressed like brides and take deceased warriors for their grooms. On earth,

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[105] *Chamd* II (v. 91): "taji raja riṛai dhārāṃ tijaḍai, bhiṛa pālha paṛe bhala sātha bhiṛai".
[106] *Chamd* II (v. 97): "jīṃdai suṃ ju(ṃ)dha jāgi, kīyai ūjalai kiraṃmari".

the warriors' corpses are being devoured by vultures. *Chamd* II appears to end with Pabuji's elevation to divine status:

101. praṇamaṃta meha pābu prasidha, (t)uṃ parasidha pramāṇa paha(ṃ)
101. "*Meha 'salutes' Pabuji('s) glory (saying): "You (have) glory like god"*.

It appears to me, however, that the above-quoted verse-line might be construed in several ways which do not necessarily connote Pabuji's deification but can also be understood as the poet's portrayal of Pabuji as the "proof of the existence of God", "comparable to God" or as "equal to God", interpretations that are determined by whether one translates *pramāṇa* as "standard", "measure", "authority", or "evidence" (see also my discussion of this verse-line in chapter 2).

### *Duha* I

Just about one century later than Vithu, the seventeenth-century poet Ladhraj is thought to have composed the poem *pābūjī rā duhā*: "Verse-lines 'dedicated to' Pabuji". Because of its length (526 verse-lines) and its episodic structuring, this poem seems to be the most typically "epic" composition about Pabuji selected for this study.[107] Ladhraj recounts Pabuji's adventures in five distinctive episodes: (1) Pabuji's parentage and birth, (2) the marriage negotiations between the Dhamdhal Rathaur of Kolu and Jimda Khici of Jayal[108], (3) the marriage between Pabuji and the Sodhi princess of Umarkot and the theft of Charani Deval's cows, (4), the battles between Pabuji and Jimda, and lastly, (5) the episode about Pabuji's nephew Jhararo and his revenge on Jimda.

Episode one opens with an invocation of the blessings of Ganesh and Devi. Ladhraj further calls upon the Goddess to help him in bringing his poem to a fitting conclusion. In the next five verse-lines, Pabuji's heroic deeds are recounted in summary fashion; the hero is introduced as "the lord of the earth", as a protector who saves his granddaughters and grandsons from harm, and as a robber-prince who ransacks the treasury belonging to Kuvera, the god of wealth. Subsequently, Ladhraj introduces himself as Pabuji's servant and asks for the hero's protection. In verse-lines 5-7, the poet states his intentions and prays for Pabuji's protection:

5. bhala pābū bhūpāla, mala kahai kīrata muṇūṃ
6. pābū patiyāroha, kaliyuga māṃ thāro kamadha
7. sevaga juga sāroha, rākhai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta

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[107] Different classifications of epic poetry will be discussed in chapter 3.
[108] Jayal, a village near Nagaur (Shekavat 1968: 14).

5. *Says Mala*:[109] "*let me praise the glory (of)* '*honourable*' *Pabuji*, *the lord of the earth*.
6. *Pabuji*! (*I am*) *your warrior* (*in support of*) '*religion*' *during Kaliyuga*.
7 *Son of King Dhamdhal*! *Protect* (*your*) *servant* (*during*) (*this*) *entire era*".

The poet then dwells upon Pabuji's parentage, in particular the adventures of his father, the Rajput Dhamdhal, who chances upon a nymph (*apaccharā*) bathing in a forest pond (v. 16-38). Dhamdhal sneaks up to the pond and steals the nymph's clothes, which have been left lying on the waterfront. He only returns the clothes to the nymph after she has given her consent to become his wife. Before consenting, the nymph makes Dhamdhal promise that he will never talk about her in the presence of others. Dhamdhal and his new bride celebrate their wedding night and the nymph becomes pregnant. The Rajput warrior then brings his bride and their newborn son Pabuji to his homeland and settles them in secret quarters. However, Dhamdhal's first wife, the Rajputni Kamlade, soon becomes suspicious of her husband's opium-intoxicated nightly rambles. She follows him on one of his visits to the nymph and discovers her husband's secret. Consequently, the nymph becomes invisible, leaving behind her child Pabuji with his father and Kamlade. Ladhraj concludes this episode with Dhamdhal's demise and the accession to the throne by Pabuji's elder half-brother Buro. Then Pabuji sets out on his horse to travel to unspecified regions. In the course of his travels, he becomes a mighty swordfighter with a fierce reputation among neighbouring kings and sultans. At this point Ladhraj briefly refers to Pabuji's adventure in Sindh, from where he robs a herd of camels:

70. sāgara sīṃ(dha) olāṃḍi, viṇa lekhai sāṃḍhī varaga
71. āṃṇe dai aṇabhaṃga, ramato dhāṃdhala rāvauta

70. *After crossing the sea (of) Sindh,*[110] *he chooses and spies a group of female camels*.
71. *The Son of King Dhamdhal brings and gives (the camels) (and) travels on, unsurpassed*.

Episode two (v. 74-168) offers an account of the marriage-negotiations to wed Buro's sister Pema to the Rajput Jimda Khici, the lord of Jayal. By achieving marital ties between the Dhamdhal and Khici lineages, Buro and his mother Kavlade[111] hope to settle the long-standing family feud between the two, a feud that dates back to the time when Buro killed Jimda's father Saramg Singh and stole his cows. Though Pabuji is not in favour of this arrangement, Buro persists. A coconut is sent to Jimda by way of

[109] In *duha* I, Ladhraj is also named "Mala" and "Ladhmala".
[110] "Sāgara sīṃ(dha)" may refer to a sea near or in the southern province Sindh in present-day Pakistan, but could also be read as "southern sea" or "the river Sindh".
[111] In *duha* I, Buro's mother is also named Kamlade and Kavlade.

marriage proposition; Jimda accepts. When the dowry negotiations begin, Jimda insists on Pabuji's black mare Kalvi in dowry since this is the only way, he says, in which the Rathaur can hope to atone for the death of his father. Pabuji turns down Jimda's request and in retaliation the latter (literally) refuses to let go of Pema's hand during the marriage ceremony. Jimda, moreover, threatens to steal the cows belonging to Charans and to kill Pabuji. But Pabuji persists in his refusal and does not grant Jimda the mare. By this time, Pabuji's elder half-brother Buro has decided to hand over the mare to Jimda. Buro thinks of a ruse to compel Pabuji to give up Kalvi and advises Jimda to rob Deval's cows, since Pabuji will surely hasten to recover the stolen livestock as he has pledged to protect Deval's cows and, as a result, Jimda will be in a position to ask for Pabuji's mare in lieu of the cattle that he holds ransom. Pleased with the ruse, Jimda lets go of Pema's hand at last and promises Buro that he will not kill Pabuji in the struggle that will ensue after he has robbed Deval of her cows:

153. pābū jīva pravāṃṇa, kyuṃ mārūṃ lyuṃ kālavī
154. būṛā tāharī bāṃha, valata sahī na vāḍha su

153. *Why should I kill (Pabu), I will take Kalvi, (says Jimda), Pabu('s) life (will be) (my) evidence*.
154. *Buro, (on receiving) your promise, I will truly not kill your brother*.

It is clear that this deal was made behind Pabuji's back, for the poet describes how Buro warns his clan members not to tell his brother about the ruse, before bringing Pema to Jimda's village Jayal.

The third episode (v. 168-198) briefly deals with Pabuji's marriage to a Sodhi Rajputni of Umarkot and the concurrent theft of Charani Deval's cows. It opens with an account of Buro's plans for a marriage between Pabuji and a Sodhi Rajputni from Umarkot. Pabuji again protests against Buro's arrangements and warns him that his (Pabuji's) death is near at hand and that Pabuji's new bride will have to become *sati* before long. Buro persists once again and Pabuji undertakes the journey to Umarkot. On the way, a bad omen occurs: a tiger appears on the left side of the road. The groom's party nevertheless continues on its way to Umarkot where Pabuji marries his Sodhi bride. His new parents-in-law offer him a festive meal. After that, Pabuji has to rush back to Kolu to help Deval because while Pabuji got married, Jimda saw a chance to rob Deval's cattle.

Episode four (v. 199-383) is the longest episode of *duha* I. It gives an account of Deval's plight and the subsequent battles between Pabuji and Jimda. Deval, upon discovering her cattle gone, first turns to Buro for help but Buro, instead of giving chase to Jimda, just scolds the Charani and tells her to ask Pabuji for his support. Deval does so and reminds Pabuji of his promise to protect her and her "hundred thousand cows". After consoling the Charani, Pabuji sets out to retrieve the stolen cattle upon which

Ladhraj has the Rajput antagonists wage two battles. After the first clash, Pabuji recaptures Deval's cattle from Jimda and returns the cows to her, whereas in the second battle, Jimda decapitates Pabuji and the Rathaur hero ascends to heaven.

The first battle episode opens with the introduction of Pabuji's army of thieves *(thorī thāṭa)*, also referred to as Bhil hunters (*āheṛi*) who resemble god (*sura*) and are *sāṃvalā*, "black" or "dark", a name also used for the blue god Krishna.[112] Before Pabuji can give chase to Jimda, he first has to persuade his rather disinclined Bhil retainer Camda to join in the war since the latter does not feel like calling off the festivities for his daughters' wedding. Pabuji reminds Camda of the duty to protect cows and of a promise made by Camda, perhaps a pledge to serve Pabuji (this is not explicitly stated in the text). Pabuji reproaches Camda for his lack of martial enthusiasm:

249. caṃdā tu tilamāta, jīva sadā kari jāṃṇatau
249. *"Camda! You know life (is) 'short', (therefore) do (what is) right," (says Pabuji).*

258. vadhāvai khatravāṭa, māṭhā paṛato tu miṭai
259. candā vāhara caṛhi, maṃdā paṛi maṃcai marāṃ
260. ila jīyai viṇa aṛhi, kī karisī kahato kamadha

258. *"Enhance (your) warriorhood, (for) on 'growing' slow, you will die".*
259. *"Camda! May we grow "old" and die in (our) beds, after setting out (for war).*
260. *(for) what will (a man) do (who) lives (on) earth 'for ever'", says the Rathaur.*[113]

After Pabuji has finally managed to persuade Camda, the preparations for battle begin. Drums are played, Pabuji's sword is readied, and grooms saddle his mare and decorate her. Pabuji "adorns" his body with armour, protective covering for his hands and a helmet. The grooms fetch his fiery steed Kalvi, who is capricious and fast like a monkey. Pabuji mounts his charger and spurs her on while brandishing his sword. Thus Pabuji recovers the stolen cows and puts the enemy army to flight. On returning the cattle to Deval (who is now referred to as Shakti (*sakati*) in verse-line 289) Pabuji is asked to water Deval's thirsting cows. To do so the Rathaur hero first has to kill the demon in the well who turns the water black every night. The "Wielder of Spears" (*bhālālā*) Pabuji lances the demon and Deval's cows are watered.

In verse-lines 297-304, the sequence of episode four is broken when the poet reveals Pabuji's imminent fate and describes how the warrior dies heroically while fulfilling his promise to Deval. The poet then summarizes the earlier events in a

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[112] *Duha* I (v. 238): "thorī teṛe thāṭa, corī surahī coraṭāṃ", and verse-line 254: "āheṛi āvīyācha, sura sadā laga sāṃvalā".
[113] In other words: everyone has to die some day.

somewhat random way by recounting how Pabuji returned to Kolu bringing back Deval's cows, how he hastened to Deval's rescue and defeated the cattle thief, and lastly, how Deval went to Kolu to ask Buro for help after Jimda stole her cows. From verse-line 305 onwards, the narrative continues with an account of Buro's assault on Jimda, the latter of whom is referred to by the poet as the "son-in-law of Jamran", the lord of the dead. Buro attacks Jimda since he is under the misguided impression that Jimda killed Pabuji.[114] Jimda assures Buro that Pabuji, whom he compares to Ram's brother Bharat, is still alive (v. 319): "mo baṃdhava mareha, vīkhāṃ bharato guṃjavai".[115] But Buro does not believe Jimda. He calls his brother-in-law a murderer and a bastard who has "cut Buro's nose", i.e. shamed him. By killing Pabuji, Buro says, Jimda did not stick to his part of the deal (Jimda's promise not to kill Pabuji). Buro attacks Jimda and gets killed by Jimda. Upon killing Buro, Jimda becomes full of apprehension. He knows that he will not be able to withstand Pabuji's anger, should the Rathaur warrior decide to settle the scores on behalf of Buro. Thus when Jimda chances upon Pabuji resting near a well, he right away resolves to attack the sleeping warrior.

At this point, the second battle between Pabuji and Jimda begins (v. 341). The sleeping Rathaur hero wakes up at once and is ready to attack with his Bhil warriors at his side. Pabu and Jimda taunt each other. Pabuji scorns his opponent, saying that Jimda will not escape him, even if he flees to "Dayala", with which the poet probably meant Jimda's village Jayal. The two Rajput warriors collide once more: "During the fight, the clatter of countless weapons resounds. The gods witness (the battle) (and) consider (it) laudable, therefore they praise (the events)".[116] Innumerable arrows are aimed at Jimda. In the end, Jimda beheads Pabuji. But the headless torso of the Rathaur hero does not collapse. It, on the contrary, continues to fight and plays with stick-like weapons as if celebrating the spring festival Holi:

355. mathai upari māṃḍa, uḍīyo dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
356. khīcī dala khāṃṛeha, rami ḍaṃḍe holī ramai
357. māthā viṇa māṃḍeha, rahi rahi dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
358. sira bāhiro satrāṃha, pābū kitāi pāṛato

355. *Son of King Dhamdhal! Upon 'attacking' (your) head, (Jimda) cut it of.*
356. *(Even so) (Pabuji) destroys the Khici army, playing with (weapon) sticks (as if) celebrating Holi.*
357. *The son of king Dhamdhal('s) torso continues to be involved (in battle).*
358. *Without head, Pabuji destroys (his) enemies (no matter) how many.*

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[114] We do not learn why Buro believes that Jimda killed Pabuji. From the prose-version of Pabuji's tale in the seventeenth-century chronicle written by Nainsi (Sakariy 1984) it can be read that it was Deval's younger sister who made Buro believe that Jimda killed his brother, thus inciting Buro to attack Jimda.
[115] *Duha* I (v. 319): "(Pabu) 'prevails' (like) Bharat, (he is not dead) he killed my brother (whom) we mourn".
[116] *Duha* I (v. 352-53): "uḍaiṃ ā(ṃ)kārīṭha, lekhai bāhiro lohaṛai. dekhe deve dīṭha, vaḍa jhudha teṇa vakhaṃṇīyo".

From verse-lines 362-63 it appears that the conflict is finally brought to an end after Jimda manages to throw an indigo-coloured cloth over the warring torso and it finally collapses.[117] But even after this event, the poet continues to prolong Pabuji's role in the proceedings since it is Pabuji who stays Camda's hand when he is about to trounce Jimda. Pabuji does so since the demise of his foe and brother-in-law would have rendered his half-sister Pema a widow. Afterwards, Camda also dies in battle. At this point, the narrative becomes redundant again, for the poet reiterates how Pabuji fought for the protection of Deval's[118] cows and returns the cows to her, saying: "I am the son of King Dhamdhal, I protect honour in Kaliyuga".[119] In the following verse-lines (v. 376-77) the poet again identifies Deval as a goddess and refers to her as "Shakti Devalde" and he begs Devi to bless his recitation of the *pābūjī rā duhā*.

After killing Pabuji, Jimda flees the battlefield. The Rathaur hero attains his well-deserved place in Vishnu's heaven. Bringing the second battle episode to a close, the poet states that God has revealed his power through Pabuji:

377. pava vaikuṭha vasaṃta, thāpi prīthī māṃ thāpanā
378. de devī āsīsa, kamadhaja rā suṇi suṇi kaghaṃna
379. varadhā koḍi varīsa, sauha japasī dhyāsī jagata
380. pābū tau pāchaiha, devā tana dakhai dunī

377. *(Pabuji's) rule has been established on earth, (his) body dwells in Vaikumtha.*
378. *Goddess, give (your) blessings (on) hearing the (warrior's) story again and again.*
379. *Everybody will praise (Pabu) (for) millions (of) years in all worlds, mankind will remember (him).*
380. *Pabu, through you, God makes (himself) known to the world.*

In the fifth and last episode of *duha* I (v. 384-526), the poet tells the story of Jhararo, Buro's son. In the first verse-line, Buro's wife Dod Gahelari and Pabuji's Sodhi bride are praised for ascending their husbands' funeral pyre to become *sati*. Before committing her body to the fire, Dod Gahelari takes a dagger and cuts open her abdomen. Thus Jhararo is born. His mother hands her child over to female relatives saying: "Aunt, sisters-in-law, mother, mother's sister(s) (and) maternal aunts! Take

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[117] In the Bikaner Archives Ms.72, also titled *pābūjī rā duhā*, the poet describes how Jimda sprinkles a blue coloured substance over Pabu's headless, fighting torso to make the body collapse (Kaviya 1997: 89). The custom is today accounted for by the fact that indigo is not a pious colour and hence serves to counter preternatural occurrences (personal communication Dr. Vikram Singh Rathaur, Jodhpur 2000). Hiltebeitel (2001: 318) describes the use of indigo coloured cloth as "carrying overtones of menstrual pollution".

[118] In verse-line 373 two or more Charanis ("cāraṇīyāṃ") are mentioned, perhaps representing Deval and her younger sister who is often portrayed at the Charani's side in the contemporary tradition.

[119] *Duha* I (v. 375): "kai kali mai kīrati, rakhu dhāṃdhala rāva-uta".

(this) child, sisters! He will return (and) "take" honourable revenge".[120] The *sati* instructs her family or the boy Jhararo (or both) to be brave since that is what Pabuji and Buro stood for. Conform to his mother's wishes, Jhararo is brought up by his maternal family. When he is a young boy, his grandmother keeps to herself the story of the fate that befell his father and uncle. Jhararo, oblivious of his family's history, spends his time with mischief, teasing women on their way to the village well. But one day, an "evil-tongued" aunt tells the boy about his past.

As soon as Jhararo learns how Jimda killed his father and uncle, he sets out to take revenge that instant. On his way to Jimda's village Jayal, the boy takes initiation in the Nath sect of Guru Goraknath and unburdens his heart to the Nath Guru, telling him about Jimda's "treacherous behaviour" and his insistence on having Kalvi, which prompts Buro to come up with a plan and force Pabuji to hand over his mare. Jhararo recounts how Jimda broke his promise and killed Pabuji in a "dishonest battle" even after promising Buro, "taking Gorakhnath's name", not to kill Pabuji. From the latter part of the boy's story, we learn that Jhararo feels that it was not the death of Saramg Khici at Buro's hands that was at the heart of the Dhamdhal-Khici feud but the struggle over Kalvi: "Jimda kills Buro and Pabu both (because of) that horse".[121] Upon hearing the boy's story, Goraknath promises Jhararo the head of the evildoer. He instructs Jhararo to go to Jayal and the boy goes on his way. However, before continuing with his account of subsequent events in Jayal, the poet first reverts to the story of Jhararo's initiation in the Nath sect. Jhararo ("who is without impurity") has a part of his body, most probably his ears, pierced by Gorakhnath in what may be a reference to a ritual of the Kanpathi (split-ear) Nath Yogis of Rajasthan (v. 445): "o āmalī ṛū rāya, kohika keṛā-ita kāṃadhāṃ". The poet then summarizes future events and recounts how the consecrated Yogi Jhararo ("who ignores worldly pleasures") confronts an enemy, probably Jimda, and demands a black horse (probably Kalvi) and threatening to behead his foe if his wish is not met. The following verse-lines are somewhat unclear but could be interpreted as a reference to yet another Yogic rite, one in which the boy is given raw meat to eat after which he attains yogic powers: "bālaka ro mana bīha, paṛīyo lyāyā pāṃcaṇo. jharaṛai mātho jhāli, kāco dāṃte karaṛīyo" (v. 449-50).

From verse-line 454 onwards, the poet resumes his earlier narrative and describes how Jhararo, now referred to as a Yogi (*jogī*) and Guru (*āyasa*), travels to Jayal. On arrival he meets his aunt Pema, who thinks she recognises her nephew in the Nath mendicant and asks him to reveal his identity. After much prompting, the boy finally declares that he is indeed a "Rathaur warrior from Maravaru" and her nephew who has come to Jayal to take revenge. Pema and Jhararo rejoice in meeting each other and begin planning Jimda Khici's demise. Pema advises Jhararo to tiptoe towards his uncle while the warrior is still asleep, wake him up and then kill him before the great warrior becomes fully awake. Jhararo rebukes her. Such a scheme, he says, will not result in an

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[120] *Duha* I (v. 388-89): "bhuvā bhojāyāṃha, mā māsī mausālīyāṃ. bālaka lyau bāyāṃha, vaira sahī o vālasī".
[121] *Duha* I (v. 436): "tiṇa jīdo to khāra, būṛo pābū hiṇa vinhai".

honourable revenge. "Brainless woman!" exclaims the boy, "Do not make pure, impure".[122] Pema, unimpressed, continues to doubt whether a mere boy like Jhararo will be able to defeat her husband. She does, however, take Jhararo to where Jimda lies sleeping and assures her nephew that he can slay the man while he is in this unconscious condition. Seeing the white of his uncle's half-closed eyes, Jhararo flees. His aunt calls him back and reminds him of his warrior's duty, upon which Jhararo returns and resolves to prove his manliness. He seats himself atop Jimda's breast and then wakes up his uncle to announce that he has come to revenge the death of Buro and Pabuji.

500. upari chātī āya, būṛāvata baiṭhau bahisa
501. jāyala rāva jagāya, kāko pita māṃgu kahai
502. jīṃdo jāgai joya, kālarūpa dīṭho kamadha
503. kahi to samo na koya, prāṃṇa vacai paraṇāvasūṃ
504. nakaṭā na choḍuha, moṛu sira jharaṛo muṇai

500. *Buro's son arrives (and) sits on (Jimda's) chest.*
501. *Waking the king of Jayal, (the boy) says: "I demand (revenge) (for) (my) uncle (and) father".*
502. *Jimda 'becomes' (wide) awake (when) he sees (Jhararo), (for) he sees Kalarupa*[123] *(death) (in) the Rathaur warrior.*[124]
503. *(Jimda) 'says': "No one 'equals' you! (If) (my) life is spared, I will arrange (your) marriage".*
504. *Jhararo answers: "Dishonourable (man)! I will not let (you) go, I will 'cut off' (your) head".*

Jhararo beheads Jimda. When Pema expresses her wish to become *sati* with her husband's torso and head, Jhararo hands over his uncle's skull. Without showing emotions, Pema mounts Jimda's funeral pyre and "burns heroically".[125] In the concluding verse-lines (516-526) of *duha* I, the poet has Pabuji praise his nephew by calling him a "Great Hero" and a "Protector of the Lineage", since Jhararo's deeds add to the glory of holy places like Surgir, Gamga and Samamd. Pabuji's and Jhararo's fame is eternal and will, in accordance with good epic tradition, last as long as "sun, moon, gods and the earth" continue to exist (v. 521): "sūraja caṃda suraṃda, ila tāṃ laga rahijā amara". The poet concludes by stating that Jhararo is an immortal warrior to whom no suffering will attach itself.

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[122] *Duha* I (v. 470): "mati hīṇī māiha, motī asuhāi ma kari".
[123] *Kalarupa*: death.
[124] In other words: Jimda realizes that Jhararo embodies Death.
[125] *Duha* I (v. 515): "kāṭhe caṛhī karūra, pemāṃ ujavālai paṛhū".

*Parvaro*

The 86 verse-lines long *parvaro* has been attached to *duha* I in the manuscript under review (Ms.402) and in several other manuscript versions of Ladhraj's composition.[126] The identity of the poet or reciter of the *parvaro* remains uncertain and we may, as noted in the previous chapter, attribute this composition to two poets: Mohandas and/or Ladhraj. What is clear is that this version of the *parvaro* was recited in 1720 while it was committed to paper in 1769 by a scribe named Pamdit Khusyal:

80. pābū krīta puṇīha, satrau(ṃ) sai āṛhāro tarai
81. cavadasa cāṃda raṇīha, caitra māsi citrāna kṣatra

80. *I 'recited' Pabu's praise in 1778 Vikram Samvat.*
81. *(On) the fourteenth day of the lunar month of the year (when) the moon is in the constellation of Citra.*

85. saṃ 1827 vi sai rā vaisākha vada 10 dine likhatu paṃ khusyala carī āsarāmadhye
85. *(Written by) Pamdit Khusyal in Cari Asara, on the tenth day of the first half of the month of Vaisakha (in) 1827 Vikram Samvat*

Through the *parvaro*, its poets expressed their devotional feelings towards the hero-god Pabuji by praising his divine powers and martial exploits.[127] Pabuji's divine intervention is detailed by means of several miracle tales, beginning with a story about a Rathaur Rajput named Vagha, who steals a drum from a Bhopa (priestly performer) who serves at Pabuji's temple in Dhamgarva (v. 2-27). The Bhopas pray to Pabuji for help, upon which:

10. kamadhaji upari kopa, kīdho bhopāṃ nu kahai
11. thāpila pīṭha jathāpa, āṃṇū ṛhola utāvalo
12. pābū dukhave peṭa, gāṛhau vāghai kamadha ro

10. (*Pabu*) *became angry* '*with*' *the Rathaur warrior* (*Vagha*) *and* '*said*' *to the Bhopas*:
11. "(*I will*) *hit* (*Vagha's*) *back* (*with*) *a* thāpila[128] (*and*) *I will quickly restore the drum.*[129]"

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[126] For example: the eighteenth-century (RRI) Ms. 634 *pābūjī rā duhā*, and the nineteenth-century (RORI) Mss. 11013 (27) *pābūjī rā duhā*-sorathaa and 8823 *pābūjī rā duhā*, which are all three ascribed to Ladhraj (Bhathi 1973: 15-16).
[127] This two-fold subject matter can, as already noted in chapter 1, also be read from the different meanings attributed to the word *parvaro*, including "war" and "heroic deed", as well as "glory" and "divine miracle".
[128] *Thapila*: a wooden instrument for patting and beating used by masons and other craftsmen.
[129] Reading *ḍhola* for *ṛhola*.

12. *Pabu causes pain in the fat belly of the Rathaur warrior Vagha.*

Vagha turns to the Bharara Bhopas for a cure.[130] They tell him to pour *sico* (clean water to remove impurity) and to recite Pabuji's name with sincerity. Once Vagha is restored to health, he repents and returns the drum to the temple and becomes a true devotee of Pabuji. He is now fully convinced of Pabuji's divine powers.

The next tale (v. 28-43) gives an account of how Pabuji punishes the Bhati Rajput Jaiti for cutting an Acacia tree (*Khejaṛa*) planted near Pabuji's temple by Ratna. From verse-line 34, it appears that Pabuji killed Jaiti in punishment. The poet adds that people now meet to attend *melā*s (religious fairs) near the pond where Pabu killed Jaiti.[131] In verse-lines 38 to 43, however, a living Jaiti continues to play a part. The poet describes how Jaiti, now full of remorse, bows to Pabuji's feet and readily accepts the hero-god's supremacy. To further atone for his deeds, Jaiti plants a silver tree with golden *sāṃgarī* (pods). The listing of Pabuji's miraculous deeds ends with a reference to the help that he gave to the Rathaur ruler of Jodhpur Rao Gamga in a battle with "Sekho" and "Daulat".[132]

44. gaṃgai hu upagāra, bhālālai kīdho bhalau
45. muhiyaṛase khomāri, daulatīyo bhāgau durita
46. jhālā suṇi ju(ṃ)jhāri, ajagai bi-ūpara karai
47. ukāre ke vāra, kaṭa kāṃ āgila koṭaṛo
48. pābū pāsara ṇā ha, kalu ara phaujāṃ nāṃ karai
49. to paratāpa huti ha, vijakai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta

44. *By the Spearwielder (Pabuji) 'justice' has been done, (his) benevolence (is) with King Gamga.*
45. *The heroic (prince) Sekho died (in battle), the enemy, Daulat, fled away.*
46. *On hearing 'a cry for help', Jumjhar (Pabuji) immediately 'comes to the rescue'.*

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[130] It is not clear whether "Bharara" refers to the Bhopas serving at Pabuji's Dhamgarva temple mentioned in verse-line 4 or whether the allusion is to Bhopas from the Bharara Bhil caste group of Madhya Pradesh, or both.

[131] *Parvaro* (v. 34-35): "bhāṭī nu bhelau, māre kīdhama sosa nai. mila mina pāṃ melau, tālau vīchai jai nīyo".

[132] According to the chronicle tradition of Rajasthan, Rao Gamga, son of Suja (c. 1498-1515), was a sixteenth-century ruler of Jodhpur. Gamga established his reign with the help of his followers from Rathaur sub-clans and managed to ascend to the Jodhpur throne instead of his elder brother Vikram. This arrangement led to several annexation wars between Gamga and Vikram, resulting in the usurpation of Sojat by Gamga (G. D. Sharma 1977: 8f). Gamga joined forces with Rao Jaitasi of Bikaner to confront the army of the Nawab of Nagaur, Daulat Khan (Sarkhela Khan) at Ganghani near Bikaner. No consensus seems to exist about the date when this event is supposed to have taken place (cf. Pranseh 1991: 195, Sakariya 1984: 87-102). "Sekho" probably refers to Rao Sekha, another son of Rao Suja (c. 1498-1515) who ascended the Jodhpur throne after the death of Rao Satal (1484-1498) but he is, at times, also referred to as the uncle of Rao Gamga with whom the Rao battled over the rights to the throne of Jodhpur and who lost his life in the battle of Ganghani (Sakariya 1984: 87-102, G. D. Sharma 1977: 89).

47. *Several times he 'warded off' the armies (which) 'advanced' 'upon' the fort.*
48. *(Upon) obtaining Pabuji's protection (in) Kaliyug, the armies of the enemy can not 'cause' (harm).*
49. *Son of King Dhamdhal! (Because of) your might, (the enemy) 'laments his fate'.*

In the remaining couplets of the *parvaro*, a poet (Ladhraj or Mohandas) talks about his devotional feelings towards Pabuji and the Goddess, and extols Pabuji for interceding when his devotees encounter difficulties. In verse-line 46, the poet furthermore praises Pabuji as a Jumjhar (*ju(ṃ)jhāri*), a deified forefather who comes to the rescue immediately on hearing a cry for help. Indeed, states the poet, even a murderer can expect to be redeemed upon seeking the protection of Dhamdhal's son.

In verse-lines 52-53, "vaṃsa vāṃkhāṃṇeha, kīrati mohana dāsa kavi, dīdhī dugāṃṇīha, rījhe dhāṃdhala rāva-uta", the poet Mohandas Kavi is mentioned as the one who has recited the "fame of Pabuji"s lineage" and received a coin as a token of Pabuji's appreciation. Then follow the verse-lines already quoted in chapter 1, giving rise to some confusion about the identity of the *parvaro*'s poet, since both Mohandas and Ladhraj are mentioned as the poets of this composition (see chapter 1). Next, it is made apparent that the *parvaro* was composed to profess devotion to both Pabuji and Pabuji's "neighbour" the Goddess. The poet declares himself to be a devotee of Pabuji and he explains that the worship of the folk-god Pabuji and the mother-goddess does not exclude each other even though the poet's dedication to Visahathi, the "twenty-armed Goddess", is presented as the supreme form of emotion. An apparent attempt is made to solve these conflicting loyalties because it is stated that there exists no disparity among gods and the only thing that counts in these matters is men's devotion to the gods in general. This verse-line does not, it seems to me, really solve the poet's conflicting feelings for he continues by writing (verse-lines 75-77) that the existence of a multitude of gods has made many devotees lose sight of "true faith", which, it here emerges, is defined as Shakti worship since the poet asserts that in his heart (v. 77) : "(devotion to) the mother goddess (is) not different (from) devotion 'to' all (other) gods".[133]

To end the *parvaro*, the poet once again asks the Goddess and Pabuji for their blessings and he voices the hope that his composition may contribute to the spread of Pabuji's fame among people. Pabuji's approval of the poem is cited, as is the hero-god's promise to bestow virtuous qualities upon that man who declaims and/or listens to the *parvaro*. In verse-lines 82-83, the poet Ladhraj (talking about himself) or Mohandas (talking about Ladhraj) informs his audience that Ladhraj recited the 302 couplets of *duha* I and the *parvaro* to comply with the Goddess's wishes:

82. dūhā murasai doī, pābū rā ati prīta thī.
83. suṇi lokāyai soī, kahyā ladhai devī hukama.

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[133] *Parvaro* (v. 77): "māharai manuṛā māṃī, bhinana hasaba deve bhagita".

82-83. *(On) Devi('s) command all 302 couplets 'dedicated to' Pabu were recited by Ladhraj*.
82-83. *On hearing (the 302 couplets), they were very much loved (by) the people*.[134]

## *Git* I

The narrative content of the shorter heroic poems (*git*s), coined *git* I to V for the purpose of this study, are summarized below beginning with the late-sixteenth-century *git* I followed by the undated *git* II and the undated poems published by N.S. Bhati (1973: 78-85): *git* III, *git* IV and *git* V. To end this chapter, the content of the nineteenth-century manuscript-version of *duha* II will be discussed. First: *git* I, the oldest manuscript at my disposal. This composition is part of the *rāṭhauṛa guṇagānā,* a collection of short praise poems composed in honour of the Rathaur rulers Raja Surya Singh (by an anonymous poet), Raja Gaj Singh (recited by Josi Gamgadas) and Rav Maldev (written by Barath Harsur).[135] The last poem of this manuscript is *git* I, a composition dedicated to Pabuji, thus including this small-time warrior in the poetic catalogue of historical Rathaur rulers. The anonymous poet of *git* I evokes Pabuji as the pride of his lineage and extols his qualities as a protector of cattle, but one does not read about Pabuji's battle with Jimda, nor are Deval and her cows mentioned, since the poet chiefly dwells upon Pabuji's looting expedition. He underlines that Pabuji's deeds are "glorious among Rathaur" since he served his land or God (*sadhīrā*) by driving away she-camels[136] from "the South".[137] In addition, Pabuji is also portrayed as a warrior who "flattens mountains" and who, mounted on a saddled horse, robs other lineages. "The warrior from the lineage of King Simha"[138] drives along many she-camels across the border and he makes his opponents engage in battle. The last verse-lines of *git* I evoke Pabuji's adventures in "southern regions" (v. 6-9):

6. rāte (i)lī[139] baisā(ṃ)[140] valharāṃ sū, uṭhai[141] jhoka avārī

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[134] A more literal interpretation of verse-lines 82-83 would be: "All 302 couplets 'dedicated to' Pabu were very much loved, (by) people, on hearing (the 302 couplets) 'recited' by Ladhraj (on) Devi('s) command".
[135] *Gīta rājā sūryasiṃgha rau*, *gīta rājā gajasiṃgha rau josī gaṃgadāsa rau kahyau*, *gīta rāva mālade rau bāraṭha harasūra kṛta*. I have not been able to trace data about the poets Josi Gamgadas and Barath Harasur.
[136] Shekavat (1968: 25, n.17) translates *sāṃdhaṛiyā* and *kamālī* both with "she-camels" (*ūṃṭnieṃ*).
[137] Sindh as a region "south" (*laṃkā*) of Marwar or Ravana's mythological Lamka. In Shekavat (1968: 25) it is clear that Sindh is meant (v. 3): "vegaṛa pālha līyā varadāī, siṃdha taṇā sāṃḍhī rā".
[138] Based on Shekavat (1968: 25, n.2), who reads *sīhā harai* as "a warrior from the lineage of King Simha (Siya)".
[139] Unclear sign, probably representing "i".
[140] Unclear whether the letters "ba" and "sa" were meant to be crossed out, or whether they should be read as *baisā*(*ṃ*), *baisī*(*ṃ*), *besī*(*ṃ*), or perhaps *baisau*(*ṃ*).

7. pāta līyai āṃṇī pramavale, sā(ṃ)rā jhoka savhārī(ṃ)
8. pāchima disi pābū pādharai, vegaja kamadhaji vālī
9. pa(ṃ)ra dīpāṃ sūṃ lyāyau(ṃ) pābū, kivalai rāi kamālī

6. *In this manner,*[142] *he assembles powerful (warriors) with sword(s), (and) advances (upon) the (camel) pen (with) an army fully adorned for battle*.[143]
7. *The horse-riders take the whole (camel) pen, (thus) they conquered the (opponent's) realm (on) the command (of the) leading (warrior)*.[144]
8. *The Rathaur warrior*[145] *Pabuji quickly 'returns' (from) the southern 'region'*.
9. *(With) 'lustrous'*[146] *weapons Pabuji 'robbed' the Badshah*[147] *(of his) she-camels*.

A shorter, somewhat different version of *git* I, the seven verse-lines long (including the title) *gīta pābū dhāṃdhaḷauta rāṭhauṛa rau* published by Shekavat (1968: 25), conveys more or less similar images as the manuscript version of the poem discussed just now:

1. *gīta pābū dhāṃdhaḷauta rāṭhauṛa rau*
2. pābū pāṭa rai rūpa rāṭhavaṛāṃ, sevai tūjha sadhīrā
3. vegaṛa pālha līyā varadāī, siṃdha taṇā sāṃḍhī rā
4. pābū parabata kīyā pādharā, gharahara pāṃkhara ghoṛai
5. sīhā harai līyā sāṃḍhī rā, lākhā ūpara loḍai
6. pachama taṇī pābū pāṭaudhara, biṛhai kamaṃdhaja vāḷī
7. para dīpāṃ hūṃ āṃṇī pragaṛī, kivaḷai rāya kamāḷī

Again, the poet describes how Pabuji towers like a mountain among Rathaur warriors because he served his land. Pabuji's might is illustrated by images of Pabuji as a warrior who "flattens mountains" and robs other lineages while mounted on a

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[141] Blotched. Perhaps: *muṭhai*. However, alliteration would require: "*utahi ... avārī*" (*mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī*).
[142] "Besī" read as "baisī": "usa prakāra kā".
[143] A more literal interpretation would be: "In this manner, he assembles with (his) sword powerful (warriors) (and) advances (upon) the (camel) pen (with) an army fully adorned for battle".
[144] This verse-line could also be interpreted as: "Many (she-camels) were taken along for the king", if "līyai" can be read as "lie" ("lī-y-e").
[145] "Kamadhaji vālī" is perhaps an example of the usage of a feminine form for masculine subjects (Smith 1992: 264). This feminine ending was probably dictated by end-rhyme, i.e. the need for "vālī" (v. 7) to rhyme with "kamālī" (v. 8). Compare Shekavat (1968: 25) who has (v. 6): "kamaṃdhaja vāḷī".
[146] Shekavat (1968: 25, n. 3) reads "dīpām" as "dvīpo", "island", perhaps a reference to Kacch in Gujarat or to the mythological island Lamka. In verse-line 3 (Shekavat: *ibid*), however, the reference is clearly to Sindh: "vegaṛa pālha līyā varadāī, siṃdha taṇā sāṃḍhī rā". It, therefore, seems more apt to trace "dīpāṃ" to "dīpaṇau": "camakanā, shobhā denā".
[147] I interpret "kivalai rā-i" as "badshah", based on Shekavat (1968: 25), who reads "kivaḷai rāya" as "musalamānoṃ kī mukhya, badashaha".

saddled horse, etcetera. The main difference between the manuscript and printed version of *git* I concerns the listing of the name of one of Pabuji's adversaries in the latter composition, the poet of which mentions one Vegara of Sindh, the "King of the south", whose herd of she-camels is stolen by Pabuji.[148] Additionally, *git* I also contains two more verse-lines (6-7) than Shekavat's version of this poem. Other differences mainly concern matters of spelling and word choice. Compare, for instance, the second and third verse-lines of *git* I and Shekavat (1968: 25):

2. pābū pāṭi re rūpaka rā(ṃ)ṭhavaṛe, seve tujha sadhīrā
3. vegaḍai pālī varadā-ī, sahi laṃkā taṇā sāṃḍhaḍiyā

2. pābū pāṭa rai rūpa rāṭhavaṛāṃ, sevai tūjha sadhīrā
3. vegaṛa pālha līyā varadāī, siṃdha taṇā sāṃḍhī rā

*Git* II

The untitled, undated and anonymous 44 verse-lines long *git* II opens with a description of Pabuji's marriage with the Sodhi Rajputni of Umarkot. Another printed and 45 verse-lines long rendering of this composition (*git* III) has been published in N.S. Bhati (1973: 83-84) and is titled *Gīta pābūjī rai vivāha samai rau* ("Song 'about' Pabuji's wedding"). The recitation, (and probably also the composition) of this printed poem has been attributed to the poet Samdu Cainji by the Rajasthani Research Institute (Chaupasni) as becomes apparent from the poem's subtitle: *Sāṃdū cainajī rau kahiyo* ("recited by Sandu Cainaji"). Apart from the latter ascription of the poem to Samdu, and the fact that the printed version (*git* III) has one more verse-line (i.e. the title of the poem) than *git* II, and with the exception of the use of dissimilar words and distinct spellings, the manuscript and printed text versions of this composition do not vary greatly. Compare, for example, the differences between verse-lines 9 to 13 of *git* II, with verse-lines 10 to 15 of *git* III:

9. neha nava rī (ji)kā vāta cita na dhārī
10. prema gavarī taṇau nāṃma pāyau
11. rāja (kam)varī [rahī camvarī][149] caḍhī
12. āpa bhamarī taṇī pīṭha(ṃ) āyau

10. neha nava rī jikā vāta cita na dhārī
11. prema gavarī taṇo nāṃha pāyau
12. rāja kaṃvarī rahī caṃvarī caṛhī
13. āpa bhamarī taṇī pīṭha āyau

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[148] Shekavat (1968: 25, n. 1) reads "vegaṛa" as a name for Muhammad Begara.
[149] An insert sign following "varī" refers to illegible words scribbled above, perhaps reading: "rā darā".

As one would expect, the narrative content of *git* I and II is also quite similar. Both *git*s open with a description of Pabuji's wedding: how he takes the hand of his Sodhi bride, a part of his clothing is tied to her wedding dress and how, at the same time, the cows of Charans are rounded up by cattle thieves. Pabuji leaves his bride behind at the marriage altar, mounts his mare and rushes to the cows' rescue. In the next verse-lines (*git* II v. 13-16, *git* III v. 15-18 ), Pabuji's black mare Kalvi is praised, in particular the way in which her hooves dance to the tune of drums and the resulting sound: "dhrībachaṛa dhrībachaṛa". Kalvi performs fearsome somersaults and arrives at the battle scene, galloping as fast as Kali's discus flies and neighing heroically. And the poem also brings to mind Pabuji's sense of duty; it is so deep that not even the sound of wedding songs can make the Rathaur hero forget his obligation towards the Charans or the duty of a Kshatriya, here described in terms of the protection of cattle (*git* II v. 17-20):[150]

19. vita rau vāharū vaṇyau tiṇa vari mai(ṃ)
20. cīta raja rīta vaṭa taṇai cālai

19. *During this time, the protector of cattle 'stood firm'.*
20. *(With his) heart, he 'follows' the road 'preordained by' the Kshatriya tradition.*[151]

Dressed as a bridegroom and accompanied by the sound of war instruments, Pabuji gives chase to his foe Jimda, who is called a "Sambhari" in this poem.[152] Jimda also stands firm, and refuses to hand over the stolen cows to Pabuji. The leader of the Khici lineage, Jimda, takes out his sword from its scabbard and defiantly twirls his moustache to indicate that he accepts Pabuji's challenge. And Pabuji, "The Spearwielder", "The Protector", "The Pride of his Dynasty", readies his lance. The two Rajput heroes and their armies clash. Headless warriors continue to display their battle skills. The broad-shouldered hero Pabuji kills many of Khici's warriors, in this manner satiating the hungry *Yoginis* and filling their begging bowls (*git* II, v. 35): "chilachilā patara bhara jogaṇī chakā".[153] Thus Pabuji proves himself "a crown on the glory of his Dhamdhal ancestors". Alongside the hero, the Bhil warriors Camda and Damai also prove their worth in battle, as does their army of 140 Bhil combatants. In this manner, concludes the poet, Pabuji kept his word and added to his fame by recovering the Charan's stolen cows.

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[150] Compare *git* III (v. 19-22) in N.S. Bhati (1973: 84).
[151] More literally: "He goes the road of the Kshatriya tradition (in) (his) heart".
[152] "Sambhari": a Chauhan Rajput from Sambhar (near Jaipur).
[153] The begging bowls are probably filled with blood, if this image can be compared with the image used in *chamd* I (v. 28): "patra pūri sakatīya rata pīyai, lakha khecara(ṃ) bhūcara bhakhalīyai".

### *Git* IV

The poet Barahat Amaradas, the composer and/or reciter of the 16 verse-lines long g*it* IV, composed this poem to exalt Pabuji by describing his divine qualities. The hero's martial deeds remain largely unsung even though the poet does praise Pabuji's death in battle (N.S. Bhati 1973: 78). In the first verse-lines (2-3) the poet testifies that no one equals Pabuji since he towers over his fellow human beings like Mount Abu soars above other mountains. In the following, rather ambiguous verse-lines (4-13), Pabu is compared with (or described as) a god who straddles and rules the sky, whereas his powers are compared to Shiva's ascetic fervour and Devi's glory. The poet also praises Pabuji's horse and his sword by ascribing exceptional powers to them. In verse-line 10, the hero-god's strength is extolled by comparing it to Arjuna's bow, and in the subsequent verse-line (11), it seems that Pabuji's story or poem is compared to a holy book or sacred scripture: "guraṛa gravaṇa jimi nātha rā graṃtha" (N.S. Bhati 1973: 78).[154] In verse-lines 14 to 15, Pabuji is praised for his patronage of the temple (*thāṃna*) in Kolu, a deed (the poet stresses) which adds to the fame of Shiva's temple. The poet also extols Pabuji for fulfilling his purpose on earth, perhaps a reference to dying in battle in order to keep his promise and protect the Charan's cows, as Pabuji's headless torso continues to fight until, finally, Pabuji goes up to "the realm of the gods" (v. 16-17): "kamaḷa paṛiyo pachai khalāṃ pāṛe kitāṃ. sura maṃḍala bhediyo prathī sīdho" (N.S. Bhati 1973: 78).

### *Git* V

The nineteenth-century *gīta pābūjī rau āsiyā bāṃkīdāsa rau kahyau* (*git* V) composed by the Charan poet Asiya Bamkidas (1781-1833) from Jodhpur comprises 16 verse-lines and was published by N.S. Bhati (1973: 85). This poem centres on the battle between Pabuji and Jimda; the way Pabuji abandons his bride in the middle of the wedding ceremony and rushes to the battlefield to combat Jimda Khici, still dressed as a bridegroom. Throughout the rest of this composition (v. 6-17), Bamkidas equates marriage rituals with the rite of battle, for instance by mirroring Pabuji's longing to get married with his even greater passion for war. Dressed in his marriage costume, Pabuji passionately attacks the enemy as if he were wedding his bride. Battle cries resound in concert with auspicious wedding songs. Weapon-blows pour down upon the head of the warrior like flowers raining down on a groom. He who worshipped the marriage-garland in his in-laws' house is now himself "worshipped" by enemy swords, that is to say that he endures the attacks of his foe. In verse-lines 13-14, it is made apparent why Pabuji rides against Jimda, that is, to protect the Charan's cows (most likely Deval's cows). Therefore, or so one could interpret, Pabuji's fame will last as long as the mountains Girnar and Abu continue

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[154] "Gravaṇa" may refer to "song, narrative, poem or ballad" and to "mountain". This verse-line could, therefore, also be interpreted as: "The Nath's gramtha (is) 'like' a mighty mountain". If "Nath" is seen as a reference to Nath *yogi*s, the verse-line could also be interpreted thus: "The Nath (yogi's) holy book".

to exist. Bamkidas concludes by describing how Pabuji, after decimating Jimda's army, is vanquished, and sleeps on the battlefield "like in a bed" (v. 17): "pauḍhiyau seja raṇa bhoma pābū" (N.S. Bhati 1973: 85).

### *Duha* II

To finish, I will summarize the narrative content of the 10 verse-lines short *duha* II. The time of composition of this work is unknown. This work was composed in praise of the cow-protector Pabuji, who is here depicted as a young boy-warrior (*bālaka*) who spurs on his horse to right wrongs. In comparison with the other selected compositions, the poet employs rather unusual imagery in the first verse-line where he has Pabuji tame "wild horses", literally: horses "(with) feet (that) do not go straight".[155] Another uncommon image is found in the fourth and fifth verse-lines where the poet compares Pabuji's Battle of Kolu to that "other battle", the Battle of Kurakheta (Kurukshetra) as described in the classic epic *Mahābhārat*:

4. kalahaṇa kolū kāha, kā-i kalahaṇa kurakheta kā
5. sahaiṃ sorī khāha, rūpaka dhāṃdhala rāva ūta

4. *(During) the battle (of) Kolu (and) (during) the other battle, (at) Kurukshetra*
5. *(The heroes of both battles) attacked (to gain) 'fame', protection (and) glory.*

The poet evokes Pabuji's attack on his foes and the way in which he decapitates the neighbouring enemy and rushes forward like "fire fanned by the wind" (v.10).[156] The last verse-line (11) reads: "bālaka jyūṃ vauha jāṃṇa, rīkhai dhāṃdhala rāva ūta". I interpret it thus: "Thus the boy protects the herd, 'riding'[157] (on his horse). O, Son of King Dhamdhal".

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[155] *Duha* II (v. 1): "pavaṃga alāgai pāgi, sāṃcara tau sūdhau nahī".
[156] *Duha* II (v. 10): "pābū pāṛi paṭhāṃṇa, pāsi kamala paṛīya pachau".
[157] I interpret "jāṃṇa" as "savārī".

*Poetry recitation by Shri Charan Samdu.*

# 4 Dimgal Prosody

Heroic-epic poetry genres can sustain many functions, all of which can be thought of as collective "charters", including social, religious, ritual, psychological and ideological reflections on a people's past, present and future. As Finnegan (1977: 273f) states; "It is through poetry - not exclusively, certainly, but surely pre-eminently - that people create and recreate (their) world". From this angle, heroic-epic genres have been studied as "social charters", or the expressions of a community's view of their history, ideals, ethos and/or religious beliefs to see how heroic-epic genres sanction political control, socio-religious eminence or, conversely, challenge societal status quos by giving voice to rival ideas about power relations and class rankings. In addition, heroic-epic genres can also function as individual or collective artistic expressions with pedagogic and/or entertainment value, ritual performances, healing ceremonies and as ways to earn one's livelihood (Finnegan 1992: 125f). All these functions co-exist and can be attributed to different heroic-epic genres, in several ways, by diverse communities or, within one community, by its different members (Branch and Hawhesworth 1994: *passim*, Oberhelman et. al. 1994: *passim*). From reflections upon the purpose of the *chamd*s, *duha*s, *parvaro* and *git*s by their poets, it can be surmized that their compositions had an evidently devotional, at times ritual, and most often martial function.

The opening verse-lines of *chamd* I, and other instances in which the poets directly address Pabuji, like in *duha* I and the *parvaro*, imply that the poets composed these works to invoke blessings of the gods in general and/or of Pabuji and Devi in particular. The invoked blessings are most often articulated as divine help in bringing a composition or recitation to a good end. Pabuji is particularly invoked to ask for his protection for a poet's personal benefit, should he fall upon hard times or, more generally, to ensure that Pabuji's devotees and future generations will be kept from harm. The description of the healing rite in the *parvaro* in addition suggests that Dimgal poetry could also have a ritual and healing function and may have been part of medieval rites at temples dedicated to Pabuji. All poems have a clear martial function: they give voice to the martial ethos of warrior communities by eulogizing warriors and their deeds, "to make their fame immortal" and thus set standards of bravery for subsequent generations. Though none of the poets directly states that his composition served to delimit contemporary heroic standards, it is nevertheless clear that the poets of the Pabuji tradition gave voice to common heroic standards by praising Pabuji and by disparaging what was looked upon as cowardly conduct as can be understood from the portrayal of Jimda and the Bhil warriors in *duha* I, who are at times cast as cowards and thieves. In setting standards of bravery by glorifying death in battle and the warriors' protective

functions, the poets gave voice to the religiously inspired ideal of sacrificial heroism (discussed in chapter 5).

Poetic reflections upon the material functions that possibly determined the content and the form of this kind of poetry are almost wholly absent from the selected poems. Only once does a poet seem to hint at the material functions of Dimgal poetry, i.e. in the *parvaro*, given that one could (reading between the lines) attribute a material purpose to the fact that the poet praises his human patron Jaswant Singh and subsequently speaks of the gold coin donated by Pabuji "on becoming pleased with the poet's words". I imagine that the poet thus intended to remind the king of the material reward he hoped to receive for his recitation.

There is yet another purpose which can be ascribed to Dimgal heroic-epic poetry: its politico-military function. Though this function has not been directly or indirectly hinted at by the poets, scholars of Dimgal often account for the belligerent content and the intricate prosodic structuring of Dimgal heroic-epic poetry by referring to its use as a poetic war cry that served to motivate warriors for battle (N.S. Bhati 1989: 17f). "It was in these songs that foaming streams of infallible energy and indomitable iron courage had flown and which made the Rajput warrior forget all his personal comforts and attachments in a fight for what was true, good and beautiful" (Maheshwari as quoted in N.S. Bhati 1989: 15). In addition, numerous poems and semi-historical tales document how Charan poets are thought to have been present at the onset of war and during a battle to instil courage in the heart of warriors by reciting Dimgal poetry and thus reminding them of the heroic deeds and deaths of their forefathers (cf. N.S. Bhati 1989: 17, 24, Kharair 1999: 44f, Sharma and Singh 1982: 28f, 37, 65). From these sources, the effect can be gauged of poetic war cries as recited by Charans.

It is, for instance, said that some poems can only be recited in a whisper ever since a band of befriended Rajput warriors involuntarily took up weapons against each other. It is reported that the Rajput friends could not contain their warlike feelings on hearing the forceful declamation of a verse by a Charan and as a result involuntarily lacerated one another with their swords (recounted by Subh Karan Deval Jodhpur, June 2001). Also, craven warriors are believed to have had a change of heart on hearing just one verse-line recited by Charans, like the Rajput Raymalot of Sivana who was about to flee from Akbar's army when the Charan poet Duda Ashiya is supposed to have reminded him of the boldness of Harpal of Shergarh (N.S. Bhati 1989: 18). Duda praised Harpal's heroic stance: he was a real hero who would not have thought of fleeing his thatched hut, even when the enemy outnumbered him. How then, continued Duda, could Raymalot think of fleeing his sturdy fort and leaving it to his foe. As legend has it, Raymalot changed his mind straight away, on hearing only the initial lines of Duda's verse, and died while giving battle to the Mughal forces.

The study of medieval prosody further supports the idea that Dimgal heroic-epic poetry was indeed composed to motivate men and egg them on during the battle. The intricate rules for alliteration and metrical patterning of Dimgal compositions are

thought to have been developed by Charan poets to intensify the warlike content and tone of this kind of poetry. It is for this reason that a study is offered below of the prosodic form of the selected poems and of the purpose ascribed to them. In the next chapter (5), I will ask how my understanding of the form and function of the selected poems relates to the symbolic content which underlies this warlike genre and to contemporary definitions of heroic-epic genres.

### *Prosody*

An obstacle in the discussion of Dimgal prosody is the fact that Charan poets appear to have closely guarded the secret of the rules governing their compositions (Cf. Kharair 1999: 5).[158] Some Charans saw, and continue to see, Dimgal poetics as a gift granted by the goddess to Charans alone. Therefore, knowledge of Dimgal prosody is not always freely shared with outsiders, let alone with a foreigner.[159] During my fieldwork in Marwar, my inquiries into the structure of Charan poetry were often met with very friendly but equally non-committal smiles. Prosodic insights which some Charan poets did feel free to share, most often dealt with information which had been published already. As a result, my summary of Dimgal prosody is mainly based upon the description of traditional poetic devices in medieval poets' manuals and the detailed though not always systematic studies of medieval prosody by contemporary scholars.[160] As noted in chapter 1, this study is based in the first place on the *Raghunāth Rūpak*, a poets' manual composed by Mamch Kavi of Jodhpur (Kharair 1999: 12).[161] This prosodic work contains nine chapters about medieval poetics illustrated with versifications of episodes from the *Rāmāyaṇ* in Dimgal, thus detailing the different metres and their subdivisions, moods, figures of speech and recitative techniques. Owing to Kharair's annotation of this work, it is the most accessible of the poets' manuals studied by me. The following account is in addition based upon Lalas's (1960) edition of the rather complex prosodic manual *Raghuvarajasaprakās*, which was composed in 1823 by Kisana Arha.[162] In this work, the poet, like Mamch Kavi, also

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[158] Mamch Kavi, the composer of the nineteenth-century poets' manual *Raghunāth Rūpak*, typically was a Brahmin who learned the art of Dimgal poetry from the Oswal Jain poet Bhandari Kesordas. Kharair, in his foreword to the first edition of this work (1940), finds it necessary to explain at some length that Kesordas, as well as Mamch Kavi, were skilled poets, favoured by the goddess and honoured by the king. It appears that, up to the first half of the last century, a strong need was felt to establish that Brahmin and Jain poets could be experts of Dimgal prosody, even if they were not Charans.

[159] It is my impression that the secrecy surrounding poetic rules is not only motivated by their alleged divine origins but also by literary rivalries among some Charan families.

[160] See the works of (*passim*): N.S. Bhati (1989), Kaviya (1997), Ashanta (1994), Apte (1968), Menariya (2000) (1968), Swami (1998).

[161] The poet is also known under the name Mamcharam or Manasaram Kuwara.

[162] Also named Adha Kisna, reportedly a protégé of Maharaja Bhim Singh of Mewar (Udaipur) of whom it is said that he was one of the poets who helped the colonial administrator James Tod in collecting manuscripts for his description of the Rajasthani 'bardic tradition' in the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (N.S. Bhati 1989: 13).

illustrates the different Dimgal rhythm and rhyme schemes by recounting Ram's story in Dimgal verse. My interpretation of this text depends heavily upon N.S. Bhati's (1989: *passim*) comparison of both the *Raghunāth Rūpak* and the *Raghuvarajasaprakās*, especially where the conflicting rules of Dimgal prosody are concerned.

It should also be noted here that both prosodic works represent late-medieval rules, perhaps representing a tradition that sought to conform to standardized prosodic rules as expounded upon in Pimgala's *Chaṃdahshāstr*.[163] It seems to me that the elaborate set of rules of the *Raghunāth Rūpak* and the *Raghuvarajasaprakās* represents an idealized or standardized idea of a poet's ability to conform to poetic rules but did not take account of his actual talent to do so. This notion is further documented below, where I describe the poets handling of prosodic rules in the poems under review.

The scope of this study rules out a detailed account of every aspect of the relationship between the rhythm and rhyme of the selected compositions and their perceived effects. The following account has therefore been limited to aspects of the rules for rhyme, rhythm and recitation, which, to my mind, best help in understanding the martial purpose ascribed to Dimgal heroic-epic poetry: [1] alliterative rules, [2] metrical structure and [3] recitative conventions. I will begin with a discussion of Dimgal rhyme-schemes as laid down in the rules for *vaiṇasagāī* or "kindred syllables". These alliterative rules most commonly prescribe that the first, middle or last consonant of a word in a verse-line should be repeated at the same position in the last word of a verse-line (cf. N.S. Bhati 1989: *passim*).[164] In addition to this basic rule, *vaiṇasagāī* encompasses several other rules resulting in, for instance, syllable-rhyme, syllabic end-rhyme, vowel assonance, internal-rhyme and word-rhyme.[165] *Varṇ samkhyāk vaiṇasagāī*, for example, prescribes rules for "syllable rhyme" or alliteration achieved through the repetition of syllables according to their first, middle or last position in a word. *Akhrot* or *mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī* are the names for rules specifying which vowels and diphthongs may be used together. In the *Raghunāth Rūpak* the following vowels and diphthongs have been grouped as "friends": [1] a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, ya, va, [2] ja-jha, va-bha, pa-pha, na-ṇa, ga-gha, ca-cha and [3] ta-ṭa, dha-ḍha, da-ḍa, ca-cha (N.S. Bhati 1989: 46). The *Raghuvarajasaprakās*, on the other hand, identifies the

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[163] The earliest known work of Dimgal prosody is the sixteenth-century *Piṃgala Shiromāni*, attributed to Maharaval Havaraja, prince of Jaisalmer, but probably composed by his teacher, the poet Vachak Kushalabh. Unfortunately, this work did not prove accessible to me as no appropriately annotated version of the work seemed to exist.

[164] N.S. Bhati's study exemplifies how medieval classifications of these rules may vary. The *Raghunāth Rūpak*, for example, lists four main types of *vaiṇasagāī*, and their subdivisions, as varieties of *akhrot*, while in the *Raghuvarajasaprakās*, *vaiṇasagāī* and *akhrot* are classed as two different types of word-embellishments, which together count ten different subdivisions. Similarly, the rules for the repetition of words (*vrityanuprās*) or end-rhyme (*antyanuprās*) are at times presented as a separate class of poetic embellishments even if they govern similar forms of alliteration as *vaiṇasagāī* does (N.S. Bhati 1989: 41-46, 155, Kharair 1999: 60-63).

[165] Comparable to phonetic schemes in English poetry, which result in "phonetic parallelism" of different kinds (Short 1996: 107-112)

following pairs: [1] ā, ī, ū, e, ya, va, [2] ja-jha, pa-pha, na-ṇa, ga-gha, ca-cha and [3] ta-ṭa, dha-ḍha (ṭha), da-ḍa (N.S. Bhati 1989: 46).[166] All this is not presented here to confound the reader, but to illustrate the complexity of the rules as laid down in works of Dimgal prosody and the manner in which such listings can differ.

As an example of *mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī*, N.S. Bhati (1989: 46) quotes the verse-line: "***a**vadhi nagara re **ī**sarā*, ***e**hā hātha **u**dāra*". In this verse-line, vowel assonance is achieved by the pairs "a" and "ī", as well as "e" and "u". Different forms of *mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī* are at times distinguished according to which extent the rules have been applied: perfect, near, approximate and half-rhyme, or according to their position (end-rhyme or internal-rhyme). The last form of alliteration discussed here is *shabd vaiṇasagāī*, or word-rhyme through the repetition of words, ruling that the last word or part of the last word of a verse-line should be repeated in the same position in the next verse-line. See, for example, word-rhyme formed by "*anta*" and "*an-anta*" in the following verse-line (N.S. Bhati 1989: 43): "vayaṇa sagāī tīna vidha, madhya, tuka, **anta**. madhya mela hari mahamahana, tārana dāsa **ananta".** Yet another form of alliteration is *atyuttam varṇ samkhyāk vaiṇasagāī*, prescribing that the first letter of the first word is repeated before the last letter of the last word: ***Taam**ne baata tave saca**taam**ha* (N.S. Bhati 1989: 47).

To illustrate a few of the finer points of medieval Dimgal prosody as it has been applied in the selected poems, I shall discuss the following forms of *vaiṇasagāī*: [1] the alliteration of letters, [2] the pairing of vowels according to different subdivisions and [3] rules for word-rhyme and end-rhyme. First, let us look at the alliterative rules applied in *chamd* II, since this composition offers the most intricate examples of alliteration. See, for example, verse-lines 7 to 10 of *chamd* I:

7. jhagajheṭhī jhiṃdā pālha jhagai, adhapati anāṃmī āpa āgai
8. khala khāla khayāra na bola khamai, naha ko ī kehī pati ṭāṃka namai
9. pābū jīṃda la pramāṇi pahaṃ, gahamaṃ tageṛā lasa puragahaṃ
10. bahū kopa hū-ā birade ta binhai, vādhāraṇa vīrati jujha binhai

In this instance, all verse-lines, except (at first sight) verse-line 10, have been divided in two halves of which the first letters of the first and last words of both the half-lines alliterate: ***jha**gajheṭhī* and ***jha**gai*, in the first half-line, and ***a**dhapati* and ***ā**gai* in the second half-line of verse-line 7. In verse-line 10 an instance of word-repetition occurs with *binhai* as the last word of the first and latter half of the verse-line. The second half-line of this verse-line appears to have no alliteration but could be understood as an example of *mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī* by pairing "*va"* and "*bha*". Along these lines, ***vā**dhāraṇa ... **vi**nhai* and ***bā**dhāraṇa ... **bi**nhai* can be thought of as together forming

[166] Dimgal vowel assonance is rather at variance with Short's (1996: 111) examples of pure vowel or diphthong assonance in English poetry, which allow for the pairing of sounds like "i" and "ee" but not, as far as I know, for the pairing of vowel sounds like "a" and "ī", and so forth.

*vaiṇasagāī*. And, if ***a****dhapati* ***a****nāṃmī* ***ā****pa* ***ā****gai* represents a conscious attempt at having all first letters of each word alliterate, the poet has also made an effort to have the first letters of all words alliterate in verse-line 7. In the other verse-lines, this attempt has not been made, except perhaps in ***kha****la* ***khā****la* ***kha****yāra na bola* ***kha****mai*, but here the endeavour appears to have been unsuccessful. In the last part of verse-line 9, no *vaiṇasagāī* is in evidence, unless one were to read this verse-line as "***gaham***(*aṃ*) *tageṛā lasa* (*pura*)***gahaṃ***" and see it as an example of word-rhyme.

In the above-quoted verse-lines all last letters of the last words of the half-lines of verse-lines 7 to 10 alliterate with each other: "*jha****gai*** *... ā****gai***, *kha****mai*** *... na****mai***, *pah****aṃ*** *... puragah****aṃ*****,** *binhai ... binhai*". At times, *vaiṇasagāī* also rules the internal-rhyme between alternating half-lines resembling the rhyme achieved between all the half-lines of verse-lines 7 and 8 (*jhag****ai****-ā****gai***, *kham****ai****-nam****ai, gaham***(*aṃ*)-(*pura*)***gahaṃ***). Though this rhyme-form has not been applied throughout *chamd* II, it is nevertheless clear that the poet did aim to have all last letters of half-lines alliterate, at times with the following verse-lines, at times by achieving alliteration between alternating verse-lines. See, for example, verse-lines 45 to 55 of *chamd* II:

45. macharāla khaigāla rosāla man**e**, vikarāla ghaḍāla jakāla van**ai**
46. ḍhiṃcāla bhuṃjāla suḍrāla dhayaṃ, sātavīsai sura saghīra sayaṃ
47. suhaṛāṃ caṃdīyau iṇa rūpa sajh**e**, mila pūnima caṃda ni kṣatra majh**ai**
48. khākhu pemala khaṃdhāra khal**ai**, vagavālata vīsala vīsa val**ai**
49. bhaṛa hekā heka vasekha bhaṛaṃ, pāradhī pāyaka pālha taṇa(ṃ)
50. hūyā sātavīse sātha heka manaṃ, dhana dhana narapati dhana dhana(ṃ)[167]
51. dhāṃdhala samau bhrama dhuṃha dhaṛ**ai**, kha ta māragi pālha turaṃga khaṛ**ai**

The alliterative pattern of verse-lines 45 to 51 has been established by having nearly all first letters of the first words in the above-quoted half-lines alliterate with the first letters of the last words of the same half-line (***ma****charāla* and ***ma****ne*, **v***ikarāla* and ***v****anai*, **ḍh***iṃcāla* and **dh***ayaṃ*, and so forth).[168] In addition, the poet had the last letter of *all* last words of each half-line alliterate with the last letter of all last words of the subsequent half-line (*ma***ne** *... va***nai,** *dha***yaṃ** *... sa***yaṃ**). Also, note the alliteration of all last letters of most words in verse-line 45: *mach****ar****āla khaig****ā****la ros****ā****la mane*, *vik****ar****āla gha****ḍ****āla jak****ā****la vanai*, that is partially sustained in the next verse-line (46): *ḍhiṃc****ā****la bhuṃj****ā****la suḍr****ā****la dhayaṃ*. And in the latter half-line of verse-line 46, all first letters alliterate: ***sā****tavīsai* ***su****ra* ***sa****ghīra* ***sa****yaṃ*.

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[167] Unclear reading. Perhaps: *dhane*. Alliterative rules suggest: *taṇa(ṃ)* (v. 49) and *dhana(ṃ)* (v. 50).

[168] Except for the last half-line of verse-line 49 (***pā****radhī ...* ***ta****ṇa*(*ṃ*)) and the first half-line of verse-line 50 (***hū****yā ...* ***ma****naṃ*), though these cases could, yet again, be thought of as a form of indirect alliteration if we read: ***pā****radhī ...* ***pā****lha-taṇa*(*ṃ*), and ***hū****yā ...* ***he****ka-manaṃ*.

In the above-quoted verse-lines, the poet also made an effort to alliterate alternating verse-lines, like verse-lines 45 to 51, where *mane* and *vanai* (v. 45), alliterate with *sajhe* and *majhai* (v. 47) and *khalai* and *valai* (v.48), while *dhayaṃ* and *sayaṃ* (v. 46) alliterate with *bhaṛaṃ* and *taṇa(ṃ)* (v. 49) and *manaṃ* and *dhana(ṃ)* (v. 50). As is documented below, these sequences suggest that the poet intended to alliterate 3 verse-lines (45, 47, 48 and 46, 49, 50) and alternated this pattern per two lines (45-46, 48-49):

45. macharāla khaigāla rosāla **mane**, vikarāla ghaḍāla jakāla **vanai**
46. ḍhiṃcāla bhuṃjāla suḍrāla *dhayaṃ*, sātavīsai sura saghīra *sayaṃ*
47. suhaṛāṃ caṃdīyau iṇa rūpa **sajhe**, mila pūnima caṃda ni kṣatra **majhai**
48. khākhu pemala khaṃdhāra **khalai**, vagavālata vīsala vīsa **valai**
49. bhaṛa hekā heka vasekha *bhaṛaṃ*, pāradhī pāyaka pālha *taṇa(ṃ)*
50. hūyā sātavīse sātha heka *manaṃ*, dhana dhana narapati dhana *dhana(ṃ)*
51. dhāṃdhala samau bhrama dhuṃha **dhaṛai**, kha ta māragi pālha turaṃga **khaṛai**

It is unclear whether this pattern was intentional or not, for in the subsequent verse-lines (52-56) the poet did not achieve the above pattern in all instances (and perhaps did not aim to do so):

52. bhaṛa pāila meha la bhīṃca bhalā, jhilīyā paṃthi pādhari jujhakalā
53. dhara dhūjati pāī dhanakha **dharaṃ**, karajoḍa kadāla kha-uga **karaṃ**
54. pāika āghaga milai **praghalaṃ**, pāradhī lodhī ghāsa **palaṃ**
55. levā sraga ārati praba *ladhai*, vāha sūvāṃ pālha pramāṇa *vadhai*
56. ukarasa nihasa hamasa i-asī, dava ūpaṛi ḍaṃbara gaiṇa dīsī

The expressive quality of Dimgal alliterative rules brings about a "musical effect", resulting in the "characteristic sonorous style of warlike Dimgal", especially when recited aloud and in a staccato manner, as Tessitori (1919b: xi) has also noted. The belligerent tone of this kind of poetry is further enhanced by the evocation of battle through sound symbolism classed as *dhvanyārth-vyamjanā*: words expressing or suggestive of sound. This "embellishment of the meaning of words" (*arthālaṃkār*) comprises proper onomatopoeia or words imitating natural sounds (*svabhāvokti*) and words suggestive of sound through repetition (*puṇarukti*) also termed "echo words".[169] In the *chamd*s, the clash and clang of battle is evoked through the use of onomatopoeia like "chanam!", a sound that represents the swish of arrows released by archers. And with *kharaṛaka khaṛaka*, the poet imitated the sound that is produced when soldiers and their weapons collide, while *thaṛa* (*taṛa*) represents the tearing sound that ensues

[169] See, for example, Apte (1968: *passim*), N.S. Bhati (1989: 165f) and Short (1996: 113f).

when mail coats are ripped to shreds. I feel that this usage, in combination with the application of *vaiṇasagāī*, reinforces the warlike content of verse-lines 74-77 of *chamd* II:

74. jhabaraka jhaṛaka jhāṭaka jharai, phāraka pharaka nāraka phirai
75. kasaṇaka taṛaki baṭaki karāṃ, pāṛi kilaṛaka dhaṛaka paḍā(ṃ)
76. kharaṛaka khaṛaka bhaṭaka khamī, u(ṃ) thaṛaka laḍaka daṛaka amī
77. maraṛaka maṛaka asidha muṛai, judha[170] pālha anaiṃ jiṃdarāva juḍai

I interpret these verse-lines as follows:

74. (*The foot soldiers*) *cascade* (*upon the battlefield*) (*and*) *attack*, *they swagger and rush* (*forward*), *the foot soldiers burn* (*with anger*), (*like*) (*men*) *dwelling in hell* (*and*) *walk to and fro.*[171]
75. *The metal rings* (*of their mail coats*) *are torn with* '*a snap*'[172] *and break*, *nails*[173] *fall* (*from*) *the* (*soldiers'*) *mail coats*[174] (*with*) *a thud.*
76. *They endured the sound of* (*weapons*) '*clashing*', (*while*) *colliding* (*with each other*), *exploding* (*with anger*), *knocking* (*each other*) *down*, *crashing* (*into each other*) (*and*) *falling down* (*like*) 'a *waterfall'.*[175]
77. *Head*(*s*) *break* (*from*) *bodies in harness*(*es*) (*and*) *fall*; *Pabu and Jimda unite in battle*.

The above-quoted alliterative rules not only dictate the rhyme of the first and last letters of the first and last words of the half-lines, but also regulate the internal rhyme of verse-line 74 through the alliteration of all the first letters (*jha*, *jhā*) of the words of the first half-line (***jha****baraka* ***jha****ṛaka* ***jhā****ṭaka* ***jha****rai*) and most of the second half-line (*phā*, *pha*, *phi*) as can be read from ***phā****raka* ***pha****raka nāraka* ***phi****rai*. Verse-lines 75 to 77 also illustrate that the poet aimed to alliterate most of the last letters of words in the first verse-line (v.74), given that he has all words, except the last words of both its half-

[170] Unclear. Perhaps: *kudha*. Alliterative rules suggest: *juḍai*.
[171] An alternative reading would be: "The foot soldiers tremble (with fear) (for) hell (and) 'beat the retreat'". Or, if *nāraka* is read as the absolutive case of *nārakaṇau*: "(The foot soldiers) 'swamp' (the battlefield) (and) attack, they swagger and rush (forward), the foot soldiers burn (with anger) and walk to and fro, exchanging (fierce) glances".
[172] Literally: the sound of tearing, "thaṛa".
[173] Reading *kila* as *kīla*.
[174] Literally: "clothes" (*kapaḍā*, *kapaṛā*).
[175] Or: "plummeting down (into) water".

lines, end with "ka".[176] In the next verse-lines (75-77) several more words end with "ka" and boost the staccato alliteration initiated in verse-line 75 (*chamd* II):

74. jhabara**ka** jhaṛa**ka** jhāṭa**ka** jharai, phāra**ka** phara**ka** nāra**ka** phirai
75. kasaṇa**ka** taṛa**ki** baṭa**ki** kaṛāṃ, pāṛi kilaṛa**ka** dhaṛa**ka** paḍā(ṃ)
76. kharaṛa**ka** khaṛa**ka** bhaṭa**ka** khamī, u(ṃ) thaṛa**ka** laḍa**ka** daṛa**ka** amī
77. maraṛa**ka** maṛa**ka** asidha muṛai, judha[177] pālha anaiṃ jiṃdarāva juḍai

A similar staccato effect is achieved in verse-lines 78-82[178] with the repetition of words ending with *ṭa* and *ṭi*:

78. dha(ṃ)macha**ṭa** gāha**ṭa** hai pha(ṃ)**ṭa** dharā, ko pa**ṭa** āva**ṭa** masaṃ**ṭa** karā
79. nīya cha**ṭa** paha**ṭa** niha**ṭa** nare, sara sāra saṃbāra samāra sa(ṃ)re
80. khalaka**ṭa** vika**ṭa** āva**ṭa** khisai, vīya cha**ṭa** sobha**ṭa** maṃsa**ṭa** vasai
81. khaga jha**ṭa** vika**ṭa** āva**ṭa** phalai, bhaṃbha**ṭa** ju a**ṭa** bhriga**ṭi** bhalai
82. mila ca**ṭa** subha**ṭa** baṃdha**ṭa** milu, hujaḍā hatha pālha laṛai hujhalai

Also note the alliteration of all first letters of the first and last words of a half-line in the above verse-lines (**dh***a(ṃ)machaṭa* ... **dh***arā*, **k***o* ... **k***arā*). In the above examples, the poet appears to have applied end-rhyme as well, albeit not very consistently, in view of the fact that end-rhyme sometimes rules the last words of four verse-lines (79-78) while in other instances (v. 74-78) no end-rhyme has been achieved.

Most of the rules which structure *chamd* II are also used in *chamd* I, the *duha*s, *git*s and the *parvaro*. I will therefore discuss the different forms of *vaiṇasagāī* achieved in the latter poems in a summary way. First, *chamd* I, which (compared with *chamd* II) illustrates the rather consistent application of alliterative rules as is apparent from the following example in which nearly all first and last words of the half-lines alliterate:

17. **bh**ita cola cakhīya ata rosa **bh**ile, **m**ukha mūṃcha aṇīṃ [jāya][179] mūṃha **m**ile
18. **v**adhiyā bhuja vyauma lagai **v**imalā, **k**rama deta ha ṭīkama jema **k**alā
19. **bh**aṛa bhīṃca hakālāya pāla **bh**alā, **h**ala vega caṛho vahalā vahalā

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[176] Today, as I witnessed during a recitation of the above verse-lines by Subh Karan Deval (2001), the "ka" suffixed to words is doubled to increase the stark alliteration of these verse-lines, as can be heard when one reads verse-line 76 out loud while doubling the "ka" at the end of the words ("kharaṛa**kka** khaṛa**kka** bhaṭa**kka** khamī, u(ṃ) thaṛa**kka** laḍa**kka** daṛa**kka** amī").

[177] Unclear. Perhaps: *kudha*. Alliterative rules suggest: *juḍai*.

[178] See also verse-lines 85 to 90, where more than half of the words end with *la*.

[179] Insert sign indicating "jāya" in the manuscript margin.

20. **v**aṛa tuṃga virata **v**ilaku(ṃ)līyaṃ, **a**sa choṛai ilā asa **u**tāvalāyaṃ

An exception is formed by the second half-line of verse-line 19 (*hala ... vahalā*), though this line could also be read as "***hala*** ... (*va*)***halā***", in which case alliteration and end-rhyme are achieved. An example of *mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī* appears in the last half-line (v.20), where "a" and "u" have been paired (***a****sa* ... ***u****tāvalāyaṃ*). Verse-lines 32 and 34 of *chamd* I illustrate the variable handling of rules in this composition, like in the first half-line of verse-line 32, where *dhurilāṃ* does not alliterate with *ghaṇīṃ*. Also, in the last half-line (v. 34), the first letters of *ghaṇa* and *ratrāṃ* do not alliterate:

32. dhurilāṃ mukhi boha vidha pheṇa ghaṇīṃ, vica vājatri gāja abāja vaṇīṃ
34. paṇiṃhāri sakatīya kūbhaṃ patrāṃ, ghaṇa ghāṭa bharaiṃ jala rūka ratrāṃ

In *chamd* I, like in *chamd* II, many instances of internal-rhyme and end-rhyme occur, at times suggesting that the poet intended to alliterate the last word of each half-line of 3 or 4 consecutive verse-lines (18-21 and 28-30):

18. vadhiyā bhuja vyauma lagai *vimalā*, krama deta ha ṭīkama jema *kalā*
19. bhaṛa bhīṃca hakālāya pāla *bhalā*, hala vega caṛho vahalā *vahalā*
20. vaṛa tuṃga virata *vilaku(ṃ)līyaṃ*, asa choṛai ilā asa *utāvalāyaṃ*[180]
21. sākhatiṃ palāṃṇa maṃḍāṇa *sahā*, tasalīma karai taṃga tāṃṇa *tahā*

28. patra pūri sakatīya rata **pīyai**, lakha khecara(ṃ) bhūcara **bhakhalīyai**
29. kei yaṃkhaṇa grihyaṇa koḍa **karaiṃ**, pala guda gila gila peṭa **bharai**
30. kei khāga sūṃ khāga vibhāga **karaiṃ**, jhaṭakāṃ baṭakāṃ hoi ṭopa **jharaiṃ**

The poet did not, however, achieve this pattern throughout the composition:

31. tara jūṭa rahe kahuṃ nāhara*se*, tāṃ[181] paṛīyā kahuṃ jodha pacāhara*se*
32. dhurilāṃ[182] mukhi boha vidha pheṇa ghaṇīṃ, vica vājatri gāja abāja vaṇīṃ

The poets of *duha* I and the *parvaro* employed much less intricate alliterative rules, at least as far as I am able to assess the prosodic achievements of Dimgal poets. In

[180] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *utāvalāīyaṃ*.
[181] The letter *ta* followed by *oṃ*. The latter was crossed out, resulting in: *tāṃ*.
[182] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *dhu-ālaṛilāṃ* or *dhuglaṛilāṃ*.

addition, the more "basic" alliterative rules seem to have been applied in a much more regular manner in *duha* I and the *parvaro* than they were in the *chamd*s. See, for example, verse-lines 4 to 10 of *duha* I:

4. **su**ra nāyaka **sū**ṃḍāla, **va**radāyaka huije **va**le
5. **bha**la pābū **bhū**pāla, **ma**la kahai kīrata **mu**ṇūṃ
6. **pā**bū **pa**tiyāroha, **ka**liyuga māṃ thāro **ka**madha
7. **se**vaga juga **sā**roha, **rā**khai dhāṃdhala **rā**va uta

The appearance of regularity has to do with the fact that the above verse-lines most often follow basic *vaiṇasagāī* rules and repeat the first letter of the first word of a half-line at the same position in the last word of the half-line.[183] Second, the poets did not use *mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī* (the pairing of different letters) as often as in the *chamd*s but regularly opted to employ the same consonant followed by the same vowel to alliterate, like ***su**ra ... **sū**ṃḍāla* and ***va**radāyaka...**va**le* in verse-line 4. Third, end-rhyme has often been achieved through straightforward word-repetition, for instance: *kamadha* and *kamadha* (*duha* I, v. 37-38). Fourth, the verse-lines of *duha* I and the *parvaro* are much less elaborate (again as compared with the *chamd*s). At times a verse-line consists of only five words (compared with an average of ten words in the *chamd*s) while some half-lines only contain two words which alliterate with each other, like ***do**hītarī **do**hītarāṃ* in verse-line 10 (*duha* I).[184] Fifth: the poets of *duha* I and the *parvaro* employed a comparatively simple form of internal-rhyme through the regular use of the empty "filler" *ha* (*īha*, *eha*) to end words. By adding *ha* to the last words of subsequent first half-lines of verse-lines, the poets achieved the alliteration of all first half-lines of four verse-lines, as can be read from the following verse-lines of *duha* I:

34. raṃbhā nu rāj**īha**, kari kolu āyo kamaṃdha
35. vāṃsai verāj**īha**, paraṇī trī hu(ṃ)ī nipaṭa
36. ugai ravi āv**eha**, āthuṇa huvai jāvai avasi
37. vinī naha cāv**eha**, ke dina iyuṃ gamīyā kamadha

It might of course also be argued that there was no real need to add "ha" in the above instances for the poet could have achieved *mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī* without doing so, since all last words of the first half-lines contain the pairs "ī" and "e". A similar question arises regarding the application of "ha" in verse-lines 22 to 29 of the

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[183] Though the opening verse-line (2) of *duha* I offers an illustration of indirect alliteration: "devī de varadāṃna, muṇato ima ladhamālīyau", if we read: "**de**vī ... (vara)**dā**ṃna, **mu**ṇato ... (ladha)**mā**līyau".
[184] *Duha* I (v. 10):"**pā**bū tūṃ **p**ratapāla, **do**hītarī **do**hītarāṃ".

*parvaro*.[185] Perhaps the addition of "ha" in the quoted verse-lines of *duha* I and the *parvaro* primarily served metrical purposes, a notion that I discuss further below, under the heading *Metrics*.

The last examples of alliterative rules discussed here serve to briefly illustrate the use of *vaiṇasagāī* in *duha* II and the *git*s, beginning with verse-line 2 of *duha* II: "pavaṃga alāgai pāgi, sāṃcara tau sūdhau nahī". In this verse-line, the first letter of the first word of the last half-line accords with the first letter of the second or third word, instead of the last word. Perhaps in the first verse-line, *nahī* should be understood as a "postposition" and taken to form one word with *sūdhau*, the word to which it has been appended. In that case, the first letter of the first word (*sāṃcara*) does alliterate with the first letter of the last word (*sūdhau*). The same can be said of the second half-line of verse-line 3 (quoted below), where *dhavīyau* alliterates with *dhāṃdhali* if one reads: *dhāṃdhali-rāvaūta*.[186] In the subsequent verse-lines, *vaiṇasagāī* rules that the first letter of the first word of a half-line alliterates with the first letter of the last word of that same half-line, while the poet has also achieved the alliteration of all first letters of all words of both half-lines in verse-line 4 ("**k**alahaṇa **k**olū **k**āha, **k**āi **k**alahaṇa **k**urakheta **k**ā").[187] In some half-lines no alliteration appears to have been achieved at all, unless we read "**s**ahaiṃ **s**orī-khāha" (v. 5) and "**p**ābū iṇi **p**ari-ja-i" (v. 8).

Like in *duha* I, the application of the rules for rhyme in this short *duha* II appear relatively uncomplicated and more or less regular. The same can be said of the manuscript version of *git* I, as the following instances illustrate:

2. pābū pāṭi re rūpaka rā(ṃ)ṭhavaṛe,[188] **s**eve tujha **s**adhīrā
3. **v**egaḍai pālī **v**aradāī, **s**ahi laṃkā taṇā **s**āṃḍhaḍiyā
4. **p**ābū ai parabata kīyā **p**ādhara, **gh**arahara pākhara **gh**oṛe
5. **s**ihā harai lī(ṃ)yā(ṃ) **s**āṃḍhīṛīyā, **l**āi lākhāṃ muhaḍe **l**aḍai
6. rāte (i)lī baisā(ṃ) valharāṃ sū, **u**ṭhai[189] jhoka **a**vārī
7. **p**āta līyai āṃṇī **p**rama-vale, **s**ā(ṃ)rā jhoka **s**avhārī(ṃ).
8. **p**āchima disi pābū **p**ādharai, **v**egaja kamadhaji **v**ālī
9. **p**a(ṃ)ra dīpāṃ sūṃ lyāyau(ṃ) **p**ābū, **k**ivalai rāi **k**amālī.

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[185] *Parvaro* (v. 22-23): "kamadhaja prāṃ māṃṇa kar**eha**, karūṃti kuṃ bhopo kahai. tada sīcau ghat**eha**, vāghai sukha pāyo bahuta", and so forth (see appendix).

[186] Compare the latter half-line of *duha* II, verse-line 9: "**dha**mīyau **dhā**ṃdhalarāvaūta".

[187] The staccato alliteration resulting from the use of "ka" in this verse-line resembles the effect achieved with "ka" in verse-line 75 of *chamd* II, described earlier as a way to enhance the warlike content and tone of the composition. Maybe the use of "ka" in verse-line 4 (*duha* II), in which the battle of Kolu is equated with the battle of Kurukshetra, suggests a relation between the alliteration with "ka" and the content of a verse-line. In other words: the staccato alliteration resulting from the rhythmic use of "ka" was perhaps set off by the warlike content of a verse-line.

[188] An illustration of internal alliteration per half-line if we read: "**p**ābū **p**āṭi *r*e rūpaka *r*ā(ṃ)ṭhavaṛe".

[189] Blotched. Perhaps: *muṭhai*. Alliteration would require: "*u̲tahi* ... *a̲vārī*" (*mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī*).

Also note the instance of internal-rhyme in verse-lines 2 to 5 of *git* I between the last words of the first half-lines ("rā(ṃ)ṭhavaṛ**e** ... varad**āī**", "pādhar**a** ... sāṃḍhīṛīy**ā"**). This alliteration has not been achieved in all instances since the last letters of the last words of the first half-line of verse-line 6 and 9 do not alliterate with the subsequent counterparts, but with each other ("s**ū** ... pāb**ū"**), as do the last letters of the last words of the first half-line of verse-lines 7 and 8 ("val**e** ... pādhar**ai"**). In the previous instances, it is yet again unclear from which rules these examples of internal-rhyme and end-rhyme result. End-rhyme occurs per two verse-lines in the first four verse-lines ("sadhīr**ā** ... sāṃḍhaḍiy**ā**", "ghoṛ**e** ... laḍ**ai**") and per four in the last verse-lines (6 to 9) which all end with "ī" (*avārī*, *savhārī*(*ṃ*), *vālī*, *kamālī*).

The verse-lines of *git* II have not been subdivided in half-lines, and *vaiṇasagāī* is achieved not among half-lines but with the first letter of the first and last word of full verse-lines. Apart from this difference, the above remarks about *git* I also apply to *git* II, for this composition is also ruled by relatively uncomplicated and more or less regular alliterative effects:

5. **jh**īṇa(ṃ) ga(ṃ)ṭhajoṛa[190] paṭa bāṃdha kara **jh**ālīyau
6. **j**aṭhai vara vīdaṇī heka **j**oṛī
7. **c**āraṇāṃ taṇau vita dhāṛa **c**āliyau[191]
8. **gh**āliyau jyā gamai roa **gh**aurī
9. **n**eha nava rī (ji)kā vāta cita **n**a-dhārī
10. **p**rema gavarī taṇau nāṃma **p**āyau
11. rāja (kam)varī (*rahī camvarī*)[192] caḍhī
12. **ā**pa bhamarī taṇī pīṭha(ṃ) **ā**yau

While the poet appears to have aimed at achieving alternate alliteration between the last letters of verse-lines 6, 8, 9, 11 (ending in *ī*) and verse-lines 5, 7,10 and 12 (ending in *au*), he did not adhere to this pattern throughout as is clear from the last words of verse-lines 13 to 16 (*git* II): "dharat**īṃ** ... (k)arat**ī**", "keviy**āṃ** ... bharat**ī**".

Similar comparatively straightforward and consistent alliterative effects shaped the *git*s published by N.S. Bhati (1973: 78-85), including exceptions to the rules in verse-line 32 of *git* III, where *vikhama* and *sahiyā* do not alliterate:

30. **bh**ālālai jhālīyau hātha **bh**ālau
31. **b**āja khaga jhataka behuvāṃ kaṭaka **b**icālai

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[190] In this manuscript, the notation of "ṛa" resembles "u". Compare *joṛī* (v. 6), *dhāṛa* (v.7), *dhrībachaṛa* (v.13), *nāvaṛī* (v.15), and so forth.

[191] N.S. Bhati (1973: 83) has: "cāraṇāṃ taṇau vita dhāṛa **meṃ** cāliyau".

[192] An insert sign following *varī* refers to illegible words scribbled above, perhaps reading: *rā darā*. N.S. Bhati (1973: 83) has: *rahī camvarī*. Subh Karan Deval (personal communication) suggests: *jikā rahī*.

32. vikhama dhaṛa phata sira sataka sahiyā.
33. **l**otha hūṃtā paṛe tūṭa māthā **l**aṭaka

The alliterative rules applied in *git* IV and V (N.S. Bhati 1973: 78, 85) are remarkable in one respect: the poets achieved the alliteration of all first letters of the first and last word of all 17 verse-lines.[193] Also note the way in which end-rhyme has been achieved between alternating verse-lines (2 and 4, 3 and 5, and so forth) throughout *git* IV:

1. gīta pābūjī raṭhauṛa bhārahaṭa amaradāsajī rau kahiyau
2. **cha**ṭhī āparīṃ parāī jāgaṇo kuḷa **cha**ḷā
3. **ū**parai narāṃ jima girāṃ **ā**bū
4. **ka**maṇa dadhi ulāṃḍai ga-iṇa māvai **ka**maṇa
5. **pā**ra kuṇa pravāṃṛāṃ lahai **pā**bū
6. **si**va taṇāṃ joga caṃḍi taṇāṃ cirata **si**ṃbha
7. **ja**ga taṇāṃ ḍāṃṇa ghaṇa taṇā raṃga **je**mi
8. **aṃ**ba taṇā taraṃga dadhi nabha taṇāṃ **ūṃ**capaṇa
9. **t**rijala dhāṃdhiḷa taṇā taṇā judha **t**emi
10. **a**rajaṇa rā bāṃṇa jimi rāṃṇa rā māṃṇa **a**ṃgi
11. **g**uraṛa gravaṇa jimi nātha rā **g**raṃtha
12. **sa**maṃda rā dhāpa ākāsa rā māpa **su**ji
13. **pā**la rā kilā utarā dharā **pa**ṃtha
14. **he**ka koḷū taṇau thāṃna āsā **ha**rai
15. **ka**madha siva thāṃna vaḍa bhalo **kī**dho
16. **ka**maḷa paṛiyo pachai khalāṃ pāṛe **ki**tāṃ
17. **su**ra maṃḍala bhediyo prathī **sī**dho

To finish this section on alliterative rules let us study the rules applied by Bamkidas in *git* V (N.S. Bhati 1973: 85). Note the end-rhyme achieved by the last letters of the last words of all unevenly numbered verse-lines (3-5, 7-9, 11-13, and so forth):

1. gīta pābūjī rau āsiyā bāṃkīdāsa rau kahyau
2. **p**rathama neha bhīnau mahā krodha bhīnau **pa**chai
3. **lā**bha camarī samara jhoṃka **lā**gai
4. **rā**yakaṃvarī varī jeṇa vāge **ra**sika
5. **va**rī ghaṛa kaṃvārī teṇa **vā**gai
6. **hu**vai maṃgaḷa dhamaḷa damaṃgaḷa vīra **ha**ka

[193] Except for the first verse-lines of both poems that constitutie the poems' titles, which do not usually alliterate.

7. **ra**ṃga tūṭhau kamadha jaṃga **rū**ṭhau
8. **sa**ghaṇa vūṭho kusama voha jiṇa mauṛa **si**ra
9. **vi**ṣama uṇa mauṛa sira loha **vū**ṭhau
10. **ka**raṇa akhiyāta caḍhiyau bhalāṃ **kā**ḷamī
11. **ni**bāhaṇa vayaṇa bhuja bāṃdhiyā **ne**ta
12. **pa**ṃvārāṃ sadana varamāḷa sūṃ **pū**jiyau
13. **kha**ḷāṃ kiramāḷa sūṃ pūjiyau **khe**ta
14. **sū**ra vāhara caḍhai cāraṇāṃ **su**raharī
15. **i**tai jasa jitai giranāra **ā**bū
16. **vi**haṃḍa khaḷa khīciyāṃ taṇā daḷa **vi**bhāṛe
17. **pau**ḍhiyau seja raṇa bhoma **pā**bū

From my appraisal of the quoted verse-lines it appears that the rules as described in the medieval poets' manuals, the *Raghunāth Rūpak* and the *Raghuvarajasaprakās*, do not in all instances prove helpful in describing the use of alliterative rules by the poets of the Pabuji tradition. The above study underlines that alliterative rules were applied in various, at times divergent, ways. The main difficulty which presents itself in understanding whether or not the above-quoted examples amount to a coherent application of prescriptive rules arises from the fact that I have not yet come across rules which stipulate that only one type of *vaiṇasagāī* can be applied in one poem or which, alternatively, allow for the variation of different types of *vaiṇasagāī* within one composition. It should, in addition, be kept in mind that the prosodic manuals upon which the above study has been based represent late-medieval rules which, as noted in the beginning of this chapter, possibly sought to conform to ideal (as opposed to practically applicable) prosodic rules that did not reflect the actual practice of oral and written composition in Marwar. It is possible that the poets sought to conform to diverse, perhaps distinctively local, alliterative rules not described in the *Raghunāth Rūpak* and the *Raghuvarajasaprakās*. The variable use of prosody will be expanded upon further after the following discussion of some of the metrical rules that may have structured the poems under review.

### *Metrics*

Rhyme-schemes ruled by metrical patterning are generally termed *chaṃd śāstr*: metre-based taxonomies of Dimgal verse. Dimgal *chamd* is most commonly defined as a form of narrative poetry composed according to different metres (Kharair 1999: 1961f, Lalas 1962-1988). The metres of *chamd* I and II have been termed *gāhā causar* and *chaṃd troṭak*. As already noted in chapter 2, *chamd* I opens with an invocation of Ram, Sarasvati and the poet's unnamed gurus (v. 1). The subsequent 6 verse-lines were written under the heading *gāhā causar*, in which the poet pays

tribute to the heroism of both the Pabuji and Jimda. The larger part of this poem (verse-lines 9 to 58) was composed under the heading *chaṃda troṭak*. *Chamd* II does not begin with an invocation of the gods, like *chamd* I does, but starts out with a portrayal of the battle preparations and war deeds of the Rajput protagonists in a way which closely resembles the *gāhā causar* of *chamd* I, though these verse-lines have not been coined thus. The poet did name the verse-lines 7 to 95 "*chaṃda troṭaka*" like the poet of *chamd* I did. The last six verse-lines of *chamd* II are drawn to a close with a *kalas* of six verse-lines through which the poet gives a summary of the battle between Pabuji and Jimda and once again praises the Rathaur hero. A *kalas* is not part of *chamd* I.

Kharair (1999: 121f) describes the first-mentioned metre, the *gāhā causar*, as a variety of the Dimgal *savak udal* metre.[194] Ideally, *savak udal* contains two verse-lines, divided into four half-lines containing 16 metrical units, ending with a three-*mātr* word, that is: a word containing three metrical instants (*mātr*). This last word is repeated at the end of every half-line.[195] If the second verse-line contains only three, instead of four, four-*mātr* words, the resulting form is termed *gāhā causar*. The second metre, the *chaṃd troṭak* (also termed *gīt tratako*) structures a poem as follows: one couplet should contain four verse-lines, subdivided into eight half-lines.[196] The first three sixteen-*mātr* half-lines should be followed by an eleven- *mātr* half-line brought to a close with a word consisting of a long and short metrical instant. For the next four half-lines, the same procedure is followed. Last but not least, the final word of the fourth half-line should be a three-*mātr* word of which the last letter corresponds to the last letter of the three-*mātr* word that concludes the eighth half-line (cf. Kharair 1999:198).

The last verse-lines of *chamd* II were composed under the heading *kalasa*, a term for concluding couplets in which the gist of a poem is summarized. The metrical structure of the *kalas* or *kalas rau chappai* as Kharair terms it remains uncertain. A number of different opinions exist on this subject. Kharair (1999) defines *kalas*, or *kalas rau chappai*, as a Dimgal verse in which every verse-line counts 20 *laghu* (short) and 22 *guru kul* (long) metrical instants that combine to form a 64 *mātr* count. Tessitori (1921: xiv) describes Dimgal *kalasa* as as six-verse-lines couplet "rhymed in pairs, whereof the first four lines number twenty-four prosodical instants each, and the last two lines twenty-eight each". McGregor (1993), in addition, defines *chappay* as a six-line couplet of composite structure based on metrics termed *rolā* combined with

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[194] Tessitori (1921: xiv) describes the *gāhā* metre as "consisting of four lines, rhymed two by two, of sixteen prosodical instants each, but not ending with a trochee".

[195] Like in the following verse-line quoted by Kharair (1999:122): "Nirakhe avāsām bhar nijar, nah dekhe dasarath nrap nijar**.** Nij dekhe nah baṃdhav nijar, nar dīthā bilakhyā saha nijar". Also note the use of alliterative rules, which determine that the first letter of the first and last word of every half-line begin with "na".

[196] For different opinions about the rules governing *chaṃd troṭak*, see Kharair (1999: 197f).

*ullāl*.[197] The first appears to be a rhyming couplet of 24 *mātr* in each line, having a pause at the eleventh, twelfth or thirteenth instant. The last syllable, or last two syllables, should be long. The latter term (*ullāl*) has not been further classified by McGregor (*ibid*.).[198] A tentative definition of Dimgal *kalas rau chappai* can, following McGregor's account of the Hindi metre *chappay*, be thought of as a six-line couplet of composite metrical structure. The *kalas* under review does contain six verse-lines summing up the narrative content of *chamd* II.

About the composite metrical structure of *chamd* I and II, I can say little with certainty, except that most of the metric rules outlined above have not been applied consistently. See, for instance the verse-lines titled *gāhā cosara* of *chamd* I:

3. va(ṃ)sa kama(ṃ)dha pāla varadāi, vegaṛa vahaṇa varaṇa varadāī
4. vairaharaṇa vā(ṃ)kāṃ varadāī, vā(ṃ)kāṃ pādharaṇa varadāī
5. udīyo kula khīcī aṇabhaṃgo, āvadha hātha jiṃdo aṇabhaṃgo
6. ari ā(ṃ)gamai tiko aṇabhaṃgo, āpai pāṃṇa ja(ṃ)so aṇbhaṃgo
7. jīṃdā pāla[199] vi(ṃ)nai jagajeṭhī, jūdha jaivaṃta vinai jagajeṭhī
8. juṛasī judha vinai jagajeṭhī, jāgai vaira vinai jagajeṭhī

The alliterative rules were applied rather consistently in the above-quoted verse-lines but this cannot be said of the metrical rules.[200] One could think of the above verse-lines as four *savak udal* couplets, each containing two verse-lines, divided into four half-lines, save for the fact that not all the half-lines have been restricted to the prescribed 16 metrical units. Nor do all the verse-lines end with a three-*mātr* word, even though the last words are, as prescribed, repeated at the end of every half-line (*varadāi*, *varadāī*, *aṇabhaṃgo*, *jagajeṭhī*). And, though verse-line 6 (the second verse-line of the *savak udal*) does contain three, instead of four words (like all other verse-lines), not all these words are, as stipulated, four-*mātr* words. In sum: though the poet clearly saw his verse as an instance of *gāhā causar* (since that is what he named the verse-lines) the resulting form does not accord with the prescriptive rules for *gāhā causar* as listed above.

It should also be remarked here that the metrical count of the studied poems remains tentative because I have not yet been able to establish, either from studying the

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[197] In Menariya (2000: 29) *chappay* figures as a Dimgal "kavitta", while Tessitori (1917a: 230) speaks of *chappay kavitt* as a "Hindi metre".

[198] Lalas (1960: 50, 72) describes "*ras ullāl*" as a traditional Dimgal mood but not as part of a metrical rule.

[199] Blotched. Perhaps: *pala* or *pola*.

[200] The rules for alliteration result in the repetition per half-line of the first letter of the first word, repeated as the first letter of the last word, while the last letter of the last word of a half-line, corresponds to the last letter of the last word of the next, sometimes the next three, half-lines. This example contains six verse-lines, rhymed two by two, for each two verse-lines end with an identical word (*varadāi*, *varadāī*, *aṇabhaṃgo*, *jagajeṭhī*), thus forming word rhyme.

poets' manuals or from the rules applied in the poems under review, in which instances one should distinguish between long and short syllables for this count. Nor do the known rules specify whether all discussed metres should be reckoned through metrical instants rather than syllabic count. I have therefore found it difficult to ascertain to which metrical count the poets of the *chamd*s meant to adhere. This subject needs further study.

The two most common metres of Dimgal poetry, the *dūhā* (*dūho*) and *gīt* also do not always reflect the prescriptive rules. As remarked in the introduction to this study, a Hindi *dūhā* is generally described as a tetrarhythmic metre, counting a division of verse-lines into half-lines made up of verse-feet of 6+4+3 and 6+4+1 metrical instants respectively. Several types of Dimgal *dūho* metres exist; *dūho*, *soraṭhiyo dūho*, *baṛo dūho* and *tūṃvarī dūho* (Menariya 2000: 29-30, Lalas 1960: 63). In theory, the metrical count of these four forms consists of variations on the basic metrical pattern (*dūho*) that prescribes that the first and third line contain 13 –13 instants each, while the second and fourth line contain 11-11 each. The *soraṭhiyo dūho*, reportedly named after Saurashtra where it is thought to have originated, is a reversed *dūho*: it has 11-11 *mātr* in the first and third line, and 13–13 *mātr* in the second and fourth line. The *baṛo dūho*'s first and fourth lines contain 11-11 *mātr* while the second and third lines contain 13-13 *mātr*. And the *tūṃvarī dūho* is the reverse of the *baṛo dūho*: it contains 13-13 *mātr* in the first and fourth line and 11-11 in the second and third line.[201]

Neither the studied *duha* I, nor *duha* II, have been composed according to the enumerated rules as can be understood from the following verse-lines of *duha* I:

15. ākhu sudha aratha, dūhā suṇi samajhai dunī
16. kamadhaja rāva sikāra, caḍhi caṃcala vana cālīyo
17. lubadhī jīvāṃ lāra, paṛīyo pīṇa na pākaṛe
18. trīkhāvaṃta talāva, vali āyo baipāraro

Counting all the above syllables as one metrical instant, verse-line 15 constitutes 7+4+5 metrical instants, adding up to 16 metrical instants. Similarly: verse-line 16 counts 9+5+5 *mātr* (total: 19), verse-line 17 counts 7+5+4 *mātr* (total: 16) and verse-line 18 counts 7+4+4 *mātr* (total: 15).[202] While the above example could lead us to assume that Ladhraj tried to establish a metrical pattern with a preference for a count of 7+4+5 or 7+4+4 in the above-quoted verse-lines (as he did in many other verse-lines through-out his composition). This pattern does not, however, follow the

[201] Notable exceptions to this enumeration are found in Kaviya (2000: 19), who adds the *khoṛau dūho*, which exemplifies a further modification to the above mentioned pattern, for the first and third line should contain 11-11 *mātr*, the second line 13-*mātr* and the fourth line, 6 *mātr* (Kaviya 2000: 19). Lalas (1960: 62), on the other hand, does not list the *soraṭhiyo dūho* and refers to the *baṛo dūho* as "*saṃkalīyau dūho*".

[202] Counted thus: (v. 15) "Ā-khu su-dha a-ra-tha, dū-hā su-ṇi sa-ma-jhai du-nī", (v. 16) "Ka-ma-dha-ja rā-va si-kā-ra, ca-ḍhi caṃ-ca-la va-na cā-lī-yo", (v.17) "Lu-ba-dhī jī-vāṃ lā-ra, pa-ṛī-yo pī-ṇa na pā-ka-ṛe", (v. 18) "Trī-khā-vaṃ-ta ta-lā-va, va-li ā-yo bai-pā-ra-ro".

prescribed rules like those listed by Menariya, according to which the basic *dūho* pattern (and its variations) counts 13-13 *mātr* (total: 26) and 11-11 *mātr* (total: 22) in alternating verse-lines.[203] From *duha* II an equally variable metrical count becomes apparent: (v. 2) 8+4+4 (total: 16), (v.3) 6+6+4 (total: 14), (v. 4) 8+6+5 (total: 19), (v.5) 6+6+4 (total: 16), (v. 6) 7+4+3 (total: 14), and so forth.[204]

The medieval *parvaro* has not been listed as a Dimgal metre in any of the manuals studied by me. As remarked earlier, the word *prāvāṛo* has several meanings, including "war", "heroic deed", "glory" and "divine miracle".[205] I have not been able to study the metrical structure of other medieval *prāvāṛo*s in any detail and it is therefore hard to say whether this form has a distinct metre or whether it is solely defined on the basis of its content. Yet, it does appear that the poet of the *parvaro* under review meant to achieve a tetrarhythmic structure comparable to *duha* I and II, as verse-lines 9 to 12 illustrate:

9. pā-bū ti-ṇa pu-kā-ra, sāṃ-bha-li dhāṃ-dha-la sī-ha u-ta
10. ka-ma-dha-ji u-pa-ri ko-pa, kī-dho bho-pāṃ nu ka-hai
11. thā pi-la pī-ṭha ja-thā-pa, āṃ-ṇū ṛho-la u-tā-va-lo
12. pā-bū du-kha-ve pe-ṭa, gā-ṛhau vā-ghai ka-ma-dha ro

If all the above syllables are counted as one metrical instant, the *paravaro*'s metrical structure does resemble the structure of *duha* I in some respects. The preceding instance suggests that the poet tried to establish a metrical pattern, alternating between 17 metrical instants in verse-line 9 (7+6+4), 16 in verse-line 10 (9+4+3), 16 in verse-line 11 (8+4+4) and 15 in verse-line 12 (7+4+4). But it is yet again clear that these counts, like the metrical pattern of *duha* I, do not follow the rules listed above.

Now, let us study a few verse-lines to gauge the extent to which metrical patterning rules the spelling of words, in particular of *duha* I and the *parvaro*. As noted above, the poets of these compositions regularly added *ha* to the last words of subsequent first half-lines of, for example, verse-lines 43 to 37 (quoted above). This they probably did more for metrical than alliterative purposes, as is suggested by the syllable count of verse-lines 34 to 37 which display a pattern established by adding "ha", of two verse-lines of 6+9 *mātr*, followed by two verse-lines of 7+10 *mātr*:

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[203] This continues to be true if one were to distinguish between short and long metrical instances.

[204] Counted thus: (v. 2) "pa-vaṃ-ga a-lā-gai pā-gi, sāṃ-ca-ra tau sū dhau-na-hī", (v.3) "bhā-lau trī-jai bhā-gi, dha-vī-yau dhāṃ-dha-li rā-va ū-ta", (v. 4) "ka-la-ha-ṇa ko-lū kā-ha, k-āi ka-la-ha-ṇa ku-ra-khe-ta kā", (v. 5) "sa-haiṃ so-rī khā-ha, rū-pa-ka dhāṃ-dha-la rā-va ū-ta", (v. 6) "pā-lha su-ṇe po-kā-ra, gā-yāṃ cī a-ha-lī ga-ma-ta".

[205] Maheswari (1980: 46) describes a fourteenth-century "payḍo" (pavāḍo) in terms of a narrative poem, based on a mythological story and composed in Apabrahṃś and Marū-Gūjar. And Smith (1991: 19) defines contemporary *prāvāṛo*s as narrative episodes part of the *mātā*-epic performed by Pabuji's Bhil devotees.

raṃ-bhā nu rā-j**ī-ha**, ka-ri ko-lu ā-yo ka-maṃ-dha
vāṃ-sai ve-rā-j**ī-ha**, pa-ra-ṇī trī hu(ṃ)-ī ni-pa-ṭa
u-gai ra-vi ā-v**e-ha**, ā-thu-ṇa hu-vai jā-vai a-va-si
vi-nī na-ha cā-v**e-ha**, ke di-na i-yuṃ ga-mī-yā ka-ma-dha

Finally, a brief comment on the *gīt*s that are part of the Pabuji tradition. *Gīt* is commonly described as a characteristic metre of Dimgal poetry, which was conceived of by Charan poets (N.S. Bhati 198: 912). Despite its name, *gīt* ("song"), this genre was not composed to be sung but was meant to be recited in a loud, high pitched voice.[206] Several definitions of Dimgal *gīt*s exist.[207] These short compositions are believed to encompass a minimum of three verse-lines and a maximum of twenty couplets of four verse-lines each, while the basic metrical structure of the many different types of *git*s can ostensibly vary from a maximum of 23 metrical instants to a minimum of 14.[208] The selected *git*s illustrate the variety of metres used for this genre and I have not been able to establish somewhat common grounds for their metrical count. The metrical count of *git* I most commonly adds up to a total of 19 metrical instants (in verse-lines 2, 3, 5 and 8) and 17 (in verse-lines 6, 7, 9), while verse-line 4 adds up to 22 metrical instants.[209] The verse-lines of *git* II, from verse-line 4 onwards, regularly add up to a metrical count of 11 (verse-lines 4, 6, 8, 10, 12) in every alternating verse-line. The other verse-lines show a much less regular pattern: 19 metrical instants (verse-line 1), 15 (v. 2), 17 (v. 3), 15 (v. 5), 12 (v. 7), 14 (v. 9), 12 (v. 11).[210] The previous examples document a fairly but not in every respect regular metrical pattern that can also be read from the other *git*s (see the transcription of these compositions in the appendix *Transliterations*).

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[206] Though Hindi "gītā" may, of course, refer to an episode in a poetic work, like the *Bhagavadagītā*, and to songs alike. It is perhaps the brevity of Dimgal *gīt*s and their recitative purpose, which are thought to distinguish them from other South Asian *gīt*. Lalas (1966-1982) clearly distinguishes between *gīta* and *gītā* and defines the first as a Dimgal metre and the second as an episode in a poetic work (*Bhagavadagītā*) *and* yet another metre, the verse-lines of which count 12 to 14 *mātr*.

[207] N.S. Bhati (1989: 106-107) lists 91 *gīt* varieties that are defined according to their metre. *Gīt*s have also been listed according to their content, like *sākha rā gīta* ("commemorative songs"), recording contemporary and historical events, local and regional histories, the glorious deeds of warriors and gods (Tessitori 1919b: ix). Kharair (1999: 18, 25f) and Lalas (1960: 136-178) offer yet other variable descriptions of *gīt* varieties which I have not been able to compare as yet.

[208] Predictably, exceptions to these rules also exist. Another enumeration holds that *git*s alternate an initial 14-14-*mātr* verse-line with a 24- *mātr* verse-line throughout the composition (N.S. Bhati 1989: 20). Cf. Tessitori (1917a: 230).

[209] *Git* I counted thus: (v. 2) "pā-bū pā-ṭi re rū-pa-ka rā(ṃ)-ṭha-va-ṛe, se-ve tu-jha sa-dhī-rā", (v. 3) "ve-ga-ḍai pā-lī va-ra-dā-ī, sa-hi laṃ-kā ta-ṇā sāṃ-ḍha-ḍi-yā", and so forth.

[210] Though it is not clear to me whether at the beginning of verse-line 1, the word *gīta* should be counted as a separate word, part of the title, or as a word that is part of the verse-line: (*gī-ta*) *ta-ṇī baṃ-dhā-va-ṇa ne-ta-baṃ-dha dha-ra-ṇa so-ḍhāṃ ta-n*(*ī*).

*Other genre characteristics*

The one characteristic which all *gīt*s are supposed to share (cf. N.S. Bhati 1989: 19f) is the fact that every first verse-line spells out the gist of these short compositions, a general "design" that is subsequently conveyed throughout the composition, though by means of different wordings and imagery. This characteristic is shared by *git* I, *git* IV and *git* V, as is apparent from my interpretation of *git* I centred on Pabuji's "glorious deeds", in particular his raid of Lamka:

1. *gīta pābūjī rau*
2. pābū pāṭi re rūpaka rā(ṃ)ṭhavaṛe, seve tujha sadhīrā
3. vegaḍai[211] pālī varadāī, sahi laṃkā taṇā sāṃḍhaḍiyā
4. pābū ai parabata kīyā pādhara, gharahara[212] pākhara ghoṛe
5. sihā harai lī(ṃ)yā(ṃ)[213] sāṃḍhīṛīyā, lāi lākhāṃ muhaḍe laḍai
6. rāte (i)lī[214] baisā(ṃ)[215] valharāṃ sū, uṭhai[216] jhoka avārī
7. pāta līyai āṃṇī prama vale, sā(ṃ)rā jhoka savhārī(ṃ)
8. pāchima disi pābū pādharai, vegaja kamadhaji vālī
9. pa(ṃ)ra dīpāṃ sūṃ lyāyau(ṃ) pābū, kivalai rāi kamālī.

I interpret the above verse-lines as follows:

2. *Pabu* (*your*) *deeds* (*are*) *glorious among* (*the*) *Rathaur*, (*for*) *you serve your 'realm'*.[217]
3. '*With haste*', *the hero drove away all she-camels* '*from*' *Lamka*.[218]
4. *Pabu! He* '*flattened*' *mountain*(*s*), (*and*) *robbed* (*Rajput*) *lineages*[219] (*while mounted*) *on a caparizoned*[220] *horse*.

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[211] Probably: *vegaṛai* (cf. Shekavat [1968: 25], who has *vegaṛa*). In *git* I, the scribe differentiates between "ṛa" and "ḍa" in a rather variable manner, spelling "camels" as *sāṃḍhaḍiyā* (v. 2) and *sāṃḍhīṛīyā* (v. 4).

[212] It has proved difficult to establish whether the *anusvār*s in this poem represent nasalization signs or not since the poem was written over an older, now almost faded, text of which some *anusvār*s remain visible. Here, if what appears to be an earlier notation of *anusvār*s is taken into account, one reads: *gha* (*ṃ*)*ra*(*ṃ*)*hara*(*ṃ*). Shekavat (1968: 25) has *gharahara*.

[213] Probably: *līyā* (cf. Shekavat 1968: 25).

[214] An unclear sign, which probably represents "i".

[215] It is unclear whether the letters "ba" and "sa" were meant to be crossed out, or whether they should be read as *baisā*(*ṃ*), *baisī*(*ṃ*), *besī*(*ṃ*), or perhaps *baisau*(*ṃ*).

[216] Blotched. Perhaps: *muṭhai*. Alliteration suggests: "*u̲tahi* ... *a̲vārī*" (*mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī*).

[217] *Sadhirā* can be read as *bhūmi* (land, the earth) or God (*īshvar*).

[218] "Lamka" may also refer to "the South", an interpretation which can be read as a reference to the mythic "southern (country)" *Laṃkā* in the *Rāmāyaṇ*. If we take *laṃkā* to mean "the South" it could also refer to Kacch or Sindh, south of Marwar. In verse-line 7, and in *git* III verse-line 1, the reference to a southern region (*pāchima disi*) is clear and most probably connotes Sindh.

[219] Here, I read *ghara* (house) as "lineage".

[220] *Pākhara* (*hāthī yā ghoṛe kī jhūl*, *koharā yā kavac*) may refer to horse-cloth, caparisoning, saddle or horse armour.

5. (*Pabu*, *the warrior of*) *King Siha's*[221] *lineage took the she-camels*, *he makes* (*his opponents*) *fight* (*while*) *taking along many* (*she-camels*) *over the border* (*of his realm*).
6. *In this manner*,[222] *he assembles powerful* (*warriors*) *with* (*his*) *sword* (*and*) *advances* (*upon*) *the* (*camel*) *pen* (*with*) *an army fully adorned for battle* .
7. *The horse-riders take the whole* (*camel*) *pen*, (*thus*) *they conquered the* (*opponent's*) *realm* (*on*) *the command* (*of the*) *leading* (*warrior*).[223]
8. *The Rathaur warrior*[224] *Pabu quickly* '*returns*' (*from*) *the southern* '*region*'.
9. (*With*) '*lustrous*'[225] *weapons Pabuji* '*robbed*' *the Badshah*[226] (*of his*) *she-camels*.

*Git* IV similarly opens with the glorification of Pabuji's exceptional and divine qualities and this praise is repeated throughout the remaining verse-lines in which the poet compares Pabuji to (and at times describes him as) a god. And Bamkidas followed a comparable pattern in composing *git* V, a poem that centres on the battle between Pabuji and Jimda. The latter opens with a portrayal of the way in which Pabuji rushes to the battlefield, dressed as a bridegroom, to combat Jimda, and this image inspires the rest of this composition. In verse-lines 6 to17, Pabuji is time and again portrayed as a bridegroom-warrior by equating marriage rituals and amorous feelings with the rite of battle and warlike passions. This equation is repeated once more in the last verse-line (17) when Bamkidas portrays how Pabuji is vanquished and sleeps on the battlefield "like in a bed", in this way, it seems, comparing the battlefield to a nuptial bed. But not all the studied *git*s are governed by the above-quoted rule. In *git* II and III the gist of the opening verse-lines (a description of Pabuji's marriage) is not repeated. Instead, the poets continue with an account of the battle between Pabuji and Jimda and end their composition with the hero's recapture of the Charans' cows (cf. chapter 2).

### *Generative rules*

The above description of the alliterative rules and metrical structuring of the selected poems and my account of the narrative structuring of the *git*s document the divergent treatment of rhythm and rhyme rules in actual practice. This finding raises questions

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[221] I interpret "sihā harai" as a reference to Raja Siha or Simgha Rathaur's lineage.
[222] *Besī* read as *baisī*: "usa prakāra kā".
[223] This could also be interpreted as: "Many (camels) were taken along for the king", if *liyai* can be read as *lie*.
[224] *Kamadhaji vālī* appears to be an example of a feminine form used with a masculine subject (*kamadhaja*). It was no doubt dictated by the need to alliterate *vālī* (v. 7) with *kamālī* (v.8).
[225] *Dīpām* has been rendered *dvīpām* by Shekavat (1968: 25) and translated as the southern island Lamka. However, *dīpām* can also be traced to *dīpaṇau*: *camakanā*, *shobhā denā*.
[226] *Kivalai rā-i* is rendered *Badshah* by Shekavat (1968: 25). Lalas (1962-1988) does not document this usage.

about the aptness of late-medieval prosodic manuals studied by me for the poets appear to have adhered to a set of rules rather less stringent and in many ways evidently different from those in the poets' manuals consulted by me. It has also proved difficult to determine whether, in the above cases, the poets strived to but failed to consistently apply metrical rules or whether they adhered to an altogether different set of rules, one which was perhaps based on local traditions and different from the rules prescribed by the consulted poets' manuals. There is one reason to presume that the prosody of the studied poems is flawed. When we take into account the medieval listings of the different types of mistakes (*doṣ*) a Dimgal poet can make (N.S. Bhati 1989: 50-53, Kharair 46-56), the above noted "variability" of the poets' application of rules for alliteration and metrics can be classed as mistakes like *chaṃd bhaṃg doṣ* that occurs when a poet fails to adhere to a prescribed metrical count. Or perhaps the observed differences in metrical structure can be seen as instances of *jāt virodh doṣ*, mistakes which arise when two metrical counts are used in one poem. Apart from metrical mistakes, the listed *doṣ* also include inaccuracies like *aṃdh doṣ* or the failure to properly convey the meaning of a verse-line because of an inadequate or ineffective choice of words. Other examples of *doṣ* include *chab kālo doṣ* that arises when a poet uses more then one language, intermixing Marwari vocabulary with Persian, Punjabi, Braj Bhasa and/or other language registers. And *pakh tūt doṣ* refers to mistakes which occur when different types of word-use are intermixed in a verse, like literary and colloquial word use.

The listed mistakes indicate that most poets did not apply prosodic rules in a variable or distinctly local way but in an inconsistent, "flawed" manner. It is, however, also possible that the illustrations of *doṣ* listed by N.S. Bhati (1989: 50-53) and Kharair (46-56) yet again emphasize that medieval poets' manuals represent a highly idealized, as opposed to practiced, form of Dimgal prosody. Smith's (1975: 434) tentative classification of Dimgal, Lalas's dictionary and my study of the medieval Pabuji tradition, all document that the listed *doṣ* (and in particular *aṃdh doṣ*, *chab kālo doṣ* and *pakh tūt doṣ*) are a rather common, and perhaps generally accepted feature of Dimgal poetry. For this reason, I continue to feel that it is more likely that the studied manuals reflect attempts to conform current usage to what might have been defined as ideal or "classical metres" in a way comparable to Kailasapathy's (1987: 402) description of medieval Tamil prosody, and the way in which this was related to metrics of classical Tamil poetry. Even though the former rules differed from and were at times unrelated to classical prosodic rules, Tamil prosodists nevertheless traced the origin of medieval metrics to classical prosody and endeavoured to describe medieval forms as "derivatives" of earlier and in the eyes of medieval prosodists "standard" metrics.

Yet another way of looking at the above-described problem (the variable handling of prescriptive rules in the poems dedicated to Pabuji) is Bryant's approach to the irregularity or flexibility of Hindi metres. Bryant (1992: 218) argues that, in actual practice, poetics know many more variations than indicated by traditional manuals or

contemporary studies of prescriptive rules. From this angle, metrics are best understood as "generative systems" engendering "optional transformations" or variations to the rules. This approach does help in explaining why, for instance, the quantitative rules for the number of metres in Hindi poetry, when put into practice, not always lead to the differentiation between long or short syllables. Or why a poem may contain verse foots that are based upon the prescribed number of metres and upon "partial cycles" of differing length. Looking at Dimgal prosody as a generative more than a prescriptive set of rules certainly makes it easier to account for the fact that Dimgal poets adhered to rather variable prosodic rules.

### *Recitation*

Though it is no longer possible to establish whether or not the studied poems were ever in actual fact declaimed before an audience, the above-described rhyme-schemes and metrical patterning do offer indirect evidence for the politico-military and recitative purpose ascribed to Dimgal heroic-poetry. The discussed rhyme schemes and metrical patterning are thought to have resulted in "metrical tension" that is believed to assist a performer's short-term memory. N.S. Bhati (1989: 42) describes the alliterative and metric rules as mnemonic aids which made it possible to commit long compositions to memory.[227] The development of recitative rules by Charan poets most convincingly helps in authenticating the martial function of Dimgal poetry. Medieval recitative rules first of all pertain to the setting in which a poem can be recited, and underline that Dimgal poetry was meant to be recited. These rules also suggest the different purposes of recitative performances like the praise of a patron in court or at functions organized by the patron.[228] N.S. Bhati (1989: 46-50) summarizes the recitative rules listed in the *Raghunāth Rūpak* and the *Raghuvarajasaprakās* as follows: [1] reciting poetry while facing the person whose praise one is singing (*sanamukh ukti*); [2] reciting poetry in praise of someone who is not present in the audience (*suddh parmukh*); and [3] reciting one's own composition to an audience (*sākhyāt srimukh*). Other recitative rules that I am familiar with stipulate that a poet recites (*pāṭh karṇau*) his composition in a shrill, loud voice (*buland āvāj*) and also regulate a poet's breathing like the *ekādoī* technique which directs a poet to deliver the first line of his poem in one breath (N.S. Bhati 1989: 25). Then he intones two lines each with every breath while the last verse-line is recited in one breath, together with the first verse-line. Another example of recitation techniques formulated by Charans is the arduous *pamcādoī* formula that requires poets to declaim the first five lines of their poem in one breath (N.S. Bhati 1989: 25). The

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[227] See also Tsur (1992: 17) who writes that "metrical tension" enables performers to use their "memory-space" more efficiently by recalling the acoustic memory-traces of metrically dense verse-lines.

[228] I imagine that the medieval poets, like contemporary counterparts, perhaps also praised their patrons for the services his lineage has rendered in the name of Devi by, for instance, commemorating a patron's acts of benevolence during a religious ceremony or his efforts in building a temple for goddesses.

succeeding stanzas are recited two lines at a time until the end of the verse, when the last four lines are delivered in one breath together with the initial line of the first stanza.

The staccato, forceful manner achieved through breathing techniques and voice modulation was meant to maximize the warlike tone and effect of Dimgal poetry. In medieval times, these techniques are believed to have helped a poet impart his poetry amidst the din of battle, helping him to make himself heard by exceeding the volume of the clamour (N.S. Bhati 1989: 24).[229] In view of this, it is not surprising that Dimgal verse is often compared to the sound and effect of war drums, which are beaten to announce war and rally men for battle, a practice that can also be read from the portrayal in *chamd* I (v. 42-47) of the way in which Rupanis join the Yoginis and Narada in applauding the warring Dhamdhal and Khici heroes by sounding the *ḍāka*, the musical instrument of the god of war. The likeness between Dimgal verse and war drums is further documented with descriptions of the *git ḍhol*, a Dimgal poem that can be recited in eight to ten different ways corresponding with as many rhythms (*tāl*) played on the *ḍhol*, the large elongated drum commonly sounded during battles (N.S. Bhati 1989: 21, 26). Another example which bears out the martial function ascribed to Dimgal heroic-epic poetry is the translation of the Rajasthani verb *bīradaṇau* which in the first place refers to making someone angry or ready for battle and arousing a warring frame of mind or to make someone utter a war cry. Secondly, this verb also denotes the singing of praise and eulogizing, and suggests the warlike purpose of praise when it serves to urge warriors on by emulating the example set by other warriors.

Along the above-quoted lines, the heroic-epic poems may be compared with modern-day "war propaganda" for the aim of poets can be related to the purpose of martial and military leaders who, the world over, strive to inspire their men for battle by setting up norms of heroism and by bringing to mind the socio-political, religious or material rewards of war, including social prestige, political power, spiritual release, everlasting epic fame and/or wealth in the form of a soldier's wage and sharing in war booty. This politico-military function of heroic-epic poetry has, moreover, been documented in other parts of the world like Africa, Europe and the Middle East, where it commonly served to marshal men for war by praising their forefathers' heroism in order to raise the morale of their patrons and, at the same time, lower the spirits of their adversaries (Goldstein 2001: 255 and Poulton 1971: 163f).[230]

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[229] Till date, Charan poets hold that the intended meaning of a poem remains obscure if it is not delivered to its audience with the required fervour and distinctive articulation. Contemporary Charan heroic-epic poetry is moreover thought to contain "words like bullets", thus documenting the warlike character this kind of poetry continues to have (personal communication B. S. Samaur, 1999).

[230] Hainsworth and Hatto (1989: 190f) record how Celts eulogized the heroism of their forefathers to heat the warriors fighting blood. In Africa poets recited poetry to edge their warrior-audiences on in battle. Somali singers recited *geerar* (unaccompanied chants) to challenge an enemy to fight by slandering him or to cheer on their patron warriors (Andrzejewski 1964: 49). See also Innes (1974: 10).

*Function*

How does the above account of Dimgal prosody contribute to an understanding of the poets' possible intentions when they versified the battle between Pabuji and Jimda the way they did? All the selected poems were composed according to alliterative and metrical rules which are thought to result from the politico-military function of Dimgal poetry as a versified battle-cry. The reproduction of the sounds and moods of war through the staccato alliteration of letter and word pairs combined with forceful metrical patterning do make it conceivable that the studied poems were meant to heat the "fighting blood" of warrior audiences on the verge of attack. Be that as it may, it can no longer be established whether or not these works were composed for the purpose of recitation or whether, in actual fact, they were ever declaimed before an audience. To my knowledge, the Rajasthani manuscript tradition does not divulge such particulars. The prosodic evidence presented above does, I feel, imply that this kind of poetry had an oral performance context. In particular the martial purpose ascribed to the intricate rules for alliteration and metrical patterning and the recitative rules developed by Charan poets allow us to imagine that the poets of the Pabuji tradition composed their heroic-epic poetry for the purpose of recitation before or during battle to marshal men for combat and to praise a poet's patron's war deeds during court assemblies and other occassions. Moreover, the use of poetic vocabulary, similes and metaphors also emphasizes the warlike mood and perhaps martial function of the compositions. War is at the heart of all the studied poems and it is the poets' most important source of inspiration. This can be understood from the apparent delight with which the poets call to mind the vagaries of battle. The poetic rendering of battle through alliterative and metrical tension, word images and the evocation of aural details, all evoke battle in stirring detail.

*Memorial pillars in the desert near the Kolu temple.*

# 5 Fierce Virtues

The summary of the narrative content and prosodic form of the *chamd*s, *duha*s, *parvaro* and *git*s in the previous chapters illustrates which story-lines, themes, episodes, plots and protagonists are commonly part of the Pabuji tradition. Here, I will ask how all the selected verses dedicated to Pabuji can best be classed. May all verses indeed be thought of, as I have been doing thus far, as part of the most widespread and oldest known narrative heritage, the global tradition of heroic and epic poetry? To answer this question, I will first review some of the problems of genre classification, in particular the problems that arise when studying scholarly definitions of heroic, epic and devotional poetry and their bearing on poetry dedicated to Pabuji. Subsequently, aspects of the narrative content, descriptive conventions and symbolic meaning of the poems dedicated to Pabuji are discussed, including the prosodic form of the poems and the martial purpose ascribed to the forceful rhythm and rhyme schemes used by medieval Charan poets. To conclude this chapter, I will make a first attempt at genre classification by asking to what extent Rajasthani and other scholarly definitions of heroic-epic genres assist in categorizing the poets' portrayal of Pabuji and his companions. The main argument of this chapter is that the classification of the poems under review as "heroic" and/or "epic" presents several problems given that this heritage includes genres that have been described in rather incongruent ways by scholars of Asian and European heroic-epic traditions.

### *Working definitions*

Short and long poetry dedicated to Pabuji is most often classified as *vir* (heroic) *kāvy* (poetry) by referring to its subject matter: the versification of the heroism and martial ethos of medieval warriors.[231] Longer poems, like *duha* I, can also be classified as *prabaṃdh kāvy*, or lengthy, narrative poetry which defines the poem according to its form and narrative content. The poems are also classified according to their metre. Thus, short praise poetry with a heroic content are listed as Dimgal *gīt*. In addition, short and long praise poems, and poems with a more "epic" length are all classified according to their metric structure as well (Dimgal *dūhā* and *chaṃd*). The *parvaro* is classed according to its heroic and devotional content, comprising heroic battle deeds and divine miracle tales, while I have not yet been

[231] My understanding of Rajasthani classifications of poetry is based on (*passim*): N.S. Bhati (1973, 1983, 1989a), Deval (2000), Gahalot (1979), Kaviya (1997, 2000), Kharair (1999), Lalas (1988, 1960), Maheshwari (1989), Menariya (1968, 2000), Samaur (1999), Shekhavat (1968, 1979).

able to class it according to its metrical structure. Heroic-epic poetry dedicated to Pabuji, whether long or short, and whether it has a heroic and/or devotional theme, is also classed *Charan kāvy* or Charan poetry, in a reference to the poets with whom the tradition is thought to have originated and ignoring the fact that Rajput, Dhadhi, Bhat, Motisar, Bhil Bhopa and Brahmin poets are also known to have contributed to heroic-epic Dimgal poetry. The catalogues of Rajasthan's research institutes also document a rather open-ended approach to genres and the poems narrative and prosodic characteristics, given that the *git*s, *duha*s, *chamd*s and *parvaro*s dedicated to Pabuji have been catalogued under various headings, including "historical poetry", "heroic poetry", "epic poetry", or "devotional song".[232]

Traditional European definitions of epic genres centre on their length (long), content (heroic) and form (poetry). Such definitions commonly exclude shorter compositions like heroic poems that are commonly defined as an initial phase in the development of epic. Heroic poetry, praise poetry, eulogy and/or "pre-epic panegyric" all qualify as short poems with little narrative progression created in praise of the war deeds and deaths of (semi) historical protagonists. This literature of songs of praise, satire, laments for the dead and war-songs is at times described as a primary genre in which narrative is implicit and epic is "embrionically present" (De Vries 1963: 250). Especially heroic songs, eulogy and panegyric are seen as the sources from which truly long, narrative epic compositions sprang (Hatto 1980: 272).[233] Thus, if one would take length as the main characteristic of epic poetry then most of the shorter *virakāvy* compositions do not fall into the category "epic" but are better thought of as heroic poetry, eulogy, war-songs and/or pre-epic panegyric. Blackburn (1986: 3f), on the other hand, holds that South Asian epic has less affiliation with praise-poems and poetic metres than with song traditions and song-rhythms. As noted in chapter 1, he tentatively traces the narrative development of wideranging regional single-story traditions to pre-epic multi-story traditions with a limited geographical and social range that are restricted in length and thematic interests (Blackburn 1989: 1-32).

To explain how local, multi-story traditions become supra-regional single-story traditions of epic proportions, Blackburn (1989: 1-32) connects narrative changes to a story's geographical and social spread. He suggests a direct relation between, on the one hand, the expansion of story telling traditions to sub-regional, regional and supra-regional audiences, and changes in the narrative structure as well as socio-political or ritual purpose of a genre, on the other. Variant versions of a story, argues Blackburn, should be explained in terms of a "narrative building"

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[232] See, for instance, the RRI catalogue *Marvar-Maratha etihasik patravali* and their 8-volume *Jodhpur ke hastalikhit granthom ki suci* (N.S. N.S. Bhati 1974-1999), and the *Rajasthani etihasik granthom ka vivaranatmak suci patra* (*kaviraja samgraha*) published by the *Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan* (Sitamau: 1991).

[233] Hatto (1980: 17) further notes (paraphrasing Maurice Bowra [1951]) that there may be a resemblance between panegyric, lament and heroic poetry; "with 'historical priority' probably belonging to the panegyric". Voorwinden (1989: 63) suggests that epic evolves from heroic songs.

process that evolves by means of "cumulative sequences of motifs". In other words, a story, crossing local and regional borders thus expands to epic proportions by accumulating themes, imagery and episodes. However, as already noted in the introduction to this study, the study of the medieval Pabuji tradition clarifies that it is difficult to imagine a transition from supposedly pre-epic poetry to today's vernacular epics. This transition will be discussed in chapter 10, when I detail how my study of the Pabuji tradition illustrates the problems involved in defining heroic poetry as an initial phase in the development of epic and the idea that South Asian epic has no affiliation with praise poetry.

Traditional definitions of epic are as problematic as above attempts to classify heroic poetry. The question is, as Finnegan (1992: 137f, 150f) argues, whether the attempt to arrive at unambiguous, standardized genre typologies is a valid undertaking (cf. Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi 2002: *passim*). Contemporary studies highlight the limitations of the definition of "epic" as long narrative poetry with a heroic content.[234] Questions have been raised about all three aspects of the above genre classification: the length, form and content of epic. How long should an epic narrative be? Does it contain several ten-thousands of lines, like the Tibetan Ge Sar epic (cf. Samuel 1992 711f) or can a few thousand lines also be termed "long", as can be gauged from Smith's (1991: *passim*) description of the extant *paṛ* epic of Pabuji? Can shorter narrative poems with a heroic content and episodic structuring be described as epic? As far as I know, there exists no consensus about answers to these questions. The same can be said about the question whether epic is always transmitted in the form of narrative poetry. Studies of South Asian epic traditions by Blackburn (1986, 1989) and Smith (1991) document that not all epic is poetry and that present-day Rajasthani performers use poetry and prose to tell their epic tales. Likewise subject to debate are definitions of the form of epic narrative.[235] Is epic one unified poem that integrates episodes about one hero into epic cycles or is it a multi-story tradition that narrates the tale of several heroes?

As is illustrated by relatively recent attempts to offer a wide-ranging definition of epic, limited definitions of epic continue to inspire contemporary studies. An example is Beissinger's (1999: 10f) working definition of epic as a *"poetic narrative of length and complexity that centres around deeds of significance to the community*", which serves to transcend the divide between oral an written epic

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[234] Like, for instance: Finnegan (1992: *passim*), Kelly (1994: *passim*), Nagy (1999: 1-21), Oberhelman (1994: *passim*), Mayaram (2004), Ong (1999: 18-27), Smith (1989b: 29-41, 1991: passim, 1999: 267-305) and Reynolds (1999: 155-168).

[235] Definitions of narrative itself have also come to encompass wide-ranging verbal and non-verbal forms, particularly in anthropological studies of the narrative aspect of contemporary heroic-epic poetry, prose and performance traditions. Narrative and narration are understood in a rather wide sense to connote all verbal and non-verbal forms where temporal sequence is implied, including visual and plastic art narratives. Scholars of performance traditions, moreover, highlight that narrative is not just the outcome of oral or written narration but can also be studied as an act or process, which may result in verbal and non-verbal forms of expression (Finnegan 1992: 41-45, 154).

and thus aims to provide a more complex sense of epic as a "larger genre" that can include various forms, genres and historical backgrounds. This definition nevertheless continues to be based on ambiguous nomenclature like "length", "complexity" and "significance" and leaves out prose genres or genres which contain poetry intermixed with prose tales. In addition, such a definition of epic excludes divine and/or magical content and ritual characteristics of heroic and epic genres the world over. Beissinger's (1999: 2) working definition of epic appears to exclude tales that depend largely on magical episodes. She ignores the religious and devotional content of South Asian epics by restricting epic content to "deeds of significance" and "deeds of grandeur or heroism", but she does not further define "significance", "grandeur" or "heroism". Thus the question arises whether some deeds are to be seen as less "heroic" or "epic" than others because they were achieved with magical, divine or other superhuman aid? The garb of epic hero would clearly not fit Pabuji if "great deeds" can only be done by epic heroes who fight their battles alone, without the help of gods or semi-divine creatures. Nor does he fit the description of an epic hero who is never defeated in battle but always vanquishes his enemy. Some poets of his tradition do ascribe magical and/or semi-divine qualities to Pabuji. And he does die in battle in many versions of his tale. It is, however, precisely his battle-death portrayed as a realization of the martial ideal of self-sacrifice in battle by the poets, which renders Pabuji a truly outstanding warrior-hero and hero-god in Marwar.

Clearly, in discussing South Asian oral and classic, written epic, the divide between mythical, magical and/or semi-historical heroic content of epic is contrived. In South Asian heroic-epic traditions, including the Rajasthani Pabuji tradition, divine intervention and magic are common story-elements. Classic and contemporary heroic-epic poetry tells the tale of gods and other celestial beings who regularly get involved with human heroes and their adventures not only to alleviate their troubles but also to aggravate them (cf. Smith 1989a: 190f). Divine intervention, miracle-stories, supernatural occurrences and so forth are as much part of heroic and epic poetry as they are of myth. The protagonists of heroic-epic traditions may be historical men and women, or human actors with semi-divine qualities or magical talents and gods who are in some way related to human protagonists, for example through marriage. Besides, South-Asian epic heroes are commonly identified as incarnations of the divine and/or part or whole embodiments of aspects of gods and goddesses and other mythological figures. It is not clear to me whether or not the latter feature is perhaps a specific South-Asian element of epic, as Blackburn (1989: 1-32) argues when comparing Indian oral epics to African epic traditions. However, Miller's (2000: 2-5, 31f) more recent study of epic heroes across cultures and

through time suggests that heroic-epic traditions the world over incorporate all types of heroes, including those who use magic and/or die in battle.[236]

South Asian oral and written epics do, as far as I am able to judge, seem to have one distinguishing characteristic: the ritual setting and function of epic, in particular epic traditions with primarily martial and/or sacrificial themes. What is clear, as remarked before, is that the selected poems dedicated to Pabuji all have a devotional stance, for most of the poets saw their work as a way to invoke the blessings of gods and goddesses in general or of Pabuji in particular.[237] Thus the traditional definition of the subject matter of epic as centred on the semi-historical deeds of human heroes also needs to be questioned. But then how should one define narratives which are epic in length and form, and which centre on magical and divine deeds and also on heroic war deeds with a semi-historical bearing? The main issue involved in the classification of Dimgal heroic and/or epic genres is, I feel, that heroic and epic genres have a primarily "multifarious nature" and by and large cut across traditional genre distinctions. As Hatto (1980: 290f) proposes, in discussing the above and other questions, the themes and underlying heroic ideology of any epic can be realized in other genres too, for example, through hero-tales, myths or plays. This point is furthered below, when I take into account the symbolic meaning underlying the narrative content of the selected poems, their historical function and oral characteristics, and conclude that all these aspects of the Pabuji tradition give reason to think of the selected poems as part of one tradition of heroic-epic poetry with devotional as well as heroic characteristics.

### *Oral culture*

Another scholarly issue which needs to be discussed when one tries to define heroic-epic genres is the oral and/or written transmission of these traditions and the manner in which they relate to each other. Since the themes and underlying heroic ideology of any epic can be "realized" in other genres too, Hatto (1980: 290f) proposes that we seek "epicality" in the "epic manner", or oral characteristics of texts and the delivery style, diction and song of poets and bards. Like the above examination of definitions of heroic and epic genres, the discussion of the "orality-literacy continuum" which characterizes these genres, has many more theoretical implications than I could adequately consider here. For the purpose of this study, the discussion of orality-literacy theories has been limited to the way in which oral composition is thought to

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[236] Moreover, gods and divine or miraculous occurrences are also part of quite a few epic traditions, including some European traditions, termed "mythic-historic" epic by Miller (2000: 2-5) and include the portrayal of epic heroes as demi-gods and/or human beings who are related to or comparable to gods.

[237] Comparable to devotional feelings expressed through "bhakti" (religious devotion, loving faith), the mainstay of heterodox devotional traditions in South Asia. However, the medieval and contemporary poetry and devotional practices of the Pabuji tradition are not commonly referred to with *bhakti*, nor do the poets of the tradition refer to devotion as *bhakti*, and for this reason I do not employ this phrase in this study either.

shape the narrative of heroic-epic genres, in so far these theories further an understanding of the form of the medieval manuscript poems dedicated to Pabuji. As can be appreciated from the contradictory opinions about the literary status of the Dimgal heritage described earlier, this subject continues to inform contemporary studies on the Pabuji tradition, in particular the traditional division between oral and written compositions that is often made to coincide with non-literate and "therefore" unsophisticated folk genres as opposed to the literate and "therefore" refined poetry of court poets. To my mind, it is this opposition between oral and written traditions which is at the root of past and present ambiguous classifications of Dimgal heroic-epic poetry.

The history of Dimgal heroic-epic poetry written by poet-scholar Kaviya from Jodhpur (1997: *passim*) illustrates the strong opposition provoked by the suggestion that Dimgal heroic-epic poetry may have oral origins. The text-bound bias demonstrated by Kaviya (1997: 29-31) leads to an appraisal of Dimgal poetry as a purely literary and written genre, and has given rise to the idea that similarities in the form and content of oral and written Dimgal genres were brought about by "folk poets" who copied original written material.[238] As a result Kaviya holds that Dimgal poetry was first created in writing and later recited to a public, and is the exclusive vocation of high-caste Charan poet-kings who composed it under the dignified patronage of Rajput royalty. In this view, oral folk traditions transmitted by illiterate often low-caste poets, singers and performers who sing for their upkeep can not be compared with the Dimgal heroic-epic tradition.[239]

It is the definition of the manuscript tradition of Dimgal poetry as a written "Great Tradition", a heritage of literary texts which elaborates elite court culture that disconcerts scholars who hold that literary, written works and oral compositions are each other's direct opposites and therefore seem to find it difficult to fathom the oral characteristics of written Dimgal poetry. However, the world over, heroic-epic traditions are thought to have their roots in "primary oral cultures" or societies or communities with no knowledge of writing. This is evident from, for example, research on the oral qualities of Sanskrit epic, the early Greek Homeric tradition and from enquiries into the oral substratum that underlies the biblical tradition.[240] From Ong's study of primary epic it appears that this kind of genre commonly has it roots in oral cultures (societies with no knowledge of writing), and thus he defines primary epic as the "oral verbalisations of history" by non-literate cultures or communities, as

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[238] A distinction, which, as Ong (1999: 24) notes, has been challenged comparatively recently in European literary history with Milman Parry's description of the oral noetics of Homeric texts adding nuance to idealized interpretations of Greek antiquity and its purported written culture of literary "high art".

[239] This distinction appears to derive mainly from contemporary caste restrictions, which are now attached to various ways of performing, for example, the distinction between the epic heritage of Pabuji's scheduled caste Bhopa performers and heroic-epic poetry dedicated to Pabuji composed by high-caste Charan literati.

[240] See Innis (1972: 53-84), Oberhelman et.al. (1994: *passim*), Ong (1999: 169, 1981: 123f), Smith (1980: 70f), Staal (1986: *passim*).

opposed to the "written verbalisation" of history by chirographic, i.e. manuscript cultures (Ong 1999: 11-12). This definition is not, as one might expect, meant to highlight the traditional divide between oral and written texts, implying that oral traditions are the product of an earlier stage of human development, which was supplanted by later written culture.[241] On the contrary, oral traditions continue to exist side by side with chirographic and typographic cultures. All "modelling systems of human thought", as Ong (*ibid.*) coins oral, chirographic and typographic cultures, retain a mind-set of primary orality, while "secondary orality" applies to contemporary oral culture as sustained by high-technology media.[242]

Scholars who contest conventional portrayals of oral and literary cultures as opposed categories propose various classifications of oral genres comprising verbal expression from traditional oral songs performed by non-literate singers to "oral-cum-post-oral texts", which are part of the heritage of literate poets, writers and performers in chirographic societies (cf. Beissinger 1999: 10, Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi 2001: 105-118, Graziosi 2006: *passim*). The latter genres embrace orally-derived chirographic texts, written versions of orally composed texts that serve as a memory aid for oral performances, written compositions that are orally recited for an audience or transmitted from one generation of poets to another and, lastly, "fixed" or memorized forms of oral transmission as opposed to flexible or recomposed oral forms. For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that post-oral, "secondary" heroic-epic poetry (also defined as "written verbalisation" of chirographic cultures) continues to reveal the results of oral transmission techniques, in particular, in the narrative and prosodic structuring of their form and content.[243] Even after heroic-epic traditions are wholly or partly fixed in writing in chirographic cultures, their "oral residue" remains in evidence, particularly in its episodic structuring, i.e. the fact that heroic-epic narrative is recollected through episodes or "informational cores" clustered around themes and formulaic expressions.

Ong's studies (1999, 1982) make evident that the limited capacity of human memory requires the mnemonic structuring of oral memorization to enable a poet to effectively remember a narrative during its oral performance. Episodic structuring makes it possible for a poet to remember epic narratives in parts and in a non-linear fashion, instead of having to perform a lengthy epic verbatim and in a linear way. As

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[241] Following Vansina (1997: 27), I use the term "oral tradition" to refer to the process of handing down knowledge through oral transmission and to indicate the outcome of this transmission, including oral and written epic, song, poetry, performance and so forth. Oral traditions are thought to include all kinds of verbal communication, including non-verbal communications like artifacts, archaeological relics, monuments or landmarks. Following Finnegan (1992: 7) and Zarilli (1992: 91), I think of "tradition" as a "dynamic system of human actions in an ongoing process of generation and degeneration", which results in ideas, believes, knowledge, feelings and practices that are part of a local, regional or national culture.

[242] For a further discussion of this premise, see Goody (1968) and Finnegan (1977, 1988, 1991, 1992).

[243] My review of the mnemonic structuring of epic narrative is primarily based on (*passim*): Beck (1989), Den Boer (1986), Downing (1992), Easthope (1983), (Finnegan (1977, 1988, 1991, 1992), J.M. Foley (1990), Obeyesekere (1997), Oberhelman et. al. (1994), Ong (1999, 1982), Parry (1985); Peabody (1975), Reynolds (1999) and Rubin (1995).

a result, redundancy and reiteration are common features of oral or orally-derived heroic-epic genres (Ong 1999: 38f). By transmitting his story in episodes, an oral poets can recall epic narratives that may run in to thousands of verses, as is illustrated by the oral rendition of the epic of Pabuji by contemporary Bhopas noted down by Smith (1991: *passim*). This contemporary performance generally contains more than 4000 lines, comprising thirteen episodes and takes about 36 hours to perform. Smith's study of the oral performance of Pabuji's contemporary epic makes clear that the Bhopas have a vast repertoire of episodes at hand from which they choose according to circumstances and audience demand. The episodes of Pabuji's epic are therefore not performed in a way that is necessarily chronological, given that one episode may be more popular than others and specific occasions may call for the performance of different episodes.

The performance setting of epic may render an oral narrative redundant, since redundancy gives a poet some breathing space while he searches for the next line or episode in his mind, and also helps an audience in keeping track of the events during long performances. Traditional poets and performers aim at a "conventional realization" of traditional stories for an audience that usually knows the beginning and the end of an epic tale just as well as the poet does (cf. Peabody 1975: 176). Thus epic tales should not be judged according to whether or not they are told in a chronological manner, as redundancy does not affect a performance in a negative way for "there is a gap between the notional totality of epic as oral tradition and the practical limitations of epic in actual performance" (Nagy 1999: 28). The success of a performance and the status ascribed to a poet depend on the way in which he knows to tell a story, his ability to deliver a poem as beautifully embellished as possible through his choice of words, metaphors, digressions and his prosodic brilliance. In telling and re-telling Pabuji's story again and again, it is not so much its story-line or plot as it is the poet's rendition or "artistic enactment" (Nagy) of parts of the story that will hold the attention of an audience.

A traditional poet's mnemonic devices also include formulaic structuring which help him remember long narratives by "thinking memorable thoughts", formed through metrical and thematic memory aids and stereotyped expressions or formulas: a group of words which is habitually employed to express a basic thought under similar metrical conditions (Peabody 1975: 179).[244] Smith (1981: 57-28) reports that the oral performance of the contemporary Pabuji *paṛ* epic is formulaic and is transmitted near-verbatim in each singing, not because the performers learned the long composition by heart, but because the performers know how to recall, almost verbatim, the major occurrences of Pabuji's story as they know it, and they are able to augment these occurrences by recalling the conventional formulae through which these occurrences are customarily told. In the process, "the meaning structure" of an epic poem does not always coincide with its metrical structure

[244] A definition, which was first phrased by Parry and elaborated upon by, amongst others, Ong (1999: 21-25 and 1982: 92-120) and Smith (1991: 20).

(Rubin 1995: 205). In other words, prosodic needs often receive priority over a composition's meaning. The submission of meaning to mnemonic requirements in the existing oral epic tradition of Pabuji has been demonstrated by Smith (1991: 14-16), who records how the Bhopa performers of the Pabuji epic add spoken prose sections to the verse narrative in order to explain the meaning of the poetic fragments to their audience, since the poetic language and archaic word use render part of the contemporary tradition incomprehensible to their audiences.

Third, oral memorisation techniques are also thought to have a bearing on the content of epic traditions, in particular on the portrayal of epic heroes and their deeds. Pabuji and his fellow protagonist are typological heroes, who conduct themselves according to patterns within a set frame of reference, namely the worldview of the epic community that transmits his story.[245] This kind of hero is the literal embodiment of the warrior ethos of fighting classes for his heroism is like his "armour and other outward trappings: its source is located outside himself, in a set of values and goals prescribed for him, then upheld and defended by him" (Cigman 1994: 165). As the embodiment of the martial ethos of medieval warriors of Marwar, the Rathaur and Bhil heroes are portrayed as courageous warriors who are ever ready to fight, willingly sacrificing their lives in battle. These antagonistic virtues can be recognized as near-universal heroic conventions which reportedly developed across cultures and were time and again defined as ideals including physical courage, physical and emotional strength, martial skills and honourable conduct (Goldstein 2001: *passim*). The "epic love of war" which from a historical angle can be understood as resulting from clan conflicts, and warrior ethos may, from the point of view of orality-literacy studies, be seen as yet another example of the oral noetics or the "agonistic dynamics of oral thought processes" (Ong), rendering battle and death generic to epic. The "flat" characterisation of the virtuous and accomplished hero can also be appraised as the result of mnemonic needs; the conventional depiction of brave heroes, glorious battle and violent death further a poet's ability to summon up his story.[246]

In conclusion, I feel that heroic, epic, praise and panegyric poetic and/or prose genres are probably best thought of, like Ong (1999: 44f) proposes, as oral and written genres which are shaped by the "oral noetics" prevalent in agonistic societies or communities of warriors, a highly polarized world where good and evil, virtue

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[245] See Miller (2000: 162) and Cigman (1994: 169).

[246] This is so because, as Ong (1999: 70) puts it: "Oral memory works effectively with 'heavy' characters, persons whose deeds are monumental, memorable and commonly public. Thus the noetic economy of its nature generates outsize figures, that is heroic figures, not for romantic reasons or reflectively didactic reasons but for much more basic reasons: to organize experience in some sort of permanently memorable form. Colourless personalities cannot survive oral mnemonics. To assure weight and memorability, heroic figures tend to be type figures: wise Nestor, furious Achilles (…) All this is not to deny that other forces besides mere mnemonic serviceability produce heroic figures and groupings. Psychoanalytic theory can explain a great many of these forces. But in an oral noetic economy, mnemonic serviceability is a sine qua non, and, no matter what the other forces, without proper mnemonic shaping of verbalization the figures will not survive".

and vice, villains and heroes, are defined according to contemporary martial ideologies that (in South Asia) include religiously inspired agonistic ethos. Such an approach also allows us to see these genres, following Kelly (1994: 1-19), as part of epic traditions which include or allude to many other contemporary and historical genres that are also part of an epic community's oral and written heritage and which redefine epic while at the same time: "allowing [epic] to stay clearly attached, despite the passage of time, to earlier exemplars of the genre, yet allowing the genre to change and revitalize the aesthetic pleasures and social debates it affords" (Kelly 1994: 4)". For, to quote Kelly (1994: 18) once more, "The epic is a range, or changing set of borderlines, between the lyric and the novel (...) If epic is a "marked" genre, it is not marked into a binary relationship, but into one with several terms. The epic entertains shifting relationships with more sharply-focused genres such as the drama, the chronicle, the document, the memoir, the autobiography, but especially the lyric". And, as I shall argue in this chapter and in the chapters ahead, the Rajasthani tradition of Pabuji documents that epic can also maintain "shifting relationships" with heroic poetry, eulogy, prose tales, songs and devotional poetry.

### *Descriptive conventions*

Is "heroic-epic poetry" indeed a suitable term for the selected poems? In describing the poems' narrative content and structuring below, I aim to further document why I have chosen to refer to the studied poems as part of a "heroic-epic" tradition of Dimgal poetry. To begin with I will examine which descriptive conventions and heroic typologies were employed by the poets of medieval Marwar and which historical and/or symbolic meaning may be attributed to the ensuing portrayal of Pabuji and his companions. As could be read in chapter 3, all the compositions one way or another evoke the moods, and at times also the sounds, of war, thus giving voice to medieval ideals concerning battle death, sacrifice, protection, honour and revenge. In addition, every poem centres upon the glorification of Pabuji, who is portrayed as an exemplary Rathaur warrior; a brave wielder of spear and sword and a man of honour, someone who can be trusted to keep his word and who offers protection to his retainers and devotees. This conventional portrayal of Marwar's warrior-heroes is for the most part subject to heroic ideals and poetic imagery and moods which almost universally delimit the protagonists of heroic and epic genres (cf. Goldstein 2001: *passim*, Miller 2000: *passim*).

Despite their clear differences in narrative content, all compositions were written in praise of war and the warrior by versifying the violent particulars of combat that resulted in a forceful "poetry of war". By glorifying the medieval warriors' heroism, the poets of medieval Marwar aimed to give voice to the warrior ethos of antagonistic Rajput and Bhil warrior communities. At the heart of the poets' renditions of heroism is the spectacle of battle: the manner in which the adversaries get ready for combat, accounts of their mounting anger, burning enmity and

verbatim renditions of battle cries. In the opening verses of both *chamd*s, for instance, the poets introduce both Pabuji and Jimda as steadfast fighters and prodigies at weapon play who excel in verbal and bodily aggression.[247] The martial dexterity of the heroes can also be understood from the poets' evocation of the gory details of war, particularly thorough in the *chamd*s. By describing how blood gushes in battle, lives are taken, warriors are beheaded but their torsos continue to fight, attention is called to the fact that Pabuji, Jimda and their warriors do not fear death but, on the contrary, seek it out eagerly.[248] While the poets of the *chamd*s evoke both Pabuji, Jimda and (in *chamd* II) the Bhil warriors by describing their martial qualities, Ladhraj also defines Pabuji's heroic role in terms of kinship and guardian relations throughout *duha* I. Pabuji is time and again defined in relation to others; he is the grandson of Asthan, the son of Dhamdhal, the half-brother of Buro and Pema, husband of the Sodhi Rajputni, brother-in-law and enemy of Jimda, uncle of Jhararo and, as an example of guardianship, the lord and protector of his Bhil and Charan retainers. These kinship and guardian ties are important since they are essential for the narrative of *duha* I in view of the fact that they govern the plot and several sub-plots of the episodes; for instance, when marriage negotiations lead to the first conflict between Pabuji and Jimda, Pabuji confronts Jimda for a second time in order to revenge Buro's demise or when Pabuji forestalls Jimda's death to protect his half-sister from widowhood and as a result is vanquished by Jimda himself.

The *git*s and *duha* II highlight yet other aspects of medieval heroism (which can also be read from *duha* I), including Pabuji's valour as an outstanding protector of cattle, a young warrior who rights wrongs, a daring camel thief and a tamer of horses. In *git* IV and *duha* II, the hero's divine qualities are also brought to the fore and are equated with (respectively) those of Shiva and the heroes of the *Mahābhārat*. At the heart of the *parvaro* are the miraculous deeds of the hero-god Pabuji, who protects his devotees from heaven, just like he protected the Charan's cattle when he still dwelled on earth). And, lastly, in *git* V, the poet illustrates his protagonist's heroism by equating war-zeal, valour and heroism with amorous passions. Bamkidas portrays Pabuji as a bridegroom at war who is full of impatience to embrace the enemy (his bride), thus suggesting the hot-blooded quality of his

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[247] The depiction of Pabuji foe's Jimda as an equally staunch hero as Pabuji, probably, served to portray Jimda as a skilled warrior and formidable opponent to thus underscore the bravery of Pabuji. For the latter, by taking on not just any enemy but a fearsome hero thus proves himself to be an outstanding warrior (cf. Miller 2000: 217).

[248] The recurring image of headless warriors may, of course, connote Heesterman's (1985: 47) view of the ritual, largely symbolic severing of heads in sacrifice to obtain "a treasure or secret that is the essence of the universe", a possession for which the gods have to contend with demons. The decapitation of Pabuji and fellow warriors is indeed presented as part of the warriors' sacrificial death in battle. However, it seems to me that the poetic portrayal of decapitation in the Pabuji tradition (and particularly in the *chamd*s and *duha* I) first and foremost connotes regional Jhumjhari tales, second, sacrificial myths representing the ritual dismemberment of the first human being by the gods and, third, myths about the demon Rahu who is believed to bring about eclipses, compared to the beheading of enemies by the poet of *chamd* II, by capturing the sun and the moon in his mouth (see chapter 3).

martial emotions. This dual use of romantic and heroic imagery is at times thought to be a distinctive aspect of Dimgal poetry, setting it apart from other heroic-epic genres (N.S. Bhati 1989: 131, Maheshwari 1980: 40). The poets' versification of battle are thought to have been inspired by conventional poetic moods which aim to express and evoke feelings of heroism (*vīr ras*) and corresponding emotions of the human psyche (*bhāv*) like *raudr* (anger), *utsāh* (war-zeal), or *bhayaṃkar* (terror).[249] N.S. Bhati (1989: 131f) argues that the evocation of *vīr ras* in Dimgal heroic-epic poetry often depends on a combination of heroic and amatory moods or feelings. Be that as it may, the passionate or amatory quality of Dimgal "war poetry" appears to be a rather common, perhaps universal, heroic-epic simile that likens battle to a wedding ritual, or marriage to a war arena in other poetic traditions like, for example, Sanskrit epic, ancient Tamil martial genres, Homer's *Odyssey* and the work of lyric poets like Sappho.[250] This poetic usage will be documented in some more detail below.

Another noteworthy aspect of poems dedicated to Pabuji (which yet again relates this tradition to heroic-epic compositions of traditional poets the world-over) is the fact that the poets ascribed heroism to their protagonists by delineating the warriors' "outer surface" (cf. Cigman 1994: 165, Goldstein 2001: 251-301, Miller 2000: 230). Dimgal typological conventions include detailed descriptions of the heroes' attitude, martial skills and deeds, physical strength, bellicose emotions and facial expressions as, for example, in the customary depiction of antagonistic feelings in the *chamd*s like in *chamd* I, where the poet describes Pabuji's martial stance by evoking his blood-red eyes, his anger and his terrifying scowl when he frowns and the ends of his moustache meet his eyebrows (v. 16-17): "On getting angry, the brave rose, such (was) (the anger of) the protector: the king('s) (anger) was lighted like a fire (with) ghee. (With) very red eyes (due to) anger, he fights the fearful (enemy), the ends (of his) moustache move (upwards) (and) meet (his) eyebrows".[251] And in the subsequent verse-line (*chamd* I, v. 18), Pabuji's physical strength is revealed with a description of how his outstretched arms touch the sky and by comparing the hero to Vishnu's dwarf-incarnation Tikama.

The attention which the poets give to the particulars of the warrior's armour, weaponry, war cries and the swiftness of their steeds further delineate the warriors' heroic and impressive qualities, like in the *chamd*s, *duha* I and *git* IV, where one

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[249] The two, *ras* and *bhāv*, are mutually dependent for their manifestation (Iglehart 1980: 34-35). The definition of *ras* and *bhāv* as enumerated by Kharair (1999: 64-74) and expounded upon by N.S. Bhati (1989: 132-142), does not seem to amount to an unvarying taxonomy of moods and their constituent emotions. For N.S. Bhati (*ibid*.) details altogether eleven moods: *vīr*, *sṛngār*, *raudr*, *vibhats*, *adbhūt*, *bhakti*, *karūṇ*, *vatsalyā*, *shānt*, *hāsy* and *bhayaṃk ras*. However, Kharair (*ibid*.) lists *sṛngār*, *raudr*, *vibhach*, *adbhūt*, *karūṇ*, *shānt*, *hāsy* and *bhayaṃk ras* as the eigth moods of *vīr ras*. See also Menariya (2000: 31-35) who lists: *vīr*, *sṛngār*, *raudr*, *vibhats*, *karūṇ*, *shānt* and *hāsy ras*.

[250] See Goff (1990: *passim*), Gold (1987: 319), Goldstein (2001: 55), Harman (1989: 1-20, 139), Hart (1975: *passim*), Miller (2000: 129), O'Regan (1992: *passim*), Rissman (1983:103f) and Spies (1930: 28f).

[251] *Chamd* I (v.16-17): "uṭhīyo dhikhi paurasa pāla āso, joi ātasa rālīya ghrata jīso. bhita cola cakhīya ata rosa bhile, mukha mūṃcha aṇīṃ [jāya] mūṃha mile".

reads about the way in which the warriors and their horses are adorned for battle and the formidable sound of weapons clashing. To underline their agility and speed, the poets compare the warriors' steeds to birds of prey, monkeys and Kali's discus. The verbatim rendition of the warriors' war cries, at times, can also be understood as an illustration of the warriors' external "attributes" as they in the first place reflect conventional Rajput ethos, not an inner self, and are cited to highlight the protagonist's eagerness for war and his martial dexterity. As Miller (2000: 230f) notes, and the *chamd*s illustrate, battle cries represent a limited selection of challenges and threats or "vocal themes" asserting a warrior's presence and intentions.[252]

The heroic typology made use of by the poets of medieval Marwar can also be examined by looking at the wide range of epithets accorded to Pabuji and his fellow protagonists.[253] The Rathaur hero is, for example, hailed as the son of King Dhamdhal (*dhāṃdhala rāva-uta*) and the grandson of Asthan (*asthānanotra*) and descendant of Siha (*sihā harai*) or Kamadha (*kamaṃdha*, *kamadhaja*), Kheṛecai and Rāṭhavaṛa, titles used for Rathaur warriors. The appellations *pāla*, *shrīphala* and *govāhara* bring to mind Pabuji's role as the protector of cattle and the honour of his lineage. *Bhut*, *jodhāra*, *sobhaṭa*, *bhaṛa*, *nara*, *narasūra*, *varadāi*, *aṇabhaṃgo*, *vairaharaṇa*, *jagajeṭhī*, *sūra*, *vīra*, *sākaita* and *neta* identify Pabuji and his fellow-combatants as warrior-heroes. In addition, the poets also speak of the Rathaur hero as *bhupala*, *chataradhara*, *chātrapati*, *nripata*, *rāja*, *rāva*, *rāvata*, denoting a kingly status. Pabuji's other epithets were inspired by his martial qualities or physical appearance: for instance, *dhanuvana* (archer), *bhālālau* (wielder of spears) and *bhūjāḷa* (long-armed hero).[254]

The poet of the *parvaro*, instead of elaborating on the exterior characteristics and martial qualities of Pabuji, elaborates upon the godly qualities of the hero. Heroic feats of protection are described in terms of divine protection illustrated with tales about the hero-god Pabuji who comes to the rescue of his Bhil priests and other devotees when they are troubled by ill-famed Rajput warriors. In this composition,

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[252] War cries are at times defined as part of a hero's armament: when the awesome voice of the combatant becomes a weapon in itself, powerful enough to put enemies to flight. Miller (2000: 230) describes such "verbal aggression" as a retrograde act through which warriors move back into animality or even into the inanimate, as when a heroes voice is compared to the roaring of a lion or the sound of thunder.

[253] Heroic typologies have been limited to four hero types by N.S. Bhati (1989: 132f), including the warrior-hero (*yuddhavīr*), the munificent patron or "hero-in-giving" (*dānavīr*), the compassionate hero (*dayāvīr*) and the righteous hero (*dharmavīr)*.

[254] The same can be said of the other protagonists. Jimda is alternately referred to as: *jiṃdarāva*, *saṃbharī jīṃda*, *sārāṃgasutī*, *jāyalavāla*, *khīcī*, *khīciyāṃ-nātha* and *neta*. The Charan woman Deval has been accorded appelations like: *cāraṇī*, *goharī*, *devalade*, *sakati*. And Pabuji's Bhil companions most commonly feature as "140" (*sāta vīsī*, *sātavīsīya*) and also as warriors and heroes (bhaṛa, sāṃvaḷā, ruṛrāla, sūra, suhaṛa, narasūra, sākaita, haṭhīyāla, laṃkāla) or with titles like *āheṛī* ("forestdwellers") or military titles like *pāika* and *pāradhī*. Lastly, a summary of the names used for Pabuji's nephew Jhararo who is described as a boy (*bālaka*), son (*beṭau*, *būṛā ro beṭo*), a Rathaur warrior from Marwar (*mārāṛu kamaṃdha*) and Nath guru or ascetic (*āyasa*, *jogī*).

Pabuji is primarily portrayed through a description of his deeds whereas his appearance and attributes remain unspecified even though the hero-god Pabuji is addressed with many of the above-listed epithets, including titles for warrior-hero and protector (*jodhāra*, *pāla*, *vīra*) and with regal titles (*rāvata*) and with titles that refer to him as a god (*devā*), a deified forefather (*jūṃjhāra*) and lord, master (*khāviṃda*). The devotional purpose of the *paravaro* is clear since its poet explicitly states that he aims to worship Pabuji, who is depicted as a warrior with divine origins, a deified forefather, folk-god, a manifestation of God and as historical warrior and righteous hero. The religious and/or devotional content of the other poems can best be gauged from the extent to which Pabuji has been ascribed magical and/or divine qualities, like in *chamd* II, the *duha*s and *git* III, where Pabuji is presented in more or less implicit ways as a warrior with divine qualities, a deified warrior or forefather and as a manifestation of God, an aspect of God or a god.

### *Sacrificial heroism*

The heroic roles described above may at first glance appear rather different. It seems, however, that Pabuji and (at times) his fellow protagonists all embody one hero type. They all strive for one and the same heroic ideal, i.e. the ideal of sacrificial heroism. This ideal presents battle death, preferably in the course of protecting cattle, land or women, as the purpose of a warrior's life. Clearly, the portrayal of combat and glorious battle death can be appraised as "generic" to heroic-epic Dimgal poetry and the result of the "agonistically toned past" and martial ethos of Marwar's warrior communities (cf. Ong's above-discussed theorem). However, as we have also seen, in Marwar, the ideal of sacrificial heroism was not only delimited by martial values but also by religiously inspired ideals, in particular the notion of battle death as a sacrifice. The battle-death of a warrior or *tyagi-vīr* (ascetic hero), who is thought to give up his life in battle selflessly, in order to serve others, is commonly presented in terms of the ascetic renunciation of life.[255] Both a warrior and renouncer were thought to relinquish life. The warrior's renunciation comes about by dying in battle while a renouncer is believed to die to the world in a spiritual sense. A warrior's asceticism rather differs from what is thought of as "standard" Brahminical views rendering ascetic renunciation a final choice upon which one cannot go back. Martial ideals of ascetic warriorhood were part of pastoral-nomadic survival strategies, which is to say that warrior-ascetics generally survived by combining settled family life, agricultural subsistence and cattle herding (or raiding) with military service (cf. Kolff 1990: 80-84).[256]

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[255] For a discussion of the symbolism of sacrifice in other South Asian traditions, see Hart (1975: 33-36), D.S. Khan (1994: *passim*) and Srivastava (1997: *passim*), and for Rajput ethos: Kolff (1990: 79-84), Kothari (1989: 102-117), Scharfe (1989: 175-86) and Stern (1991: *passim*).

[256] In the desert regions of western Rajasthan, people depend primarily upon cattle for their survival and follow different strategies, including pastoral and nomadic strategies, and transhumance. Transhumance is

A medieval warrior did not necessarily think of renunciation as an irreversible choice but instead choose to become a warrior ascetic to earn a living, share in the spoils of war, and in time if he survived the vagaries of war, return home wealthy enough to get married and live a householder's life. By leaving behind his family and adhering to the ideal of death in battle, a warrior did renounce "the world" (family life) but he did so for worldly reasons, i.e. to return to his family in due course, granted of course that he was victorious in battle. The Dimgal poets, predictably, offer a decidedly less worldly view of ascetic heroism. They stress the other-worldly aspect of a hero's martial deeds. Though Pabuji's wars, fought over the retrieval of cows and/or the ownership of a horse, have a clearly material aim (the possession of cattle), his tradition's poets do not straightforwardly mention worldly aims as a Rajput ideal.[257] Whether or not Pabuji fought to realize worldly goals was clearly not a major concern of the poets. They defined martial ideals chiefly in spiritual terms by presenting battle death as a form of ascetic self-sacrifice, bringing to mind a warrior's intention to relinquish his life in battle by fighting till victory or death.

Charan poets employed martial, religious and marital imagery to equate the warriors' death with renunciation, whereby battle comes to symbolize a sacrificial rite while, at the same time, the battlefield emerges as the altar upon which warriors offer their lives. The traditional hero's role as sacrificer, presenting a death-offering at the altar manifested as a battlefield, is of course a forceful theme of heroic-epic traditions the world over (Miller 2000: 338). As Feller Jatavallabhula (1999: 96-97) argues in her study of bloodshed in the *Mahābhārat*, these kind of religiously inspired, martial metaphors for war symbolize human sacrifice: the ultimate oblation to the gods.[258] The sacrificial nature of Pabuji's heroism can be understood from all selected poems. First, in *chamd* II, the ascetic nature of the heroism displayed by the Rajput and Bhil becomes apparent from the death wish and enthusiasm for war

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generally defined as seasonal migrations of cattle herding communities which have a permanent or semi-permanent place of abode the rest of the year. Pastoral-nomadism generally refers to people who migrate throughout the year along routes that are chosen according to prevalent climatic conditions and the resulting availability of grazing land and fodder. A combination of transhumance and pastoral-nomadic strategies can be employed by herding communities who live in drought-prone areas like the Thar Desert and are dependent on multi-enterprise, multi-resource and eco-niche based strategies for their survival (Gupta 1991: 332). It is in the latter sense that the phrase "pastoral-nomadic" and "mobile" peoples has been used throughout this study. For discussions of transhumance, pastoralism and nomadism in western Rajasthan, see (*passim*): Barth (1962), Bharara (1994), Gupta (1991), Kavoori (1991), Lodrick (2005), Prasad (1994), Robbins (1998) and Srivastava (1997).

[257] Arguably, the poets' glorification of Pabuji's battle as a warrior's chance to add "fame to his sword" does not stand for an ascetic ideal either unless one wants to read "fame" as a spiritual triumph, a reading which (bearing in mind the martial and material purpose that I attribute to the selected compositions) is not the way I would be inclined to interpret such a simile.

[258] Ziegler's (1998: 283, n.83) study clarifies that acts of self mutilation by Rajput warriors also stood for the sacrifice of (parts of) one's body to the gods, a sacrifice which was presumably thought of as a way to extract a boon. See also (Heesterman 1998: 16) on a Hindu king's role as sacrificer, victim and divine recipient of Vedic sacrificial rites.

displayed by them and from imagery that compares Pabuji and his warriors to Shiva by describing how their bodies, like his, are covered in ashes. The selfless aspect of their heroism is also clear. Though the reason for the battle is not specified in these compositions, even so, the references to "a woman" (*chamd* I) and to Jimda as a "(cattle) thief" (*chamd* II) indicate that the protagonists fight to protect Deval's cows. And the battle and fall of the "great warrior" Pabuji is unambiguously phrased as a libation and an ascetic renunciation of the world in this composition. The imagery of *chamd* I also gets across the notion that a warrior is a sacrificer *and* a sacrificial offering, for it is he who offers his own life to appease the gods. This notion is particularly explicit in the religious imagery of *chamd* I, in particular the bellicose role attributed to gods and goddesses, and the way in which they partake in the bloodshed. We have read how Shakti and Khecaris feast on the blood, flesh and bones of the fallen warriors, while Shiva goes round collecting skulls. Thus the warriors, by dying in battle, nourish Shakti, the Khecaris and, at the same time, appease Shiva. By describing the blood thirst of Shakti and her Khecaris, the poets may, in addition, have meant to evoke sacrificial myths associated with the Puranic goddess and her battle with the buffalo-demon Mahisha. This I read from the symbolism of blood employed by the medieval poets, rendering blood a "celestial wine" drunk by the goddess.[259]

In the *chamd*s, the blood sodden battlefield, soaked by the blood gushing forth from the warriors' wounds and littered with their corpses and skulls, represents the altar upon which the warriors surrender their life to Earth, the primeval mother goddess who is watered or fertilized by the blood spilled in battle and by the warriors' corpses. Such imagery evokes myths which render a warrior's flesh and blood the homologic alloform of earth, a belief inspired by the thought that earth was once formed of the body of a primal sacrificial man.[260] The "blood bond" between a warrior and mother earth also inspires conventional political idiom underlining the strong emotive bond between a warrior and his realm by defining this relation in terms of a symbolic marriage (cf. Inden 1998: 61f, Heesterman 1985: 145, Tambs-Lyche 1997: 61, 270, Ziegler 1998: 255).[261] Late-medieval warriors and/or kings were commonly represented as the rulers, masters, gods or husbands of the earth and were thought to be "wedded" to their territory.[262] Along these lines, a king and/or warrior became a "husband of the earth" and a "giver of life" to his (female)

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[259] Compare Doniger O'Flaherty's (1975: 248f) study of Devi-myths as told and retold in the *Skanda Purāṇa* and *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*.

[260] For related interpretations of sacrificial myths representing the ritual dismemberment of the first human being by the gods as the beginning of the world, creating it from his different body parts see: Feller Jatavallabhula (1999: 85f), Inden (1998: 41-91) and Lincoln (1981: 75).

[261] Kinship metaphors also extended to patron-client relations, for example when a Rajput patron or ruler was portrayed as the parent of his military retainers or as the father *and* mother (*mātā-pītā*) of non-Rajput communities (cf. Gold 1987: 305-327, Ziegler 1998: 267).

[262] For instance: *sām* or *sāmī*, *dhanī* and *dātār*, titles that connote meanings ranging from ruler, master, god, husband to "giver of life" (*dātār*).

realm or land, *dharatī*, a word traced to Sanskrit *dharitrī* ("female bearer") by Ziegler (1998: 267).[263]

Poetic equations of a warrior's body with an oblation (*piṃd*) in *chamd* II call further attention to the religious sacrifice a warrior was believed to make to the mother goddess. *Piṃd* has been described by Ziegler (1998: 254) as a ball of food representing the yield of one's fields and as balls of clay signifying an offering of the land itself. The poet of *chamd* II describes the heroes' dead bodies as "juicy meatballs" (*gudāla rasāla*) or *maṃsapiṃd*, an oblation which was meant for the hungry vultures swarming the battlefield in verse-lines 43, 62, 90 and 99 of *chamd* II:

43. varīyāma sa(ṃ)grāma jhihā(ṃ)ma va(ṃ)pe, kīyā tili kaṃdīla su cīla kape
43. '*There*', *near the bodies* (*of*) *the glorious* (*warriors*), *vultures* '*pecked*' *with* (*their*) *beaks at the pupils (of)* (*the warriors'*) *eyes*.

62. nīsāṃṇa dahuṃ dali(ṃ) nīdhasīyaṃ, harakhe pala cāra mane hasīyaṃ
62. (*The sound of*) *the Nagaras* (*of*) *both armies* '*filled the air*' (*and*) *the vulture*(*s*) *looked forward* (*to a feast*) (*and*) *smiled in* (*their*) *hearts*.

90. maṃsāla bhukhāla paṃkhāla milai, gudāla rasāla ḍalāla gilai
90. *The* '*hunger'* (*of*) *the carnivorous birds is* '*satiated*';[264] *they eat* (*and*) *gulp down juicy meatballs*.

99. pūri āsa palacarāṃ, līyā āmakhi dhau lādhai
99. *The 'hunger'* (*of*) *the vultures is satiated* (*for*) *meat* '*became available*' (*on*) *earth* (*and*) '*was eaten*'.

The sacrificial implication of the above-quoted verse-lines becomes clear when one remembers that vultures and other carrion-eaters are customarily seen as the creatures of "mother nature" or "mother earth" and as theriomorphic forms of the goddess (Feller Jatavallabhula 1999: 85). Put differently, the warriors sacrifice their lives to the mother goddess by dying in battle and thus satiating her vultures' hunger.

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[263] Tambs-Lyche (1997: 107f) notes that a similar (but woman-oriented) way of looking at land can be read from Rajputnis' important role in the management of Rajput etsates, suggesting that Rajputnis were in the first place married to the land and not to their Rajput husband.

[264] If *maṃsāla* is read as *māṃsāla* or "maternal uncle's house", this verse-line could also be interpreted as: "Hungry vultures 'visit' (their) maternal uncle's house'": that is to say, the battleground, which is littered with corpses, is equated with the welcoming atmosphere of a maternal uncle's house, where male relatives traditionally recieve a warm welcome. Personal communication Subh Karan Deval (2000). See *chamd* I (v. 45): *māṃsāla bhukhāla paṃkhāla miḷe* ("Vultures meet (their) impoverished maternal family").

The sacrificial quality of Pabuji's heroism in Ladhraj's *duha* can be understood from the selfless way in which the hero comes to the rescue of people in need; he battles primarily to protect the interests of others, for example, to return Deval's cows to her or to revenge his half-brother Buro's death at the hands of Jimda. The fact that Ladhraj identifies Deval as a goddess, even if it remains unclear what class of goddesses she belongs to, suggests that the hero of *duha* I, like in the *chamd*s, battled to placate the goddess since Pabuji sacrificed his life to protect her cattle. In *duha* I, the hero's final sacrifice comes about when he holds back Camda and thus spares the life of his brother-in-law Jimda to protect his half-sister against widowhood. In addition, the earlier-quoted exhortation of the Bhil hero Camda by Pabuji also furthers the idea that Ladhraj saw dying in battle an eminent ideal, equating warriors with ascetics. And Ladhraj's portrayal of Pabuji's war skills, especially his image of the hero fighting with sticks as if playing Holi, draws attention to the fact that he not only willingly parts with life in battle but also demonstrates "war-enthusiasm" in preparing to do so. This kind of imagery renders war a festive occasion, an event to rejoice in like Holi or, like in *git* V, a marriage ritual. To my mind, these similes employed by Ladhraj effectively stress Pabuji's devotion to war and his heroic renunciation of life.

Altruistic self-sacrifice is not a manifest theme of the *parvaro*. Combat is wholly absent from it except for very concise references to fights between Rajput brotherhoods and the help Pabuji extended to them. In this composition, Pabuji chiefly wields his power through supernatural means and Pabuji's divine persona is at the centre of this poem, in particular his incarnation as a hero-god who always comes to the rescue of his devotees. Pabuji's ascetic qualities are brought to the fore through the epithetical identification of the hero as a Jumjhar, a deified forefather who died in the course of the service to others, in this case the protection of cattle. Keeping in mind that Pabuji died to retrieve Charani Deval's cattle, I imagine that the poet of the *paravaro* may have also thought of the hero's death as a sacrifice to the goddess even though Deval and her identification as a goddess cannot be read from this poem. Deval is, nevertheless, part of the preceding *duha* I and it does therefore not appear unlikely that the poet of the *paravaro* may have also thought of Pabuji's sacrifice as a way to serve the goddess.

Similar sacrificial overtones can be read from the *git*s and *duha* II. In, for example, *git* IV, the ascetic nature of Pabuji's heroism is called to mind with descriptions of the hero's death in a fight over cattle. In *git* V, Pabuji's sacrifice is evoked by bringing to mind how the warrior "romanced" death. At first reading, the fact that Pabuji abandons his bride at the wedding *maṃḍap* (pavilion) in Bamkidas's *git* seems to advance the conventional ascetic ideal of celibacy. Pabuji, by leaving his bride to rush to Deval's rescue, renounces married life. Perhaps the poet thus meant to portray Pabuji as an unmarried warrior-ascetic who, through sexual

abstention, is thought to attain physical, mental and spiritual vigour.[265] On second reading, however, it appears that Bamkidas's ascetic ideal did not inevitably include celibacy. By evoking Pabuji as a bridegroom-warrior, and comparing the rites of battle to wedding rituals, Bamkidas relates his hot-blooded feelings during battle to amorous passions. By comparing the hero's longing for battle and the way in which he passionately "embraces" his enemy, on the one hand, to the union between a bridegroom and his bride on the other, the poet, as I shall argue in more detail below, appears to celebrate the erotic and procreative aspect ascribed to war. Pabuji's death is portrayed in similar terms since Bamkidas concludes by describing how Pabuji falls asleep on the battlefield "like in a bed", seemingly comparing the battlefield to the hero's nuptial bed and, conceivably, battle-death to post-coïtal sleep.[266] Battle-death is also compared to a wedding in *chamd* (II), given that a warrior's death delivers him to the arms of heavenly nymphs who, dressed as brides, have been impatiently awaiting his demise while stringing flower wreaths to garland him with and thus elect him as their husband.[267] From Bamkidas's tribute to Pabuji's wholehearted and passionate willingness to fight and surrender his life in battle and from the zeal with which protagonists are shown to have readied themselves for war, seeking out death eagerly like bridegrooms longing for their brides, the warrior's realization of the ascetic ideal of "dying to the world" attains a festive and passionate quality.

### *Procreation*

By relating war and violence, on the one hand, to religiously inspired self-sacrifice in battle and wedding festivities, on the other, the poets highlighted the martial and religious ideals embodied by medieval warriors. The "erotic" tenor of the above-quoted similes also points towards the fecund results ascribed to battle deaths, for by comparing the forces released in battle to sacrifice to earth goddesses, marital passions and sexual union, the poets evoked the potential of violence to "give birth" to new life, thus rendering war a means to sustain life, and its violence a procreative force (cf. Hart 1975: 35). As noted just now, battle can be seen as a form of religious sacrifice by and of men who give up their lives and offer their bodies to "feed"

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[265] An ideal motivated by the concept of *bhramacāryā* which advocates the sublimation of sexual feelings through spirituality and celibacy. See also Kakar (1989: 118f), Smith (1991: 93).

[266] "Pauḍhiyau seja raṇa bhoma pābū" (N.S. Bhati 1973: 85). The comparison of making love to battle can also be read from a Rathaur genealogical account translated by Tessitori (1919a: 45) in which it is said of a warrior that he chose to lie down "on the field of battle of his zenana" (that is to say: he died in battle).

[267] Yet other similes mirror a warrior's love for his dagger (*kripan*) during battle with his amorous feelings while sharing a bed with a woman, thus comparing the battlefield to a warrior's nuptial bed and the warrior's love for war with amorous passions (cf. N.S. Bhati 1989: 131). The warrior's love for his dagger has obvious phallic connotations comparable to Goldstein's (2001: 349-50) interpretation to the phallic character of traditional portrayals of the thrust of weapons like, for example, spears.

mother earth and nourish another aspect of the goddess, referred to as Shakti. Scholars of the Freudian tradition, like Sudhir Kakar (1989: 118f), interpret such images, connected to warlike, "man-eating" goddesses, as an expression of men's fear or apprehension of women as sexual beings, especially in their role of mothers.[268] According to Kakar, it is the perceived male preoccupation with the devastating power of uncontrolled female sexuality that inspires the image of fierce goddesses in heroic-epic genres, commonly understood as symbolic of female reproductive capacities and sexuality as arcane, menacing forces.[269] However, the linking of the forces released in battle, on the one hand, with marital relations, on the other, could also be evaluated as an image which served to evoke a confirmatory appraisal of reproductive processes, and was not first and foremost inspired by men's misgivings about women. In reading Tamil marital metaphors for war, Hart (1975: 35), for example, proposes that the comparison of the forces released in battle to sexual union denote the potential of violence to "give birth" to new life. Thus war is rendered a means to sustain life, and its violence a procreative force. The above-mentioned political metaphors that render a Rajput the husband of the earth looked upon as his wife, connoting agricultural fertility and human procreation, further underline a fertility-oriented interpretation of the metaphors.

The poetic connections between a ruler and his land, and the equation of women with (agricultural) land, or mother earth with the goddess, bring to mind a common set of images which all focus on the perceived active male principle of creation as opposed to the passive female principle. Such imagery is also contained in, for instance, myths that render heaven and earth the archetypal parents of the world (Dange 1971: 34). The union between heaven and earth, by producing abundant harvests, also ensures human life and prosperity. In this way, the blood spilled by warriors on the battlefield, "watering" the earth-mother is suggestive of agricultural fertility and human procreation, granted that male "blood" can be understood as a symbol of fertility, comparable to rain or semen, ensuring the earth's fecundity.[270] Hence, I would suggest that an added meaning underlies the

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[268] Cf. Damsteegt's (1997a: 20-26) discussion of Kakar's psychology of marital relations .

[269] See, for example, Doniger O'Flaherty (1980: 247) who holds that ambivalent feelings towards eroticism and fertility in the Upanisadic period resulted in the portrayal of women as the enemy of ascetic men. A similar notion apparently inspired an interpretation of the mare as a negative symbol in Vedic and Upanishadic literature, which came to be associated with demons, demonic destruction and the male-devouring goddess. Doniger O'Flaherty (1980: 261) does, however, also note that the mare was a positive symbol in Rajasthan considering the positive, powerful role she has been accorded in Rajput warfare in which she came to present a "secular symbol" and a "royal equestrian image". It remains to be seen whether this kind of interpretation helps in judging the role attributed to Pabuji's steed Kalmi, who is at times identified as a part-incarnation of the Goddess, an incarnation of nymphs (like Pabuji's mother) or equated with "Kali's discuss".

[270] For a study of the conventional use of "seed and field" metaphors connoting agricultural and human fertility as well as "spiritual fertility" in medieval and contemporary Rajasthan, see Gold (1987: 305-327) and Harlan (2003: 187f). Reeves Sanday's (1981: 19, 96) study offers further examples of the way in which the shedding of blood in war can be read as symbolic of fertility.

earlier-discussed metaphors of *chamd* (I) portraying, for example, the goddess's water vessel filled with the warriors' blood that can also be thought of as symbolic of fertility.

I take metaphors that imply the life-enhancing outcome of battle death as evocative of agricultural productivity as well as human procreation to be celebrations of fertility-centred understandings of sexuality that portray men as the "givers of life" to the earth and to women. This male-oriented way of looking at procreation is characteristic of European and South-Asian traditions which render female fertility an inert principle, and women's bodies a passive receptacle for semen, the latter of which represents the active, life-giving masculine principle. This view is, moreover, redolent of long-established notions of human conception as a process whereby a man plants his seed, basically a homunculus, in a woman's nourishing "soil" or "womb".[271] Put differently, the celebration of fertility construed as men's primary role in procreation and their ability to control women and their fertility can be seen as the "master-metaphor" of the studied compositions. A gender-based evaluation of the discussed imagery allows us to see the discussed similes as an expression of a male fertility-centred worldview articulated through metaphors that construe war and a warrior's role and his battle deeds and battle death as live-enhancing undertakings.

At the heart of this kind of imagery is the primacy accorded to the active male principle over the passive female principle, a finding which to my mind helps position the discussed poems in a worldwide epic-heroic tradition of martial and military cultures. The poets of such cultures came to define masculine, martial strength as the control of all that is feminine by (for example) feminizing the opponent and presenting war as the rape of an effeminate enemy.[272] Such a perception furthers my interpretation of Bamkidas's marital and martial metaphors, in particular his comparison of war deeds to a wedding. By positioning masculine heroes (the warrior-bridegrooms) opposite female or effeminate adversaries (their brides), Bamkidas (knowingly or unknowingly) feminized the enemy and his poem seems indicative of the above described gender constructs that value the control of femininity as a show of masculine strength. Bamkidas's chosen imagery underscores the idea that brides, like enemies (and vice versa), need to be conquered and subjugated. This interpretation is historically valid as well. Research into women's role in Rajput society, and the Pabuji tradition itself, unambiguously documents how marital relations between Rajput brotherhoods commonly served to ensure the

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[271] As Friedland (2002: 412) puts it: "Man's capacity to make life, while mediated by his ability to produce the means of reproduction, rests primordially on his own reproductive force, his capacity to produce children (…) Children mean workers, warriors, and wombs. Their absence spells collective death". See also Reeves Sanday (1981: 4, 60) and Teskey (1996: 15f).

[272] The aims of war are defined correspondingly. Military objectives, like defeating or subjecting the enemy by gaining power over him, killing him or invading his territory, are till today equated with sexual intercourse, most commonly in terms of rape while the (defeated) opponent is thought of as female (Goldstein 2001: 349, Goff 1990: 63 and Haste 1993: 75).

survival of a lineage, preferably through male offspring, and was thought of as a way to settle feuds, establish political alliances, or to economically advance one self.[273] In societies where marriage amounts to a patriarchal exchange system in which women are the main currency, there is an evident need to control women by "domesticating" them for the role of subservient wives and mothers. Especially male concerns about the survival of their lineage are commonly quoted to explain the wish to dominate women and control their fertility; thus men hope to ensure that they can call themselves the father of their wives' progeny with some confidence (Goff 1990: 46, Kakar 1989: 66, 118f).

The above interpretations do evidently not rule out that the poets' images of the sacrifice of men to ferocious (earth) goddesses stood for male misgivings about the procreative power of women expressed through images of a blood-thirsty goddess or Pabuji's death in battle as the result of embracing his bride. They do, on the other hand, suggest that the poets were more concerned with the procreative than with the destructive force attributed to sexual union. The poets appear to have been particularly interested in what may be understood as men's vital contribution to the continuation of life. In sum, the portrayal of war in Dimgal poetry as a form of religious sacrifice by and of men who sacrifice themselves to "feed mother earth" may, in this specific context, be interpreted as symbolic for procreativity. This is suggested by imagery that presents the sacrifice of warriors in battle as a way to ensure the continued existence of cosmic and, presumably, societal order by nourishing mother earth and the goddess Shakti. The same can be said of metaphors that represent a warrior's corpse as an oblation offered to the goddess's creatures, the vultures. The procreative symbolism of similes that present a Rajput as a "husband of the earth" and "giver of life", wedded to his female realm ("mother earth"), is of course rather obvious. By battling to protect his realm and retainers, giving his life in battle, a warrior is thought to ensure the fecundity of his land and the survival of his lineage. Even more obvious is the celebration of fertility and procreation through marital imagery, as when the poets equate war with marriage to connote sexual union and the continuation of life, probably in particular the continuity of Rajput lineages through male offspring (cf. Tambs-Lyche 1997: 271).

### *Mnemonic patterning*

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the manuscript versions of heroic-epic poetry continue to show the results of oral transmission techniques, in particular in the narrative and prosodic structuring of their form and content. The "oral residue" of written heroic-epic poetry may be gauged from its episodic structuring and

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[273] Compare Tambs-Lyche (1997: 61): "The queen's role in traditional Kathiawar shows the fundamental importance of marriage alliance in Rajput polity. This role changes too, but the idea of patriliny is certainly as fundamental to the marriage alliance as the latter is to the constitution of the clan. The idea of Rajputhood, as it emerges, involves a complementarity of male and female, of brotherhood and alliance".

occurrences of redundancy and reiteration. Here, I will look at these features more closely by giving attention to the selected poems' structuring, narrative sequence, the poets' explicit reference to oral composition or performance. As a final point, let me briefly reiterate the historical function that can be understood from the compositions' prosodic and metrical structuring (cf. chapter 4).

The clearest examples of mnemonic patterning are found in *duha* I and the *chamd*s. *Duha* I, as noted before, is told in five distinct episodes, dealing with Pabuji's parentage, marriage negotiations between the Rathaur and Khici families, the theft of Charani Deval's cows, etcetera. The poem's narrative progression is relatively unbroken, for the episodes have been noted down chronologically starting with the episode of Pabuji's birth and ending with the hero's death and, in the last episode, the revenge on Jimda Khici by Jhararo. However, the narrative sequences of the episodes themselves break down several times. In the episode about the theft of Charani Deval's cows, for example, Ladhraj recapitulates the cow-theft in detail before moving on to the next episode, describing once again (verse-lines 199-237) how Jimda stole the cattle, the Charani went to Buro for help, Buro turned her away and Pabuji subsequently came to the Charani's rescue. This kind of digression at the end of one episode and before beginning the next episode seems a clear example of "a breather" for the poet, allowing him and his audience to keep track of events and link one episode to another.

Another example of chronological confusion crops up in episode 4, the narrative sequence of which is lost from verse-line 297 onwards, where Pabuji's heroic death is portrayed, after which previous events are again repeated in a rather random way. In verse-line 305, the narrative sequence is picked up again and the account of Buro's assault on Jimda continued. After the description of Pabuji's defeat by Jimda in verse-lines 362-63, the narrative becomes redundant when the poet reiterates how Pabuji fought for the protection of Deval's cows and returns the cows to her (v. 375). In the last episode, the poet once more reiterates events when he, after announcing Jhararo's journey to and arrival in Jayal, does not continue this tale but reverts to an account of Jhararo's earlier initiation in the Nath sect and describes how (v. 445-453) Jhararo has something, probably his ears, pierced by Gorakhnath. Then the poet summarizes imminent events, telling us how the Yogi Jhararo confronts his enemy, threatening to behead him. From verse-line 454 onwards, the poet resumes his prior account of Jhararo's journey to Jayal.

The oral mode of the medieval transmission of *duha* I can also be understood from the words used by Ladhraj to introduce himself and his narrative. The poet clearly states that he recollects Pabuji's story by *singing*, *reciting* and *telling* it.

2. devī de varadāṃna, muṇato ima ladhamālīyau
2. pābū suraparadhāṃna, gāuṃ to tūṭhai guṃṇe

3. "*Devi*! *Give* (*your*) *blessing*(*s*), *thus* '*requests*' *Ladhmal.*

3. *Pabu* (*is*) *paramount* (*among*) *gods*, *I sing* (*his*) *praise* (*and*) *you will be pleased* (*with*) (*his*) '*merit*(*s*)'".

5. bhala pābū bhūpāla, mala kahai kīrata muṇūṃ
5. "*Pabu* (*is*) '*dutiful*', (*he*) (*is*) *the protector* (*of*) *all*", *says Mala*, "*let me sing* (*his*) '*praise*'".

Verse-lines 14 and 383 (*duha* I) contain rather unambiguous references to the process of oral recollection since Ladhraj refers to his art as the recollection of an earlier tale heard by him. Verse-line 378 could be understood (though such an interpretation may seem somewhat far-fetched) as a reference to the repetitive or recurrent aspect of oral transmission:

14. to jāyāṃ rī katha, bhālālā mai sāṃbhalī
14. "*Spearwielder! Now (follows) the sons' story (as) (it) has been heard (by) me*".

383. suṇi āgai suratāha, kamadhaja tāharī kahu
383. "*Let me speak (about) you (and) (about) the recollection (of) the Rathaur warrior (as) I heard (it) before*".

378. de devī āsīsa, kamadhaja rā suṇi suṇi kaghaṃna
378. *"Devi! Give your blessings after hearing the warrior's story time and again"*.

As already noted in chapter 2, in verse-line 83 of the *parvaro*, the poet refers to this poem as a recitation which, as described in verse-line 85, was eventually written down (*likhatu*) by Pamdit Khusyal:

83. suṇi lokāyai soī, kahyā ladhai devī hukama
84. iti pābūjī rā dūhā sampuraṇaṃ
85. saṃ 1827 vi sai rā vaisākha vada 10 dine likhatu paṃ khusyala carī āsarāmadhye

The above-listed standard expressions also convey that reciting, reading, or hearing poetry devoted to Pabuji is beneficial for a poet or his audience, a way to gain insight into the world, obtain merit or become virtuous. The *paravaro*'s poet, for instance, states (c.32): "Upon that [man] [who] 'reads out' [and] hears [this poem], I will immediately 'bestow' virtuous [qualities]". And in *duha* I (c. 29), the poet states that he praises Pabuji's glory "with [his] tongue" (*duha* I: 29).

Compared with *duha* I and the *parvaro*, the *chamd*s contain fewer examples of mnemonic patterning through redundancy. In *chamd* I (v. 15), the reference to "a

woman's request" (probably Deval's request) to attack Jimda, after the battle between Pabuji and Jimda has already commenced, could be taken as an example of redundancy. However, it is also possible to interpret this verse-line as a portrayal of a woman, perhaps Deval, who urges Pabuji on during, and not before, the battle.[274] Examples of digression are more clear in *chamd* II (v. 10-48) when, for example, the poet departs from his chronological account of Pabuji's preparations for battle, including the decoration and saddling of his horse and a description of the subsequent battle proceedings (v. 10-37). After this, the poet digresses from his sequential account of the battle proceedings and once again describes how Pabuji's horse is decorated and the saddle straps tightened and so forth (v. 38-40) before he continues his battle narrative. A more evident example of mnemonic patterning in *chamd* II is presented by the fact that the already very slow narrative progression regularly gives way, from verse-lines 68 to 81, to detailed descriptions of the warriors' moods and the clamour of battle.

To evoke battle, the poet not only employs poetic descriptions of the clash of arms but also (as has been discussed in chapter 4) onomatopoeia and forceful rhyme schemes. In doing so, prominence was given to the evocation of the images, sounds and moods of war over a chronological account of battle or an explicit portrayal of which of the protagonists does what. It is therefore not always easy to tell which of the protagonists or armies is manoeuvring and who attacks, wounds or kills whom. In verse-lines 60 to 67, it is still apparent that the poet meant to give an account of Pabuji's army but in the next verse-lines (68-80) confusion arises when unspecified armies retreat in terror, unnamed warriors brandish weapons, clash and stagger, and so on. But in verse-lines 79 to 80, it is not very clear to whom the poet refers when he talks about a "great army" and "great heroes".

79. nīya chaṭa pahaṭa nihaṭa nare, sara sāra saṃbāra samāra sa(ṃ)re
80. khalakaṭa vikaṭa āvaṭa khisai, vīya chaṭa sobhaṭa maṃsaṭa vasai

79. *They bring (the) warriors to a halt (with) (an) attack, (they) hurl weapons, they sharpen swords and arrows (and) inflict wounds.*
80. *They drive back the great army (during) the carnage, and the great heroe(s) (are) 'beleaguered' (and) brought to a standstill.*

Though epic convention suggests that the poet talks about the army and heroes of Pabuji, the main protagonist and hero of this composition, it is also possible that he meant to describe Jimda and his warriors since both Pabuji and Jimda were introduced as equal heroes. In view of the fact that in most versions of Pabuji's story it is not he who wins the battle, but Jimda, it seems most likely that Jimda also

[274] *Chamd* I (v. 15): *pāla trīya āyi puṃṇai praghaṛā, jiṃdarāva upāṛiya desa jaṛā* ("The woman, arriving (near) the protector, says: "Heroic (lord)! If (you are) strong, (then) "attack" Jimdarava!").

conquers Pabuji in the above-quoted lines. On the other hand, Pabuji has also been portrayed as Jimda's vanquisher, though vaguely so, in *chamd* I (v. 58).

Two more aspects of the *chamd*s could be understood as illustrations of the oral nature of their transmission and/or composition or of the fact that they were part of, or based on, an oral heroic-epic tradition in medieval times. Firstly, the reference to recitation in the full titles of both *chamd*s, where it has been stated that the poems were "recited" by Meha Vithu.[275] Secondly, some of the *chamd*'s story elements bring to mind themes and imagery from episodes as contained by *duha* I and the *git*s. Though neither of the *chamd*s offers evidence for episodic structuring, since the narrative progression of the poems is very slow and mainly centres on the versification of battle, their content does, on the other hand, bring to mind elements of Pabuji's story, in particular as told in *duha* I. Indeed, if one did not know the different episodes of Pabuji's story beforehand, it would be difficult to make sense of some of the more ambiguous references like those in *chamd* I, where the cause of the battle between Pabuji and Jimda is not mentioned, and it is entirely unclear who the "woman" is who exhorts Pabuji to attack Jimda or why she urges him to do so. Read together with Pabuji's portrayal as a "protector", probably of cattle, and the description of Jimda as a "thief", again probably referring to cattle, these allusions gain meaning if they are interpreted as suggestive of Jimda's theft of Deval's cattle, and Pabuji's rescue of that cattle. Such allusion can only be understood if one knows other versions of Pabuji's tale, as the poets' medieval audiences most probably did. Consequently, it is not inconceivable that the *chamd*s were in one way or another part of a wider tradition. I imagine that the *chamd*s were part of the same tradition as *duha* I, either as autonomous works, inspired by Pabuji's story but performed or written down independently, or as episodes, part of a longer heroic-epic performance, but came to be transmitted independently. In other words, I see the described narrative correspondences as an example of what Kelly, as quoted just now, describes as the "shifting relationships" of heroic, epic and other genres.

To conclude this section on mnemonic patterning, I shall discuss the shorter compositions selected for this study. The *git*s and *duha* II are, at first sight, heroic praise poems, or heroic poems, while the *parvaro* appears to be a heroic and devotional genre, a "devotional praise poem". As described in chapter 2, the narrative content of all these shorter works centres on Pabuji's glorification as a warrior and/or divine being, though each poem highlights a different aspect of Pabuji's story, at times connoting tales elaborated upon in the episodes of *duha* I, in particular narratives about Pabuji's battle and marriage. While this description clearly gives reason to think of this composition as a panegyric or a "heroic praise poem", I would suggest that these compositions, like the *chamd*s and *duha* I, also form part of a broader heroic-epic tradition. The praise awarded to Pabuji by the *git*s and *duha* II, and the different narrative themes, no matter how limited their content

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[275] *Chamd* I: *atha mehā viṭhū rā kahīyā shrī pābujī rā chaṃda* and *chamd* II: *Atha pābujhī ro chaṃda mehaijhī rā kahyā.*

is, have little meaning if they cannot be understood in the light of Pabuji's battle deeds (*git* I, *duha* II, *parvaro*), his confrontations with Jimda (*git* I, II, *git* III, IV, *duha* II), the way he comes to the rescue of Charani Deval's cows (*git* II, IV, *duha* II), his marriage to a Sodhi princess and the way he leaves her at the wedding pavilion (*git* II, IV, V), the sacrifice made in battle by Pabuji (*git* I, II, IV, V, *parvaro*), or the belief that he was a deified forefather (*jūṃjhāra*) or god (*git* IV). The *chamd*s' imagery is also brought to mind, in particular in the evocation of battle and the way Yoginis partake in the bloodshed, like the presence of Yoginis in *git* II.

With the above remarks I do not mean to imply that there was a direct relation between the different poems suggestive of a linear development in time. Nor do I want to propose that Pabuji's epic is "embrionically present" in the *gits* or that the *gits* should be thought of as earlier strands of Pabuji's story elaborated upon in *duha* I and/or the *chamd*s (or vice versa). But I do think that the broader narrative of Pabuji's story is implicit in the shorter *git*s, *duha* II and the *parvaro*, since the latter (like *duha* I and the *chamd*s) all display similar characteristics, including praise, heroic ideology, devotional strands, themes and imagery which connote diverse episodes from Pabuji's adventures. Though the latter episodes are only fully narrated in *duha* I, it does, even so, seem to me that they are implicitly referred to by the poets of the *chamd*s, the *git*s and *duha* II, for example when they hint at the cause for battle between Pabuji and Jimda, his hasty departure from the marriage ceremony, his battle death, etcetera. Though these references are no longer instantly recognizable, they must, even so, have been known to the poet and, as remarked just now, apparent to medieval audiences.

One characteristic of the *parvaro* makes it stand out from the other selected works: this poem does not share many common themes or protagonists with the other poems. Its primarily devotional character sets it apart from the more martially inspired compositions. However, the devotional feelings expressed in the *parvaro* are not altogether absent from the other poems (except perhaps *git* I and V). Devotion to Pabuji and other gods or goddesses does figure as a major or minor concern in *duha* I, the *chamd*s and *git* II and, like in the *parvaro*, illustrates the narrative link between the veneration of Pabuji and Goddess worship. I therefore feel that the *parvaro* highlights devotional themes which are part and parcel of the Pabuji tradition, just like martial themes are. And I would suggest that the *parvaro*, though primarily devotional, can also be thought of as a heroic-epic poem, for the poem does highlight the martial as well as divine "protective functions" of the warrior-hero and hero-god. The *parvaro*, moreover, deals with Pabuji's miraculous and martial deeds through distinct, unconnected tales, a manner that to some extent resembles the episodic structuring of epic. This notion can be further documented by the fact that tales similar to the medieval *parvaro*'s tales structure the ritual performance of present-day episodes which together constitute the oral *mātā* epic of Pabuji (cf. chapter 10).

*Family of texts*

The limited length, narrative content and structuring and the devotional meaning of most poems proves it difficult to relate them to traditional classifications of heroic and epic poetry. If length (long), content (heroic, not miraculous deeds) or form (narrative poetry) should be considered as the defining features of epic then most poems clearly do not qualify as heroic and/or epic. All poems use devotional and/or religious imagery. *Chamd* I, *git*s I-IV, *duha* II are too short and do not know episodic structuring. The narrative progression of the relatively longer *chamd* II is too slow and ambiguous and does not document episodic structuring either. As noted before, the only truly epic composition, according to the traditional view, is *duha* I, a relatively long poem, containing 5 episodes. However, *duha* I also has a devotional, not just heroic, content. Can *duha* I indeed be compared with epics that contain thousands of lines? What to think of the idea that shorter poems can be thought of as part of an earlier tradition of heroic or praise poetry from which longer "truly epic" genres developed? And are the studied structural features of the *chamd*s, *duha*s, *parvaro* and *git*s indeed the result of mnemonic patterning?

I have argued that it is likely that the redundant narrative sequence of *chamd* I and II and *duha* I resulted from oral transmission and composition techniques. The same is probably true of the episodic structure of *duha* I, the allusions to acts of speaking, reciting and/or listening in the *chamd*s, *duha* I and *parvaro*. One could, however, also argue that the listed structural features of the poems and the allusions to acts of reciting etcetera should be understood as part of traditional literary composition techniques and stock phrases which served to express a poet's intentions in a conventional way, but do not necessarily have a bearing on the historical performance context of the compositions. But, if one were to appraise the above evidence for the poems' oral substratum together with the martial use ascribed to the distinct poetic vocabulary that emphasizes the warlike mood of the compositions, and to the intricate rules for alliteration and metrical patterning, to the use of onomatopoeia and words suggestive of sound and, lastly, to the recitative rules developed by Charan poets, all this does, I feel, give reason to imagine that the selected poems resulted from oral transmission and composition and, last but not least, oral recitation techniques. Or, as John D. Smith (1979: 356) remarks about contemporary Rajasthani heroic-epic genres: "[W]e are dealing with a textual reservoir, a "pool" of textual material into which any poet is entitled to dip at any appropriate moment", a procedure which also helps account for the narrative "overlaps" and "variations" that abound in the Pabuji tradition.

I feel that the selected poems are best seen as part of a medieval heritage of Dimgal poetry that can be defined as the sum of past and present poems, prose stories and performances. Included in these categories are "possible" versions of written and oral poems dedicated to Pabuji, orally composed texts never recorded in writing and no longer orally transmitted, and possible manuscript versions of texts that have never been (or are no longer) preserved in government or private archives.

The problems of classification arising from the poems' evident similarities and differences are best solved, I think, by considering the variety of story-lines, themes, protagonists, symbolic meanings, narrative forms, oral and written characteristics as part of a multi-layered tradition. The fact that the poems dedicated to Pabuji have several narrative and stylistic features in common, and the direct or indirect references to narrative themes and episodes connote a wider context, suggesting that they were informed by a diversity of oral and written tellings of Pabuji's story, including older and/or contemporary heroic-epic genres. Following Ramanujan (1991: 44), I feel that these kinds of poems are best thought of as a "series of translations clustering around one another in a family of texts". From this angle, the heroic-epic genres of the Pabuji tradition can be thought of as a multiform tradition inspired by common, aggregated sets of sources or "pools of signifiers".[276] This common bank of story elements includes plots, characters, names, geography, and incidents that inspire each poem dedicated to Pabuji. Put differently, each poem is a "realization", in time and content, of aspects of common codes shared with other poems of the tradition.

By seeing the poems as part of a multifaceted tradition that contained heroic, epic and devotional poetry, I feel that I can list the genres that are part of the Pabuji tradition as "heroic-epic poetry". This phrase enables us to take account of the idea that longer and shorter poems, despite the clear differences in length, narrative content and prosodic structuring, existed side by side and were (and still are) composed as part of one "multi-story heroic-epic tradition", and independently of each other. The phrase "heroic-epic poetry" moreover serves to account for the fact that elements of Pabuji's story may function as narrative "building blocks" for short heroic and longer epic compositions. This includes the possibility that such building blocks take the form of separate compositions in the course of an epic performance or during other occasions, when just one or two episodes are performed. This definition also includes the notion that shorter heroic poetry may be part of an epic performance, as a way to embellish an episode, for instance, and the notion that an epic episode itself may inspire heroic poetry, which then is recited in a different context like, for example, the tale about Pabuji's wedding ceremony that is part of *duha* I, *git* V and, as shall become apparent in chapter 10, also of contemporary epic performances dedicated to Pabuji, and of poetry and prose-tales and songs sung during weddings.[277]

The above-proposed definition also allows me to include structural similarities. By applying Ramanujan's idea of a common imaginative pool to the concept of genre, the many genres that are part of the Pabuji tradition can be evaluated as part of one "multi-layered" and collective narrative, the poets of which

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[276] The concept of a distinct, homogeneous communal or social pool of thought from which all myths derive was first put forward in structuralist studies of culture. Here, not a uniform "pool of thought" is imagined but a corpus that encompasses the whole of the inherited culture or common knowledge of a community, including a diversity of oral and written traditions in different periods, circumstances and regions (Ramanujan's 1997: 22-46).

[277] For example, the wedding-song *Arāj mhārī sāmhalau* in J. Singh Rathaur (1998:11-12).

continuously refashion story-elements, plots, episodes, chronologies and prosodic forms, rendering Pabuji's story through distinct tellings and various, mostly overlapping, oral and written heroic-epic genres. The continuous refashioning of story-elements results in distinct versions rendered through various genres. Though the "texture" and context of a text may be distinctive, both are nevertheless crystallizations of common codes shared with other texts (Ramanujan 1997: 5f). Along these lines, I imagine the existence of a common pool of "structuring devices" shaping the ongoing diffusion of both oral and written versions of poems dedicated to Pabuji.

*Devotional picture of Pabuji, Dhembo and Camda as sold during Navratri at the Kolu temple (unknown artist).*

# 6 Pabuji's World

The glorification of the main protagonists of the poems dedicated to Pabuji served to articulate medieval attitudes towards war. Thus the medieval poets gave voice to the warrior ethos of Rajput and, in some instances, Bhil warriors. At the heart of several of the studied poems is the warriors' death in battle portrayed as a worthy way for a warrior to breathe his last. This outlook reflects a reportedly worldwide martial ideal, defining a "good death" in terms of a battle-death, portrayed as a warrior's opportunity to enhance his and his community's reputation by gaining epic fame and thus remain in the minds of his people for ever. In addition, some warriors, like Pabuji, have been ascribed divine status after their self-sacrifice in battle. In this chapter, I will try to account for the differences and similarities between the selected poems, in particular the extent to which the poets attributed miraculous and/or divine qualities to the Rathaur hero. By studying the initial stages of Pabuji's deification in the medieval tradition as a "narrative structuring technique", I aim to answer questions regarding the textual differences contained in the medieval Pabuji tradition and whether these differences can be seen as part of a sequential narrative development as described in the introduction to this study. For this reason, the rationale and outcome of battle as portrayed by the poets will be considered in some detail below, particularly the connection between Pabuji's death and his elevation to (semi) divine status.

Subsequently, in the second part of this chapter (and in chapters 7, 8 and 9) I propose to study the socio-political status of the poets of the Pabuji tradition and the composition of the audiences for which the studied poems dedicated to Pabuji may have been composed. In doing so, I try to account for the concurrent portrayal of the hero as a warrior, a godlike being, an instrument of God, a deified forefather and a hero with semi-divine origins aspiring *avatār* status. Can one assume (even if one left aside the miraculous and devotional aspects of Pabuji's story for a moment) that there ever did exist a warrior chief named Pabuji Dhamdhal Rathaur who lived by his "wits and weapons" (as Smith put it)? By relating the imagery employed by the poets to what is known about Pabuji's world, i.e. the history of Rajput kingdom formation in Marwar, I propose to argue that the warrior Pabuji represents a clear historical type emblematic of the medieval history of Marwar.

### *Warrior-hero and hero-god*

For the purpose of this chapter, I define deification as the symbolic and/or literal ascription of magical or godly qualities to warrior-heroes after their deaths in battle and the worship of deceased warrior-heroes as manifestations of god and/or deified

forefathers. These aspects of deification will be highlighted in the following study of the way in which the poets accorded different roles to Pabuji, varying from martial hero and ascetic warrior, to warrior with supernatural qualities similar or equal to god, deified forefather, and a hero with semi-divine origins, the son of a warrior and a celestial nymph. It will become clear that the ascription of divine qualities to Pabuji was well under way in some but not all of the poems studied here. We can distinguish between poems that clearly point up Pabuji's divinity by linking death and deification, on the one hand, and compositions that emphasize Pabuji's martial role and do not refer to him in any way as a god, even after describing his death, on the other.

As noted in the previous chapter, the martial ideals voiced in *chamd* I were bolstered by means of religious imagery, especially the warlike role attributed to gods and goddesses, which could be read as a secondary theme of this composition. Neither Pabuji's death, nor his deification is mentioned. Instead, the poet presents the outcome of the battle between Pabuji and Jimda in terms of the victory of the former. As already noted in the summary of the poems' narrative content in chapter 3, my interpretation of the last verse-line of *chamd* I does not include Pabuji's death and subsequent ascent to heaven as a common theme of this composition. For, in view of the sentence's word order (*pābu jiṃdarāva suṃ...*), I take verse-line 58 to mean that it is Pabuji who eventually conquers Jimda: "Pabu 'causes' Jimda 'to be killed'".[278] Though the poet of this work does not clearly state the reason for the battle between Pabu and Jimda, it may even so be surmized that it was fought over cattle since the poem's "battle-plot" centers upon the retrieval of a stolen herd, probably belonging to Charani Deval. This can be understood from two references to Jimda's theft of cattle in verse-lines 14 and 15: firstly, in the account of Pabuji's attack on the (cattle) thief Jimda; and secondly, in the allusion to "a woman" who exhorts Pabuji to attack the Khici warrior, if Pabuji feels he is brave enough. As remarked in chapter 3, it appears probable that the woman mentioned stands for the Charani cattle keeper Deval who turns to Pabuji for help in retrieving her stolen cows.

*Chamd* II is largely martial in content for, unlike *chamd* I, it is largely devoid of manifest devotional overtones. The versification of battle is the work's main theme. Its poet dwells upon the preparations to and proceedings of battle in great detail and makes a special effort to evoke the sound of battle by means of alliterative structuring and onomatopoeia. This composition (again as compared with *chamd* I) evokes the battle movements of Rajput and Bhil warriors in some detail. The poet mentions the time of day when the armies move, the direction in which they are heading and the obstacles they meet on the way (cf. chapter 3). The reason for and

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[278] *Chamd* I (v. 58): "pābu jiṃdarāva suṃ āya parai(ṃ)". As also argued in chapter 3, a less evident construal of this sentence's meaning would result from reading "parai(ṃ)" as *pa-r-ai(ṃ)*, leading to the interpretation: "Jimda causes Pabu to be killed". In view of the verse-line's word-order (*pābu jiṃdarāva suṃ...*), I feel that the latter construal, though possible, is not appropriate.

outcome of war are clearly identifiable since the protagonists are shown to fight to "satisfy their longing for death" and to enhance their personal heroism by "adding to the fame of their swords". The poet makes apparent that the prime cause for war is the protection of cows and the outcome of battle is also clearly stated: Pabuji and his Bhil archers lay down their life. Pabuji's battle death is cause for the poet to praise Pabuji by comparing him to god or, depending on the reading of the last line, ascribing divine status to the hero:

101. praṇamaṃta meha pābu prasidha, (t)uṃ parasidha pramāṇa paha(ṃ)
101. "*Meha 'salutes' Pabuji('s) glory (saying): "You (have) glory like god"."*

If the above-quoted verse-line is in fact indicative of the Rathaur hero's elevation to divine status, then it seems likely that the poet by recounting Pabuji's deeds aimed to extol God's glory. As noted before, the above verse-line can be construed in several ways which do not all connote Pabuji's deification. Depending on whether one translates *pramāṇa* as "standard", "measure", "authority", or "evidence", the verse-line could also be construed as the poet's portrayal of Pabuji as the "proof of the existence of God", "comparable to God", or as "equal to God". In view of the fact that the poet does not at any other point in the poem ascribe divine or even magical characteristics to Pabuji but portrays him as a warrior throughout, I am inclined to think that the poet intended to portray Pabuji (and his battle death) as "evidence of the existence of God", in that God or divinity becomes manifest or incarnate via Pabuji's deeds. The latter interpretation does not necessarily suggest that the poet intended to portray Pabuji as a full incarnation of God but could, I think, also be understood as a way to depict Pabuji's sacrifice in battle as a glorious deed motivated by human qualities that are divine in their inspiration and are therefore ascribed divine glory by the poet.

If my interpretation of verse-line 101 holds true, the main purpose of *chamd* II, though nowhere clearly stated, was to set standards of heroism. A notable difference between this composition and *chamd* I is that the former not only presents Rajput warriors as paradigms of martial bravery, but Bhil archers as well. The warlike code of both groups of warriors is principally voiced through martial imagery while metaphors connoting religious symbolism are much less pronounced than in *chamd* I. An exception is formed by the portrayal of the hero's demise which is expressly described in terms of ascetic heroism, given that the poet of *chamd* II describes his death in terms of a libation and a renunciation of the world. He does not, however, make apparent whether Pabuji's oblation should be understood as a sacrifice to gods or goddesses, like in *chamd* I. Celestial beings do not figure in *chamd* II, apart from a cursory reference to yoginis who add to the sound of battle by playing the *damru* drum and one allusion to "the gods" in general. The warrior's demise could, even so, be understood as a sacrifice to the goddess. Especially the

last verse-lines of *chamd* II suggest such an interpretation for here it is described that Pabuji battles to satiate the hunger of carrion birds by making "meat" available to them. This "meat" (the warriors' corpses) is furthermore compared to juicy meatballs (*gudāla rasāla*), denoting '*piṇḍ*', or balls, usually of meal, that are offered to the spirits of ancestors. This imagery may be taken to symbolize a sacrifice to the Goddess: by feeding her creatures, the carrion eaters, one also placates the Goddess.

The narrative content and plots of the different episodes constituting *duha* I give voice to the ideal of sacrificial heroism and protection. The hero is in the first place praised as the protector of cattle, his family and retainers. He is glorified as a destroyer of enemies, a valorous warrior and powerful swordfighter with a fierce reputation among neighbouring kings and sultans. Besides, the Rathaur is also praised as a robber-prince who loots the treasury of Kuvera. The warlike similes of this text are distinctly less graphic and violent, and not nearly as evocative of the hue and cry of war as the imagery of the *chamd*s, despite the fact that Ladhraj does dwell upon the vagaries of battle. In *duha* I, the versification of war appears to be primarily intended to underline the strained familial and marital relations between its protagonists. And, while the battle over cattle is also central to this poem, the reasons for battle are nevertheless couched primarily in terms of hostile kinship ties and problematic marriage relations. The protagonists' actions, war deeds and Pabuji's death are mainly motivated by the longstanding family feuds, dowry negotiations and family honour. The cause of the bad blood between the Rajput protagonists can be traced to the fact that Buro killed Jimda's father and subsequently stole his cows. The Dhamdhal family hopes to atone for this offence by offering Pema in marriage to Jimda. But the latter is not so easily mollified. He demands Pabuji's black mare in dowry to atone for the murder of his father. Thus the enmity between the brotherhoods is intensified, as Pabuji does not accede to his demand. Likewise, Buro assails Jimda because he is under the impression that the latter killed his brother. Jimda, after killing Buro, fears Pabuji's revenge and therefore decides upon a defensive course: to attack the Rathaur hero.

The second battle between Pabuji and Jimda has a clear outcome. Pabuji eventually lays down his life in battle but not before his headless torso has given spirited battle. After Pabuji's torso has been vanquished by supernatural means, the hero is finally vanquished. Thus Pabuji establishes his rule on earth and attains his well-deserved place in Vishnu's heaven. The poet proclaims that Pabuji will gain the praise of mankind "for millions of years in all worlds" and he also declares that God's power has been revealed through Pabuji. This avowal may be read as indicative of the poet's belief that Pabuji was an instrument of god to see good done on earth or as the elevation of Pabuji to divine status. Along these lines, Pabuji's death in battle may be considered the motivating force of his elevation to semi-divine or divine status. There are several reasons to think that Ladhraj intended to deify Pabuji by ascribing divine qualities to him, even though the poet does not plainly state that Pabuji is indeed God or, for that matter, a deified forefather or godling.

The first reason is that Ladhraj appears to strike a devotional cord in verse-lines 5 to 7 when he praises Pabuji as "the lord of the earth" and introduces himself as Pabuji's warrior and servant in support of religion during Kaliyuga.[279] Second, the above quoted reference to Vishnu's heaven could be considered indicative of the narrative link that the poet may have meant to establish between Pabuji and Vishnu in an attempt at *avatār*-linkage by representing Pabuji as an aspect of (or the full embodiment of) Vishnu.[280] Likewise, the above reference to Pabuji's rule on earth can also be understood in the following ways: first, in epic terms of immortality (as when an epic hero lives on in the memory of mankind); second, in terms of the establishment of Pabuji's and, through him, Vishnu's religious sway on earth; third, the hero's semi-divine origin is clearly established in the birth episode, where he is portrayed as the son of a Rajput warrior and a heavenly nymph; and last, the most straightforward indication of the hero's exalted status (the portrayal of Pabuji's death in supernatural terms) directs us to see the warrior's divinization in terms of forefather worship. Keeping in mind Blackburn's description of the different stages of deification that a local warrior-hero may go through (cf. chapter 1), one could assess the different ways in which miraculous and divine characteristics have been ascribed to Pabuji in *duha* I as evidence for a linear development of Pabuji's deification from a role as deified forefather to attempts at *avatār*-linkage with Vishnu within this composition. However, as shall be argued below, rather than as successive stages of development, it is also possible to think of the different aspects of Pabuji's deification in *duha* I as representative of roles that could (and in *duha* I did) exist side-by-side.

Ladhraj's account of the fight put up by Pabuji's headless torso, and the manner in which it collapses after his foe throws an indigo-colored cloth over it, first and foremost, documents forefather worship as manifest in regional Jhumjhari tales.[281] Srivastava's (1997: 74) study of the Jhumjhari tradition makes apparent how the death of a warrior who comes to be revered as a Jumjhar is often portrayed in terms similar to that of *duha* I, especially as regards stories about headless torsos that can only be "pacified" when a mix of water and indigo is sprinkled over them after which the torsos cease to fight.[282] The fact that a warrior continues to fight even after losing his head is explained in miraculous terms: eyes may emerge on a warrior's

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[279] *Duha* I (v. 5-7): "bhala pābū bhūpāla, mala kahai kīrata muṇūṃ. pābū patiyāroha, kaliyuga māṃ thāro kamadha. sevaga juga sāroha, rākhai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta".

[280] See also verse-lines (516-526) of the concluding episode of *duha* I where the poet has Pabuji praise his nephew perhaps from the earlier-assigned place in Vishnu's heaven (chapter 3).

[281] Apart from local forefather worship and Vaishnavite influences, Shaktik influences are in evidence as well: the poet identifies the cowherd Deval as a goddess, even if only once, by referring to her as "Shakti Devalde". And the text refers to Nath religious practices, as can be read from the last episode, in which Jhararo is initiated into the Kanpathi Nath cult of guru Gorakhnath and thus obtains the courage required to beat Jimda (see chapter 9 for a description of contemporary Nath worship of Jhararo).

[282] A headless warrior can also be pacified when women, catching sight of the "bizarre" image that a fighting torso presents, cry out: "Lo! There comes a man without head", upon which the headless torso collapses (Srivastava 1997: 74).

chest, which enables the torso to continue fighting. Another common theme of Rajasthani *Jumjhar* poetry explains that a headless torso can "see" with his heart and is thus able to find his way in battle even after rather literally losing his head.[283]

Pabuji is not the only protagonist who has been accorded divine status in the composition under review. Ladhraj twice refers to Deval as Sakati (Shakti) in verse-lines 289 (*mo gāyāṃ marasīha, suṇi pābū kahatī sakati*) and 376 (*pābū iyuṃ prabhaṇaṃta, sāṃbhali devalade sakati*). And, in verse-line 228, Deval is referred to as "ā-iha", a title that can refer to a woman *and* a goddess (Lalas 1962-1988). In other instances, the poet also identifies Deval as a female Charan (v. 298, *cāraṇi*) and a member of the Charan community (v. 428, *gaṛhavāṛā*). Deval's elevation to the status of Shakti can only be read from *duha* I, since she has not been referred to in other poems or only in a rather vague manner. As I intend to document in chapter 9, Deval's role in Pabuji's tale as recounted in *duha* I relates the hero's worship to the cult of Charani goddesses of whom Deval is one.

A last instance of deification in *duha* I can be read from the ascription of a divine role to Pabuji's mare Kalvi. If my indefinite interpretation holds true, verse-line 212 has Buro explain to Jimda that he cannot have the mare in dowry because Pabuji is very attached to Kalvi since "(she) was (his) mother". From this I construe that Ladhraj meant to portray the mare as an incarnation of Shakti (in this instance Pabuji's nymph-mother), a representation reminiscent of the portrayal of the mare and Pabuji's mother as Shakti incarnate by contemporary Bhil Bhopas.

Battle is only a minor theme in the *parvaro*. Its poet employs mainly religious imagery, and centres his account on the divine help that Pabuji extended to his devotees, among others, the historical Rajput Gamga in warding of his enemies (v. 44-45).[284] It is not clear whether the poet here intended to describe the help extended by the warrior Pabuji or meant to evoke the divine intervention by the godling (*devatā*) Pabuji, or both. The martial title *bhālālā* ("Spearwielder") in verse-line 44 perhaps suggests that the poet intended to portray Pabuji as a warrior. However, in the subsequent verse-lines (46-47), Pabuji is identified as a "jujhāri" (Jumjhar), a deified forefather who immediately comes to the rescue on hearing a cry for help and who several times "wards off the armies, (which) 'attacked' the fort".[285] The latter identification perhaps suggests that the help extended by Pabuji in the previous verse-lines should also be thought of as supernatural help. However this may be, the

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[283] As remarked in the previous chapter, the decapitation of warriors in the Pabuji tradition is also reminiscent of sacrificial myths that represent classical motives like the ritual dismemberment of the first human being by the gods, the king as victim and recipient of ritual sacrifice, or the ritual sacrifice of heads as a way to obtain "a treasure or secret that is the essence of the universe" (Heesterman 1998: 16, 1985: 47). And the act of decapitation can also be compared to the way in which the demon Rahu brings about eclipses by capturing the sun and the moon in his mouth by comparing Pabuji's warriors to Rahu and their enemy's head to the sun and the moon, as has been documented by my (indefinite) reading of the imagery used in *chamd* II (chapter 3).

[284] *Parvaro* (44-45): "gaṃgai hu upagāra, bhālālai kīdho bhalau. muhiyaṛase khomāri, daulatīyo bhāgau durita".

[285] *Parvaro* (v. 46-47): "jhālā suṇi jujhāri, ajagai bi-ūpara karai. ukāre ke vāra, kaṭa kāṃ āgila koṭaṛo".

*parvaro* is first and foremost a devotional poem dedicated to the worship of the godling Pabuji, who intercedes from heaven on behalf of his devotees, and to express devotion to the Goddess.

The purpose attributed to this poem in the text has been expressed in terms of a prayer for protection and blessings. In verse-lines 60 and 63, the poet asks for the hero-god's protection "with folded hands" and prays that the Spear wielder and "Lord of the earth" Pabuji may stand by him in times of trouble.[286] The poet also makes clear that he recites the *parvaro* (and *duha* I) to please Pabuji's neighbour Devi and thus obtain her blessings.[287] The reward for his endeavour becomes clear form verse-lines 64-65 in which Pabuji himself is quoted as saying that the versification of his story by Ladhraj is to his liking and "anyone who reads out or hears this poem will be rewarded with virtuous qualities".[288] Indeed, so pleased is Pabuji with the poet's recitation that he gives him a coin (*dugāṃṇī*) in verse-line 53, an instance that illustrates yet another function of the recitation of poetry dedicated to Pabuji: material reward.

Pabuji's death in battle or ascent to heaven and his subsequent deification are manifestly absent from the *parvaro*. One may perhaps imagine that Pabuji's battle-death is implied since the *parvaro* represents the final outcome of deification: the worship of Pabuji as a deified warrior by his Bhil Bhopa priests and other devotees, including penitent Rajput warriors. In the *parvaro*, the praise of Pabuji as a god includes the description of his protective function in devotional terms, that is: the divine intervention extended by the god and Jumjhar Pabuji. The protection extended by Pabuji in these roles includes the retrieval of a stolen temple-drum, the punishment of wrong-doers, the cure of a Rajput's stomach-ache and the protection of women and trees. Pabuji's medieval Bhopas are, in addition, portrayed as the Dhol-playing priests of a Pabuji cult with temples in Kolu and Sojat.[289] The Bhopas are also presented as healers who, with Pabuji's help, cure people of their stomach ache through a *ūsīcoha* or *sīcau* ritual apparently involving the pouring of clean water to remove impurities and to cure curses.

The shorter compositions dedicated to Pabuji, the *git*s and *duha* II, are expressive of similar concerns as raised in the longer poems discussed above; the varied use of martial and religious imagery, the reasons and outcome of battle, and the different purposes attributed to the texts. In these poems, war is yet again an

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[286] *Parvaro* (v. 60): "e mosū upagāra, kījai kari joṛe kahu", and (v.63): ""bhālālā bhupāla, velā ati paṛīyai vikhama".

[287] *Parvaro* (v. 58-59): "pābū pāṛosīha, devī mīthai hātha de. japīyo tojasa jīha, kamadhaja yuṃ ladharāja kahi".

[288] *Parvaro* (v. 64-65): "kathī ladhā te krītā, mo pyārī pābū muṇai. paṛhai sūṇai supravīta, tiṇa upara karasūṃ turata".

[289] The medieval Pabuji temples are referred to in the *parvaro* as "sojhati maṛha", "kolu maṛhi" and "sojhita thāmpanā", probably referring to small temples or open-air platforms and covered altars like today's *thāmnā* or *manda* dedicated to Jhararo, which is an uncovered hearth on top of a hillock where Jhararo's hero stones are worshipped by different caste-groups from the surrounding villages.

important theme. The reasons for war are most commonly expressed in terms of the protection of cattle. But the accounts of Pabuji's death in battle, and subsequent elevation to divine status, vary considerably. Death and deification are, for example, not themes of *git* I and *duha* II for they have a predominantly martial content. And, though Bamkidas does conclude *git* V with Pabuji's battle-death, the hero's deification does not follow from this. Besides, though one could understand his deification from the allusion to Pabuji's demise in *git* II, when the poet refers to death as a sacrifice to the Goddess, this couplet does not straightforwardly refer to Pabuji's death and it is not clear whether or not the poet meant to imply it. In *git* III, plain references to Pabuji's death in battle lack but the poet's mention of Pabuji's temple in Kolu does suggest that he devoted his poem to the praise of the deified warrior Pabuji, perhaps relating the hero's deification to his death in battle.

Among the shorter compositions with predominantly martial imagery, death and deification are themes that are conspicuous by their absence in the manuscript and printed version of *git* I. The battle, in these songs, is set off by the hero's expedition to loot camels from "the South", not his protection of cattle. Both texts primarily honour the martial hero Pabuji as a valiant robber and warrior and, only in the second instance, as the protector of cattle. *Git* V is a work with a clearly martial theme as well. Bankidas commemorates the fact that Pabuji fought to safeguard the Charans' cows. To do this, he employs martial as well as marital similes, equating combat-rites with wedding-rituals. Thus the warrior-groom Pabuji dies in battle, after embracing the enemy, his bride. The hero's death is not followed by an account of his ascent to heaven or his elevation to divine status but, as already noted, in sacrificial terms by presenting Pabuji's battle as symbolic of the creative aspect of destruction, when the forces released in battle and in sexual union are symbolic of the replenishment of "the ever-vulnerable forces of life", and a sacrifice to the goddess.

The last primarily martial composition discussed here is *duha* II which celebrates war by praising Pabuji as a young horse-rider, still a boy, who protects cows. This boy is also remembered for "taming wild horses" and for his attacks on neighboring enemies, specifically the "Pathans". But the hero chiefly wages war to protect cows and thus earn fame and glory. In this composition, the poet underlines Pabuji's eminence by comparing "the battle of Kolu" to the battle of Kurukshetra, thus equating Marwar's hero and his warriors with the heroes of the *Mahābhārat*. The outcome of the battle of Kolu is expressed in the idiom of fame, protection and glory, not in terms of Pabuji's battle-death or deification.

The predominantly religious imagery of *git*s II and III allows us to speculate whether these two compositions were composed as devotional genres comparable, perhaps, to the *parvaro*. *Git* II was for the most part composed in praise of Pabuji's martial deeds: the hero is depicted as a dutiful Rathaur warrior who is true to his word and rescues stolen cows. The poet's intention to portray the Rathaur's battle death can only be surmized by reading between the lines. The poet describes battle

deaths, in general, as a form of devotion to the Goddess by relating how warriors satiate hungry Yoginis by filling their begging bowls, probably with the blood of warriors. This image seems evocative of the portrayal of sacrificial heroism comparable to similar imagery employed by the poets of the *chamd*s. The poet does straightforwardly define the reason for the battle by articulating Kshatriya *dharma* as the protection of cattle and by subsequently describing how Pabuji adhered to this duty by abandoning his bride at the wedding *maṃḍap* (pavilion) to rescue the cows stolen by Jimda. This *git* contains several other standard similes already known from our reading of the *chamd*s and *duha* I, in particular versifications of the clash of armies, warriors wielding weapons and the way in which headless warriors continue to fight.

The poet of *git* III, finally, leaves no doubt about the reason for battle: Pabuji fights to protect cows. The outcome of Pabuji's fight is less plainly stated given that it has only been described in general terms that battle-death is a warrior's "purpose on earth". After Pabuji's headless torso collapses, it goes up to the realm of the gods. From this description one could infer that Pabuji waged battle and died like a *Jumjhar* and subsequently achieved divinity, if that is how his ascent to the realm of the gods was meant to be interpreted. A more compelling argument for the depiction of Pabuji's deification in this poem can be found in the last verse-lines where the poet speaks of Pabuji's patronage of a temple in Kolu. On the basis of this, it is feasible to imagine that this *git*, like the *parvaro*, was composed to sing the fame of the resident deity of Kolu, Pabuji. If this reading holds true, *git* III can be thought of as a devotional poem with martial overtones that is illustrative of the final outcome of a process of deification.[290]

### *Pabuji's deification*

The above comparison of the texts illustrates the different degrees of narrative importance that the medieval poets attached to death and deification on different occasions. Different forms of deification are manifested as the worship of dead warrior-heroes, the attribution of (semi) divine status to warrior-heroes, indefinite but suggestive instances of *avatār*-linkage and the cultic practices of the Bhopas of medieval Pabuji temples. It has become evident that the ascription of divine qualities and/or divinity was well under way in some but not all of the compositions of the medieval Pabuji tradition. It is now also clear that Pabuji has been indeed worshipped as a Bhomio (Jumjhar) during medieval times. The poets portrayed the Rathaur as a martial hero and ascetic warrior (*chamd* I, *git*s I, II, IV), as a warrior similar or equal to god (*chamd* II), as a god *and* deified forefather (*duha* I, *parvaro*,

[290] As will be discussed in chapter 10, this composition can be compared with the *parvaro* in yet another way for it also establishes a link between Pabuji's cult and the worship of Devi. It appears that the poet also intended to relate Pabuji to Shiva for he wrote that Pabuji's patronage of the Kolu temple adds to the fame of Shiva's temple.

*Some of Pabuji's different iconographic forms at the Kolu temple.*

*git* III) and as a hero with semi-divine origins, the son of a warrior and a celestial nymph and, conceivably, as an *avatār* of Vishnu (*duha* I). If one wants to, these different roles can be seen as successive stages of the medieval process of deification that could be related to the theories of narrative developmental introduced in the first chapter. Correspondingly, Pabuji's deification, according to Blackburn's narrative pattern 1, begins with the adventures of the cow protector, tamer of wild horses and camel rustler (*git* I, *duha* II) and progresses via the narrative of the death of a local hero (*chamd* I, *git* IV) perhaps at village Kolu where Pabuji's temple now stands. In time, the local warrior-hero Pabuji came to be worshipped as a Jumjhar and god (*devatā*) and served by the Bhopa priests of Pabuji cults in Kolu and Sojat (*parvaro*, *git* III).

In particular the ways in which, and narrative moments at which, miraculous and divine characteristics have been ascribed to Pabuji in *duha* I suggest that Pabuji's deification progressed from his role as deified forefather to attempts at *avatār*-linkage with Vishnu within this composition. Keeping in mind Blackburn's idea that magic birth-stories are added to the story of a local hero in a later stage of a tradition, once it spreads geographically, the telling of Pabuji's magical birth-story at the beginning of *duha* I may be appraised as an indication of the medieval spread of Pabuji's story from Kolu village to a regional level, that is, the Jodhpur court where the poet Ladhraj was a scribe at the court of Jaswant Singh. At this stage, the addition of a supernatural birth motif to the hero's tale (*duha* I) may have resulted in his elevation to semi-divine status. In the *parvaro*, this elevation could be read from the poet's inner conflict (arising from divided loyalties to different gods) is perhaps suggestive of the need to establish Pabuji's divine standing vis-à-vis other gods. This need may have inspired the further narrative expansion of the hero's tale in later story-telling traditions eventually giving rise to his portrayal as the embodiment of Lakhsman in modern traditions. As I have noted earlier, the latter stage of deification cannot be read from the medieval tradition, at least not from the works studied by me. But the indeterminate narrative link between Pabuji and Vishnu made in *duha* I could be interpreted as the medieval beginnings of *avatār*-linkage in the present-day Pabuji tradition. This narrative process may also account for the concurrent portrayal of Charani Deval as a horse trader, cattle keeper and goddess in *duha* I, but cannot be read from the poems under review. The medieval sources also do not document the relation established by contemporary poets of the Pabuji tradition between the Bhil heroes, Jimda Khici and Pabuji's Sodhi bride, on the one hand, and the gods and heroes of classical heroic-epic traditions, on the other. *Avatār*-linkage permeates large sections of the narrative of modern-day versions of Pabuji's *paṛ*-epic in which Jimda is portrayed as an incarnation of the demon-king Ravana, while Ravana's sister Surapamkha is thought to be embodied by Pabuji's Sodhi bride. The Rathaur hero's Bhil companions Camda (Camdo), Salaji and Dhembo and the Rebari Harmal are moreover believed to be the personifications of, respectively, the goddesses

Caumunda, Visot, Bhaisand and/or the god Hanuman and his army of monkey warriors (cf. Smith 1991: 271-72 and Hiltebeitel 2001: 91-92).

Apart from the chronological problems which the preceding interpretation presents us with, the above description of the medieval tradition's narrative development also does not really help in accounting for all the differences in content, purpose and sectarian interpolations between the medieval poems dedicated to Pabuji. It now seems apparent that death and deification are not, as Blackburn holds, "twin-themes" that structure the content of all medieval poems especially not of the shorter, martial compositions or of poems with a markedly devotional tone. While the hero's death is evidently an important theme of the tradition in general this does not mean that his demise is a theme of all the poems under review. And, even if the poets do mention Pabuji's death, or imply it, this does not routinely lead to the elevation of the hero to (semi) divine status. The opposite is also true: the poets may attribute miraculous or godly qualities to the hero without explicitly speaking of his death. In addition, it proves difficult to explain with Blackburn's theory in hand how the poets came to portray Pabuji, at times in independent texts but as often in one and the same composition, as a martial *and* divine hero, a *Jumjhar and* a god *and* (possibly) an incarnation of Vishnu. The clearest example of this practice is found in *duha* I, a composition that appears to unite three different aspects of deification: the warrior's elevation to semi-divine status, his worship as a god and deified forefather and possible *avatār*-linkage. It is of course possible to reason that the occurrence of all these roles in one composition suggest that *duha* I represents the one but last stage of narrative development and deification (the straightforward identification of Pabuji as Lakhsman's *avatār*). Accordingly, the different roles ascribed to Pabuji could be considered to represent the different stages of deification as narrated in local multi-story traditions, which have been accumulated in *duha* I through the addition of different story-lines from different shorter compositions constituting the episodes that make up the narrative of *duha* I. This line of reasoning does not, however, help in understanding how poems with different narratives, plots, imagery, length and functions continued to exist side by side.

Also, though one could see "primary process material" (Hiltebeitel) at work in the poets' use of Shaktik or Shaivite similes and allusions to Vishnu, it nevertheless seems apparent that most story-lines, similes and different heroic and/or divine roles cannot be traced to "primary process material" from the *Rāmāyaṇ* or other classical sources alone. This is particularly true, I think, of local Jumjhar imagery and the poets' account of Bhil Bhopa ritual practices in Kolu and Sojat which cannot be explained in terms of the re-emplotment of classical narratives. Nor do the allusions to the hero-gods and battles of classical epic traditions amount to such a re-emplotment in the studied poems given that these allusions serve a different purpose, i.e. the glorification of the bravery and strength of Marwar's heroes by comparing them to classical examples like in *git* III, where the Rathaur hero's might

is compared to the strength of Arjun's bow and in *duha* II, where the battle of Kolu is equated with the battle of Kurukshetra from the *Mahābhārat*.

In addition, the use of Shaktik imagery in the *chamd*s, *duha* I, the *parvaro* and some of the *git*s, which is clearly reminiscent of tales about the Puranic goddess, her Yoginis and her battle with the buffalo-demon Mahisasur, appears to refer to other literary-historical (not necessarily classical) "process material" as well. Charani Deval's indeterminate role as a cattle herder in the *chamd*s and her identification as a horse trader, cattle keeper *and* Shakti or "a goddess" in *duha* I, links the Pabuji tradition to narratives that are part of the medieval and contemporary Charani Shakti tradition. This tradition (which today appears truly "Sanskritized" as Charani Shaktis are now most often presented as part or full incarnations of the classical goddesses Durga and Himglaj) is part of narrative traditions which can be traced till far outside the classical "Hindu belt" to the medieval worship of Charan goddesses in Makran and Baluchistan. As we shall see in the course of this study, the same can be said of the worship of Devi in the *chamd*s, *duha* I, the *parvaro* and some of the *git*s.

Let me conclude this part of the chapter by saying that Pabuji's deification cannot be explained in narrative terms as the result of "deification-by-death" since the ascription of (semi) divine characteristics does not seem to represent a sequential process that could be traced from stories about the death of local heroes to deified forefathers and, lastly, to epic tales about regional gods and supra-regional *avatār*-linkage. As a result, the relation between the narrative development of heroic-epic poetry and geographical expansion also appears to sum up a process that cannot be documented through medieval poetry, at least not in the case of the Pabuji tradition. Then how can I account for the concurrent portrayal of the hero as a warrior, a godlike being, an instrument of God, a *Jumjhar*, a warrior-hero with semi-divine origins or a local and regional godling whose devotees seek to attribute classical *avatār* status to him? I think that possible answers to questions about the medieval and contemporary process of the deification of Pabuji, Charani Deval and (in the contemporary tradition) the Bhil archers and the "demonization" of Jimda Khici and the Sodhi Rajputni are best found by studying the socio-political and religious history of the communities who transmit the stories and histories of the Bhil, Charan and Rajput protagonist of the Pabuji tradition.

As noted in chapter 1, and as I will briefly recuperate here, Blackburn and Hiltebeitel propose that South Asian patterns of storytelling can be understood by studying the social range of the audiences of heroic-epic traditions. Blackburn (1989: 1-32) connects traditions of "pre-epic" stories, songs and poems with local audiences with a limited social range and restricted thematic interests. Accordingly, changes in the narrative content, the length and function of a story are explained by looking at a story's social as well as geographical spread. Blackburn posits a direct relation between the spreading out of a local story to include sub-regional, regional and supra-regional audiences and changes in the narrative content and structure as

well as purpose of a story. For a story to become part of the narrative traditions of regional audiences, it is necessary for poets and performers to thus refurbish their narratives in order to hold the attention of their new, regional audiences made up of different social groups which do not necessarily take an interest in the purely local stories about kinship ties and deified dead. The mythification of local history to appeal to wider audiences is thought to be fully accomplished when the human origins of a local hero are altogether forgotten and historical warriors are exclusively thought of as the embodiment of classical epic heroes and/or gods. In short, Blackburn relates narrative expansion of heroic-epic story-telling traditions to the widening of a story's social base. Hiltebeitel (2001: 30), on the other hand, argues that stories about local heroes hold no interest for broad-based audiences that are not part of the hero's caste group and he proposes that stories can only spread to a larger geographical range and audience as long as the caste identity of a story's hero remains the same. Thus, stories which centre on the martial heroes and traditions of dominant landed castes can be transmitted from one region to another as long as the hero and the audiences of his story remain dominant landed castes.

In the second part of this chapter, I aim to address the social base of the Pabuji tradition further by documenting how the Rathaur hero's adventures represent concerns typical of early and late medieval periods of Marwar's history. The poets' portrayal of their Rajput, Bhil and Charan protagonists will be compared to what is known about Pabuji's world, in particular to what is known about the history of traditional occupational and caste identities of Rajput, Bhil and Charan communities and the way in which these identities were advanced during Rajput kingdom formation in Marwar. Next I intend to assess the social make-up of the audiences for which the studied poems may have been composed. I will consider questions about the portrayal of audiences, poets, priests and historical warriors by the poets of the medieval Pabuji tradition. First, I will ask whether (and if so, in what way) the imagery employed by the poets reflects historical concerns relating the poetic portrayal of Pabuji to what is known of Rajput typology and history in Marwar. Aspects of the history of Bhil warriors, robbers and priests will be sketched in chapter 7. The history of Charan poets and religious cults centred on Charani goddesses is the subject of chapter 8.

### *Early-medieval Rathaur history*

The well-documented typology of early-medieval Rajput warriors from different social backgrounds and their opposite, the "pure blooded" Rajput nobles of the late medieval period, is commonly made to coincide with two different stages of socio-political organization: the early and medieval period of "kingdom formation" in Rajasthan. In what follows an overview is offered of, first, the historical context of Pabuji's story in early-period Marwar from approximately the twelfth century onwards until the second half of the sixteenth century. Second, I will review the late

medieval period of Rajput history dated from approximately the sixteenth century onwards till the establishment of British administrative rule.

Early-medieval kingdom formation in the Thar desert can be seen as a period in Marwar's history when, from the twelfth century onwards, 'new' ruling elites started to establish their hold over the region and competed with each other for authority. It should be kept in mind, however, that the "newness" of the late-medieval elites who ascended to power was relative, as Thapar (1999: 115f) argues, noting that the conventional break between historical (classical or medieval) periods and, consequently, the distinctions made between old and new ruling elites does not do justice to the continuities between historical periods and the history of the peoples involved. The term medieval clearly proves problematic in this context, I do, even so, propose to continue its use for the sake of brevity and clarity. For the purpose of this study, Marwar's early medieval period is thought of as spanning the centuries between the tenth and the sixteenth century, while the late medieval period of Rajput history is dated from round about the beginning of the sixteenth century up to the institution of British colonial rule in Rajasthan.

From the twelfth century onwards, and perhaps even earlier, ruling elites employed socio-political and legendary traditions to claim ascendant martial identities. Available historical data for the most part consist of semi-historical, often legendary (and at times rather confusing) collections of facts and figures, names and different versions of stories, about which there seems to exist little consensus. As several scholars of Rajasthan's history have remarked, dates and names listed in early Rajput genealogies should be regarded with wariness.[291] I will not attempt to sort out all the differing views on the chronology of early Rathaur history. A somewhat coherent, chronological account of early-medieval Rathaur history is hampered by the on-going, till date open-ended discussions about the accuracy of the many different dates associated with this part of their past. More interesting for the purpose of this chapter is a study of the narrative content of the stories about early Rathaur rambles in the areas around Kher, Pali and Maheva which give an idea of the background against which much of the poetry dedicated to Pabuji may have been composed. The prose stories and poems about Pabuji's forefathers and their descendants have been recorded through regional chronicles and genealogical traditions, most importantly in the *Khyāt* and *Vigat* compiled by the seventeenth century chronicler Muhnta Nainsi, minister at the court of Jaswant Singh Rathaur of Marwar (1638-78).[292] Nainsi fulfilled the court position of "home minister" (*divāṃṇa*) from 1658 until 1666 (cf. Peabody 2001: 824). During this period he wrote the *Mārvāṛ rā parganāṃ rī vigat* ("Account of the Districts of Marwar"),

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[291] For a discussion of the language of Rajasthani prose chronicles and the value of the contained data for historical research, see: Smith (1991: 77), Henige (1974: *passim*), Peabody (2001: *passim*), Saran (1978: 1-13), (Tessitori 1921: *passim*), Ziegler (1976a: 219-250).

[292] A similar compilation of facts and fictions about Rathaur history, based on nineteenth -century written and oral sources, can be read from Tod's account of the history of Marwar and Bikaner (Tod 1972 II: 1-167).

edited and published by the prolific scholar Narayansimh Bhati (1968, 1969 and 1974). Nainsi' *khyāt*, a compilation of historical prose tales and poetry texts, was edited by Badriprasad Sakariya (1960, 1984, 1993, 1994) and published under the title *Muṃhatā Naiṇasī rī khyāt*.[293]

The beginning of Rathaur history is usually dated to the twelfth-century, when Rao Siha Rathaur is thought to have set foot in Marwar.[294] It is thought that Siha fled to the region after Muhammad Ghori sacked his father's capital, Kannauj (Reu 1938: 18, 45, Tod 1972 II: 9f). Some versions of Siha's story connect him to the Brahmin inhabitants of Pali (south of Jodhpur). It is said that Siha came to the Pallival Brahmin's rescue when they were under attack from Mer "camel robbers", probably tribesmen ruled by Kanha Mer, lord of part of the Pali region. The chronicler Nainsi, whose patron was a Rathaur, describes how Siha fought the Mer overlords of the Pali Brahmins and was subsequently enlisted by the villagers to protect them against further incursions (N. S. Bhati 1968: 9f). D. Sharma (1966: 691f) holds that Siha died in 1273 when he "probably fell fighting while trying to protect [cows]". But Tod (1972 II: 10f) reports that Siha murdered the Pallival Brahmins in order to appropriate their cattle and land. The different versions of stories about Siha's life and his relations with the Pallival Brahmins continue to be the subject of debates centring on the question whether Siha protected, robbed or murdered the Brahmin inhabitants of Pali. Unsurprisingly, chroniclers and historians partial towards the Rathaur lineage interpret the episode in a positive light: Siha maintained law and order in Pali (M. Rathaur 2001: 39, Reu 1938: 135). Stories about Siha's massacre of the Pali Brahmins were noted down by Tod, the 'British Bard' of Sisodiya rule in Mewar, who perhaps mirrored the local dislike for the Rathaur of Marwar after the ruling Sisodiya family of Mewar, said to be the twelfth-century landholders of Pali, were ousted by Siha (Tod 1972 II: 10, G.D. Sharma 1977: 1f). This can also be read from Tod's (1972 II: 11) opinion of Siha's son Asthan who, writes Tod, conquered Kher "by the same species of treachery by which his father attained Pali" (cf. Tambs-Lyche 1997: 63).

Consequently, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the period when Pabuji is thought to have lived, Rathaur kingdom formation got under way in

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[293] Other medieval chronicles and genealogies used for my study of medieval Rathaur history include: the unpublished (RORI) Mss. 9720(11) *vīraṃde rī bāta*, 15649 (1) *raṭhauṛa meṃ khaṃpa dhāṃdhala rī khyāta,* 22554(11) *raṭhauṛaṃ rī pattāvalī rī vā khyāta*, 26110(2) *jodhpura ke rājāoṃ kī vaṃśavalī* and published sources like the *Jodhpur hukumat rī bahī* edited by S. Chandra, S. R. Singh and G.D. Sharma (1976) and the *Rāṭhauḍ vaṃś rī vigat evaṃ rāṭhauḍāṃ rī vaṃśāvalī* edited by Phatesingh (1997). I also consulted genealogies of the Khici warriors as recorded by the *Khīcī vaṃś prakāś*, edited by Khici and Khici (1994) and a Bhati Rajput genealogy published by Hukam Singh Bhati (no date) and titled: *Yaduvaṃś bhāṭiyoṃ kī vaṃśāvalī aur unakā gaurav*.

[294] Siha (also spelled Seeha, Sia or Sheoji), is thought to have been the son of the twelfth-century Gahadvala ruler of Kanauj, Jayachamdra, and the first Rathaur (Rasthrakuta Gahadvala) to establish himself in Marwar, in Kher, near present-day Jodhpur (M. H. Singh 2000: 27, Sakariya 1984: 166-175, Tessitori 1921: 266, 1919a: 31, Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 106). D. Sharma (1966: 687f, 756), on the other hand, postulates that Siha was the son of Setakamvar, a Rasthrakuta of Gadhipur.

Marwar, but on a rather modest scale. Siha's son Asthan (c. 1273-1291), generally held to be Pabuji's grandfather, conquered villages around Pali and Kher in southern Marwar, wresting these areas from the Dadhi underlings of Gohil or Solanki Rajput lineages (N. Bhati 1968: 12, Sakariya 1984: 279). Asthan's death has been dated to circa 1290 and is thought to have occurred during a battle with Jalaluddin Khilji who, on his way to attack Gujarat, passed through Pali and saw chance to abduct some of the town's women. The partly legendary nature of this story can be read from the description of Asthan's death who, on confronting the Sultanat forces, died in battle together with his "140 warriors" (M. Rathaur 2001: 39).[295] Here, as in other poems, 140 should probably be read as a conventional, symbolic number, denoting "many" warriors, a reading that is also born out by references to Pabuji's "sātavīsai sura" (7 times 20 heroes), that is Pabuji's 140 Bhil warriors (*chamd* II, v. 46). After Asthan's demise, his eldest son, Rao Dhuhad (also spelled Duhur, Dhuhad, Dhuhar), is thought to have ascended the throne of Kher from which he ruled from c.1292-1309 (D. Sharma 1966: 691, 756). Dhuhad is credited with further advancing Rathaur rule over Kher by successfully challenging the competing claims of Chauhan rulers. Dhuhad, who was Pabuji's paternal uncle, is believed to have died a violent death circa 1309 (Sakariya 1993: 29). His death is rather similar to Pabuji's demise, for we read that Dhuhad was killed in the course of pursuing cattle rustlers who had stolen cows from his subjects in Siwana.[296]

In the fourteenth century, Dhuhad's eldest son Raipal ruled over Kher, extending his sway up to Barmer and Kundal in western Rajasthan (D. Sharma 1966: 691). About Dhuhad's younger brother, Pabuji's father, the fourteenth-century warrior Dhamdhal, no tales featuring the protection or robbery of cattle are known to me.[297] One version of his life, noted down by Nainsi, depicts Dhamdhal as a small-time Rajput from Mahevo[298] who managed to extent the sway of his lineage over Kolu by ousting a regional chief named Pamo Goramdhar (Sakariya 1993: 58, N.S. Bhati 1993: 29). It has, however, also been recorded that Dhamdhal ousted the Chauhan chief of the region (Tessitori 1916: 167f). Dhamdhal's main claim to fame

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[295] The confusion over the date of Asthan's death also seems to indicate the part legendary character of this tale. For, if Asthan did die in 1292, it is not clear which Khilji campaign above version of his tale intended to commemorate. In all likelihood, written and oral records of the event became more scant in succeeding centuries and in later versions of the story and, as a result, susceptible to factual errors. It is perhaps because of this, that Asthan's death came to converge with references to the attack on Gujarat in 1299 led by the Khilji army generals Ulugh and Nusral Khan, who apparently marched from Sindh to Gujarat, via Jaisalmer and Chittor, a route which, one may imagine, could have taken them through Pali (Chamdra 1999: 87-88). D. Sharma (1966: 691) writes: "The year of Asthan's death is uncertain".

[296] Yet other versions of this story (locating Dhuhad's death at Siwana or Nagana) narrate how the warrior died fighting after joining the Songira Rajput Satal Soma's battle against Alauddin Khilji (1296-1316) (Chamdra 1999: 148).

[297] Shekavat (1968: 212) notes that Pabuji was born in the thirteenth century and died in Samvat 1313 (1256 CE). This suggests that Dhamdhal may have lived in the thirtheenth century.

[298] Mahevo, Smith (1991: 493) writes, may have been a village or town in medieval Pathan or Gujarat.

lies in being the father of Pabuji and Buro.[299] Marwar's chronicles and genealogies provide rather detailed, perhaps semi-historical, information about Pabuji's parentage, all aiming to document that he is Dhamdhal's son.[300] Dhamdhal himself is generally listed as the sixth of Asthan's sons, born from one of his wives, Uchhrandge, mother of Asthan's eldest son Dhudah and his younger brother Chachaga. Dhamdhal died an apparently natural, to Rajput-standards probably unspectacular, death. All that Ladhraj has to say about the event is: "Seeing (that) 'his time' had come, King Dhamdhal dies".[301]

*Dhamdhal warriors' hero stones at Kher (Keru).*

After his father's demise, Dhamdhal's eldest son Buro ascends the Kolu throne while his younger half-brother Pabuji set out on his horse "travelling to unknown regions" to become a powerful swordfighter with a fierce reputation among neighbouring kings and sultans (*duha* I, v. 61-73). In Nainsi's seventeenth-century prose rendition of the story, we read that Pabuji was an approximately five-year old boy at the time of Dhamdhal's demise, a boy, moreover, with magical qualities. Nainsi depicts Pabuji as a young hunter who rode a she-camel and performed miracles

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[299] Tessitori noted (1916: 109) that an early twentieth-century oral tradition about Dhamdhal records that Dhamdhal had 15 sons, including Buro, the second son, and Pabuji, the thirteenth son.

[300] (RORI) Ms. 15649 (1) *raṭhauṛa meṃ khaṃpa dhāṃdhala rī khyāta* (3-4), Khici and Khici (1994: 51), Nizami and Kheechi (1990: 47), Phatesingh (1997: 7), M. Rathaur (2001: 40). The contemporary tradition contains several versions of Pabuji's birth, dating it to the thirteenth century and locating his birth in Jhunanagar (district Barmer) or in Kolu (cf. M. Rathaur 2001: 41). Smith (1991: 75) notes that Pabuji is at times also portrayed as Asthan's son in some contemporary, oral versions of his story. Medieval sources document similar views, listing Dhamdhal as Asthan's eldest son (Tessitori 1919a: 31) or the the eighth son of Asot'hama (Asthan) (Tod 1972 II: 11).

[301] *Duha* I (v. 58): "pekhe dina pugeha, rāva dhāṃdhala cisaraṃmīyo".

(Sakariya 1993: 59). In the centuries following the death of Dhamdhal's two sons at the hands of Jimda Khici, the history of the Rathaur sub-clan of Dhamdhal warriors received little attention from the region's chroniclers, except for the history of Viramde, son of the Dhamdhal Rathaur Dhuhad, the sixteenth-century ruler of Merta, who fought a long drawn out war with neighbouring Rathaur ruler Maldev (G.D. Sharma 1977: 8f). And Nizami and Kheechi's (1990: 368) *Survey of Kheechi-Chauhan History* documents that the seventeenth-century Dhamdhal Rathaur and Khici clans were described as "khavās-pāsabān" or personal attendants and arms bearers of the king who were seated behind the throne of the Jodhpur ruler during formal court sessions.[302] However, late-medieval events in the erstwhile Dhamdhal "realm" Kolu appear to have gone largely unrecorded; I only know of Tessitori's comment (1916: 109) about a seventeenth century Marwari chronicle that ostensibly documents the bequest of Kolu to Pabuji's Bhopas by the sixteenth-century Rathaur ruler Gamga.

Though landholders, farmers and priests claiming Dhamdhal Rathaur ancestry continue to live in Kolu and Kher till today, the ruling ambitions of the Dhamdhal branch of Rathaur warriors were apparently nipped in the bud after Jimda killed Pabuji and Buro.[303] The fate of Dhamdhal's sons and grandsons apparently did nothing to change the lineage's decline in later times if it is true, as Tessitori (1919a: 38f) notes, that Dhamdhal's eldest son Nabhala died childless while Dhamdhal's four grandsons were slain.[304] Other descendants of the Rathaur patriarch Asthan did expand Rathaur rule over Marwar, furthering the brotherhood's regional prominence, notably during the reign of Rao Chumda (c. 1383 to 1423), Rao Satta (c. 1419-28) and Rao Rinmall (c. 1428-1438), who took advantage of the weakening Tughluq state. In the last decade of the fourteenth century, Rathaur armies invaded the Sambhar, Nagaur and Ajmer territories of Delhi Sultanate underlords (Chamdra 1997: 221, G.D. Sharma 1977: 4).

During the early phase of kingdom formation in Marwar, Rathaur claims to regional supremacy were time and again met by similar ambitions nurtured by "semi-independent" landholders belonging to several Rathaur and other Rajput brotherhoods. In the period between the twelfth and the fifteenth century, the main challengers to Rathaur power included Rathaur sub-clans like the Mertiya Rathaur from Merta as well as Delhi Sultanat subsidiaries, Mer overlords, and neighbouring Rajput rulers of Bhati, Chauhan, Gaur, Khici and Sodha descent. This period of

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[302] Nizami and Kheechi (1990: 368f) trace this convention to [1] Mughal ceremonial practices *and* [2] to the *Mahābhārat*'s description of armed bodyguard of "trusted heroes, patriotic and devoted to the master", who were seated behind the king. The Kheechis are, in addition, said to have been awarded the privilege of being the keeper of the king's personal weapons during Gaj Singh's rule over Jodhpur (c. 1619-38).

[303] Tessitori (1916: 109) records how in the seventeenth century 210 Thori are thought to have lived in Kolu alongside 300 "Muhammadans", 210 Dhedha, 130 Bania and 20 Rajput.

[304] The landlord of present-day Keru (Kher), who inhabits a mansion there, claims Dhamdhal descent, perhaps traceable to Pabuji's nephew and Dhuhad's eldest son, Raipal. Regrettably, the landlord proved rather reticent about his ancestry, the only time that I met him.

Rathaur history has been documented by Marwar's poets and chroniclers by means of descriptions of full-size battles and minor skirmishes fought either in efforts to expand Rathaur rule at the expense of rival claimants or to defend the brotherhood's territories against incursions.[305]

### *Narrative concerns*

The Pabuji tradition has a number of narrative features in common with early Rathaur historiography. It has become clear that Pabuji's adventures as read from our poetic sources represent often reiterated themes which are also part of the region's prose chronicles. Pabuji's ancestors have been portrayed, like Pabuji, as small-time warriors who spent much of their lives squabbling over cattle, including cows, camels and horses. Several of Pabuji's warrior forefathers were chieftains of parts of fourteenth-century Marwar. They are thought to have died, like Pabuji, during battles while protecting cattle, women and, in a few instances, land. Likewise, Pabuji's probable contemporaries, like his uncle Rao Dhuhad, is also remembered for dying in the course of pursuing cattle rustlers (in one version of his story). But, unlike Pabuji, not one of his forefathers has, as far as I can see, been elevated to semi-divine or divine status. This seems all the more remarkable since the above narrative concerns of the Pabuji tradition are also a common feature of stories about other Rajput heroes and folk gods like Devanarayan, Tejaji and Vachhada Dada. The latter's story repeats many of the narrative concerns of early Rathaur history. In one version of his story, Vachhada Dada is remembered (akin to Bamkidas portrayal of Pabuji in *git* V) as a youthful Rajput bridegroom who, while proceeding towards his bride's house, abandons his *barāt* on hearing shepherds call for help to rescue their cattle from robbers (Mankad 1956: 60). Vachhada Dada dies in the ensuing battle. His story continues with a repetition of the warrior's heroic feat seven times in seven successive lives until he is elevated to the rank of demi-god by the sun-god.[306]

The fact that divinity was accorded to several Rajput heroes who met a violent end but not to early Rathaur warriors like Dhuhad, who died the same way, further underlines that the above described "deification-by-death" does not help in explaining all aspects of Pabuji's deification. Nor does it help in comprehending why other Rathaur heroes have not been partly or wholly deified even though their stories closely resemble the nucleus of the stories (i.e. their death in a battle over cattle) told about Pabuji and other Rajput folk gods. As I hope to show in the next chapter, the answer to this problem can be found by further studying the historical

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[305] See (*passim*): N.S. Bhati (1968, 1969), Sakariya (1960, 1984, 1993, 1994) and Ziegler (1976a, 1976b, 1994, 1998).

[306] Today, Vachhada Dada is worshipped by Rebari, Charan, Ahir and other pastoral-nomadic peoples as a protective deity who helps in retrieving lost buffalos.

context of Pabuji's story and in particular the narrative and historical part accorded to his Bhil companions.

Early Rathaur history can be summed up as recurring stories about fights over the ownership of cattle, in particular cows, camels and horses.[307] The above summary of this history suggests that *if* Pabuji indeed lived in the beginning of the fourteenth century, he hailed from a relatively long line of warriors and cattle protectors or cattle rustlers. Dhamdhal Rathaur history thus allows us to think of Pabuji and his forefathers as typical early-medieval warriors or Rajput, an epithet for warriors that is thought to have covered the segmented identity of many kinds of men, especially young men (*javān*) who combined agricultural occupations with pastoral-nomadic migrations, trade and military undertakings. Kolff (1990: *passim*) describes this type of early Rajputhood as a designation upon which a wide range of people, including migrant labourers, armed peasants, pastoral-nomadic and tribal groups prided themselves. The title Rajput used to include as diverse trades and professions as "horse-soldier", "trooper" or "headman of a village". These geographically and socially mobile young men who travelled north-western India in search of employment formed an "open status group" of warriors on taking service in war bands and regional armies and claimed the rank of Rajput and, in early medieval Marwar, could also claim the title of Afghan (Pathan). These regional soldiering traditions gave rise to a medieval "military labour market" in Hindustan (Kolff 1990: 39, 71-75) and, I would like to suggest, in north-western Rajput kingdoms.

It is against this background, i.e. the history of a parallel diffusion of military labour and the transmission of regional martial oral epics in Hindustan and north-western regions, that the origin and spread of story traditions like the present-day oral epic of Pabuji have been positioned by Hiltebeitel (2001: 463, 492), who describes Pabuji's story as a recollection of the rivalries between imperial overlords and "little kings". In the course of these rivalries, a "little rajputization process" was set in motion and folk traditions became "Rajputized" when people gave new meaning to the Sanskrit epics (Hiltebeitel 2001: 509). In the "hinterland kingdoms" of "little Rajputs" this process is thought to have been inspired by similarities between the epics (specially the *Mahābhārat*'s) allusions to "Vedic Vratya war bands and the lifestyles of earlier medieval "low status Rajputs"" (Hitlebeitel 2001: 441). Hiltebeitel sees many similarities between the lives of epic Kshatriya warriors and antagonistic Vratya warrior bands of the Vedic past, on the one hand, and the lives of medieval "little Rajputs" like Pabuji, on the other.

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[307] Ziegler (1998: 247) notes that instances of horse theft and death resulted from disputes over the ownership of horses can be traced to the 16th century in Marwar. However, Chamdra's (1999: 30) description of horse trade in India and Central Asian suggests that a lively trade has been conducted between these regions since "ancient times". Historical descriptions of the character and martial use of Kathiawari and Marwari horse breeds suggest the same (Hendricks 1995: 251-253, 279-281).

*Late-medieval Rathaur history*

Before further discussing "little rajputization", let me briefly recapitulate what is known about late-medieval Rajput martial culture and kingdom formation in Marwar. The late-medieval phase of Rathaur socio-political organisation is thought to have originated in the second half of the fifteenth century, when the Rathaur ruler Jodha Rinmalot established a first foothold in Marwar, about three centuries after Rao Siha came to the region. The right to precedence among Rathaur sub-clans as advanced by Jodha's *khamph* is generally traced to this period in Rathaur kingdom formation, since it is thought that Jodha considerably extended the sway of the Rathaur lineage over large parts of the region thus consolidating Rathaur rule in Marwar towards the end of the fifteenth century. And it was Jodha who chose present-day Jodhpur as the site of a new Rathaur capital around 1455 (Tessitory 1919a: 69).

From the sixteenth century onwards, the history of Rathaur rule in Marwar, especially their political and marital relations with Mughal overlords, has been well documented. Like in the previous centuries, the people of sixteenth-century Marwar witnessed unremitting warfare. Detailed studies record the long-drawn-out struggles between Rathaur rulers and Mughal subsidiaries based in Jodhpur, on the one hand, and competing Rajput brotherhoods in adjoining areas, on the other.[308] I will not dwell upon these particulars of Marwar's warlike history here but limit myself to a review of those aspects of late-medieval Rathaur history that have some bearing on the historical context against which the Pabuji tradition may have developed. For this reason, I will outline the life and times of late-medieval rulers who are thought to have patronized the composers or scribes of some of the medieval poems dedicated to Pabuji: [1] Rao Maldev (Maldeo) who ruled from circa 1532-1562 and who is thought to have been the patron of Vithu Meha; [2] Rao Jaswant Singh, Ladhraj's professed patron, who ruled Marwar from 1638 to 1678; and [3] Raja Man Singh (1803-1843), the recognized benefactor of Jodhpur's court poet Asiya Bamkidas (1781-1833).

Maldev, the son of Rao Gamga, is thought to have ascended the Jodhpur throne in the early 1530s. He is credited with attempts to further increase the prominence of the Rathaur ruling lineage in Marwar in an era when questions of primogeniture had become a matter of fierce struggle among the different Rathaur brotherhoods (N.S. Bhati 1974: 10-13). The fact that many major and minor Rathaur chieftains gained an important say in matters of ascendancy and alliance politics based on marriages between brotherhoods is seen as one of the prime causes of

[308] For a study of late-medieval Rajput politics in Marwar see (*passim*): Bhadra (1998), N.S. Bhati (1991), S. Chamdra (1999); G.D. Sharma (1976), Chattopadhyaya (1994, 1997); Peabody (2001), Saran (1978), Saxena (1989), D. Sharma (1968, 1990), M. Sharma (1977); V. Sharma (2000); D. Singh (1990), Stern (1991) and Ziegler (1976a, 1976b, 1994, 1998). See also Tod (1972 II : 29-167).

many of the late-medieval allegiance wars between Rajput clans and sub-clans.[309] In addition to internal brotherhood struggles, many other causes for strife existed in early sixteenth-century Marwar, like the conflicts between local chiefs of neighbouring Rajput brotherhoods and battles that ensued after Mughal incursions into Rajput desert realms. As a result, the territory of the Rathaur under Rao Gamga (c. 1483-1531), Maldev's father, had become limited to a few Jodhpur districts and some surrounding areas.[310] In the bordering districts which formerly fell under the Jodhpur throne (like Pokaran, Phalodi, Merta and Siwana) semi-independent Rathaur chiefs claimed the upper hand (G.D. Sharma 1977: 9). As noted just now, Maldev tried to re-establish the prominence of his lineage, Jodha's direct descendants, in Marwar by means of long drawn out struggles with "unruly" Rathaur sub-clans, in particular those of neighbouring Merta, ruled by Viramde, son of the Dhamdhal Rathaur Dhuhad (G.D. Sharma 1977: 8f). In the 1540s, Maldev eventually suffered defeat at the hands of Viramde who had sought and obtained military aid from Sher Shah Sur.[311] Though Maldev did continue to rule from Jodhpur after this defeat, the size of his realm and his political power had been rather diminished.[312] Upon Maldev's death, Mughal underlords expanded their political influence in Marwar to such a degree that matters of succession came to be wholly decided by Mughal overlords from the 1560s onwards.[313]

In the second half of the sixteenth century, when Ladhraj is thought to have composed *duha* I, Mughal imperial rulers and their Rathaur underlords established further military and administrative rule in Marwar. This was the time when Rajput identity came to reflect the various ways in which alliances between Rajput subsidiaries and Mughal overlords took shape. As regional power equations came to be defined in Mughal terms of military service and loyalty based on landed rights,

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[309] Tod (1972 II: 25) notes a portrayal of the relations between nineteenth-century ruling houses and "junior branches", quoting the latter as saying: "When our services are acceptable, then he [the ruler] is our lord, when not, we are again his brothers and kin, claimants, and laying claim to the land".

[310] The cause of the annexation wars in Marwar during Maldev's time is commonly traced to his father's rule, when Rao Ganga managed to ascend the Jodhpur throne instead of his elder brother Vikram. This arrangement led to several wars between Ganga and Vikram until the former triumphed and annexed Sojat (G.D. Sharma 1977: 10, Tod 1972 II: 19-23).

[311] G.D. Sharma (1977: 10) dates Maldev's defeat at the hands of Viramde to the battle of Sumel in 1543.

[312] G.D. Sharma (1977: 10-12) lists eastern districts like Sambhar, Didwana, Lalsot, Chatsu, and Mewat as parts of the Rathaur realm lost by Maldev to competing chieftains and Mughal rulers. However, his rule was still considerable, judging from the fact that, from his re-occupation of Jodhpur (1545) till his death in 1562, he claimed control over Jodhpur, Sojat, Jaitaran, Phalodi and Pokaran (near Kolu), Siwana, Jalor, Sanchor and Merta and is known to have occupied Barmer and Kotada in the far-west, and to have made incursions into the territory of Jaisalmeri rulers (cf. N.S. Bhati 1974: 43-4).

[313] The territory of the Mertiya Rathaur had already been divided by Akbar among Viramde's sons, while a portion of the realm came to be administrated by Akbar's imperial servants. In 1574, after Maldev's third son, Candrasen, did not manage to withstand the advance of Mughal troops, Akbar granted Jodhpur to Raja Rai Singh of Bikaner. In time, the power struggles among Maldev's relatives were resolved by Akbar, whose army occupied Jodhpur in 1563, after first invading the territories of Rathaur subsidiaries in Jaitaran and Merta. According to G.D. Sharma (1977: 23, n.92), Jodhpur chronicles date this event to 1565 while Mughal sources date it to 1563 (G.D. Sharma endorses the last mentioned date).

the identity of Rajput landed elites and their identification with and loyalty towards different Mughal rulers led to the re-definition of diverse regional soldierly traditions. This seems to have been the case in particular during the reign of Ladhraj's patron, Jaswant Singh (ruled from 1638 to 1678). His rule is commonly described as a time when Rajput-Mughal relations began to be thought of in terms of incorporation: the merging of Rajput military and administrative culture with Mughal standards. Jaswant, a subsidiary of the Mughal rulers Shahjahan and Aurangzeb, is credited with reorganising Marwar's revenue system, thus far been based on a system of *paṭṭā*s (land grants or leases) in lieu of military services by developing a system founded on Mughal *jāgīr*s (land stipends).[314] Jaswant is thought to have aimed at a redefinition of the power relations between Rathaur royalty and their Marwar subjects. Relations which were traditionally defined in terms of loyalty, patronage and kinship alliances are thought to have been transformed into a ruler-client relationship based on service and exchange. It is, in this regard, good to note, as Ziegler (1998: 259) does, that patron-client relations based on land tenure did exist before Mughal incursions into Marwar. However, loyalty defined in terms of service and exchange apparently only became a customary under Jaswant (cf. G.D. Sharma 1977: 12f).

The wide-ranging impact of Mughal policies on the political and social life of medieval Marwar is a common theme of studies about late-medieval conditions.[315] The notion that the majority of Marwar's Rajput and non-Rajput people came into contact with Mughals only intermittently has been considered less often. Ziegler (1998: 243f) argues that there were considerable variations in relations between successive Mughal and Rathaur office holders. Thus, at the same time as Rajput-Mughal culture flourished at central courts, the majority of Rajput warriors, especially those sub-clans settled in outlying realms (like in the desert-districts of Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner) remained far removed from imperial Mughal rule or their subsidiaries who ruled from Jodhpur. A case in point is the unyielding hold of Rathaur sub-clans over far-western Marwar. In these out-of-the-way, difficult to reach desert territories, minor chieftains continued to hold sway who long refused to submit to the authority of the Jodhpur ruler (Ziegler 1998: *passim*). In these desert realms, hostilities and feuds between minor and major Rathaur brotherhoods and

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[314] According to G.N. Sharma (1990: 35, 42, 173), in the eighteenth century, a *paṭṭā* was a written record on the basis of which a holder was entitled to collect land revenue and other taxes from lands earmarked by Rajput rulers. This system seems to have existed in rudimentary form from the time of Rao Maldev onwards, who combined *paṭṭā* grants with older *bhaibāṃdh chakkar* or assignments based on services lasted to him by men from his brotherhood (*bhaibāṃdh*). During the eighteenth century, most Rathaur rulers continued to bestow *paṭṭā*s, granting them against military as well as civil services but the basis of these grants was the Mughal *jāgīr* sytem.

[315] See, for example, Streusand (2001: 362f): "Akbar now dominated Hindustan (…) His relationships with rulers of Amber, Jodhpur, Bikanir, and Jaisalmer eliminated any threat from them and gave him a cut of their revenue and access to their military resources". Compare Richards (1998: 157f).

their retainers continued unabated. In addition, local and regional power struggles ensued among Rathaur and Bhati as well as minor Mughal claimants to revenue.

The assertions of authority and pre-eminence advanced by the Rathaur rulers of central Marwar continued to be challenged by their "subjects" in the outlying districts. This state of affairs appears to have lasted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when successive Mughal rulers tried to grant Pokaran and Phalodi districts to the then rulers of Marwar, Mota Raja Udai Singh and Gaj Singh. However, neither the Mughals nor their Rathaur underlords appear to have been able to establish long-term factual authority over the tracts since they were alternately claimed and re-claimed by rival Rathaur and by Jaisalmer's Bhati rulers. The same can be said of Mota Raja Udai Singh's attempts to make real his appointment as *jāgīrdār* of Pokaran by Akbar given that he never did get a proper hold over the area since his claims continued to be contested by Bhati rulers (Ziegler 1998: 257). And Raja Gaj Singh, who had been granted Phalodi by Akbar, never managed to wholly assert his authority in this region either. Nor was he able to acquire full possession of land granted to him in Phalodi, Merto, Sivano, Jalor, and Samcor at different times during the period between 1620 and 1626 (Ziegler 1998: 258). In sum, the Rathaur subsidiaries of the Mughals did not manage to decisively subjugate competing Rathaur claimants to power, especially not in the far western areas of Marwar like Barmer, but also not in Pokaran and Phalodi, the two cities between which Pabuji's Kolu temple has been located since approximately the latter half of the fifteenth century.

From epigraphic evidence collected from the temple-complex in Kolu, I gather that the Pabuji temple and the surrounding desert area have been among the sites where the rulers of Jodhpur contended for power with underlords and Rathaur sub-clans from Phalodi, Pokharan, Jaisalmer and Bikaner. This can be read from the different rulers and chieftains who through the centuries patronized the Pabuji temple and its priests. Of the two temples situated within the present day temple compound at Kolu, the oldest temple (referred to here as the "red temple") is flanked by a *kīrtistaṃbh* (memorial pillar) which dates its donation, and perhaps the foundations of the red temple itself, to Samvat 1515 (1458 CE). On this *kīrtistaṃbh*, the name of the warrior who donated it to the temple is mentioned: one Dhamdhal Khimamra (or ruler of Khimamra) and one Sohar Nara.[316] I have not found any data about the history of this warrior or his family in the chronicles of Marwar, except Tessitori's (1916: 109) listing of Dhamdhal's "15 sons", which mentions one Sobhata as the father of Sohar among the many names recited to Tessitori (1916: 109) at the beginning of the last century. A list that did not represent an altogether

[316] This part of the inscription reads: "*ohṃ śr̥ ganeśa samavata 1515 varake badawa sudhi 11 budhavāsare maharāva rāṭhauṛa dhāṃdhala sutra maharawatha pabu prāsāda kr̥pita ki(tri) karavitaṃ dhāṃdhala khimamrā soṃ sutta sohara nārā* (...)". Compare Tessitori (1916:108).

*Pabuji's red temple (above) and white temple (below) at Kolu.*

correct view of past Dhamdhal generations, as Tessitori (*ibid*.) also noted.[317]

The inscription on the second face of this *kīrtistaṃbh* indicates that Kolu was part of Phalodi district in 1458, for the memorial pillar appears to have been erected during the reign of Satal, Jodha's eldest son, who apparently established himself in the desert between Pokaran and Phalodi prior to ascending the Jodhpur *gaddī* (throne), as may be concluded from the inscription on the second face of the pillar, reading: "mahāraya jodhā suta rāya śrī sātal vijaya rājye" ("during the reign of King Satal, son of Jodha") (cf. Tessitori 1916: 108, 1919a: 70). Another inscription, found on a *devaḷī* (hero stone), also dates the building of the temple to Samvat 1515 (1458 CE) and mentions Dhamdhal, son of Sohar Nara and Khimamra (or ruler of Khimamra).[318] This hero stone (kept in the chambers of the temple's head priest Tulsi Singh Rathaur at the time of my visits) appears to be the oldest dated *devaḷī* preserved in the temple, and its inscription identifies Pabuji as the son of Dhamdhal, and grandson of Asthan.[319] This hero stone, like most of the other stones kept at the temple, portrays Pabuji while riding a horse.[320]

The second temple within the compound today, the "white temple", is the most recent of the two temple structures. A *kīrtistaṃbh* to the left of the entrance of this building commemorates its founding in 1711 CE (Samvat 1768) during the time of Abhey Singh (son of Ajit Singh) by one Bhopa named Bagachamd.[321] G.N. Sharma (1990: 75) dates Abhey Singh's succession to the Jodhpur throne to 1724, after his father Ajit Singh had been murdered by another of his sons (Bakht Singh).

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[317] Tessitori (1916: 109) listed: (1) Dhamdhal, (2) Ude Simgh, (3) Ram Simgh, (4) Gaj Simgh, (5) Likhamana Simgh, (6) Dev Raj, (7) Khimva Karana, (8) Sobhata, (9) Sohara and Kamo, (10) Godo, (11) Neto, (12) Vagfo, (13) Sami Das, (14) Rupo, (15) Neto, (16) Hara, (17) Maha Simgh, (18) Ano and, lastly, (19) Buro.

[318] "*Samvata 1515 varkhei bhadava sudi 11 vāra (ādīdhavāra) rāṭhauṛa āsthāna sutha dhāmdhala sutha pābū samga devatāna khivara sutha soma soha(d)ra soya prasada po*". A temple priest read the unclear letters, which appeared to represent "sohā(d)ra", as "nāra", suggesting: Sohar Nara. Tessitori (1916: 107) described a similar inscription, which mentions a Dhamdhal Rathaur named Sohar, son of Sobha, identified by Tessitori as the ruler of Khimvara and son of Devathamna, perhaps the sixth Dhamdhal ancestor Deva Raj. However, it seems more probable that *khivara sutha soma soha(d)ra* refers to the ninth Dhamdhal, Sohar, son of Sobhata, son of Khimva Karana, and that the word *deva thamna* signified the platform (*devathān*) as place of worship or a small temple (*devasthāṃn*) alongside which the memorial pillar was erected. It is not clear to me whether the inscription read by me is the same but weathered version of the inscription transcribed by Tessitori or an altogether different record. Tessitori did not mention the location of the stone image of Pabuji or any other particulars of his epigraphic records.

[319] Tessitori (1916: 107-08) transcribed the inscription on an even older stone image of Pabuji dated to Samvat 1483 (1426 CE) set up by a Dhamdhal Pa or Paha (*pā[hā]*) during the reign of one Maharaja Lavakhana. I have not been able to trace this stone image among the *devaḷī*s at today's Kolu temple.

[320] On this *devaḷī*, like on a few other hero stones, Pabuji's face and the head of his horse have been chipped away. According to the priest, this happened during Mughal raids on the temple. No dates appear to be known for such raids in western Rajasthan, neither in the present-day oral tradition, nor in secondary historical sources.

[321] This part of the rather weathered inscription possibly reads: "*Samvata 1768 vāra khe matī phaguna suda 7 sukaravā sare karata kā nakha(satre) śrī pābūjī ra devala (…) rājā dhī rāja maharājā (sarāṃmā) (…) sahāī ka(va)rajī śri ajita siṃghjī śri abheya siṃghjī ri vāra māhai bhope bagachaṃda jata palanī*".

The inscription's reference to 1711 as Abhey Singh's time ("*vāra*") perhaps indicates that Kolu was awarded in tenure by Ajit Singh to Abhey Singh at the beginning of the eighteenth century, perhaps in an attempt of the former to strengthen his hold over district Phalodi awarded to him by the Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah in 1710.[322]

*Oldest hero stone depicting Pabuji kept at the Kolu temple.*

The inscription on the *kīrtistaṃbh* in the middle of the temple courtyard appears to date its establishment to 1710 when it was donated by a devotee named Narottam Nathji, son of Karnidan of village Savarije.[323] This inscription mentions 1710 CE (Samvat 1767) as the time of Maharaja Shardar Singh, perhaps referring to Saradar Singh, son of Vijay Singh, who ascended the Jodhpur throne three years after Abhay

[322] During this year (1710), the position of Ajit Singh as the ruler of Jodhpur appears to have been rather precarious. It was a time when Ajit Singh was engaged in "internal disturbances", aiming to exert his administrative control over Jodhpur and neighbouring areas (G.D. Sharma 1977: 227-231). These disturbances kept him so busy that he failed to heed the summons of the Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah to present himself at his court and be formally recognized as the ruler of Jodhpur. When Ajit Singh finally did present himself at Bahadur Shah's court in 1710, he was granted Jodhpur along with the *parganā*s (districts) of Sojat, Siwana and Phalodi, the latter of which probably included Kolu. This finding tallies with the inscription on a *devaḷī* on the red temple's upper altar which mentions Ajit Singh name and is dated Samvat 1770 ( 1713 CE).

[323] A very weathered inscription which I (with the help of the temple priests) rendered as follows: "*1767 vaisāk sudhī 6 śri pabuji maharāja karnī dānda putra palīwāla jātī dhamatha gāoṃ savarīje narottama nathaji maharaja di raja śri śardāra simghajī re vāra meṃ*".

Singh is said to have died (1749).[324] The fact that the year 1710 is mentioned as the time of Shardar Singh, while 1711 appears to have been the time of Abhay Singh perhaps suggests that the two were engaged in a brotherhood rivalry pending the official grant of Jodhpur and Phalodi district to Ajit Singh in 1710 after which Ajit Singh's son Abhay Singh would have gained the upper hand.

*Kīrtistaṃbh in the middle of the Kolu temple courtyard.*

The side-building of the temple, at present functioning as a *dharamśālā*, was added to the temple complex in the time of (or at the behest of) Bikaner's ruler Gaj Singh. The temple's Rathaur priest dates the construction of the *dharamśālā* to the nineteenth-century. Gaj Singh seems to have been a devotee of Pabuji and donated the *dharamśālā* to demonstrate his piety. This nineteenth-century ruler of Bikaner was certainly a contemporary of Asiya Bamkidas (1781-1833), the composer of the short *gīta pābūjī rau āsiyā bāṃkīdāsa rau kahyau* published by N.S. Bhati (1973: 85). This Charan poet is known to have risen to prominence at the early-nineteenth-century court of the Jodhpur Rathaur Man Singh, who ruled from c. 1803 to 1843. Bamkidas witnessed the waning of Mughal dominion and the advance of the British

[324] Vijay Singh appears to have ruled Jodhpur from circa 1752 to 1793, dates which do not tally well with the dating of the *kīrtistaṃbh* (1710). For if Vijay Singh was the father of a son old enough to administrate districts of Marwar in 1710, he must have been rather aged, when he ascended the throne 32 years later, and vigorous for he ruled for another 43 years. Perhaps the *kīrtistaṃbh* was erected to commemorate Shardar Singh's birth in 1710. It is, of course, also possible that the *kīrtistaṃbh* inscription commemorates yet another person named Shardar Singh, not traced by me.

East India Company's military and political ambitions aimed at administrating large parts of Rajputana, as Rajasthan was then called. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can thus be thought of as yet another era of minor squabbles at the local level and all-out regional warfare shaped by Rajput brotherhood rivalries and continuing challenges to the succession claims and ascendancy of the Rathaur rulers of Jodhpur (cf. G.D. Sharma 1977: 219-241). Apart from Rajput overlords and their feudatories, Maratha and British forces also came to engage in the Rajputana power contest, often on invitation of Rajput rulers or their feudatories, who sought Maratha or British alliances in regional battles against their peers and rivals.

### *Great and little Rajput traditions*

When, from approximately the sixteenth-century onwards, the ruling aspirations of landed Rajput elites gave rise to less inclusive, more stratified, social and religious identities, the open character of Rajput identity, thought of as an "open status" category during the early period of state formation, changed. From then on, ruling elites began to redefine the title Rajput by contrasting early medieval warrior identities with Rajputhood as defined by the landed elites of the region who looked upon themselves as the true aristocratic Rajput warriors and rulers of Marwar. In addition, Rajput identity also came to be perceived as similar or comparable to the legendary Kshatriya warriors of the Vedic past. This shift in the perception of Rajput status needed its own literary form. Complementing the segregation of genealogically orthodox ruling Rajput lineages as opposed to low status Rajput lineages, a literary Rajput "Great Tradition" was conceived, thought of as a courtly tradition of "Great" or "High" culture that encompassed Rajasthani written, literary poetry composed by Charan court poets. These compositions are first and foremost thought to reflect late-medieval images of Rajputhood, creating a link between reigning Rajput lineages of the period and the high-status Kshatriya warriors of Vedic times by blending legendary and/or historical genealogies with myth.

It was through different tellings of the Agnikul myth that medieval Rajput warriors came to be portrayed as a new generation of Kshatriya warriors sprung from the fire lit by the sage Vashista to fight the demons who intended to disrupt the fire-ritual. Thus late-medieval Rajput status came to be defined in Brahminical terms.[325] The chronology of this process appears to be rather uncertain. Chattopadhyaya (1994: 181-185), for instance, holds that the class of upcoming Rajput rulers at first thought of themselves as *Brahmakṣatrā* (*Brāhmaṇ-Kṣatriya)* to legitimize their ritual and political stature. According to him, the link between medieval Rajput warriors, on the one hand, and Brahmin and the Kshatriya rank, on the other, apparently lost its meaning from the tenth century onwards. Once Rajput

[325] Brahmin priests are credited for taking the initiative for this fire-ritual. It is said that they were the ones who (after having ousted the impious Kshatriya warriors of the past) were in charge of the fire-ceremony on Mount Abu to bring to life a new class of Kshatriya warriors (Chattopadhyaya 1994: 186).

lineages established a firmer political foothold in Rajasthan, and surpassed the power and status traditionally accorded to Kshatriya heroes, the upcoming rulers no longer seem to have felt the need to legitimize their ambitions by referring to Kshatriya status and, instead, came to define themselves solely as Rajput. However, Chamdra (1997: 251f), dates the severing of ties between Rajput rulers and Brahmin priests to a later stage, that is the beginning of Sultanate rule in northern India.[326]

In addition, Ziegler (1998: 248) notes that warrior elites only came to refer to themselves as Rajput after the fifteenth century, until which period the ritual Kshatriya status accorded to (and appropriated by) early medieval ruling elites remained of importance. From the sixteenth century onwards, Rajput rulers no longer presented themselves as the embodiment of the "true Kshatriya rulers" of Vedic times even if they did continue to claim ties with Khsatriya ancestors. Late-medieval Marwar's chronicles represent medieval times as a period of *vikhau* (distress), when the "ideal order of things" (construed as Vedic societal order) collapsed, following the demise of the sovereign rule of the Vedic class of Kshatriya warriors. Although late-medieval Rajput rulers no longer presented themselves as the embodiment of the "true Kshatriya rulers" of ancient times, they did not altogether sever their perceived ties with Khsatriya ancestors either, since they came to see themselves as the descendants of the legendary Kshatriya lineages. And though Rajput aristocracy continued to perceive itself as lower in rank than its glorified ancestors, medieval rulers did credit themselves with a comparatively elevated rank in society for their efforts to reassert "Vedic ideals".

Hiltebeitel (2001: 441, 448) dates the political use of the Agnikul myth to the sixteenth century, when versions of this myth apparently gained in importance to define Rajput status in Brahminical terms. According to his view, pre-twelfth-century South-Indian variants of the Agnikul myth inspired regional martial epics in Rajasthan and introduced themes like the birth of Rajput warriors from fire, the manifestation of goddesses as family or clan goddesses, and the defeat of enemies, including Raksa, Daitya, Asura, Danava, Buddhist, Jain and Muslim enemies. The South-Indian variants of the Agnikul myth can apparently be related to regional "folk" *Mahābhārat*s and *Rāmāyaṇ*s which became part of the traditions of hinterland populations and little Rajput kingdoms (Hiltebeitel 2001: 414f). The narrative themes part of this body of South-Indian myths are also part of the Pabuji tradition like, for example, stories which document claims to royal stature and tales about cow theft, retaliatory sacrifice and divine assistance offered by different gods and the socio-political role of goddesses (Hiltebeitel 2001: 415, 453). It appears that the variant Agnikul myths told in Rajasthan from the sixteenth centuries onwards chiefly served to establish links between medieval Rajput rulers and Vedic or epic Kshatriyas (Hiltebeitel 2001: 448). Hiltebeitel (2001: 441) holds that the affinities between medieval Rajput roles and Vedic myth should not be understood as documenting continuity between an ancient heroic age and the sixteenth-century

[326] See also G.N. Sharma (1966: 684).

Rajput great tradition, rather, they direct us (as noted just) to address questions about similarities between the epics, Vedic Vratya war bands and early medieval "low status Rajputs".

The divergent dating of the uses of the Agnikul myth in Rajasthan probably results from a failure to distinguish different types of Rajput men and their ritual as opposed to the socio-political status and/or of a failure to make a distinction between the different uses of Agnikul myths to voice different kinds of identities in different periods of time. It appears to me that the Rathaur rulers' endeavours to acquire a classical background for their lineage (whether in terms of mythical descent from Vedic Kshatriya warriors and/or genealogical succession to the rulers of Kanauj) should be primarily understood in the context of late sixteenth and seventeenth century claims to Rathaur ascendancy vis-à-vis the rulers of other Rajput lineages and, secondly, against the background of Rajput-Mughal politics.[327] However, my main concern here is the professed difference between the literary Rajput great tradition, on the one hand, and oral and written little traditions of non-Rajput, low-status or "little" Rajput communities, on the other. Apparently, the values associated with the early-medieval Rajput world, in later times, continued to be diffused into hinterland Rajput kingdoms through the ongoing transmission of regional martial epics, including Pabuji's story. This transmission gave rise to the aforementioned, late-medieval traditions of "spurious" or "little" Rajput communities, a term which in later times came to include communities from minor Rajput lineages and other social groups, chiefly agrarian castes and pastoral-nomadic or tribal peoples who aspired to forms of Rajputhood that did not always coincide with definitions put forward by aristocratic Rajput lineages. To this typology, Ziegler (1998: 268) adds the Marwar's idiom of *pādrā* Rajput landholders. Based on his study of seventeenth-century Marwar's chronicles and administrative documents, he defines *pādrā* Rajput as the chiefs of small landholdings or "lesser" Rajput chiefs who were also named *caurasī dhānī* (master of 84 villages) and *bhaibaṃdha bhomiyā* (lord of small landholdings). *Thakura* or *rājāvi* were the titles used to refer to landed elites, or *vāḍāghara rā choṛū* (sons of great houses), the Rajput rulers of greater kingdoms.

The interests of Rajput ruling elites have come to be thought of as far removed from the rural world of "little" Rajput communities. In socio-political and literary terms, great and little Rajput communities and their traditions came to represent two different late-medieval spheres: first, the world of ruling Rajput elites

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[327] Illustrative of this thought is Tessitori's (1921: 262f) observation of the "genealatry" prevalent in the late sixteenth century among Bikaner Rathaur and Akbar, i.e.: "[the] extravagant claim which the Rāṭhòṛas had begun to put forward (…) that they are the offspring of rājā Jè Canda of Kanauj and, more remotely, of Rāma Candra himself. The reasons which led the Rāṭhòṛas to put forward this claim are easy enough to understand, and that they should have put this forward at this particular time [1593], is a fact which is easily accounted for by the stimulus which the Rāṭhòṛas in particular and the Rajput in general received from the Court of Akbar. That Akbar was himself a believer in genealatry (…) is conspicuously demonstrated by Abul Fazl himself, who, in the first chapters of his "Nāma", has wasted much ink to trace the descent of this monarch to that common father of mankind, Adam".

asserting their status in terms of genealogical "purity". And, second, the world of small Rajput landholders and tribal, peasant or pastoralist groups of peoples who sought to legitimize their ongoing claims to Rajput status by referring back to early-medieval Rajput history.[328] In Hiltebeitel's (2001: 414f, 492) view, such claims represent a "little-rajputization process" that are supported by regional martial epic story telling traditions, in particular Pabuji's epic. Accordingly, late-medieval claims to Rajput status as advanced by diverse "marginal" groups were aimed at achieving "pure" Rajput status, not by referring to contemporary (that is, late medieval) Rajput courtly traditions but by evoking the initial stages of regional history, when many different kinds of people could still lay claim to the title Rajput. Thus, one can distinguish two processes of Rajputization, both aimed at achieving Rajput status: [1] based on a courtly great tradition and Vedic myth to validate the ambitions of the landed elite; and [2] based on regional and local traditions of subject communities, which referred back to early-medieval Rajputhood in an attempt to support the upwardly mobile aspirations of a variety of minor Rajput lineages and other non-Rajput groups vis-à-vis ruling Rajput families.

Apart from attributed royal allure, late-medieval elite Rajputhood also reflected the various alliances between Rajput subsidiaries and their Mughal overlords. Regional power equations were interpreted according to Mughal ideals of military service and loyalty based on landed rights by phrasing military service in regional and imperial armies in terms of *naukarī* or the "honourable service in a war band" and "retainership of a lord" (Kolff 1990: 20, 76), and resulted in a new "political grammar" aimed at roping in different soldiering traditions by giving voice to the relations between Mughals and the peoples they aimed to control. This late-medieval soldiering tradition came to be articulated through the language of *naukarī*, a military idiom which could be understood by, and appeal to, many different regional parties, including "spurious" as well as elite Rajput warriors.

*Naukarī*, in various regional contexts, encompassed the soldierly traditions of retainers in the (long-distance) service of military entrepreneurs, like Payak (foot soldier), Nayak (chief) and Javan (a young man or soldier): warriors or soldiers of peasant, pastoral-nomadic or tribal origin, which included Afghan and Rajput men. At the same time, a distinct Marwar's political grammar developed. Judging from Ziegler's (1998: 267) study, Rajput rulers, small-time chiefs and patrons were termed Sama (Sami), Dhani and Datar, titles connoting meanings that range from ruler, master and god to husband. These titles reflect political and poetic metaphors that conceive of Rajput rule in terms of a marriage between a king and his land, looked upon as his wife. Kinship metaphors also extended to patron-client relations: a Rajput ruler came to be seen as the parent of military retainers that are usually overseen by the ruler's sons (*beṭā*). Upon rendering military service (*cakrī* or *sevā*), a ruler's retainers became his servants (*cakrā*), who were rewarded with landed

[328] See Blackburn (1989:216-218), Chattopadhyaya (1994: 185), Hiltebeitel (2001: 414, n.2), Kolff (1990: 73, 84).

rights in return for military service, and were also considered to be his wards (*vās*), military retainers who were part of royal Rajput households.[329] As was noted in chapter 5, this kind of idiom defines a Rajput's duty in terms of a symbolic marriage, rendering a Rajput wedded to his land or a "husband of the earth" who is a *datar* ("giver of life") to his female land or kingdom called *dharatī*, a word traced to Sanskrit *dharītrī* ("a female bearer") by Ziegler (1998: 255, 268).

In heroic-epic poetry, the connection between a ruler and his land, and the equation of women with (agricultural) land, or land with the goddess ("mother earth") connotes a rather common set of images, evoking mythical beliefs that render earth the homologic alloform of a warrior's flesh and blood. Such kinship metaphors for political relations might be traced to myths about the creation of the earth, narrating how it was formed of the body (parts) of a primal sacrificial man. It is believed that the world began with the ritual dismemberment of the first human being by the gods who then made use of his different body parts to create the world (Feller Jatavallabhula 1999: 85-88). The poetic connection between a ruler and his land also brings to mind a common set of images inspired by perceptions of an active male principle of creation as opposed to a passive female principle. Accordingly, father heaven (rain, sun) and mother earth are imagined as the archetypal parents of the world (Dange 1971: 34). As noted in chapter 5, the merger of heaven and earth is described as resulting in abundant harvests and thus ensures human life and prosperity. Along these lines, it is also possible to think of the poets portrayal of the life-enhancing aspect of battle death as evoking agricultural productivity and human procreation by portraying warriors as the "givers of life" to the earth and to women. The blood spilled by warriors on the battlefield can be seen as "watering" the earth-mother if we allow that male "blood" can be understood as a symbol of fertility, comparable to rain or semen, ensuring the earth's fecundity. Taken together, such metaphors can be read as indicative of a fertility-centred worldview articulated by portraying war and a warrior's role (including his battle deeds and death) as live-enhancing undertakings.

### *Poetic concerns*

The above outline of Rathaur Rajput history served as an introduction to the way in which customary Rajput typologies are commonly made to coincide with early and late medieval stages of socio-political organization. Our study of the different

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[329] *Sagāī*, the bonds of brotherhood through marriage, also existed between Jodha's descendants and moslim Khan rulers of Nagaur (Ziegler 1998: 254). Marwar's idiom for patron-client relations not only defined the relations between Rajput warriors and their leaders but also accommodated Muslim warriors and Mughal rulers, as can be read from the fact that Rajput jati accommodated moslim (Turk) and Hindu warriors. Rajput apparently thought of Mughal rulers, in particular Akbar, as representing the warrior-ideal embodied by Ram, the archetype of Rajput martial ideals. This connection furthered the incorporation of Rajput military culture by the Mughals. As a result, Rajput service for a Mughal emperor came to be thought of as similar to local service to Rajput rulers. See also Saxena (1989: 390f).

versions of tales about early Rathaur has enabled us to judge the narrative significance of certain themes and imagery common to the Pabuji tradition since it has become clear that these features are not only part of narrative poetry but also to Rathaur history. As noted above, Pabuji's adventures represent oft-reiterated themes typical of early-medieval Rathaur history for Pabuji and his ancestors are portrayed as archetypical early-medieval Rajputs: geographically and socially mobile young men who travelled north-western India in search of livelihood and employment, often taking service in military war bands and regional armies. These men, of dissimilar backgrounds and with disparate social ranks, formed an "open status group" of warriors claiming the status of Rajput, and were part of a medieval soldiering tradition that gave rise to military labour markets in northern India. Such labour markets included Rajput warriors from Rajasthan who became part of the Mughal armies of Hindustan and, I think, warriors recruited for the armies of north-western Rajput rulers or for the armed bands of men who owed allegiance to minor chiefs.

Interestingly, the word "Rajput" has not been used in any of the poems under review, even if Pabuji and his allies are portrayed as the archetypical Rajput warriors. As I shall document in more detail below, a range of titles and epithets is offered to denote the warriors according to their local places of origin, their lineage names and their martial roles and ascribed heroic abilities.

The distinction between Rajput great and little traditions appears rather less straightforward and meaningful for literary-historical analysis when we take into account the way in which the medieval poets of the Pabuji tradition portrayed warriors and Rajputhood. The selected poems offer little evidence of a preponderance of later "classical" definitions of Rajputhood in Marwar. As I aim to show below, the poems do not point up the contrast between early-medieval Rajput identities with late-medieval Rajputhood as defined by "pure blooded" Rajput warrior elites with ruling aspirations. The most obvious examples of late-medieval socio-political concerns to be read from the poems under review are, first, the references to Pabuji's kingly status and realm and, second, the changing relations between Rajput warriors, on the one hand, and Bhil warriors, on the other, which can be understood from the different portrayal of Bhil warriors in *chamd* II and of Bhil warriors, thieves, and priests in *duha* I and the *parvaro*.

In what follows, I intend to illustrate how the poets gave voice to Rajputhood by studying the identity ascribed to Pabuji and his warriors. Thus, I hope to be able to assess whether the imagery employed by the poets reflects the above listed historical concerns, i.e. Rajput typologies and the political idioms of early and late medieval Marwar's history. And I will ask what the lack of references to the title Rajput or, for that matter, the very infrequent references to Kshatriyahood, signify? It will be argued that the poets' choice of words adds yet another political and poetic grammar to above described terms of military service and patronage. Before doing this, it should be noted once more, as already remarked in the general introduction to

this study, that the poets' evocation of the past in the poems dedicated to Pabuji is, of course, primarily inspired by poetic conventions, vocabulary and metrical needs, and should not be thought of as representing "hard" historical facts. The poets' choice of words does, however, prove to be of historical interest when studied as a reflection of their view of medieval life and the way in which early and late medieval historical experience was embedded in their compositions. In addition, some of the selected poems also prove to be suggestive of the Rajput-Afghan military culture and Marwar's terms for military service which in some respects resembles the idiom of *naukarī*.

For the purpose of the following literary-historical analysis, early medieval historical concerns are assessed according to the narrative importance given to cattle and the aspirations of warriors who belonged to Rajput and non-Rajput groups. Poetic wordings and imagery relating to these themes will be dealt with as evoking early-medieval pastoral-nomadic themes, suggestive of a world where socio-political identities were not as well-defined as in later medieval society. Late-medieval poetic concerns are defined as wordings and imagery relating to socio-political stratification, patron-client ties, marital relations among Rajputs (as predominantly evoked in *duha* I), Rajput claims to landed rights and, most significantly, references to lineage-based status evocative of Vedic Kshatriyatva and elite Rajputhood.

### *Rava-uta, Rathaur and Kherecau*

Let us begin by looking at the different epithets used for Pabuji and his warriors. The *chamd*s' idiom suggests that Pabuji may have been considered a Kshatriya since the poets included references to the "thirty-six", a phrase that connotes a legendary number of Rajput brotherhoods. The reference to the "thirty-six" must have served to establish a link between the medieval Rajput warriors and ancient Kshatriya warriors.[330] However, the word "Rajput" does not figure in either of the *chamd*s. From this it should not be concluded that the *chamd*s' poets did not mean to portray Pabuji as a Rajput of noble descent for they did portray Pabuji as the son of a king, a *rājaputr*. The poets identify Pabuji as the son of king Dhamdhal by referring to him, though not often, as a warrior of the Dhamdhal lineage ("dhāṃdhalāṃ") who hails from the territory or "country" of the Dhamdhal Rajput warriors ("dhāṃdhala desa").[331] The most common epithet used in referring to Pabuji's lineage is "Kamadh" or "Kamdhaj", the customary honorific for Marwar's warriors of the Rathaur lineage, while Pabuji is only once actually called a Rathaur (*chamd* II).[332]

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[330] The word Kshatriya is not used in the *chamds*, their poets only mention that Pabuji's army is made up of "the" "thirty six" (*chatīsī* and *chatrīsī*).

[331] Compare *chamd* I (v. 13), *chamd* II (v. 23).

[332] Kamadh, Kamadhaj and Kamamda (S. Kabamdha) in the first place denote a Rathaur Kshatriya, and secondly refer to a certain class of demons from the *Rāmāyaṇ* who were buried alive by Ram. Thirdly,

The references to the Dhamdhal lineage and "realm" perhaps reflect that the majority of Rajput warriors prided themselves on royal ancestry even if they did not actually rule or did not rule great kingdoms (Peabody 2003: 37). And I also imagine that the poets thought of Pabuji as a paragon of Ksatriyatva since the name Rathaur[333] can be taken to connote royal status and, perhaps, Ksatriyatva, if its origins can indeed be traced to royal titles like Rashtrakuta and Rastavar.[334]

The poets of the *chamd*s, like the poets of all the other studied poems, combined martial and royal epithets to portray Pabuji, Jimda and their warriors. The martial epithets used most frequently by the poets of all the compositions under review are: *bhaṛa*, *sobhaṭa*, *bharabhīca*, *bhaṭa, vīra, varadāī, bharai, varavīra, jhagajheṭhī*, *aṇabhaṃgo*, *netabaṃdha tribhāṃgaṃ*, connoting honorifics like warrior, hero, warrior-hero, outstanding hero and leader. In addition, the poets also used martial epithets inspired by the various qualities ascribed to warriors by drawing attention to the combatants' protective functions and war feats, for example, when they call Pabuji *pāla* or *pālha* ("Protector"). Other martial honorifics evoke the warriors' bodily qualities like in *bhujāla* ("Long-armed hero") or identify fighting men by their weaponry, like *bhālāla* and *sākaita* ("Spearwielder") or by their mounts (*asavāra* or "Horseman"). In the seventeenth-century *duha* I, "Kamadh" is the preferred title for Pabuji. Ladhraj's chosen epithets more often portray Pabuji in kingly terms than in the *chamd*s for Pabuji is referred to as: the son of a warrior-king (*dhāṃdhala rāva-uta*), a lord and king (*maiha pati*, *nripa*). In *duha* I, Pabuji is moreover identified as a Rathaur warrior (*kamadha, rāṭhavaṛa*, *rāṭhoṛau*) and *kheṛecau* (*khaṛecau*). The latter title is the most notable honorific used in *duha* I since it has not been employed in any of the other poems under review.[335] It would seem that this title serves to link Pabuji to his lineage's place of origin Kher (Keru),

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Rathaur can also mean "dhar" or "torso", perhaps evoking the poetic image of Rathaur warriors' headless torsos which continue to fight (Lalas 1962-1988). Other kingly titles used in the *chamd*s include: *chataradhara* (King) and *ujjālai kula* ("Pride of the dynasty").

[333] The clan name is also spelled "Rathorau", "Rathoda", "Rathada", "Rathur", "Rathav" and "Rathavar".

[334] Lalas (1962-1988) describes the *Rāṭhauṛ* as an old Kshatriya branch with royal Suryavanshi, Yaduvanshi as well as Chamdravanshi origins in different periods of time. The name *Rāṭhauṛ* has been traced to the Gahadvala Rashtrakutas of Kanauj of whom it is thought that the first Rathaur, Siha, sprang. Siha's name is thought to have changed from Rashtrakuta via Rathavar to Rathaur. Reu (1938: 4) traces the meaning of both Rathoda and Rashtrakuta to a combination of the words *ratta* or *raśtra* (kingdom) and *kuta* (lofty), together meaning: "a great kingdom", and further connects the Rathaur to the Rashtrakutas by describing how the name Rashtrakuta was "corrupted" to forms like Rathvara, Rathada and Rathaur. Bingley (1999: 118) writes that Rathaur derives from Rashtrakula, "a royal race". The discussion of the historical and/or mythical roots of Rathaur ancestry and clan names is beyond the scope of this study.

[335] *Kheṛecau*, according to Lalas (1962-1988), derives from S. *khetanam*. In his Rajasthani dictionary, Lalas distinguishes between a Rathaur Rajput (*kheṛecau*) and a Rathaur Ksatriya (*rāṭhavaṛa*). It is not clear to me whether or not any special meaning should be attributed to this usage and whether the title Kherecau, referring to the geographical beginnings of Rathaur rule, was reserved for late-medieval "little Rajputs", while Rathaur (*rāṭhavaṛa*) was the preferred title of late-medieval ruling elites claiming Kshatriya status.

a village near present-day Jodhpur, which is believed to have been the first foothold of the Rathaur in Rajasthan.[336]

The frequent use of the epithet *dhāṃdhala rāva-uta* was clearly more inspired by prosodic than by political motives, since it almost always appears at the end of a verse-line to fulfil alliterative and/or metrical requirements, like in verses 290-95 of *duha* I:

290. tai di narī tirasīhā, rāṃbhai **dhāṃdhala rāva-uta(ṃ)**
291. pāvai jala pyāsīha, khala gāyāṃ khījāṛīyāṃ
292. kohara kālāṃ sīhā, rātī **dhāṃdhala rāva-uta**
293. bhālai(ṃ) bhā(ṃ)lāloha, āyo kohara uparā
294. vasadhā vahāleha, re lī **dhāṃdhala rāva-uta**
295. pābū pāṇī pāya, cāraṇīyāṃ nu caṃdaiyai

The addition of *dhāṃdhala rāva-uta* in the above example probably served to balance the metrical count of the even-numbered and uneven-numbered verse-lines.[337] However, the frequent use of *dhāṃdhala rāva-uta*, taken together with the recurrent choice of other royal epithets (*narapāla*, *bhupāla*, *maiha pati*), does further bolster Pabuji's royal persona. From *duha* I, he emerges as the son of the warrior-king (*kamadha-rāva*) Dhamdhal from the lineage (*kula*) of the ruling lineage of Marwar. The honorifics accorded to the hero's half-brother Buro (who ascended the Kolu throne after Dhamdhal's death) also centre on the lineage's royal stature: *nripa*, *nripati*, *chātrapati*, *pāhī*. And from the fact that the poets describe Buro as the lord of the kingdom (*rāji*) Kolu, it is clear that King Buro made, or is thought to have made, territorial claims. In addition, the poets have Buro rule over a fortified village or fort (*kota*), for Ladhraj speaks of Buro's *kotavāla* ("fort commander"). Apart from royal honorifics, Ladhraj also uses common martial titles to name Pabuji, like warrior and hero (*vīra*, *yekalā*, *siṃha*, *sāhula*), protector (*pāla*) and swordfighter (*trijarāhatha*) and spear wielder (*bhālālo*). The dual use of martial and royal epithets is also common to the *parvaro* in which these honorifics are used side by side with designations like *devatā* (god) and *jūṃjhāra* (deified forefather). But in this devotional composition too, the hero is most often spoken of as a Rathaur

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[336] Geographical references often motivate the use of names for Rajput lineages like the Chauhan, Hada, Sisodiya and Kachavaha warriors who are, respectively, also named: Sambhari, Bundichat, Mevaro, Amero or Jaipuriyo. These epithets are comparable to Kherecau for they refer to the link between different Rajput lineages with their territories, signifying a Rajput from Sambhar (Sambhari), Bundi (Bumdichat), Mewar (Mevaro), Am(b)er (Amero) or Jaipur (Jaipuriyo) (N.S. Bhati 1989: 28). Honorifics connoting geographical links are used alongside epithets that refer to the martial status or genealogical status of Rajput warriors like: Madapat (a Bhati warrior from Jaisalmeri) and Jaduvamsi, an epithet that calls to mind the claims forwarded by the Bhatis to royal Yaduvanshi origins.

[337] The occurrence of the rare form *dhāṃdhala rāva-uta**(ṃ)*** (v. 290) seems to suggest, moreover, that this phrase was added to more fully alliterate with *khījāṛīyā**ṃ*** (v. 291).

warrior (*kamadhaja*) in addition to titles like "spear wielding warrior" (*bhālālo subhaṭa*) and "hero" (*vīra*). Royal stature is ascribed with titles like *dhāṃdhala rāva-uta* and "son (descendant) of Jodha Rathaur" (*Jodhā-suta*). And Pabuji is also referred to as a *sāmi*, a title that (as noted just now) denotes a small-time chief.[338]

The ascription of "common" martial epithets alongside royal epithets to Pabuji can also be read from the *git*s and *duha* II. Honorifics which denote heroism and martial prowess are, for example, *varadāī* and *pāti* (*git* I) and *abhiyāmanau*, *bhālālau*, *bharai*, *varavīra, pāla* and *kāmdhalāma*[339] in *git* II. To Pabuji's role of cow protector as projected in the *chamd*s, the poet of *git* I adds Pabuji's role as a tamer of wild horses. And in *duha* I and II, the description of the hero's adventures as a camel rustler portrays him as a quintessential warrior *and* looter, competing with other cattle-rustlers. Interestingly, in *git* II, the only poem to expressly mention Kshatriya dharma, a Kshatriya's duty is defined in terms of the protection of cattle and not in terms of the protection of land or struggles over landed rights, the more common description of Kshatriya dharma. And the poets of the *git*s commemorate Pabuji's Dhamdhal Rathaur ancestry. In *git* I, for example, the hero is portrayed as a warrior of King Sinha's lineage.[340] The use of the epithet "*pāti*" in *git* I sums up the use of marital, martial, royal and religious titles, for it connotes meanings ranging from husband and master to ruler and god (cf. chapter 5).

### *Realms and borders*

Another way of looking at poetic Rajput typology is by considering poetic images related to realms and borders and other allusions to landed rights. Though cattle and not land is at the heart of all poems, and (as remarked just now) *git* II expressly defines a Kshatriya's duty in terms of the protection of cattle and not in terms of the protection of land or struggles over landed rights, most poems, including the *chamd*s, describe Pabuji and his fellow protagonist Jimda as warrior-kings who fought over the ownership of land as well as cattle. Considering the poets' pastoral-nomadic interest in cows, camels and horses, I had expected also to find imagery connected with grazing rights or squabbles over grazing lands in the poems. Apart from pastoral-nomadic interests contained in the versification of battles over cattle and references to watering places in the form of wells, the struggle over grazing rights, however, appears to be almost wholly absent. In *duha* I, the poets' pre-occupation with cattle has been contained in episode 4 with an account of the watering of Deval's cattle and Pabuji's battle with the "demon" that blackens the

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[338] In the *parvaro*, the royal title "chatra dhārī" is reserved for the Rathaur ruler Jaswant Singh (*parvaro*, v.78: "jasavaṃta jodhāṃ ṇaiha(ṃ), chatra dhārī pratapai chato").

[339] "Broad-shouldered hero".

[340] In addition, Pabuji is portrayed as a *dhāṃdhali* ("of the Dhamdhal lineage") *git* III. The poet of *git* II also describes Pabuji's role in royal terms when he speaks of *raja rīta*, the royal rule or rite, which Pabuji followed and by using common epithets like *rāva* and *chataradhara*.

well's water. In most of the poems, however, pastoral-nomadic interests occur alongside the poetic description of Pabuji and Jimda as warrior-kings who fought over the ownership of cattle as well as land. Though we may infer that for the Rajputs of the desert of Marwar (and kingdoms further west) the struggle over land in the first place meant a struggle over the access to grazing lands and not, like in more fertile regions, a struggle for the ownership of agricultural land, this is, however, not a theme made manifest by the poets.

Apart from the above-quoted pastoral-nomadic concerns, the selected poems also record a poetic awareness of kingdom formation since Pabuji's role is also couched in terms of royal reign, portraying him as the protector of "the earth" or his "kingdom", probably best thought of as Dhamdhal territory around Kolu and Kher. In the *chamd*s, for example, the poets evoke "Dhamdhal desa" when describing the battles between the two Rajput lineages and evoking the arrival of Jimda Khici and his forces at the borders of Pabuji's territory (*dhāṃdhala desa*).[341] And the poet of *git* II (v. 36) speaks of the Dhamdhal's kingdom (*dhāṃdhalāṃ chāta*). "Desa" and "chāta" can be taken to mean "realm". Considering the context of the initial period of kingdom formation in and around Kolu (described above) the words are perhaps better thought of as having connoted minor "territories", in particular early-medieval Rajput territories with unstable and frequently contested borders. Or perhaps "desa" and "chāta" were used to connote seasonal access to grazing lands, though the primary meanings of both words, which in the first place connote a land or kingdom, do not really support such an interpretation.

In later medieval times, when the Dhamdhal lineage no longer held any territory of consequence, *desa* may have been mainly used to refer to early-medieval Dhamdhal territory thought of as a kingdom by late-medieval poets. From the fifteenth century onwards, as the above summary of the history of Rathaur kingdom formation illustrates, royal sway was exerted from Jodhpur by Rathaur warrior-kings who claimed direct descent from Jodha. Examples of the ascription of royal status to Pabuji in terms of territorial rights and claims to landed status as increasingly emphasized in the late medieval period can be understood from the seventeenth-century *duha* I. Its imagery involves the ascription of kingly titles to Pabuji and his brother Buro and the claims to realms and forts, lineage and marriage-ties, reminiscent of seventeenth-century royal Rajputhood. The poets' imagery does not reflect the above finding that, in the centuries following the death of Dhamdhal's two sons, the ruling ambitions of the Dhamdhal branch of Rathaur warriors were nipped in the bud and the seventeenth-century Dhamdhal families came to be known as "khavās-pāsabān" or personal attendants and arms bearers of the Rathaur ruler who presided in Jodhpur (Nizami and Kheechi 1990: 368). Accordingly, the

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[341] *Chamd* I (v. 15): "pāla trīya āyi puṃṇai praghaṛā, jiṃdarāva upāṛiya desa jaṛā". *Chamd* II (v.23): "jhīṃdarāva caṛai jama rāva(ṃ) jhisai, dala(ṃ) hālai dhāṃdhala desa disau".

ascription of royal stature to the Dhamdhal hero in *duha* I may have primarily reflected a contemporary (seventeenth-century) ascription of kingly status which does not necessarily had any bearing on the real status of the Dhamdhal warriors of that time. But Ladhraj depiction of family relations and marriage ties in *duha* I does relate his poetic concerns to historical Rajput politics, in particular to the key importance ascribed to marriage relations in forming alliances between brotherhoods. For, despite the fact that the main reason for the battle between Pabuji and Jimda is cattle in *duha* I as well as in the other selected poems, Ladhraj usually couches the reasons for battle in terms of kinship and marriage relations. Pabuji is portrayed as the protector who saves "his granddaughters and grandsons from harm" and thus the honour of his lineage.

Ladhraj describes the warrior's prime motivation for battle in terms of longstanding family feuds and dowry negotiations. These events motivate the protagonists' actions and eventually cause Pabuji's death. As can be read from the summary of the narrative content of Ladhraj's poem in chapter 3, Ladhraj evokes the unsuccessful dowry negotiations between the Dhamdhal's and Khici's as the main trigger for war. By marrying his sister Pema to Jimda, Buro intended to atone for the fact that he killed Jimda's father and afterwards stole the Khici's cattle. But Buro's plan backfires when the dowry negotiations turn sour and a dispute arises over the possession of Pabuji's mare. Buro's attempts to mollify Jimda by offering him elephants instead of the mare Kalvi also fail since Jimda continues to insist on receiving the black mare in dowry. Jimda is quoted as saying that he does not need elephants and horses since he has enough of them for cattle is his "trade" (*vaipāra*). The only way that the Dhamdhal family can hope to pacify him is by giving Kalvi in dowry.[342]

The ensuing battle destroys the "relations through marriage" (*chamd* I, v. 10) for in the end Buro thinks of a ruse to help Jimda in obtaining Kalvi. He prompts Jimda to rob Deval of her cows thus challenging Pabuji for a battle. It is the wrangle over dowry which (in the last episode of *duha* I, v. 434-37) gets quoted as the main reason for the brotherhood battles by Pabuji's nephew, Jhararo. Finally, the Rajput warrior code of honour and revenge directs Jhararo to behead his uncle Jimda thus avenging the death of Buro and Pabuji. And this is where the feud between the Dhamdhal and Khici Rajput warriors, as far as the story of *duha* I goes, ends.[343]

Imagery related to the Dhamdhal's realms is not part of the *parvaro* at all, though one does come across references to the early sixteenth-century succession wars between the Rathaur ruler Gamga and his elder-brother Vikram in 1529. Gamga is thought to have ascended the Jodhpur throne instead of Vikram with the

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[342] *Duha* I (v. 122-23): "vadi khīcī tīṇa vāra, ghari ghoṛā hāthī ghaṇa. vita māṃharai vaipāra, kyu na luṃ kālavī".

[343] Till today, some members of Dhamdhal and Khici clans of Jodhpur and surrounding villages speak ill of each other and the Dhamdhal refuse to give their daughters in marriage to the Khici, calling to mind Jimda's "ignoble murder" of his two brothers-in-law.

help of his followers from Rathaur sub-clans. This state of affairs, as discussed under the caption "Late-medieval Rathaur history", led to several annexation wars between Gamga and Vikram and resulted in the usurpation of Sojat by Gamga. The poet lists Gamga's victory as one of Pabuji's miraculous deeds and avers that it was Pabuji's help that rendered Gamga triumphant. Another example of Rathaur territorial rule mentioned in the *parvaro* concerns the seventeenth-century rule of Jaswant Singh. This is, however, a late-medieval concern and is in no way related to Dhamdhal rule in Kolu (or anywhere else). The *parvaro*'s poet in the first place defines Pabuji's supremacy and his role in Rathaur history in terms of divine rule and not in terms of political power or territorial sway.

I think it is noteworthy that a seventeenth-century poet like Ladhraj deals with dowry in terms of cattle in the above-quoted negotiations between the Dhamdhal and Khici families in *duha* I. In addition, Ladhraj also suggests that Pabuji donates she-camels from Sindh, perhaps in dowry to his niece Kelam, the daughter of Buro and Gailavot (*duha* I, verse-lines 70-71).[344] The gift of cattle in dowry and not, as seems to have been more common among Rajput warriors, a gift of clothing and land to establish territorial bonds between brotherhoods (cf. Ziegler 1998: 261) further suggests that the poets of the late-medieval Pabuji tradition like Ladhraj were not interested in agricultural land or agrarian rights as narrative themes but mainly versified themes related to pastoral-nomadic life.[345] The fact that Jimda describes cattle as his trade (*vaipāra*) moreover suggests that Jimda, and perhaps Pabuji, were not only seen as warriors and cattle-thieves but also as cattle-keepers and perhaps traders in seventeenth-century Marwar.

The abiding interest of pastoral-nomadic concerns in seventeenth century poetry need not surprise us even though the late-medieval period is generally described as an era when Rajput kingdom formation led to the establishment of centralized rule, the consequent expansion of an agricultural economy and, as a result, the decrease of the pastoral-nomadic economy of the region. This view has been largely based on the historiography of eastern Rajasthan, which documents the process of kingdom formation in the fertile, rainfed fields of eastern regions like Mewar (Udaipur), Haroti and Ajmer and largely ignores or even glosses over the geographical background of western regions (cf. Chandra 1996: 230, Mukhia 1993: 204-15, Peabody 2003: 91-101). As was noted just now, the history of kingdom formation in the desert surrounding Marwar, Jaisalmer and Bikaner is different from processes elsewhere in Rajasthan. Likewise, the region's economy, unlike the agriculture-based economies of eastern Rajput kingdoms, remained largely pastoral-nomadic, which meant that cattle and trade remained the mainstay of the regional

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[344] *Duha* I (v. 70-71): "sāgara sīṃdha olāṃḍi, viṇa lekhai sāṃḍhī varaga. āṃṇe dai aṇabhaṃga, ramato dhāṃdhala rāvauta". This event is described in much more detail in the contemporary tradition (cf. Smith 1991: 385-86).

[345] Though cattle, horses and elephants were also given in dowry to arrange courtly Rajput marriages, they were (so to speak) "auxiliary" gifts and did not equal the importance accorded to them in the context of Pabuji's story in which the gift of the horse is pivotal to the dowy negotiations.

economy. In the infertile, rocky and sandy plains of the Thar Desert, agriculture was clearly not a durable survival strategy.

If and when the monsoon reached the vast expanse of sand and sand dunes, agriculture was possible to a limited extend. But for the greater part of the year, the region lived up to its local name "region of death" (Marusthali) since it was an area with dry warm winds, high temperatures and scarce (if any) rainfall. To the west of Jodhpur, towards Kolu and on to Jaisalmer, the yellow sand dunes further increased in volume in medieval times as, indeed, they continue to do today (cf. Tod 1972 I: 605). Late-medieval Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer were oasis among sandy plains where cattle and trade, not agriculture, remained the mainstay of a principally pastoral-nomadic economy.[346] Where wells could provide enough water, meagre harvests of desert crops like barley supplemented the desert inhabitant's diet.[347] However, not agriculture but trade provided the main income of Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner and smaller desert towns like Barmer or Phalodi. They were situated on important medieval trade routes connecting the South-Asian peninsula to Central Asia and, via Baluchistan, to the Middle East. Chapter 8 offers a further discussion of the pastoral-nomadic economy of the desert and of its chief trade centres.

### *Rajput-Afghan martial culture*

Regardless of the royal allure of the epithets used for Pabuji and despite the mention of Dhamdhal realms and forts, it seems to me that the Rathaur hero was in the first place portrayed as the quintessential early-medieval Rajput. Especially from the *chamd*s, *git* I and *duha* II, Pabuji emerges as an itinerant warrior who waged "wars", best described as small-scale conflicts, during looting expeditions and squabbles over the ownership of cows, horses and camels. The poets' choice of words in the *chamd*s and *duha* I does, however, direct us to imagine such small-scale conflicts, the upshot of encounters between rival groups of cattle-rustlers, in terms of daunting war scenes crowded by vast armies made up of combatants armed to the teeth, to make it appear that the hero was in charge of "armies" of horse-riders. This is particularly true of the portrayal in the *chamd*s of the imposing martial splendour of the rival Dhamdhal and Khici heroes, their armies, armament, armour, horses and elephants. On the whole, the poets' choice of words appears to connote a regular army or sizeable armed force except when in *chamd* I (v. 31) and *chamd* II (v. 68) Pabuji's army is also referred to as a group (*jūṭa*, *samuha*) perhaps referring to the

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[346] See, for example, Bharara (1994: 13), Deloche 1980: 237, Devra (1978: 582), East and Spate (1950: 54), Ludden (1994: 7f), Raychaudhuri and Habib (1982: 1), Tod (1972 I:171, II: 133, 154-158, 236, 500f, 554), Verma (1978: 115).

[347] Blanford (1876: 89) described how in the nineteenth-century Thar Desert "(w)hen rain falls, crops of bájri (Holcus spica) are raised. When rains fail, the population lives principally on the milk of cattle and on imported grain".

early-medieval Rajput-Afghan war band but, more probably, denoting a Rajput-Bhil band of warriors of more modest size and appearance. [348]

Explicit references to Rajput-Afghan aspects of the Marwar's military labor market in the Pabuji tradition could be understood from the poets' use of military terms and titles. Especially noteworthy in this regard is the idiom used to denote Pabuji's enemies. The poet's portrayal centered on Pabuji's army but he also included a description of Jimda and his men. In most of the selected compositions Jimda is referred to as a Rajput and receives several martial epithets that are accorded to Pabuji as well, for instance: *mūkhi* (leader), *jāyala rāva* (ruler of Jayal), *aṇabhaṃgo* (hero) from the Khici lineage (*kula khīcī*).[349] Jimda also figures as a Sambhari, a Chauhan Rajput from Sambhar and a Khici Rajput leader (*khīcīyāṃ nātha*) in *git* II.[350] But, interestingly, titles denoting Jimda's enemy status can also be traced to presumably Persian or shared Sanskrit/ Persian origins, like in *chamd* II where the Khici army is said to have been made up of Lodhi soldiers. Such a wording perhaps reflects Rajput-Afghan military culture, conceivably defining Jimda as a Sultanat Rajput subsidiary in charge of Lodhi soldiers. Judging from the fact that Afghans have been part of Rajput armies, and vice versa, this is not unlikely (cf. Kolff 1990: 57). It is perhaps a poetic instance that illustrates how in medieval times, both the titles Pathan and Rajput did not necessarily represent two mutually exclusive identities. A Muslim could acquire Rajput identity, and Rajput lineages, like the Muslim Qayam Khan Khici Rajput branch could, and did, convert to Islam (Nizami 1990: 315-316).[351] Another instance illustrating the ascription of Muslim identity to Pabuji's enemies is found in *duha* II where Pabuji is said to have fought enemy armies of Pathan (*Pathāṃṇa*), probably from Sindh.[352]

The poets' identification of Pabuji's adversaries should perhaps be read as primarily symbolic and not as literal references, for the poets employed identical "Hindu" titles for Jimda as they did for Pabuji, next to titles that rendered Jimda a Muslim or Pathan warrior. Thus, even though Jimda was at times pictured as a Muslim, a "foreign" (perhaps Lodhi) enemy, he was at the same time thought of as a Rajput warrior and ruler: a Chauhan Rajput from Sambhar as well as a Muslim or Hindu warrior of the Khici lineage and, conceivably, a Lodhi soldier. If the chosen wording can be understood as a reflection on Rajput-Afghan military culture in Marwar then (taking into account the other, differing epithets used for Khici) this

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[348] Words to describe the assembled forces in *chamd* I (verse-lines 20, 47, 48, 54, 58) like *tuṃga*, *sena* and *ghaṛa* seem to refer to regular armies. In *chamd* II (verse-lines 13, 26, 29, 61, 64, 66, 71, 83) such usage includes: *kaṭaka*, *dala*, *pauha*, *ghāṭa* and *thāṭa*.

[349] See: *duha* I (v. 89, 501), *chamd* I (v. 5,8, 11), *chamd* II (v. 3).

[350] *Git* II (v. 24-25): "jaṭhai paga thobhīyā saṃbharī jīmda. hāka suṇa khīcīyāṃ nātha naha hāliyau".

[351] As Thapar (1999: 78-80) has noted, the historical meaning of ethnic, geographical or cultural monikers for "foreigners", like (respectively) Turuksha, Yavana and Mleccha, varies according to the context in which they were used, thus reflecting a diversity of perceptions and not clearly delimited geographical, political and/or religious identities.

[352] *Duha* II (v.10): "pābū pāṛi paṭhāṃṇa, pāsi kamala paṛīyā pachau".

kind of word use seems to chiefly elucidate that it was not the enemy's Muslim or Afghan identity that set him apart but his outsider status. This status, seen from the perspective of the Dhamdhal Rathaur, apparently included Pathan and/or Lodhi soldiers, Chauhan Rajput and Sambhari Khici. The fact that neither Pabuji nor his army is ever in any of the studied poems included in the ranks of Muslim warriors suggests that, from the poets' point of view, there was a clear difference between Dhamdhal Rathaur "insiders" and all other warriors, including Pathan or Afghan outsiders.

As far as I can see, most poets appear to have employed chiefly Sanskritic and Marwari martial and military terms, at times used side-by-side with (presumably) Persian idiom.[353] Terms for military service reminiscent of the idiom of *naukarī* are mostly found in references to Pabuji's Bhil archers in *chamd* II where they are identified as Payak (Paik).[354] Payak denotes a servant but also refers to Naukar, (armed) foot soldiers, heroes and warriors. While Lalas (1961) traces Payak to Sanskrit *padāti* (foot soldier), McGregor (1993), on the other hand, cites Persian *paika* (footman, armed attendant, message bearer). The historical use of Payak perhaps reflects that it is possible to trace this martial title to Sanskrit as well as Persian origins for the title was in use during pre-Mughal and Mughal times as suggested by, for example, Bhadra (1998: 473-490) who distinguishes several classes termed Paik, like the Kandi Paik (archer) whose name can apparently be traced to *kandi* or *kar* ("arrow" in the north-eastern dialect of Kamrup). Bhadra (*ibid.*) also notes that the Paiks of kingdoms in north-eastern regions of the subcontinent served as archers and footmen after (but maybe also prior to) the seventeenth-century Mughal invasion of the region.[355]

In the *chamd*s, identical honorifics have been accorded to Bhil and Rajput warriors, in particular the honorific "Bhat", which denotes a hero and (foot) soldier and according to Lalas (1962-1988) is synonymous with the title Naukar. But only Bhils are referred to with the honorific "Payak" and this title is only used in *chamd* II. The words used in *chamd* II to describe arms and armoury are also noteworthy in this regard. Compared with the phrasings in the other studied poems, the poet of *chamd* II appears to have employed a distinct idiom particularly suggestive of a

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[353] It appears that terms for weaponry and armour change over time as they are used by different kinds of people and become part of the martial culture of different communities (Bhakari 1981: 92-121). It has proved difficult to establish whether words like *guraja* (mace or club) should be traced to Pharsi or Arabic *garz* (Lalas 1962-1988) or Hindi *garaja* (thunder) (McGregor 1993), or both. Similarly, *sāra*, which is translated as "*talavāra*" (sword) by Lalas and ascribed Sanskrit origins (*śara*), can also be traced to Persian *sara* (head, top, tip, arrow) by McGregor. Bhakari (1981: 96) notes that bows made of (S.) *śara* or "reed" were also known to the authors of the *Mahābhārat*.

[354] *Chamd* II (v. 49): "bhaṛa hekā heka vasekha bhaṛaṃ, pāradhī pāyaka pālha taṇa(ṃ)" and (v. 54): "[pāika āghaga] milai praghalaṃ, pāradhī lodhī ghāsa palaṃ". Other epithets employed for the Bhil will be discussed in the next chapter.

[355] Bhadra (1998: 473-490) also lists the Gharduwari Paik who combined archery with the occupation of elephant drivers. In addition, a distinction is made between low-class bowmen, the Karis Paiks of Kacch and Ahom, who were seen as lesser archers than the local, high-status Chamua archers.

Rajput-Afghan context.[356] Several words used in *chamd* II can ostensibly be traced to Arabic or Persian martial idioms, for example: *hukama, jarada*, *kamāna, khurasāṇī*, *phauja*.[357] The name Khurasani (*khurasāṇī*) accorded to blacksmiths who sharpened Pabuji's sword at the onset of battle apparently derives from the blacksmiths' place of origin Khorasan in eastern Iran. It is likely that the poet meant to refer to the Lohani Afghans of the same area who carried on trade between Kabul, Multan and north-western India since Babur's time and probably even earlier (Chetan Singh 1998: 437-39).[358] Though this subject clearly needs further study, it does seem to me that the vocabulary of *chamd* II (more than the idiom used by other poets) is indicative of the existence of a distinct, possibly Rajput-Afghan war vocabulary reminiscent of the idiom of *naukarī*. An impression which is bolstered by comparing the "mixed vocabulary" used in *chamd* II with the predominant use of Sanskritic, Avadhi and/or distinctive Marwari martial idiom in the other selected poems (*dala, chakarau*, *dhanaura, kataka, sanāha*, *sena*, and so forth).

### *Political and poetic grammars*

Upon studying the imagery employed by the poets, and relating this to what we know of early and late medieval history of Marwar, it has become clear that the warrior Pabuji represents a clear historical type, well-known from early and late medieval Marwari poetic and prose sources, i.e. a small-time warrior and cattle rustler. The poets' imagery documents several historical concerns, in particular martial warrior roles and the different political idioms used in early and late medieval Marwar. As we saw, the poets employ terms for martial and military service which are at times reminiscent of the idiom of *naukarī*. In particular the idiom used in *chamd* II proves to be suggestive of aspects of Rajput-Afghan military culture.

The above consideration of the poets' choice of words is interesting since it illustrates that the poets of the Pabuji tradition did not use martial epithets, political titles, and ethnic or geographical designations to represent unchangeable or fixed definitions of identity. It has become clear that, even in the late-medieval period, when Rajput and other identities are thought to have become more rigid, the roles

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[356] A few words of ostensible Persian origin have also been used by Ladhraj, like: *jalām*, *phauja* and *hukamī*. On the whole, however, Ladhraj (like most other poets whose work is reviewed here) appears to have used words for armies and battle equipment, which are for the most part traceable to Sanskritic, Avadhi and *deśi* ("desaj") origins.

[357] A linguistic analysis of the above-quoted word origins was not undertaken for this study, which is based solely on the dictionaries compiled by Lalas (1962-1988) and Mc. Gregor (1983) and descriptions of arms and armour by Bhakari (1981: 92-111), Sarkar (1984: 111-142) and Saxena (1989: 256-66).

[358] Interestingly, Khurasani has acquired a multiplicity of meanings in Marwari, many of which indicate people, animals and arms connected with warfare and hailing from Khorasan. For apart from smith, Khurasani has also come to mean: "sword", "foreigner", "Muslim", "horse", "arrow", bow", "army" and "Badshah" (Lalas 1962-1988).

and ranks ascribed to Pabuji and his companions continue to reflect a wide range of meanings and (self) perceptions, comparable to the way in which early-medieval ascribed Rajput status is described by Kolff (1990: *passim*) and Thapar (1999: 80). A noteworthy finding of my study of the *chamd*s, *duha*s and *git*s is that the word "Rajput" does not figure in any of these compositions. This does not imply, however, that the poets did not think of Pabuji as a Rajput, that is, a scion of the ruling Rathaur lineage since he is portrayed as a "prince" (*rāva-uta*), the son of King Dhamdhal and the offspring of one of the ruling lineages of Marwar, the Kherecau or Rathaur.[359] The absence of references to the title Rajput indicates that local definitions of warriorhood for Rajput warriors like Pabuji remained the primary poetic frame of reference. In this way, the poets' idiom adds yet other political and poetic grammars to existing terms, that is, a clearly local vocabulary, the use of which highlights that Marwar's warriors could be defined in several ways. This was done, most significantly, by references to their place of origin, lineage, realm, as can be read from titles like *khaṛecau, dhāṃdhala rāva-uta, kamadhaja*, *rāṭhavaṛa*. Second, Pabuji and his fellow protagonists were also ascribed titles, highlighting their martial prowess and war feats (*bhālāla, subhaṭa, vīra*, *pāla*, and so forth).

In the late medieval period the lack of references to Kshatriyahood becomes all the more significant if we consider the above-described theories about the use of the Agnikul myth to define Rajputhood in Brahminical terms. As we saw, the poets did not directly refer to the heroes as Kshatriya, or use Kshatriyahood as a frame of reference, except in *git* II, where Kshatriya *dharma* is straightforwardly defined as the protection of cattle. Considering the extent to which pastoral-nomadic concerns inform most selected poems, we may imagine that the poets commonly defined Kshatriyatva in terms of the protection of cattle and not in terms of agricultural land or the protection of realms.

The poetic data do not give a clear idea of the above-documented typology of the late-medieval "pure blooded" Rajput noble. The lack of references to Kshatriyahood and stories like the birth of Rajput warriors from the sage Vashista's fire, in an attempt to redefine late-medieval Rajput status in Brahminical terms, indicates that the Agnikul myth was not a major source of inspiration for the poets of the Pabuji tradition (cf. Brockington 1998: 427). This finding perhaps also accounts for the fact that Brahmin protagonists have no role to play in the medieval Pabuji tradition. The poets remain completely silent on this subject. One neither reads about Brahmin protagonists, nor does one come across any references to the socially privileged position of Brahmin communities in the medieval society of Mawar. This is not to say that Brahmin traditions had no part to play in the history of the region, but it does mean that the poets of Pabuji's poems accorded no (narrative) importance to them. A finding which (as shall be discussed further in

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[359] The literal meaning of *rāva uta* does, of course, correspond to the literal meaning of *rāja putra* (Rajput). Both titles signify "son (of) (a) king", i.e. a prince.

chapter 8 on Charan history) is not surprising considering that the roles Charan poets ascribed to themselves included roles claimed by Brahmin courtiers.

Late-medieval concerns can be read from the poems' references to the Dhamdhal's kingly status and realm and, secondly, from their portrayal of the changing relations between Rajput warriors and Bhil warriors. As noted just now, references to Pabuji's royal stature do not appear to include invocations of the Agnikul myth and seldom refer to the Kshatriya status. The variable roles ascribed to Pabuji's Bhil companions are documented by comparing the Bhil martial roles as evoked in *chamd* II and the portrayal of Bhil warriors, thieves *and* priests in *duha* I and the *parvaro*. Especially, the conflicts between the Bhil priests of Pabuji's temples and "impious" Rajput warriors as evoked in the *parvaro* underline the changing relations between Rajput warriors and their former allies, the Bhil archers (as evoked in *chamd* II). These sixteenth or seventeenth century circumstances do appear to offer an example of less open and more stratified socio-political identities which could illustrate that the relations between "little Rajputs" and Rajputizing classes, on the one hand, and the upper echelons of ruling Rajput elites, on the other, were strained. In the next chapter (7), the socio-political identity and status of Pabuji's Bhil warriors will be studied in more detail.

*Memorial stone dedicated to Pabuji's Bhil archers at the Kolu temple.*

# 7 Warriors, Robbers and Priests

The historical context of the Pabuji tradition has thus far been presented in terms of a world inhabited by great and little Rajput warriors. Now I will look at the historical roles accorded to Pabuji's early-medieval comrades-in-arms, and his late-medieval priests, the Bhil. An analysis of the way in which the Bhil were praised in some of the poems (in particular *chamd* II) or were, alternatively, almost entirely excluded from compositions (like from *chamd* I and some of the *gits*) offers yet another way to gauge aspects of the medieval context of narrative poetry about Pabuji. With the following study of what is known of the history of the Bhil of Marwar, I also hope to answer questions regarding the different aspects of Pabuji's deification, in particular the question why Pabuji has been deified while other Rathaur heroes were not, even though their stories closely resemble the nucleus of tales (i.e. their death in a battle over cattle) told about Pabuji and other Rajput folk gods. The most suggestive illustration of the poetic and historical role ascribed to Pabuji's Bhil companions is offered by the poet's portrayal of the relation between Pabuji and his archers in *chamd* II. As I hope to show, the representation of the Bhil in *chamd* II adds yet another poetic and political grammar to the known military "sociolects" of medieval Rajasthan, i.e. the "Payak register" relating to Bhil warriors while other aspects of this Marwari idiom are reminiscent of the earlier-described *naukarī* tradition.

### *Bhil*

I shall begin with a summary of what is known of early and late medieval Bhil history in western Rajasthan. The title "Bhil" (like the title Rajput) has not been used in any of the texts under review. My usage of "Bhil" in this study is based on the self-image of some contemporary Bhil who trace their ancestry to the bowmen in Pabuji's army. From anthropological data, it appears that "Bhil" might be traceable to Sanskrit *bhilla*: "a barbarian of a particular tribe", and to Prakrit *Abhīr*, with a similar meaning (Koppers 1948: 23, 27). Bhil is also traced to Tamil *bil* (bow) pointing up the Bhil's superior archery skills and tracing their ancestry to Eklavya, a Bhil who is thought to have outdone Arjuna with his aptitude for the use of bow and arrow (Koppers 1948: *ibid*.). Likewise, Valmiki, the poet to whom has been ascribed the composition of some versions of the *Rāmāyaṇ*, is thought of as a Bhil bandit (Vail) who (upon repenting his lawless way of life) received the blessings of Saraswati, the goddess of learning, and was thus enabled to versify Ram's adventures. From anthropological literature it appears that Bhil identity, like early-medieval Rajputhood, may have been a rather "open" category since a Bhil can be seen as belonging to a group of people from different backgrounds all of whom

describe themselves as Bhil. Werz-Kovacs (1982: 23f), for example, holds that Bhil is not a "tribal" name, because the people who are commonly classed "Bhil" form neither clearly definable linguistic, racial, nor cultural communities. Instead, she proposes, Bhil should be evaluated as an ascribed, generic title for several "altindischen Stämmen" who were classed Bhil by "culturally advanced" people like the Rajput after they subjected the Bhil to their rule (Werz-Kovacs 1982: *ibid.*).

Today, Bhil is most often defined as an "ethnic" and/or caste name, and contemporary Bhil "castes" are classed as "scheduled tribes" in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh. In an attempt to emancipate Bhil and like communities from past and present stereotyping, they are also referred to with names like *ādivāsī* (indigenous people), *girijan* (hill or mountain people) or *vanavāsī* (forest-dwellers).[360] But, such labels are often based on, to my mind, out-dated perceptions of racial differences between Rajput and non-Rajput groups, and are thus often used to further feelings of racial and cultural superiority by people who set apart "backward tribals" from "superior Aryan races". This construct can also be read from the reports of British travellers, ethnographers and administrators who aided the dissemination of racial definitions which till date inform portrayals of the Bhil of Rajasthan as "dark-skinned, short and ugly" and originating from "aboriginal", Dravidian, Austric or other "Non-Aryan" forefathers.[361] This portrayal most commonly serves to underline the superiority of the allegedly light-skinned, tall "Aryan race" (or caste) like Rajput warriors. Several of the few available "modern" studies about Bhil are still partly based on nineteenth-century racial theories. Wilhelm Koppers's 1940s research (*Die Bhil in Zentralindien*), for instance, includes a section on Bhil physiology ("körperliche Eigentümlichkeiten") for which Koppers extensively quotes nineteenth-century colonial administrators and ethnographers, in particular the medical officer of the Mewar Bhil regiment, Hendley. According to the conventional ethnographic practice of his days, Hendley studied Bhil physiology and measured the skulls of Bhil men to compare unfavourably their appearance to that of "The Hindu" and thus emphasize the perceived differences between "Aryan people" and "non-Aryan tribes" (Koppers 1948: 34).[362]

Keeping in mind the discriminatory usage of terms like "Bhil" and "tribal", it is good to note here that in referring to the Bhil as "tribal" in the below study of the historical and poetic portrayal of the medieval Bhil, I adhere to Thapar's (1999:142) non-racial use of the word and understand "tribal" as a socio-economic term

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[360] These appellations, denoting a community's socio-political identity and geographical spread, have caused offence to some Bhil writers who argue that such titles continue to brand them as primitive, backward, illiterate and/or criminal peoples.

[361] See *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1908: 101), Koppers (1948: 34), M. H. Singh (1891: 57), Tod (1972 II: 141, 248).

[362] Tod (1972 I: 8f) describes the Bhil and Mair as mountaineers and the "aboriginal tribes" and "wild races" of Rajasthan. However, some Bhil were able warriors because, Tod (*ibid.*) imagined, their progeny "may have been improved by the infusion of Rajpoot blood".

indicating the life-style of communities like lineage-based hunter-gatherers, slash-and-burn cultivators and warriors. In medieval Rajasthan, the Bhil are thought to have been hunter-gatherers and warriors who had their realms or territories in the hilly tracts of the Aravallis and the desert tracts of western Rajasthan and Sindh (Burton 1852: 323, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* 1908: 86, Tod 1972 I: 181f, II: 283). Few historical data seem to have been preserved that document the early-medieval history of the Bhil in Marwar. And it appears that legendary tales about Bhil pre-eminence in the region are no longer part of either oral or written contemporary Bhil traditions in Marwar since, as contemporary Bhil priests told me, the early-medieval period is "too long ago to remember". However, some tales about early Bhil-Rajput relations have been recorded from which it appears that Bhil and similar communities like the Meda and Mer were part of Rajput armies and marriage alliances in the early stages of kingdom formation (Chattopadhyaya 1994: 186, Tod 1972 I: 539, II: 347f). Some Bhil are also known to have held high positions at Rajput courts (Tod 1972 II: 141). Marriage alliances between Bhil and Rajput families till today serve to authenticate the claims of Bhilala, Gola or the semi-nomadic Girasiya to Rajput *aṃś* (essence), tracing their ancestry to Rajput forefathers (M.H. Singh 1995: 376, Srivastava 1994: 591f, Tod 1972 I: 539, II: 248, 283).

Yet other tales narrate how Rajput warriors "were implacable enemies" of the Bhil, hunting them down and killing them mercilessly until the last century, "taking the best lands from them and pushing them back into the barren stony hills of Western-India" (Fuchs 1973: 191 as quoted in Werz-Kovacs 1982: 28). Stories abound about Rajput warriors who, upon fleeing from rival forces, found refuge with hunter-gatherers and pastoral-nomadic peoples (Tod 1972 I: 272, II: 325). After enjoying their hospitality, the bonds between non-Rajput and Rajput parties were either consolidated for centuries to come, or ended in the subjugation of Bhil hosts by their Rajput guests (Tod 1972 I: 236f, 548, II: 178-181, 372f, 252). One such story is the nineteenth-century version of a tale about the sixth-century Rajput Guha (or Goha) and the Bhil "Mandalica" as described by Tod (1972 I: 180f). This tale evokes the friendship between the "Guhilote" Rajput Guha of Lahore and "the chief of the savage race of Bhil" Mandalika, the ruler of Edur in southern Rajasthan (Tod 1972 I: 181). Guha, fleeing from "barbarous Scytians", was granted refuge in Edur. He became a friend of the Bhil who in due course elected him their king, after which Guha murdered Mandalika reportedly without reason since the latter had already acknowledged Guha as the new ruler of Edur, or so the story goes. This and similar tales adequately illustrate the volatile power relations between communities like the Bhil and Rathaur Rajput warriors which, after the latter gained ascendancy in Marwar, are customarily defined in terms of the subjection of Bhil, Mina and other communities to Rajput rule.[363]

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[363] See also Pangarhia (1988: 33-38), Rousselet (1983: 240), Tod (1972 I: 136f, 241f, 539; II: 9, 17, 137-143, 170, 241, 282, 299-301, 348,372f).

### *Unruly tribes*

The dominant Rajput brotherhoods did, however, have some difficulties in keeping their tribal "subjects" (as the Bhil and others are defined in nineteenth and twentieth century sources) subjugated. This can be understood from the fact that many non-Rajput communities continued to voice their claims to an autonomous status until well into the twentieth century (Radhakrishna 2000: *passim*, Tod I: 9, 538-543, II: 241, 247, 283). From colonial sources it becomes evident that the Bhil and other communities, like the Koli, Meo, Meda, Mer and Mina, did not perceive their status in terms of subjection. In particular the tribes of Shekawati, Mewar, Mewat and Marwar were rather independent minded. Here autonomous tribes held sway over most of the roads. Although Mughal emperors are known to have sent guards to protect their officials on their way through these regions, this could not protect their caravans and camps from raids (Bernier 1934: 208). This is hardly surprising for, upon reading the account of the Dutch traveller Francisco Pelsaert (1979: 307f), it becomes clear that local officials would conspire at letting robbers have their way on the road as these officers too wished to share in the proceedings of the, in the eyes of the Mughal and Rajput authorities, "unlawful" extraction of transit dues.[364]

In addition, the nineteenth-century Bhil of Mewar remained capable of denying travellers passage through their territories. Tod (1972 I: 8 n.5), on a journey through erstwhile Rajputana, first had to procure the arrow of a local Bhil headman, by way of travel-permit, before being able to continue on his way. The fact that many Rajput rulers only managed to collect taxes from the Bhil by force, if at all, also points up how "unruly tribes" continued to be a force to be reckoned with. The same can be said of the tribal Mina of Ajmer, known as tireless "robbers" from the twelfth till the nineteenth century, whose historical role was described as follows by Tod (1972 I: 539f): "Like all mountaineers, they of course broke out whenever the hands of power were feeble". The ruling Sisodiya clan of Mewar also remained apprehensive about the menace posed by the "marauding barbarous tribes of Bhils, Mérs, and Meenas", who threatened to overrun Rajput estates from the southern, eastern, and western hills bordering Mewar (Tod 1972 I: 116). Some Bhil chiefs, moreover, managed to hold sway in forts and played a not unimportant role in late-medieval power struggles: "All (mountaineers) rose to power from the common occupations of plunderers aided by the national jealousies of the Rajpoots. If the chieftains of Méwar leagued to assault the mountaineers, they found refuge and support in Marwar; and as their fortresses at all times presented a sanctuary, their Rawuts or leaders obtained consequence amongst all parties by granting it (Tod 1972 I: 541)."

Bhil and other tribal communities, branded "bandits", "unruly tribes" and "robber-peasantry" in Rajput courtly and British colonial sources, evidently remained powerful enough to contest assertions of sovereignty as put forward by their self-proclaimed Rajput, Mughal and British overlords. Few sources appear to

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[364] *Imperial Gazetteer* (1908: 36f, 86f, 221, 241, 288); Malcolm (1827: 87f); Rousselet (1983: 240), Tod (1972 I: 143 n.2, 541, II: 255).

be available for a description of this aspect of Bhil history in Marwar. But I imagine that in the nineteenth century, after most Rajput ruling houses signed a "peace treaty" with the British, the political position of the Bhil tribes of Marwar (like that of Bhil elsewhere in Rajasthan) changed considerably. Of the Bhil of Mewar, who enjoyed a "semi-independent" status under the Maharanas of Mewar, it is known that they became the subject of British and Mewari "pacification campaigns", from 1818 onwards (Chundawat Singh 1983: 92-99). It seems that the Rajput rulers of Mewar tried to suppress the Bhil with the help of the British, who came to the Rajput's aid since they feared that unrest would spread to other tribal territories within the colonial domain.

The tension between Bhil, on the one hand and Rajput and British parties, on the other, escalated when the British started to undertake census activities which, the Mewar Bhil suspected, served to mark Bhil men for recruitment in the British army and to levy more taxes on them. The recording of the name, age and marital status of Bhil women by British administrators was also greatly resented. When, subsequently, the Mewar rulers attempted to take over the control of the roads through Bhil *pal*s (villages), the Bhil violently resisted what they saw as an encroachment upon ancient rights, citing centuries-old agreements between Bhil and Mewar rulers that gave the Bhil the right to levy *bolai* and *rekhwali* taxes on the Udaipur-Kherwara road (Chundawat Singh 1983: 95).[365] In the period between 1868 and 1879, this led to a policy of violent repression in order to "settle" Bhil territories in Mewar.

In other parts of Rajasthan too, Bhil and Mina assertions of autonomy inspired "uprisings" against the British policy of "pacification" aimed at restraining Bhil and Mina communities. In 1908, the colonial administrators are believed to have reason to fear the aforementioned communities' ambitions to form a separate "state" within territories the British claimed as their own and employed a (to Pangarhia's (1988: 33f) mind) "disproportionate amount of violence" to bring the uprising to an end.

Bhil resistance to being "pacified" earned them the administrative title of "criminal tribes". As Lloyd (2007: 369f) remarks regarding the bureaucratic classification of Indian communities as "criminal" by British colonizers: this label was informed by British fears about potential resistance to or evasion of colonial governance.[366] Though this kind of labelling still catches the imagination of some

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[365] The unrest had several other causes which illustrate the changing standing of Bhil in Rajasthan, as can be understood, for instance, from stories about non-Mewar mercenary soldiers (Pathans) that were employed by the Sisodiya rulers of Mewar, who set up money lending businesses and reportedly charged the Bhil exorbitant interest rates, upon which the Bhil killed several Pathans. Mewar officials retaliated by destroying Bhil villages (Chundawat Singh 1983: 95f).

[366] The "criminalization" of peoples was not an exclusively colonial affair. In the *Khatoota Ahala Karana* (1992: 14f, 88, 111), covering Rajput correspondences in the period 1633 to 1769, for example, the right to collect taxes from travellers through their domains, as claimed by minor Rajput Thakurs, was listed as extortions and robbery. The activities of Bhil and other non-Rajput groups received similar labels. See also Gupte (1917: 4) who describes Bhil as Kings of the Forest, accomplished archers and "awfully crooked" men to deal with.

contemporary scholars and politicians, it does not appear to have been internalized by its target communities.[367] Research into the oral traditions of the Meo of Mewat, for instance, documents that this tribe did not think of their activities in terms of robbery but in terms of a duty accomplished: "In the darbar of Delhi, Shah Jahan was the ruler of Hindustan. His horses, loaded with gold, were passing by Ajangarh. The Pahat Meos learnt of this. In those days in the Pahat Meo *pal* of 210 villages there were many brave warriors who used to challenge kings, all twenty four hours. This was their duty (Marayam 1994: 24)". Accordingly, I think that descriptions of the "rebellious raiding activities of bandits" or, depending on which sources one consults, "the heroic accomplishment of their duty by brave warriors" are best understood as illustrations of the way in which non-Rajput groups continued to claim autonomy in opposition to attempts to subject them by ruling Rajput communities and colonial administrators. In this context, it is good to mention Mayaram's 1997 and 2004 studies of Meo oral traditions, which she describes as "a form of oppositional practice" against "statist" Indo-Persian representation in court chronicles of Meo resistance to revenue collection. Indo-Persian claimants to imperial power generally represented Meo resistance as a criminal and/or rebellious act to undermine what was construed as the legitimate assertion of dominance by Lodhi or Mughal parties. British administrative practices followed a similar imperial strategy to uphold the image of colonial administrators as the legitimate defenders of order and justice against the "criminal insurgence" of obdurate "subjects".

### *Bhat, Paradhi and Payak*

By examining the roles ascribed to Pabuji's companions in the selected poetry sources, I aim to demonstrate that the concerns noted in the above summary of what is known of early and late medieval Bhil history in western Rajasthan are also part of the Marwari poetic tradition. As can be read from chapter 3, the poets of the selected poems ascribed rather different roles to the Bhil. The poet of *chamd* II evoked the Bhil as heroic warrior-archers and Pabuji's loyal companions. In *duha* I, the Bhil are portrayed as dark, godlike beings, imposing warriors *and* thieves. And in the *parvaro*, the Bhil are depicted as the drum-playing priests and devotees of Pabuji who possess the gift to ritually cure ailments. The Bhil are not at all mentioned by the poets of most *git*s and *duha* II. Only in *git* II, the Bhil have been accorded a minor part, since two Bhil warriors (Camda and Damai) are mentioned in passing. The poets' different ways of portraying the Bhil will be studied below with a closer look at the roles accorded to them in the *chamd*s, *duha*s, *parvaro* and *git*s.

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[367] After the repeal of the *Criminal Tribes Act* in 1952, "criminal castes" became "denotified". Since then these communities are officially classed "denotified tribes". In practice, however, they are still often referred to as "criminal tribes". And, as d'Souza (2000: *passim*) points out, they are still commonly thought of as "congenital criminals" or "criminal ethnic groups" with "criminal instincts". See also Freitag (2001: 55).

The portrayal of Pabuji's army made up of Rajput and Bhil warriors in *chamd* I only indirectly evokes the Bhil by referring to them as "140 brave heroes"; their warrior role is not expanded upon. In *chamd* II, on the other hand, the poet praised their war skills at length and also specified the names of the Bhil warriors and their virtues and battle deeds. This point is of note because these details have not been considered worthy of mention by most of the other poets, except (but only cursorily so) by Barhat Amardas, who briefly mentioned two Bhil warriors (Camda and Damai) in *git* II. Though he said little about their standing in this short composition, it is nevertheless clear that Amardas accorded leadership and heroic valour to Camda and Damai for they are said to have brought along "their army of 140 Bhil warriors" who all "proved their worth in battle" (*git* II: 37-40).

To my mind, the versification of Bhil heroism in *chamd* II is expressive of the same kind of unreserved admiration as the poets' usually accorded to Rajput warriors. For Pabuji's Bhil archers were introduced halfway through *chamd* II (v.42) following a detailed description of Pabuji and his Rajput soldiers' war preparations followed by a separate account of the battle deeds and valour of Pabuji's Bhil warriors, an account that takes up a significant part of the narrative. The admiring tone employed to describe the Bhil in *chamd* II is most pronounced in verse-lines 42-55, 67 and 92-94:

42. bha-u pālha taṇā pārādha bhaṛaṃ, āghā anabhaṃga jhisā anaṛa(ṃ)
43. varīyāma sa(ṃ)grāma jhihā(ṃ)ma va(ṃ)pe, kīyā tili kaṃdīla su cīla kape
44. dhaṇahāla bāṃhāla jhāṃṭāla dhayaṃ,[368] haṭhīyāla laṃkāla trikāla hayaṃ
45. macharāla khaigāla rosāla mane, vikarāla ghaḍāla ja kālavanai[369]
46. ḍhiṃcāla bhuṃjāla suḍrāla dhayaṃ, sātavīsai sura saghīra sayaṃ
47. suhaṛāṃ caṃdīyau iṇa rūpa sajhe, mila pūnima caṃda ni kṣatra[370] majhai
48. khākhu pemala khaṃdhāra khalai, vagavālata vīsala vīsa valai
49. bhaṛa hekā heka vasekha bhaṛaṃ, pāradhī pāyaka pālha taṇa(ṃ)
50. hūyā sātavīse sātha heka manaṃ, dhana dhana narapati dhana dhana(ṃ)[371]
51. dhāṃdhala samau bhrama dhuṃha dhaṛai, khata māragi pālha turaṃga khaṛai
52. bhaṛa pā-ila meha la bhīṃca bhalā, jhilīyā paṃthi pādhari jujhakalā[372]
53. dhara dhūjati[373] [*pāī dhanakha dharaṃ, karajoḍa kadāla kha-uga*[374]*karaṃ*

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[368] Unclear. Perhaps: *ghayaṃ*, *thayaṃ*. Alliterative rules suggest: *dhayaṃ*.

[369] The word *kāla* is followed by a hyphen, which reportedly served to connect it with *vanai*.

[370] Unclear. Perhaps: *kritra*.

[371] Unclear. Perhaps: *dhane*. End-rhyme suggests: *taṇa(ṃ)* (v. 49) *and dhana(ṃ)* (v.50).

[372] Unclear. Perhaps: *jujha(ṃ)ka(ṃ)lā*.

[373] The word *dhūjati* followed by an insert-sign, probably referring to the verse-lines scribbled in the top-margin of the manuscript, which reads: "pāī dhanakha dharaṃ, karajoḍa kadāla kha-ugakaraṃ, pā-ika āghaga". By inserting this verse-line in v. 53 and v. 54, which read "Dhara dhuja ti milai praghalaṃ, pāradhī lodhī ghāsa palāṃ", the first letters of all the last and first words of the half-lines of both verse-lines achieve alliteration: *Dhara dhuja ti-( pāī dhanakha dharaṃ, karajoḍa kadāla kha-uga karaṃ), (pā-ika āghaga) milai praghalaṃ, pāradhī lodhī ghāsa palāṃ*. The poet may have also meant to achieve end-

54. *pāika āghaga*] milai praghalaṃ, pāradhī lodhī ghāsa palaṃ
55. levā sraga ārati praba ladhai, vāhasūvāṃ pālha pramāṇa vadhai

67. samarī gaṇī pāradhīye savare, kīyā kuṃḍala rāha ganāma karai

92. vi(ṃ)ḍhi pā(ṃ)ṇa samaṃpe dhena vaṛai, caṃdīyai riṇa nāmau caṃda caṛai
93. lo(ṃ)hāṃ baliyā vaka sraga lahe, riṇa khāṃkhu pemala sati rahai
94. kīyā pāradhīyai kali nāma[375] kathaṃ, sātavīsai siṃdhā pāla sathaṃ

In these verse-lines, the poet pays tribute to Pabuji's Bhil fighters by describing them as fearsome Paradhi combatants "decked out like the great warrior Yam". And he recites the warriors' matchless qualities one by one, listing the names of Camda, the chief-in-command of the Bhil archers Khamku, Pemal, Khamdhar, Visal, Pail and Mehal.[376] Camda is most splendidly adorned of all the Bhil warriors for "he shines (like) the full moon amidst stars" (*chamd* II, v. 47).[377] The 140 Bhil archers never weary of battle and continue to display courage even while vultures crowd the battlefield to devour fallen warriors, picking at their eyes with their sharp beaks.[378] The Paradhi army confronts Jimda's soldiers, here referred to as Lodhi warriors, and attack time and again hoping thus to fulfil their desire "to obtain heaven" (*chamd* II, v. 54). Together the seven Bhil and their archers make up an impressive army that, once on the move, shakes the earth. The weapons most commonly ascribed to the Bhil is the bow though the poet also has them wield swords[379] and "arms to strike and throw with" (*chamd* II, v. 53: *karajoḍa*). Loyalty is yet another heroic quality ascribed to the Bhil as can be understood from the fact that the warriors Khamkhu and Pemal die side-by-side with Pabuji and thus attain a well-deserved place in

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rhyme for after inserting the verse-lines from the top-margin, the last words of all half-lines end with *aṃ* (*āṃ*).

[374] Unclear. Perhaps: *kharaga*.

[375] Unclear. Perhaps: *nāḍā*.

[376] Some of the names for the Bhil archers can be seen as epithetical references for they could be translated as "Moon" (Camda), "Heroic Man" (Khamku), "Loved One" (Pemal), "Powerful" (Visal). The meaning of the names Pail, Mehal and Khamdhar are less clear to me. Perhaps Mehal denotes Mahal ("palace") while Khamdhar possibly translates as "Swordfighter".

[377] Listings of Pabuji's Bhil warriors' names commonly differ. In Nainsi's *Khyāt* (Sakariya 1993:58-79), the Bhil have been listed as Camda, Devo, Khapu, Pemalo, Khalmal, Khamgharo and Casal. Tessitori (1916:110) mentions Khakhu, Khemalo and Vasalo. And Smith (1991: 493, n.8) notes the existence of nine retainers, including the Bhil warrior Dembho (Dambo) and a Rebari retainer named Hariyo or Harmal.

[378] *Chamd* II (v. 43): "varīyāma sa(ṃ)grāma jhihā(ṃ)ma va(ṃ)pe, kīyā tili kaṃdīla su cīla kape". The meaning of this couplet is ambiguous. It could perhaps be read as a portent of the Bhil's heroic death when they fall prey to vultures. It seems to me, however, that the verse-line was meant to underscore the bravery of the Bhil who fight on even while vultures devour dead warriors.

[379] If *kha-uga* (v. 53) can be read as *kharaga*.

Indra's heaven (*chamd* II, v. 93-94).[380] Pabuji's commander-in-chief Camda also dies in battle thus adding glory to his name (*chamd* II, v. 92).

In the selected poems, dissimilar epithets are accorded to the Bhil in a way somewhat comparable to the portrayal of the earlier-studied Rajput titles, for the epithets connote different aspects of Bhil identities, including different occupational roles and geographic and religious identity. For example, epithets which refer to Bhil martial status include epithets they share with Rajput warriors like *bhaṭa*, *subhaṭa*, *bhaṛa*, *bhaṛabhīca*, *trikāla*, *laṃkāla*, *pāyaka*. Their war feats are suggested with epithets like those accorded to Rajputs (and discussed above) including *hathiyāla* and *jujhalā*. Their weapons, chiefly bow and arrow, warrant titles like *dhuniyāla* and *dhanakh* (both denoting "archer"). Other appellations designate imagined or real places of origin (*pāradhī*, *āharī*), divine qualities and/or skin-colour (*saṃvāla*), their thieving reputation (*thorī*) and, lastly, their role as healers and priestly performers (*Bhopa*). The designation "Bhil", like the title Rajput, does not figure in any of the studied poems.

The most interesting epithet accorded to the Bhil is Payak (*pāyaka)* in *chamd* II, a word which has been traced to Sanskrit *padāti* (foot soldier) by Lalas (1962-1988) and to Persian *paika* (footman, armed attendant, message bearer) by McGregor (1993).[381] Payak denotes a servant, but also refers to Naukar or (armed) foot soldiers, heroes and warriors and is reminiscent of the idiom of *naukarī*. It is an epithet employed only by the poet of *chamd* II and solely to refer to Pabuji's Bhil warriors. The poets of both *chamd*s accorded identical honorifics, denoting a hero or (foot) soldier (like "Bhat") to Bhil *and* Rajput warriors. The exclusive usage of the Payak for Bhil in *chamd* II suggests that its poet saw it as an epithet reserved for Bhil archers. In *chamd* II, the title "Payak" occurs in conjunction with Paradhi (*pāradhī pāyaka*). The poet explicitly asserted that "The Pardiya (are) the (loyal) Payak of the protector (Pabuji)".[382] Today Paradhi in the first place connotes a hunter or fowler (McGregor 1993), while Lalas (1962-1988) also lists the meaning "armed attendant", specially a bowman. The third meaning given by Lalas is simply "Bhil" and his last-listed meaning describes a Paradhi as a person who "strikes from a hiding place", conceivably like a hunter or robber lying in wait for his prey. Koppers (1948: 28, 117), on the other hand, thought of Paradhi (Pardee) as a regional Bhil clan and caste name.[383] It seems that Paradhi communities know

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[380] In ambiguous verse-lines (*chamd* II. v. 60-61, 68-71, 79-82) the Bhil also seem to figure as protectors (*vāhasūvā*), heroic men (*dhāṛīta narāṃ*), lords of cattle (*dheṇa dhanī*) and warriors (*bhaṛa*), but it is not always clear whether the poet meant to refer to the Bhil, Pabuji, or both, when he composed these lines.

[381] *Chamd* II (c. 43): "pāla tanā pāradhīyā pāyaka".

[382] *Chamd* II (v. 49): "bhaṛa hekā heka vasekha bhaṛaṃ, pāradhī pāyaka pālha taṇa(ṃ)".

[383] Paradhi "sub-castes" are listed as Fase-Paradhi, Gav-Paradhi, Berad-Paradhi, Gay-Paradhi, Chita-Paradhi by Jamanadas (www.ksafe.com, 2005). The idea that Paradhi should be seen as a caste name is contradicted by present-day missionary sources about contemporary Paradhi, which describe them as an "isolated" and "unusual" group of people who, unlike other Bhil clans, have remained largely outside regional caste hierarchies till date (*ibid*.).

several "sub-castes", all of which share three surnames, that is Chauhan, Pawar and Solanki, all of which suggest Rajput ancestry. Koppers traced the name Paradhi to Marathi *paradha* ("hunt") and accordingly described the Paradhi of Jhabua and Kushalgarh (Rajasthan) as a "caste" of hunters who used nets to catch their prey. The Gujarati Paradhi were known to him as a "wandering tribe of fowlers". Nowadays the Paradhi are classified as "migratory Bhil" who speak one of the many Bhil "languages" (Pardhi) and live throughout Maharashtra and Kacch (or Kutch) in Gujarat, earning their keep as hunters of birds and small game, snake charmers, basket weavers and producers of black-stone bowls and pitchers (www.ksafe.com).

The Bhil are referred to as Dhanakh (*chamd* II, v.53) a title traced to Sanskrit Dhanurdhar ("bowman") by Lalas (1962-1988).[384] Though they are most commonly described as fighting with bows and arrows, the Bhil have also been portrayed (in verse-line 53) as wielders of swords and slinging weapons or daggers.[385] Pabuji's Rajput warriors are, on the other hand, at all times evoked as the wielders of swords and spears in *chamd* II and the other poems under review. While the use of the epithet Dhanak is straightforward in *chamd* II, the usage of bow and arrows, usually ascribed to the Bhil, is not always as clear like in verse-line 70 of *chamd* II in which it is not altogether obvious whether the poet describes Bhil archers and Pabuji, or only Pabuji, when he versified how the "Spearwielder" (Pabuji) tore apart his enemy with deep incisions, probably of his spear, and the enemies armour and arm shields were torn apart by arrowheads shot by Pabuji or his Bhil warriors.[386] Though this lack of clarity could be the result of chronologic confusion, it is nevertheless interesting to note that Rajput warriors like Pabuji were perhaps seen as wielders of bows and arrows *and* wielders of swords and spears by some poets. Conversely, the above instance could also suggest that Bhil archers and foot soldiers were at times evoked as wielding spears. This and other occurrences (discussed below) give reason to imagine that Pabuji, in the mind of the poet of *chamd* II, may have figured as a bowman and had more in common with his Paradhi archers than the traditional divide between Rajput and Bhil identity suggests.

Another instance that appears to highlight correspondences between particular Rajput and Bhil martial identities can be found in *chamd* I when the poet portrays Pabuji and/or the Bhil as young warriors who fight with bow and arrow in verse-line 39: "kaṭi tuṃṇa kabāṇa suṃbāṃṇa kasai, dhari pāṃṇa su(ṃ)bāṃṇa javāṃṇa dhasai(ṃ)". Depending on whether *javāṃṇa* should be interpreted here as a plural form or not, this verse-line may be interpreted as "They place the arrow(s) (from) the arrowholder(s) (around) (their) waist (upon) (their) bow(s); holding the arrow(s) in (their) hand(s), the young warrior(s) enter(s) (the fight)". If *javāṃṇa* is read as a singular form, the verse-line may be interpreted as "They place the arrow(s) (from) the arrowholder(s) (around) (their) waist (upon) (their) bow(s). Holding the arrow(s)

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[384] Shekavat (1968: 36, n.40) translates *dhānaṃk* as "dhānake yoddhā" and "nāyak jāti ke vīr".
[385] *Chamd* II (v. 53): "dhara dhūjati pāī dhanakha dharaṃ, karajoḍa kadāla kha-uga karaṃ".
[386] *Chamd* II (v.70): "phara phāṛi sanāha sabāha phaṛaṃ, bhaloṛaṃ bha(ṃ)bhāra bheda(ṃ)ta bhaṛaṃ".

in (his) hand, the young warrior enters (the fight)". Either way, this instance is of interest because the Bhil are not normally referred to with "Javan", a title which appears to have been reserved for Pabuji in the selected sources since he is believed to have been a young boy when he took up arms.[387] Likewise, though Pabuji is commonly depicted as a young warrior, he is not usually portrayed as fighting with bow and arrows. Other reasons to imagine that the roles attributed to Pabuji and the Bhil were not as disparate as they may seem are the connotations of the epithets chosen for the Bhil archers which, as mentioned just now, are shared by both Rajput and Bhil protagonists in *chamd* II and illustrate that Rajput-like heroism was at times attributed to the Bhil bowmen.

My impressions can to some extent be the result of the fact that, as noted before, it is not always clear which combatant or army makes which move in either *chamd* I or *chamd* II. Especially from the battle descriptions in the latter composition it is at times difficult to establish who fights with what weapons or which epithet is used for whom. Yet, the poet's choice of words in the *chamd* II does appear significant when compared with other texts in which the distinction between the two groups is much more marked. A case in point is *chamd* I. Although the poet portrayed both Pabuji's Bhil and Rathaur Rajput warriors as the wielders of swords, clubs, maces, bows and arrows, even so, when mentioned individually, the Rajput warriors were always depicted as fighting with spears and swords, while the Bhil archers, needles to say, availed themselves of bows and arrows. And in *duha* I, Ladhraj very clearly distinguished between Rajput warriors, who were portrayed as wielding swords, daggers, spears, clubs and maces, on the one hand, and the Bhil whose role was confined to that of archers, on the other. It is against this background that I have come to imagine that the blurred distinction between the two groups, their epithets and use of weapons, is not just the result of chronological flexibility or poetic licence. And, as shall be discussed below, the description of Pabuji's parentage in *duha* I has also given me reason to conceive of Bhil and Dhamdhal Rajput relations as more involved than those between lords and subjects or martial leaders and their foot soldiers.

### *Samval, Thori, Ahari*

In most of the shorter compositions, the Bhil do not figure at all except in *git* II (v. 40), where they have been referred to as *sāṃvaḷā(ṃ) sātavīsī*, the "7 times 20 (140)

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[387] Compare *chamd* I (v. 37) and *duha* II (v. 11) in which Pabuji is referred to with the titles *jūvā* ("young") and *bālaka* ("boy"). This role is perhaps comparable to the role of the "Yuva rāja", as described by Kolff (1990: 126f), who defines the *yuva rāja* as a crown prince or other prince who went in search of land, honour and a lord to serve. Since other men than fathers and sons may take up these role (and the roles can be performed alternately by one man) it can be imagined that aspects of Pabuji's role refer to the role of *yuva rāja*, a rebel son who goes into the jungle; in his case not to win land but to add to the fame of his sword by protecting cattle.

Samval". *Duha* I and the *parvaro* do present us with a good number of examples of alternating perceptions of Rajput-Bhil relations. From the first-mentioned composition it can be surmized that Pabuji's Bhil archers came to be thought of as the low-status subordinates of Rajput warriors in seventeenth-century Marwar. They were no longer, like in *chamd* II, explicitly portrayed as heroic warriors. On the contrary, the role of the Bhil protagonists is much less significant, and Ladhraj only mentions Camda by name while the other six archers' names, like listed in *chamd* II, were apparently forgotten or perhaps they were not deemed important enough to mention. Ladhraj moreover describes in some detail how Pabuji has to overcome the wavering feeling of his Bhil retainer Camda who is portrayed as rather disinclined to join Pabuji in his war against Jimda, a depiction which in this kind of poetry appears to underline the rather un-heroic stance taken by the Bhil warrior (*duha* I, v. 249-250 quoted in chapter 3). Camda has other things on his mind than war, in particular the arrangements for his daughter's marriage. When the Bhil warrior finally agrees to join Pabuji, his role in the battles, and the part played by his army (*thāṭa*) of Thori (*thorī*) is described as relatively insignificant. Ladhraj did, even so, accord some measure of heroism to the Bhil in verse-line 254 by comparing them to gods or heroes (*sur*) who resemble Samval *(sāṃvalā),* literally meaning "black" or "dark", perhaps in an allusion to the complexion of the archers;[388] *sāṃvalā* moreover also translates as "hunter" and "Bhil" (Lalas: 1962-1988). Once Rajput-like heroism is accorded to Camda and his archers, when their valour is described as arising from Kshatriyahood (*khatravāṭa* or *kṣhatriyatā*) in verse-line 258.

On the whole, however, Ladhraj did not dwell on the archers' role in the battle proceedings or their martial prowess in any detail. And, apart from titles like Sura and Samval, Ladhraj also employed the less flattering epithet Thori ("thief") to refer to Pabuji's archers. The Bhil are also named Ahari (*duha* I, v. 254: *āheṛi*). Ahari, yet again according to Lalas (1962-1988), connotes hunt (*shikār*) and accordingly Ahari is translated as "hunter".[389] While Ahari appears to have a neutral meaning, the title Thori does not; it is commonly rendered "thief".[390] Shekavat (1968: 211) translates Thori as a caste name (*thorī jāti ke sevak*). It is not clear whether Ladhraj meant to use the name Thori in a disparaging manner or just to denote a caste name. Judging from Nainsi's *Khyāt*, the former seems more likely since Nainsi's usage documents

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[388] If *sāṃvalā* can be traced to Sanskrit *syāmal*, the epithet may also have served to liken the Bhil to Krishna since this epithet is also one of many names of this god, connoting his dark-blue skin.

[389] In the twentieth century, Ahari has also been classed as one of the many clan names used by Bhil from different regions in Rajasthan, including Udaipur-Kherwara, Banswara, Dungarpur, Partabgarh and Sirohi (Koppers 1948: 115, 119). There may have been a connection with the peasant and pastoralist Ahirs of the Saurashtra Jangal in Gujarat, bordering south-western Rajasthan, for Ahir Bhil, though differentiated from Ahari Bhil, were traced to Gujarat and Kandesh by Koppers (1948: 121).

[390] Today, some Thoris prefer to be called Nayak (chief) a term that has also come to refer to "thorī jātī" and "Bhil jātī" in Rajasthan (Lalas 1962-1988).

the disparaging overtone of the title Thori in the seventeenth century.[391] In the *Khyāt*, Pabuji's Thori are evoked as eating meat, including she-camels, before Pabuji takes them under his wings and recruits them as his companions and comrades-in-arms. The fact that they killed "an animal" is the main cause for their banishment by their former patron, Ano Vaghelo. The Thori are, moreover, subject of a quarrel between Pabuji's sister Sonam and her co-wife, who taunts Sonam by saying: "Your brother eats in the company of Thori", a remark which was clearly aimed at insulting Pabuji (Smith's translation, 1991: 482-83).

### *Bhil Bhopas*

The *parvaro* represents an altogether different genre within the Pabuji tradition as it does not have many themes or protagonists in common with the other selected compositions except, of course, its main hero Pabuji. In this composition, Bhil protagonists play an important part, but they no longer figure as Pabuji's comrades-in-arms and neither their martial roles and epithets nor any of the other titles that are listed above receive any mention. From this poem, the Bhil emerge as Bhopas, the medieval devotees, priestly performers and ritual healers of Pabuji's temples. The title Bhopa has several meanings and has been ascribed to many different communities, including Bhil, Rebari and Rajput devotees of folk gods and goddesses. Its range of meanings include: "seer", "diviner", "medium", "priest", "devotee" and "fool".[392] The *parvaro* makes apparent that Bhil Bhopas figured as the *dhol*-playing priests of Pabuji's Kolu temple and of smaller temples (*maṛhi*, *thāpanā*) dedicated to him at Dhamgrava and, perhaps, Sojhat (*sojhita*). The temple priests are also portrayed, in verse-line 14, as Bhopas from Bharara (*bhopā bharaṛā*). It is unclear whether this should be taken to mean "Bhopas of the Bharar community", a caste group from Madhya Pradesh, or whether it was meant as a reference to Bhopas from a place called Bharar, unknown to me.

Inscriptions found at Pabuji's Kolu temple today document that Bhopas used to be connected to the temple. As remarked in the previous chapter, the beginnings of the Kolu temple can be dated to fifteenth or early sixteenth century, well before the seventeenth-century *parvaro* was committed to paper. None of the available epigraphic evidence at the temple helps in dating a Bhil Bhopa cult to the initial stages of temple history, but the title Bhopa is found inscribed on some of the later *devaḷī*s (hero stones) and *kīrtistaṃbh*s or commemorative pillars. The eighteenth-century memorial pillar to the left of the entrance of the white temple, for instance,

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[391] In the nineteenth century, "t'hori" apparently came to be known as "bhoot" (ghosts) or the "sons of the devil", and "professional thieves" as well as camel proprietors and caravan guides (Tod (1972 II: 255). Likewise, Mewar's "thaoris" have been described by Tod (1972 II: 154) as a "caste of robbers".

[392] From the meanings accorded to the Rajasthani noun *bhopāī* and the verb *bhopanī*, it can be surmized that contemporary Bhopas are believed to be people endowed with supernatural or magic powers, and able to perform miracles (Lalas 1962-1988). Frater (1989: 96) describes Rebari "Bhopa" as priests "through whom the goddess speaks". See also McGregor (1993).

documents the fact that it was erected by, among others, Bhopa Bhagchamd from Palani and substantiates Bhopa service in (or associated with) the temple in the late medieval period. Bhopa Bhagchamd is mentioned again in an inscription on the hero stone in the middle of the altar of the white temple, dating it to 1713 and informing us that this hero stone was established or donated by Bhopa Bhagchamd and Bihari Das during the reign of prince Abhey Singh, son of Ajit Singh.[393]

*Bhil memorial stome (undated).*

The reference to Bhopas as eighteenth-century Kolu temple priests or devotees does not inevitably suggest that we are here dealing with an allusion to Bhil Bhopas. As noted earlier, contemporary usage suggests that Bhopa is, and perhaps has long been, a title used for priests and devotees from different communities like the Bhil and Rebari as well as for Rajput priests who nowadays also employ the title "Bhopa" to refer to themselves. Evidence to document the inclusion of Bhil archers in the Pabuji cult as observed at the Kolu temple can be read from hero stones with images of the Bhil (Thori) archers. Many of the hero stones dedicated to Pabuji can be recognized by the inclusion of one or more Bhil archers, mostly in the right-hand corner of the hero stones.[394] On the central altars of both the white and red temple two or more Bhil figures accompany Pabuji on hero stones with inscriptions dating to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Besides, two memorial stones depicting

[393] The inscription reads: "srī pābūjī saṃvata 1770 vara khe matī caira vadi 11 somavarla bihari dāsa vidanī sādāvai srī maharājā di rāja srī ajīta siṃgajī komaraji abheya siṃgajī ri vāra maṃhai carai bhopā b(h)āg chāṃda". Another hero stone on the altar of the red temple carries an inscription that documents that a Bhopa (his name is unreadable) served at the Kolu temple in 1713 during the time of the ruler Sangha. This inscription reads: "pābūjī sata cahi ni savata 1770 varasa saṃghaji ri vāra bhopā (...) re kesamno saitraga suṃtra"

[394] However, the majority of hero stones kept at the Kolu temple show an individual warrior wielding a spear or sword and riding a horse, who is identified as Pabuji riding Kalvi. Some of these hero stones are at times accompanied by a "twirl" in the lower right corner which at some instances looks like a calf, and at other times seems to represent a wave. Only one of the undated hero stones shows Pabuji accompanied by the small figure of a Bhil with bow-and-arrow, below the riding figure, in the right corner of the stone.

the seven archers in Pabuji's retinue now stand within the temple compound placed in small shrines. One stone faces the entrance of the white temple and the other faces the entrance of the red temple. Two more memorials with seven Bhil archers are furthermore found in a separate alcove in the side wing of the temple compound. All these commemorative stones are without dates or other inscriptions and their depiction of the seven Thori wielding bow and arrow rather differs, ranging from intricately carved figurines to rather sketchy carvings.[395] The temple priest, Tulsi Singh Rathaur, lists their names as: Ishal, Vishal, Kaku, Baku, Harmal, Camda, and Dema. The seven men carry bows and arrows and, judging from the fact that their legs are bent at the knee, are kneeling down. Today Bhil Bhopas are seated in front of the archers' hero stones when they ritually perform the *paravāṛau*s[396] that are part of the contemporary *mātā* (drum) epic dedicated to Pabuji. The Bhopas claim direct descent from the seven archers and include accounts of the heroic deeds of Pabuji's companions in their performance of the epic. I will return to the subject of Bhil archers and their contemporary worship in chapter 9.

*Mātā epic performance by the brothers Ram in front of a Thori memorial stone.*

[395] To my untrained eyes, the rather sketchily carved Thori memorials have an aura of "antiquity" while the more intricate carvings resemble the style of late-medieval hero stones dedicated to Pabuji. However, it is also possible that the two different styles were contemporary and represent different kinds of handiwork, perhaps Rajput and Bhil workmanship. I do not know enough of the history of this kind of art to be able to speculate about the dating of Bhil worship practices in Kolu on the basis of these stones.

[396] I use *paravāṛau* to refer to the contemporary *mātā* tradition and to differentiate between this tradition's *paravāṛau*s and the medieval *parvaro*.

From the eighteenth-century version of the *parvaro* attached to *duha* I it becomes clear that medieval Bhopas presided over drum performances and ritual healings at medieval Pabuji temples in Kolu and Sojhat, while in *git* III, Pabuji's patronage of a temple in Kolu is also referred to. In view of the medieval *parvaro*'s narrative, I imagine that the drum (*ṛhola* or *ḍhola*) played an important role in the medieval cult and perhaps served a similar ritual purpose as the ritual *mātā* (drum) used by today's Bhil Bhopa to accompany their performance of *parvaro*s dedicated to Pabuji. This becomes apparent from the tale told by the *parvaro*'s poet, Mohandas or Ladhraj, about the Rathaur Rajput Vagha who stole the *dhol* belonging to a Bhopa serving at Pabuji's temple in Dhamgrava (*dhāṃgaṛavā maṛhi*). To punish Vagha, the Rathaur hero-god cursed him with a severe stomach ache. It soon turned out that only the Bhopa could cure Vagha's pain. Once the Bhopa restored him to health, the Rajput repented and restored the drum to the temple. The meaning that could be attributed to this episode becomes clearer when one remembers the importance of the *dhol* as a ritual instrument in present-day Bhil Bhopa epic performances and healing practices which involve trance rituals and indicate that *dhol* and *mātā* drums should be thought of as divine and/or magic instruments and ceremonial aids which assist in invoking a trance-like state.[397] In trance, a Bhil Bhopa feels himself to be a medium through which the presence of a god's *chāyā* ("shadow", "apparition") is revealed. Thus a god expresses himself in an oracular manner, addressing his devotees through his Bhopa.[398] The aim of such rituals is to solve a devotee's everyday problems, see the future, settle disputes and/or cure illnesses.

Though the contemporary tradition of *chāyā* has not been mentioned in the studied *paravaro*, I even so do feel that this text contains instances that illustrate the ritual, magic and healing qualities ascribed to the *dhol* in medieval times. My interpretation is based, first, upon the importance attached to the retrieval of the stolen *dhol*, second, on the description of Pabuji's voice coming from heaven and talking to the Bhopa, and third, on the poet's statement that the Bhopa healed Vagha with Pabuji's help (*parvaro*, v. 2-27, cf. chapter 3). Lastly, the description of the healing ritual (*sīco*) in verse-lines 18-19 also seems to indicate that the poet accorded healing powers to the Dhamgrava Bhopa.[399] All one comes to know from the *parvaro*, however, is that some Dhamgrava Bhopas used to cure stomach aches

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[397] The use of drums as trance inducing instruments, which can invoke a god's presence, is part of religious traditions worldwide. In northern India, the meaning attributed to the sounds of drums can be connected to myths that portray the creation of the universe as resulting from the sound of Shiva's drum (Alter 2004: 361).

[398] Compare Blackburn's (1989: 10f) description of ritual possession, spirit possession, trance dance, divinization and self-mutilation as "generic" to oral martial and sacrificial oral epic in India.

[399] Studies of Bhil customs do not mention this particular ritual but they do document the use of medicinal plants and trees by Bhil to cure stomach aches and other afflictions by crushing bark, leaves, etcetera, and administering them to a patient mixed in water (Ebner 1996: 21).

through a ritual in which *sico* (clean water to remove impurity) is used while invoking Pabuji by repeating his name "(with) sincerity".[400]

The significance of the story about Ratna and Jaita becomes clearer when it is read against the background of yet another concern of contemporary Bhil life as described in anthropological studies. Ebner (1996: *passim*) and Robbins (1998: *passim*) describe the importance attached to the protection of trees by Bhil and other inhabitants of the Thar Desert, and I imagine that this practice motivates the punishment meted out by Pabuji's to Bhati Jaiti for cutting an Acacia tree (Khejar) near the warrior-god's temple. And the severity of the punishment meted out by Pabuji for cutting trees (he kills Jaiti) can perhaps be read as an illustration of the great significance that people used to accord to trees. Like the present-day inhabitants of the desert, former communities must have been very dependent upon trees as fodder for their cattle and as fuel for their cooking fires.

Ratna's tale may also be understood as an illustration of the fact that the eighteenth-century Kolu temple was surrounded by an *oṛhaṇ* (*auṛaṇ*), a communal pasture area for the grazing of goats, sheep, cows and camels and a shared source of fuel for village kitchens. The contemporary village *oṛhan* in Rajasthan can be defined as a "class of land management systems dependent on social sanction and the patterns of authority structured into traditional village politics" (Robbins 1998: 87). Oral tradition records how the same probably held true for medieval times when the Kolu temple was surrounded by a sizable *oṛhaṇ* that served to regulate the use of trees, bushes and grasses as cattle fodder and fuel (personal communication Tulsi Singh Rathaur 2001).[401]

The Kolu *oṛhaṇ* rules allow for the grazing of animals on the lower branches and bark of trees, and collecting dead wood, but strictly proscribe the cutting of trees or branches. This custom is commonly enforced through local village counsels and by means of cautionary tales, which (like the

[400] *Parvaro* (v. 18-19): "sācai muṃṇa sīcoha, pābū ro ghāto puṇai. 19. īsaṛau ū sīcoha, kīdho yuṃ sājo kamadha".

[401] It is said that the Kolu *oṛhaṇ* used to provide fodder for huge herds of cattle, in particular camels. This is no longer the case today. In the last two to three decades, camel keepers and their herds are no longer welcome in Kolu. Ever-increasing population pressure and the resulting desertification in western Rajasthan has left the temple *oṛhaṇ* a large sandy "meadow" with little shrubbery and few scattered acacia trees. The leaves, fruits and bark of these trees still serve as cattle fodder and fuel but only for the cattle of the villagers. I was told that the Kolu *oṛhaṇ* can still provide green pasture during a good monsoon. During my visits to Kolu, the rains had failed for four consecutive years and the *oṛhaṇ* was barren, the village wells had run dry.

medieval *parvaro*) warn about the dire consequences resulting from the cutting of trees. Divine retribution, like the castigation of the Rajput Bhati Jaiti by Pabuji in the *parvaro*, continues to be invoked. This incident, I think, illustrates that the rules broken by Jaiti resemble existing rules curtailing the cutting of trees in Kolu's *oṛhaṇ*. In the *parvaro* it has been clearly stated that Ratna planted the ill-fated Khejar tree near Pabuji's Kolu temple (*maṛhi*) and near Pabuji's "statue" (*thāpanā*).[402]

Other socio-political and religious concerns in the *parvaro* relate to the roles ascribed to Rajput warriors in the beginning of the eighteenth century in Marwar and the manner in which the veneration of Pabuji was linked to Shakti worship. The first concern is part of the episode about the hero-god Pabuji's rescue of his Bhopas after they have been robbed by the Rajput Vagha. The poet describes how the Rajput warrior Vagha does not share the Bhopas' dedication to Pabuji since he does not fear the hero-god's anger and robs the temple drum from Pabuji's temple. The Rajput Jati does not respect Pabuji's powers either since he cuts down a tree near the hero-god's temple. Only after the Rajput godling has punished the two Rajputs for their deeds, do the wrongdoers repent and accept Pabuji's divine authority. This tale documents the changing relation between the Rajput and Bhil of eighteenth-century Marwar, who apparently fought amongst each other. The Bhil are portrayed as fighting Rajput warriors with the help of magic and through Pabuji's divine intervention, but they no longer figure as warriors in their own right like in *chamd* II and some verse-lines of *duha* I. From the quoted episodes one may gauge that, unlike most Rajput families of Marwar today, not all medieval Rajput were devotees of Pabuji. From this instance, and from the poet's attempts at positioning Pabuji's cult vis-à-vis "other gods" (discussed below), it could be inferred that in the seventeenth century, Pabuji's Bhopas and other non-Rajput devotees were in the process of establishing or re-establishing Pabuji's popularity among a wider audience.

The *parvaro* also details the manner in which poets sought to relate the Pabuji cult to the goddess worship. In the second half of the *paravaro*, the poet expands upon his devotion to the goddess and Pabuji like in verse-lines 67-68, where it has been implied that both the poet Ladhraj and Pabuji are servants or devotees (*sevaga*) of Devi, while in the following verse-lines the poet takes quite some trouble to explain that the worship of Pabuji and the mother goddess do not exclude each other even though the poet at the same time presents his dedication to Vasihathi, the "twenty-armed Goddess", as the supreme form of devotion:

67. suṇi tāharī suvāṃṇi, rājī hai ladharājīya
68. kaha to rāva kamaṃdha, tu sevaga devī taṇo

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[402] *Parvaro* (v. 30): "ratanāṃ ro vaṃtī, kolu maṛhi pābū nhai", and (v. 37): "naine naha dekheha, th(ī) pābū rī thāpanā". Today, *maṛhi* and *thāpanā* can refer to a hero stone on a small uncovered altar, scattered throughout the Thar Desert, though *maṛhi* can also be used to refer to the Kolu temple.

69. sosabalo sanamaṃdha, āṃpāṃ chai ladharājīyā
70. tonu chaiyari tīna, pāṛosī jasa ekā prabhā[403]
71. āja pacho ākhīna tāharo huṃ madha kara taṇā
72. ladhīyā lokā ika, devī tina bhina devatā
73. visahathī vāyaka, sūṇī[404]yā chai māharā sakai
74. devāṃ māṃhi dubhāṃti, rī kahu mata le vato
75. khitavā sī sūra khāṃti, jasa gāyo ladharājīyai
76. bhālālā bhara māī, lo kāṃnu ke-ī lūṃḍīyā
77. māharai manuṛā māṃī, bhinana hasaba deve bhagita

In stating that there exists no disparity among gods and that what counts in these matters is man's devotion to the gods in general (v. 72-77), the poet perhaps tried to solve his evidently conflicting loyalties. But he did not seem to really manage to do so, for in conclusion he asserts that the existence of a multitude of gods has made many devotees lose sight of "true faith", indicating that according to the poet there existed "false faiths" too (*parvaro*, v. 76). His declaration in the next verse-line (77) that in his heart "(devotion to) the mother goddess (is) not different (from) devotion 'to' all (other) gods", also, seems to indicate that the poet felt the need to defend his belief in the goddess, perhaps to counter contemporary claims made by devotees of other sects. It is of course also conceivable that the poet felt the need to clarify that by worshipping Pabuji the goddess is not neglected but venerated as well. Such an interpretation may indicate that for the poet and his audiences, the goddess embodied the highest godly authority, encompassing all other manifestations of the divine. A more detailed interpretation of Shaktik imagery in the Pabuji tradition will be given in chapter 9, when I discuss the Charani Shakti tradition of Marwar. Suffice it to note here that goddess worship, encompassing the goddess's archaic or "pre-patriarchal" forms, like mother earth and her tribal and locally worshipped "village" forms as well as her Shaktik manifestations, is currently one of the main constituents of Bhil religious mythology and ritual practices (cf. Werz-Kovacs 1982: 151, 189, 214).

### *Bhil-Rajput bonds*

By studying the different forms Rajput-Bhil relations took in the different poems, several features of their historical background can now be explained. I have illustrated how the Bhil were accorded a Rajput-like role in *chamd* II while their martial role becomes much less notable in *duha* I, and the Bhil are altogether "written out", or were just forgotten, in the composition of other poems, like *chamd*

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[403] Unclear. A *daṃda* precedes and follows *prabha* (*/prabha/*).
[404] In *sūṇīṇīyā*, "ṇī" was crossed out.

I and some of the *gits*. The study of the martial idiom employed by the poet of *chamd* II highlights the "Payak-register" the poets used to describe Bhil martial roles. This poetic idiom, suggestive of Rajput-Afghan military culture as expressed through the idiom of *naukarī*, enables us to conceive of a distinctly local Marwari grammar for defining martial relations between Rajput warriors and Bhil archers

As was argued just now, the ascription of epithets and weapons to the Rajput and Bhil warriors in *chamd* II attains a distinct meaning when this poem is compared with the other studied sources for then it appears that the composer of *chamd* II may not have blurred the distinction between the two groups by accident. The indistinct portrayal of the two groups, and especially the ascription of similar epithets and weapons to Rajput (in particular Pabuji) and Bhil warriors, has made me wonder whether Pabuji and his Bhil warriors may have had more in common than becomes clear when one reads the other selected sources, the poets of which unambiguously differentiate between the epithets and weapons ascribed to Rajput or Bhil combatants, if the latter are at all mentioned. In this light, an answer seems to present itself to the question posed in chapter 6 concerning the possible reasons why Pabuji was the only Rathaur from a long line of cattle rustlers and warriors who came to be deified? Though Pabuji's deification may, as we saw in the introduction to this study, be understood as an attempt to make the life of a small-time village hero appeal to wider, regional audiences, it appears to me that the depiction of Pabuji and his Bhil associates in *chamd* II points up another possible motivation underlying Pabuji's deification.

Perhaps the relation between Pabuji and the Bhil was not a solely martial affair, maybe it could also be understood as a reflection of the fact that the inclusion of Bhil in Rajput ranks (and vice versa) through marriage alliances was not at all uncommon in the period preceding Rajput ascendancy in Marwar (cf. Chandra (1999: 251).[405] A point in case is the history of today's Bhilala "castes" who trace their ancestry to Rajput-Bhil marriage alliances. The Rajput Garasia (or Girasia), for example, claim to be the progeny of the early medieval bonds between Rajput warriors and Bhil women. Today the Garasia highlight their Rajput status and object to being reminded of their Bhil ancestry. In reading the portrayal of Pabuji and Bhil warriors in *chamd* II together with the inclusion of Pabuji's birth story in *duha* II, I have come to feel that it is not likely that the ascription of a semi-divine birth to Pabuji, who is portrayed as the son of a Rajput father and a forest nymph in *duha* I, served to shroud Pabuji's father's dallying with a non-Rajput woman, perhaps a Bhilni or Mer. As was noted in the previous chapter, Pabuji's forefathers had to deal with Mer and Bhil contenders to power who, during the early-medieval stage of Rajput kingdom formation, still ruled large desert and forest tracts in and

[405] The opposite is also true. Peabody (2003: 88) relates how one Rao Deva flattened a Mina town after a Mina man proposed marriage to a Brahmin woman. Deva thus aimed to uphold a differentiated social order by preventing the "mixing of castes". This instance appears to illustrate a Rajput man could wed a tribal woman while the alliance between a tribal man and a Rajput woman was not deemed acceptable.

neighbouring Marwar. If "nymph" can be understood as a narrative theme that is emblematic of "the wild", the poets' representation of Pabuji's nymph-mother could be thought to stand for a woman of the forest, perhaps a "tribal" woman. This impression is further documented by the description of how Dhamdhal is thought to have chanced upon the "princess nymph" (*kuṃvārī apacharā*) when he, while hunting in the jungle, discovered her taking a bath in a forest pond (*duha* I, v. 16-22). The fact that Pabuji, in poetic, prose and genealogical sources, is the only Rathaur of the period whose ancestry is traced to a nymph, may be an eloquent example of attempts to obscure Rajput-Bhil relations in some later sources when Rajput, upon gaining ascendancy in Marwar, no longer wanted to be reminded of the earlier inclusion of Bhil in Rajput ranks and no longer felt a need to acknowledge Bhil martial valour in terms of equality.

My study of Bhil history in Marwar illustrates how the poetic concern with cattle and the aspirations of the warriors who belonged to Rajput and non-Rajput groups represent a narrative theme that evokes the medieval pastoral-nomadic world of cattle rustlers and upcoming Rajput clans who sought to establish their dominance in areas that were, at that time, ruled over by Mer and perhaps Bhil tribal chiefs. This was a world where socio-political identities were not as well-defined as in later medieval society. Such themes at first sight set apart the *chamd*s from late-medieval texts like the *duha* I and *parvaro*. The varying roles ascribed to the Bhil are one of the clearest examples of the changing narrative content of the selected poems. But it is difficult to tell whether this change also represents a historical, chronological change that could date *chamd* II to an earlier time of composition than *chamd* I, *duha* I and the *parvaro*, perhaps an early-medieval time when poets still included Bhil warriors in the martial "hall of fame" constituted by their poetry. Yet, the portrayal in *chamd* II of early-medieval Rajput-Bhil alliances and Bhil heroism as opposed to the portrayal of the Bhil's loss of status in later compositions like *duha* I does appear to be a good reason to assume that the former text can be dated to an earlier period than the latter.

One cannot, however, be certain that the inclusion of a clearly early-medieval theme does indeed mark the studied version of *chamd* II as an earlier version of Pabuji's story, since this theme may have become part of late-medieval compositions as well, perhaps by a sixteenth-century poet, conceivably a Bhil, who wrote the Bhil into *chamd* II to ascribe Rajput heroism to his ancestors by portraying them as the valiant archers of Pabuji's army. This kind of connection may have also served to claim a Rajput-like status by Bhil priests or Bhopas of a sixteenth-century (or earlier) Pabuji cult. At present, the Bhil Bhopas of Kolu perform *paravaro*s dedicated to Pabuji for exactly this reason: to assign Rajput-like heroism in battle to the Bhil and thus highlight that they were equal to Pabuji's Rajput warriors in the past and, I was told, therefore lay claim to Rajput status today (cf. chapter 10). A more than martial relation between Pabuji and the Bhil, a relation defined by bonds of marriage, could also help in explaining why Pabuji was deified, but none of his

fellow Rathaur warriors. It would, in addition, also shed light on the question why the Bhil became Pabuji's devotees and, as the *parvaro* illustrates, his Bhopas.

*Depiction of the Charan goddess Karni Mata (Courtesy: Paul Veltman, Amsterdam).*

# 8 Charan Identities

"In these golden times of Rajput life when swords were never allowed to rust nor steeds to rest, and the bard was always wanted at the side of the warrior as a witness of his deeds and a singer of his praises, the lavishness of the chiefs to the bards had known no limits", wrote Tessitori (1917a: 250) in a style which perhaps knowingly resembled the effusive style of Charan poets, generally described as the "bards" of Rajput rulers in colonial sources. Charan poets are believed to have stood at the cradle of what is generally known as the "Rajput Great Tradition", the heritage that underpins the worldview and ruling ambitions of noble Rajput lineages. Till date, Marwar's exceptionally literate Charan community's self-image centres upon claims to a high-ranking socio-political status which originated with their prominent positions at Rajput courts as poet-kings, poet-historians, ministers, political advisors, warriors and protectors of forts and havelis (*polapaṭ*).[406] The elite literary and courtly status ascribed to Charan poets can probably be traced to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the "glory days" of Dimgal poetry, when Charan Dimgal poetry came to be seen as a literary court tradition analogous to the gradual increase of Rajput dominance in the region.

Charan men are also known as the sacrosanct guides of camel and pack oxen caravans through the Thar Desert, and as traders in horses, wool and salt, suppliers of food and weaponry to armies, and perhaps most importantly, as the devotees of Shakti and the poets and priests of cults dedicated to Charani Sagatis, living goddesses of Charan origin, thought of as historical women recognized as living goddesses during their lives or deified after their deaths. Such women, born to Charan lineages, are believed to be the multiple manifestations of the "first" or "original" goddess, the Mahashakti Hinglaj. There exists a close political connection between the Charani Sagatis of the western desert regions and the ruling Rajput lineages of medieval Rajasthan, which came to think of Charan goddesses as the guarantors and defenders of their realms. This connection has been hinted at by the poets of the *chamds*, *duha* I and the *parvaro*, in the first place, by evoking Shaktik imagery connoting Puranic tales about Devi and her battle with the buffalo-demon Mahishasur and, secondly, by the portrayal of Deval as a Charani Sagati relating Pabuji's story to the medieval worship of regional forms of Shakti. To understand better the connection between the Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions, I shall in the second part of this chapter examine the political, religious and economic links between Rajput and Charan communities and Charani goddesses in Baluchistan,

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[406] Today, the Charans of Rajasthan are listed as "Other Backward Castes" under the Indian Constitution Order, a status which, Charans say, does not refer to their level of economic development or socio-political status but mainly points to the fact that the Charans form a small community.

Sindh, Rajasthan and Kacch (Gujarat). Thus, I intend to document how Charan identities used to resemble Rajputhood in several ways. Finally, I hope to show how the history of the spread of Charan men and women and their story-telling traditions can assist in imagining the ways in which Pabuji's poetry tradition may have been transmitted and by whom.

### *Inspirational narratives*

In medieval times, Charan poets are said to have received rewards from their Rajput patrons in exchange for their poetic services. They were rewarded with cattle, horses, elephants, revenue and land-grants and, according to poetic sources, gold. This relation between the Charan poets and Rajput warriors and rulers, like that of bards and court poets the world over, is of course based on patron-client relations whereby Rajput patrons pay for the poetic services rendered by Charan clients.[407] This custom, according to Tod, gave rise to flattery and sycophancy since it was nothing more than "the barter of empty phrase against solid pudding" (Tod 1972 I: xvi). Tod's colonial view of nineteenth-century Rajasthan and the Charan Dimgal tradition has been translated into Hindi and, unfortunately, has inspired many scholarly and popular reference books on the subject.[408] It is Tod's disapproving appraisals of Charan history which seem to be quoted most often and not his more positive remarks, like his observation that Charan poets could be critical of Rajput warriors who did not live up to heroic standards: "[T]hese chroniclers dare utter truths, sometimes most unpalatable to their masters. When offended, or actuated by a virtuous indignation against immorality, they are fearless of consequences; and woe to the individual which provokes them! The *vis*, or poison of the bard, is more dreaded by the Rajpoot than the steel of foe. The despotism of the Rajpoot princes does not extend to the poet's lay, which flows unconfined except by the shackles of the *chund bhojoonga*, or 'serpentine stanza'; no slight restraint, it must be confessed, upon the freedom of the historic muse"(Tod 1972 I: xv-xvi).

Reportedly the reputation of many a Rajput "sunk under the lash of [Charan] satire" and condemned to "eternal ridicule names that might have otherwise escaped notoriety" (Tod 1972 I: xvi). Stigmatizing verses or "poetry of slander" (*visahar*) were reportedly not always inspired by "virtuous indignation" but at times also stemmed from greed. Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 129) notes tales about covetous Charan poets who would take money to spread malicious rumours about a Rajput's opponent to shame him, while other poets are said to have used their way with

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[407] Termed *jajamānī* or *yācak* relations in Marwar, which today include the poetic services rendered to their Charan patrons by their *yācak* communities, the Raval, Motisar, Mir, Udia, Doli and Dhadi poets, who all expect to be rewarded by their Charan patrons for praising their lineages (Samaur 1999: 32, Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 162-163).

[408] See for instance Anil Chandra Banerjee who, in his *Lectures on Rajput History*, comments that 'Tod depended primarily on "heroic poems" which, to Bannerjee's mind, were no better than "opium-eaters tales" (Banerjee 1962: 188).

words to blackmail their patrons into meeting their extravagant demands or else suffer the damaging consequences of poetic libel.[409] While such an "active exercise of bardic power", as Snodgrass (2004: 273) defines it, no doubt left much room for slander and blackmail, its primary purpose was to voice heroic ideals by according praise or blame, an exercise which served to establish codes of conduct and define which men would be remembered by future generations as heroes and which men would end up with the label "coward" (cf. Tessitori 1919a: 46). The most accurate definition, to my mind, of Charan poetry is proposed by Ziegler (1976a: 221) who describes it as "inspirational biographical narrative" or the portrayal of episodes from the lives of Rajput rulers and warrior-heroes, including descriptions of battles between different Rajput clans and their martial ideals. The recitation of early-medieval *bāt* (short, orally composed Dimgal poems) by Charan poets is thought to have assisted Rajput boys in preparing for their warlike future. "Recitations of this kind, particularly those done in the homes of Rajputs, served an extremely important function in Rajput society since batam were one of the major media through which young Rajputs were traditionally educated. It was through this medium that they were brought into the history of their families, lineages and clans, were schooled in the moral values of their fathers, and were tutored in their future role in society" (Ziegler 1976a: 222).

### *Charan lineages*

Apart from elite poetic and other court-based identities, the Charan community encompassed a variety of social groups with different occupational identities from dissimilar geographical regions, in particular grazier communities who took on various occupations as climatic, economic or socio-political circumstances changed. Thus, Charans of the Kacchela lineage in Gujarat and Marwar, now known as graziers, are believed to have formerly been specialized in pack ox transports and trade and the breeders of oxen and, perhaps, buffaloes (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 101). Sorathia Charan clans are portrayed as medieval and contemporary graziers but some Sorathia poets recount that their forefathers were also poets at Rajput courts. The Rohadia (Roharia) Charan represent yet another case of this Charan lineage. It is said that their ancestor was a Rajput who was forcibly detained (*rohaṛabo*) and compelled to become a poet by twelfth century Rathaur because they had no poet of their own to authenticate their heroic past (Arha 1939: 12, Tambs-Lyche 2004c: 67). Among the different Charan communities of Marwar, Maru Charan have been accorded the highest status as the renowned poets and courtiers of

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[409] Snodgrass's (2004: 273) observation about past "bardic" practices of Bhat and Charan poets further illustrates this point: "In the past, bards possessed the power to make or break kingly reputations, to guard or besmirch kingly honour, and thus literally to forge royal identity. As curators of collective memories, skilled praise-singers vested kings with noble lineages stretching back to the sun or the moon. If they felt that their services were not adequately valued or rewarded, they had the power to tell the world that their lords were mere pretenders and their titles false or illegitimate".

the Rathaur Rajput of medieval Marwar, while Kacchela and Sorathia Charan lineages, traditionally engaged in horse breeding and the trade in cattle and horses (like Charani Deval in *duha* I) are now thought to be of "lowly" origins.

Many different listings of Charan lineages (*sākhā*) and their branches (*khāṃp*) exist.[410] It appears that Charan lineages went through a similar process as their Rajput patrons, because some of their lineages are also named after their historical places of origin. The five most commonly listed Charan lineages are the Gujar Charan from Gujarat, the Kacch or Kacchela Charan from Kacch and Sindh, the Maru Charan from Marwar, the Tumer or Tumbel Charan from Sindh (now settled in Gujarat), and the Sorathia Charan from Sorath and Kathiawar. According to some traditions, the first Charan clan assembly was called together for the codification of their marriage laws in the early-medieval period, between the eighth and tenth centuries, followed by similar gatherings in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976:107f). If the dates associated with the Charan tradition of goddess worship are anything to go by, and I hope to show below that they are, the beginnings of Charan history in western Marwar can be dated to the ninth century when the Charani goddess Avad is believed to have lived in district Barmer in southwestern Marwar.

The meanings attributed to the name "Charan" also reflect the various identities ascribed to Charan communties since the word has been traced, for instance, to the Rajasthani verb *caraṇau* (to graze, to wander) and is thought to underline the pastoral-nomadic origin of many Charan lineages (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 94). The word "Charan" has, on the other hand, also been taken to stem from Rajasthani *uccāraṇ* (the art of recitation, verbal expression) and *chahaṛ* (translated as "love, justice"), word-origins which are quoted to highlight the poetic talents of Charan communities and their love for justice as manifested by their poetic praise of honourable battles (Samdu 1993: 17, Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: *ibid*.).[411]

### *Myth-history*

Various myth-histories relate Charan ancestry to classical traditions, Sanskritic gods and mythical and/or historical abodes in the Himalayas and, perhaps, southern India. The Maru Charan of Marwar, for example, relate their ancestry to semi-divine beings or spirit-beings like the half-divine Siddhas of Vedic lore and Puranic Sutas who used to eulogize the gods and allegedly became demi-gods themselves (Arha

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[410] Charan *sākhā*s seem to be comparable to Rajput *kūl* and *vaṃś*, which denote Rajput lineages made up of smaller brotherhoods (*khāṃp* and *nāk*). One listing of Charan *sākhā*s counts 23 (*bīsottar*) main Charan lineages, including chief lineages that are thought to have been divided into 600 branches over the centuries (Samdu 1993: 19-20). Cf. Tambs-Lyche (1997: 190f) study of Charan kinship in Gujarat.

[411] Lalas (1962-1988) does not list *chahaṛ* but he does list the adjective *cahaṛ* ("excellent", "best') and the noun *chahaṛau*, which is translated as "battle", "strife".

1939: 7-8, Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 96f). Maru and other Charan lineages have also been traced to Charan Munis of the *Mahābhārat*, of whom it is said that they looked after Raja Pandu when he stayed in the "Land of Charans" and who, after Pandu's demise, accompanied his queen and son on their way to Dhritarashtra in Hastinapur. Other comparable tales relate Charan ancestry to the semi-divine Dev-Charan of Mount Sumeru. One such tale records how the Dev-Charan are thought to have left Mount Sumeru due to the increase in members of the divine populace, which caused several groups of divine and semi-divine origin to move elsewhere (Samdu 1993: 17f, Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 96-98). After settling on earth, Dev-Charan lineages became known as Manusha-Charan and made a living as graziers and the poets of kings. Several present-day tales relate how the Manusha-Charan poets lived in the Himalayas until one king Prithu (or Prathu) gave them Telang.[412] King Prithu (during different periods of time) has been identified as an incarnation of Vishnu, the Vedic king Prithu, an eighth-century Ram Parmar Prithu or the twelfth-century Prithu (Prithvi) Raj Chauhan. The different stories centre on the demand of a brazen Brahmin who insisted on marrying Prithu's daughter and threatened to curse the king if rejected. Prithu turned to Shiva for help, who then sent the king a Charan messenger. "With the blessing of Durga", this Charan appeared to the presumptuous suitor in the form of the Mother goddess ("from whom all power to curse comes") and thus scared the Brahmin into withdrawing his improper proposal (Arha 1939: 9).[413]

The above-quoted myth-histories relate Charan ancestry to classical traditions. There exist many other equally divergent tales regarding the origins of Charan lineages and their occupations, especially legends highlighting the pastoral-nomadic and martial occupational identity of Charan communities who trace their geographical origins to Baluchistan, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Sindh. These communities recount how Shiva first created Bhat shepherds to herd the god's bull Nandi and protect him against lions. But the devout Bhat failed to protect Nandi from the lions and Shiva had to generate new bulls over and over again. He therefore created Charan guards who were as devout as the Bhat but who had a more daring disposition and proved to be valiant enough to protect Nandi from the lions' attacks (Malcolm 1970 II: 108). In the nineteenth century, the tale about Shiva's bull reportedly served to cast the Charan poets as the guardians of justice (symbolized by the bull Nandi) against "savage violence" (symbolized by the lions' attacks) underlining the difference between Bhat and Charan communities (Malcolm 1970 II: 132). The rift between the two communities was inspired by professional rivalry. Both communities served Rajput patrons and both laid claim to the status of elite

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[412] Or *Tailaṃg deś*, perhaps a reference to the Telinga region that extended from the south of Orissa up to Madras (McGregor 1993).

[413] Yet other tales trace the origins of the different Charan lineages to different gods: the Nara Charans regard Shiva as their creator while the Chorada, Brahma and Chumvar Charan communities are believed to have been created by Krishna (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 110) and Charan Banjaras claim descent from Mola, one of the graziers of Krishna's cows (www.vanjarivishwa.com).

literary and ritual specialist in the nineteenth-century (and perhaps earlier).[414] In Rajasthan, Bhat poets and genealogists have been known to claim descent from Brahmin poets who ("a long time ago") composed Sanskrit praise-poetry at royal courts, an identity with which Bhat poets, who now serve the low-caste Bhambhi community, closely identify till today (G.N. Sharma 1990 II: 259, Snodgrass 2004: 274f, Tod 1972 II: 135).

In defining the difference between Bhat and Charan, the latter status and identity is usually described as more akin to the rank of warriors than to Brahminical standing.[415] As the tale about Shiva's bull and the lions illustrates, Charan poets assigned themselves (and were assigned) martial characteristics given that they prided themselves on fighting alongside their Rajput patrons. The Bhat, on the other hand, were not courageous enough to "protect justice from violent assault", at least according to their Charan peers. By implication, the Bhat poets were also not considered courageous enough to lend voice to Rajput warrior ethos, a task that was constructed as the exclusive domain of Charan poets.

### *Rajput, Brahmin,Charan*

The ascription of a martial background to some Charan communities was not only based on their assumed relation to Rajput lineages but was also related to the deeds of Charan warriors who stood up to "the test of the sword" in battle. Charan myth and history as well as colonial and contemporary sources portray individual Charan men as skilled combatants and horse-riders, like the poets and warriors Goyamd Rao (son of Chango Samdu) and his son Udaikaran, both of whom are thought to have died in battle fighting in the army of the sixteenth-century Rathaur rulers Gamga and Maldev (Samdu 1993: 21).[416] Charan combatants are also mentioned as part of warrior bands, travelling groups of armed men termed "mercenary bands" and "para-military groups" in nineteenth-century colonial sources (cf. *Imperial Gazetteer* 1908: 289). The martial characteristics accorded to some Charan lineages and their Rajput patrons have led colonial administrators like Russell (1916: 252) to

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[414] As remarked in chapter 2, it is clear that there existed a social divide and "language-barrier" between Bhat poets, on the one hand, and Charan poets, on the other. Dimgal and Pimgal, Charan and Bhat poets, were regularly portrayed as belonging to different socio-religious spheres (see, for example, Bhatnagar (2004: 46) who describes Charans as "low-caste bards"). Bhat are said to highlight their own ritually elevated, "Brahminical" status by reminding rival Charans time and again of their lowly origins as the poets of "degraded Gujarati potters". It is said that Charan poets used to extract excessive amounts of money from the potters during weddings and that the potters consequently refrained from arranging matches for their offspring. A Rajput ruler came to the potters' rescue by ordaining that Charan poets were only permitted to sing for and beg from Rajput patrons (Kaviya 1997: 15).

[415] Snodgrass's (2004: 274) observation that Rajasthan's Charans ("the equivalent of wandering minstrels") do not usually claim a connection to ancient Vedic traditions or priesthood is problematic in the view of the earlier-quoted tales tracing Charan ancestry to Vedic and Puranic lore.

[416] Interestingly, some Charani goddesses have also been portrayed as horse riders, like in murals of Hinglaj's temple near Jaisalmer.

pronounce that Charan lineages "derive" from Rajput warriors. Several sources do indeed relate Charan to Rajput lineages through marriage, adoption or the ascription of Rajput status after proving their worth in battle (Samdu 1993: 18). The Maru Charan, for example, are said to have Parmar Rajput forebears, and (used to) intermarry with Rathaur families while branches like the Kidiya, Kochar, Detha and Rohadia Charan claim descent from Budh Bhati warriors. The Samdu Charan lineage is said to derive from the ranks of Gohil Rajput lineages (cf. Malcolm 1970 II: 132, Samdu 1993: 18).

Other Charan lineages are equated with Rajput warriors in a symbolic sense. Bhati, Maru and Hujar Charan, for example, are believed to be like Rajput warriors, while predominantly pastoral-nomadic Charan lineages like the Kacchelas, Sorathia, Parajia and Agarvacha are equated with graziers like the Babria, Kathi, Ahir and Bharvad (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 159). And there also exist stories, like the one quoted above, about Rajput warriors who were forced to "become Charan", i.e. practice the profession of poet, like the Rohadia Charan who commemorate how their Rajput Bhati ancestor was forcibly detained by twelfth century Rathaur warriors until he agreed to become their poet (cf. Tambs-Lyche 2004c: 67). One of the origin legends of the Tumbel Charan further illustrates the mixed Rajput-Charan identity accorded to some lineages since they trace their lineage back to Avar, a ninth-century Charani goddess, who married a Charan on the understanding that he should never speak to her. When Avar was pregnant with their fourth son, her Charan husband broke his promise upon which the half-grown child that fell out of Avar's body and was put in a dish (*tumbā*, a Sadhu's begging bowl) and set afloat on the sea. According to most versions of this story, the vessel eventually landed on the Makran coast near Hinglaj's temple and was found by a Samma Rajput pilgrim on his way to Hinglaj. With the blessings of the goddess, the Samma Rajput brought up the boy as his own. This tale is told to underline that the Tumbel clan, the offspring of the half-grown son of Avar, is considered only "half" a Charan clan (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 149). The Samma fosterage of Tumbel is also cited as the reason why Tumbel Charan are said to be good warriors but less renowned poets.

Other "martial characteristics" that many Charans are said to have had in common with Rajput warriors, are the eating of meat, the use of opium and alcohol, and the worship of warlike goddesses. The Rajput warriors' non-vegetarian diet, often associated with their alleged lust for blood in battle, continues to be cited as an aspect which is "fundamental to the Rajput character". Such martial customs, which are thought to have been shared by Charan communities, are believed to have led to a certain coldness between Charan and Rajput communities, on the one hand, and Brahmin priests, on the other. The latter, wrote Tod, were apparently not held in high esteem in nineteenth-century Rajasthan since Rajput warriors and rulers only deferred to Brahmin priests outwardly and "(i)n obedience to prejudice, but unless their fears or wishes interfere, they are less esteemed than the [Charan] bards" (Tod 1972 I: 25).

More than opium and alcohol consumption or goddess worship, it was the eating of meat that appears to have set the Rajput warriors of Rajasthan apart from Brahminical values as suggested by Tod's rather dichotomous perception of "martial Rajpoot" and "meek Hindus". I cite here Tod's quixotic and, I feel, rather admiring depiction of Rajput warriorhood to illustrate the distinction made between Rajput martial culture and Brahminical values: "The religion of the martial Rajpoot, and the rites of Har, the god of battle, are little analogous to those of the meek Hindus, the followers of the pastoral divinity, the worshippers of kine, and feeders on fruits, herbs and water (...) The Rajpoot delights in blood: his offerings to the god of battle are sanguinary, blood and wine (...). With Parbutti on his knee, his eyes rolling from the juice of the p'fool and opium, such is this Bacchanalian divinity of war. Is this Hinduism, acquired on the burning plains of India? (…) The Rajpoot slays buffaloes, hunts and eats boar and deer, and shoots ducks and wild fowl (*cookru*); he worships his horse, his sword, and the sun, and attends more to the martial song of the bard than to the litany of the Brahmin" (Tod 1972 I: 57).

Despite their non-vegetarian diet and the martial characteristics assigned to them, some Charan poets have been portrayed as possessing "Brahminical traits" too, that is to say, traits which they are thought to hold in common with Bhat, Brahmin and other religious specialists who claim a high status for themselves. The chief characteristics to inspire the comparison of Charan roles with Brahminical roles are: first, the semi-divine or magical power of words and curses; second, the sacrosanct and invulnerable status accorded to Charan men that prohibited the shedding of a Charan's blood (cf. Maheswari 1980: 49, 60, Malcolm 1970 II: 133); and third, Charan men were also known as religious specialists since they were not only the fathers, husbands or sons of the Charani goddesses but also their officiating priests and the foremost devotees and proponents of the belief in Charani goddesses, which is expressed through compositions of devotional and martial poetry and prose traditions that centred on the life and miraculous deeds of deified Charan women.

Charan poets, like Brahmin religious specialist, are thought to be blessed with "the power of the 'word', the corpus of sounds by which the moral order of society is maintained and altered" (Ziegler 1976a: 226). To the words uttered by Charan men and women, like those of diviners or seer-poets the world over, have been ascribed magical faculties like the power to predict the future, protect against the evil eye through magical formulas or to cure diseases through spells or the ability of words to bring about physical damage through curses. The power assigned to the Charans' speech seems to mainly derive from their status as priestly poets or *devīputra*s, the chosen devotees of the goddess who granted the Charans their poetic talent and Dimgal prosody.[417] As noted in chapter 4, Dimgal poetry, and especially its prosodic structuring, is believed to have had the ability to inspire warriors to heroic war

[417] Though instances of Rajput men with comparable powers are also known, like the supernatural powers and poetic genius ascribed to Rathaur Prithi Raja of Bikaner who, noted Tessitori (1919b: iii), was honoured as a clairvoyant and saint during his lifetime.

deeds, in particular their self-sacrifice on the battlefield, which stands for a sacrifice at the altar of primeval goddesses (Mother Earth, Devi).[418] The force of a Charan's or Charani's word is believed to result in the materialization of the angry aspect of the Goddess, a belief that adds considerably to the effect that curses uttered by Charan men and women are thought to have since "all power to curse comes from the Mother goddess".[419] Especially the words uttered by Charan goddesses were regarded with a mixture of reverence and dread since their powers of speech were believed to be such that their words could kill.[420]

The second "Brahminical" characteristic of Charan status, their sacrosanct position, is related to the power of speech and the listed religious roles which together bestow a "holy aura" on Charan men and women. Like the killing of a Brahmin, the consequences of shedding a Charan's blood or killing him was believed to lead to spiritual detriment of the wrong-doer.[421] Accordingly, the threat of a Charan to hurt or kill himself if his patron or other individual did not comply with his demands meant that his patron or other individuals would be held responsible for forcing the Charan to shed his own blood or kill himself (Maheswari 1980: 49, 60).[422] Rajasthani Charan traditions list many different forms of self-inflicted wounds and death including *tyāgī*, *dhāge*, *telī*, *samādhi* and *dharanā* (agitation through strikes or fasting) (Samaur 1999c: 72-77).[423] *Tyāgī* connotes ascetic renunciation of worldly life, or a self-chosen death or sacrifice, commonly through a hunger strike till death follows. *Dhāge* encompasses threats to mutilate or

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[418] According to Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 127, 167), Charan poets were also present during battles to curse the enemies of their patrons. This custom has not been reported in any of the sources studied by me.

[419] Comparable to Padoux' (1990: 4f, 46) and Samaur's (1999c: 27) identification of the power of the word with divine energy in Tantric Shakta-Shaiva traditions.

[420] The magical faculties accorded to Charan women have, at times, been described as side-products of the special powers invested in Charan men (cf. Enthoven 1922: 258). However, as Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 167-168) notes, divinity, and the powers that go with it, was most commonly ascribed to living Charan goddesses and not to Charan men. Though Charan men were assigned sacrosanct status, they were not (as far as I know) usually portrayed as divine beings or reincarnations of gods, apart from Charan Depal, the husband of the Charani Sagati Karni, who is believed to have been a part incarnation of Shiva.

[421] Tod noted that the murder of a carrier of goods with a "sacred character" like the Bhat was considered even worse than the death of a Brahmin. For "the Rajpoot might repose after the murder of a Brahmin, but that of the prophetic Vates would rise against him here and hereafter" (Tod 1972 II: 555).

[422] Such threats are believed to have had an immediate corrective effect on wrong-doers. The sixteenth-century traveller Sidi Ali Reis noted that similar threats made by Bhat caravan guides were only carried out occasionally, "[but] if a caravan is attacked and the suicide of the Bats becomes necessary, this is considered a terrible calamity, and the superstition of the people demands that the offenders be put to death, and not only the offenders themselves but the Rajput chief deems it necessary to kill their sons and daughters also; in fact, to exterminate the whole of their race" (published on www.fordham.edu). To my knowledge, only one Marwari example has been recorded of a king who would not bow to the "insolent threats" of Bhat carriers who refused to pay duties. His refusal reportedly led to the self-inflicted death of 80 Bhat men and "[t]he blood of the victims was on the Rana's head" (Tod 1972 II: 555).

[423] Today, *dharanā* (reportedly a Brahminical custom) is commonly rendered as "civil-disobedience", "strike" or "picketing" to enforce one's demands, obtain a favour or the payment of a debt or a fast to attain favours from gods. In Rajasthan, *dharanā* seems to also connote a fast, sometimes till death.

kill oneself with a knife or dagger, perhaps connoting *dhāge dhāge karaṇau*, "to tear to shreds". *Telī* and *samādhi* are the forms of self-sacrifice that are most commonly associated with Charan goddesses (Samaur 1999c: 27, 31). *Telī* stands for self-immolation by pouring oil over one's body and lighting it, while *samādhi* commonly defines any act of self-sacrifice. However, in Marwar, *samādhi* seems to most often refer to self-immolation by entombment, cremation or drowning (Samaur 1999c: 72-77).[424] I know only one story that commemorates a Charani's death as the result of above-mentioned practices, the *samādhi* of a Charani Sagati of village Bobasar (Shekawati), whose name I can no longer recollect. It was described to me as a "burning" to death by water, that is, the Sagati was reduced to ashes by water as if burned by fire (personal communication Bhanvar Singh Samaur, Bobasar 2000). Finally, *dharanā,* a strike or fast initiated by Charan poets and Charani goddesses, constituted a less deadly method to express one's unhappiness with circumstances, as long as it was not maintained till death.

The inviolable status of Charan men assured them a role as caravan guides and safeguards of travellers whom they protected by threatening robbers with *tyāge-dhāge* (*tyāg-dhāg*) and its power to bring "ruin and destruction" upon anyone who dared stand in their way (Malcolm 1970 II: 135). Their sanctified status also meant that Charan traders paid lighter levies on trade and agricultural produce while, in other instances, they are said to have taken advantage of the fear their sacrosanct status induced to evade the payment of trade duties (Tod 1972 I: 555). Charan homes were also deemed inviolable and frequently offered asylum to Rajput parties on the run or, after a Rajput's death in battle, to their wives and children (Malcolm 1970 II: 133f). The "holy aura" ascribed to Charan poets inspired Rajput rulers to bestow land and revenue rights upon them, hoping to thus protect lands and revenue against raiders. A Charan's pledge of honour was held in such esteem that it was given as a bond in lieu of loans taken by their Rajput patrons (N.S. Bhati 1974: 107-115, 322, Westphal-Hellbusch 976: 157).

The third Brahmin-like role accorded to Charan men is that of religious specialists. The special relation Charan poets are thought to have with the Goddess, usually referred to as Shakti or Durga, not only arises from their poetic talents; it is also based on the fact they have been the main devotees, poets, officiating priests and promoters of Charani goddesses in Rajasthan. As will become clear in the second part of this chapter, the religious and socio-political significance attributed to deified Charani women is documented by the close connection between Charani goddesses and the Rajput rulers of Rajasthan, including the Rathaur lineages of Bikaner and Marwar. In describing aspects of the medieval history of Charani goddess worship below, I first aim to answer the questions regarding the intermediate status of Charan men somewhere in between the position of Rajput warriors and Brahmin priests and, second, to clarify Deval's role in Pabuji's story (in particular in the

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[424] The Charani Sagati's tradition of self-sacrifice apparently links them to the tradition of *satī*, which is said to inspire widows to cremate themselves alongside their dead husbands (see Tambs-Lyche 1997: 61).

*chamd*s, *duha* I and the *parvaro*) and the way in which the Rathaur hero's tradition may be related to medieval Charani Sagati cults.

## *Charani Sagatis*

In the subsequent pages, I will investigate how (and when) the Charani cow herder and horse trader Deval became Sagati Devalde, and whether her deification could be compared with Pabuji's elevation to divine status. Since data about Deval herself are singularly lacking, I will discuss the traditions about other Charani Sagati to answer some of the aforementioned questions, and document the historical and mythical connections between the traditions about Charani Sagatis, on the one hand, and imagery concerning Puranic goddesses as found in the *chamd*s and the *parvaro*, on the other. After a brief reiteration of the Shaktik similes that are part of Pabuji's tradition, and the role accorded to Deval and other Charanis in *duha* I, the *parvaro* and *chamd* I, the narrative content and historical context of Charani Sagati miracle stories and praise-songs will be discussed. These traditions consist of numerous collections of poetry, including medieval and contemporary versions of oral and written compositions dedicated to different forms of the goddess, their miracles, life stories and many names.[425]

Charani Deval, like all other minor and major Charan goddesses, can be linked to Hinglaj, the Mahashakti and "spiritual foremother" of a long line of medieval and contemporary Charani Sagatis, deified women who became recognized as living goddesses during their lives.[426] The most important spiritual foremothers of Deval are considered to be the goddesses Avar and Karni, *pūrṇ avatārī*s (full reincarnations) of the "original" goddess Hinglaj. Charani Sagatis of later medieval times and present-day living goddesses are classified as *nimitt avatārī* or part (as opposed to full) incarnations of Hinglaj. In addition, symbolic listings, numbering "900.000 ordinary incarnations" define all Charan women as potential full or part

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[425] The most important Rajasthani source for this part of my study is *Rājasthānī śaktī kavy*, a compilation of poems dedicated to different goddesses by Samaur (1999c). Also helpful were publications of contemporary Charan devotees of goddesses like (*passim*) Chandra Dan Charan and Muldan Depavat (1987, *Māṃ Karaṇī śaṭśatī jayantī*), Chandradan Charan (1986, "Karaṇī Mātājī"), Bhanvar Pritviraj Ratnu (1996, *Suvā Uday Saṃsār*), Hanuman Prasad Sharma (no date, *Śrī karaṇī avatār*), Nandakishor Sharma (1999, *Jaisalamer kī lokadeviyāṃ*), Omaprakash Tamvar (no date, *Śrī karaṇī mātā kā camatkār*) and Kailashdan Ujval (1985, *Bhagawatī srī karaṇījī mahārāj*).

[426] In this study, the name "Shakti" is employed to refer to individual goddesses (Hanglaj, Devi, Chaumunda) as personifications of *śakti*, the female creative principle in Shaktik traditions or the divine energy as embodied by a deity's wife in Shaiva and Vaishnava traditions. "Sagati" is the name I use for regional incarnations of Shakti personified by Charan women. Both forms of the goddess can be related to the Puranic Devi, Shakti or Durga as portrayed in the *Devīmāhātmya* section of the *Mārkaṇḍey Pūraṇ*, which was probably known among the Charan poets of medieval Rajasthan from (at least) the fourteenth century onwards when the Charan poet Shridar Vyas composed the religious and heroic poem *Saptasatī* based on the *Durgā Sāptaśatī* (cf. Maheshwari 1980: 41-42). Tambs-Lyche (2004: 30 n.7) dates the arrival of ideas from the *Devīmāhātmya* in Rajasthan to approximately the sixth-seventh century.

incarnations of Shakti. Even those Charanis not recognized as a form of Shakti are nevertheless thought to embody latent divine qualities, but only extraordinary or full *avatārī*s are worshipped as goddesses in temples dedicated to them. Till date, the veneration of a contemporary Charan woman as a Sagati depends on the amount of people who recognize her as a full or part *avatārī*, a status determined by the trust people place in a contemporary Sagati's effectiveness or the scope of her miraculous powers.[427]

The legendary history of the Charani Sagatis' struggle against rapacious Rajput rulers is commonly held to connote Puranic tales about Shakti or Durga as the destroyer of the buffalo-demon Mahishasur. It is to this form of the Purnaic goddess, known as *Mahishasuramardini*, that Hinglaj and her Charani Sagatis are most commonly related (cf. Tambs-Lyche 2004b: 18f, 2004c: 64). As noted in earlier chapters, the poets of the Pabuji tradition also used this kind of imagery expressive of Puranic tales about Devi and her battle with the buffalo-demon. In the *paravaro*, for example, the poet mostly addresses the goddess with "Devi", but in verse-line 36 he refers to her as Visahathi, the "twenty-armed Goddess", a title that is used to refer to the Puranic goddess Durga and her different aspects (also thought of as Mahamaya or Yogmaya in different traditions). The poet of the *paravaro* employs several names for the goddess and accords to her a prominent role. In addition, the predominantly devotional *paravaro*, which was composed to praise both Pabuji and the Goddess, establishes a connection between their cults (see chapter 5).

In *chamd* I, imagery connoting Puranic tales about Shakti or Durga as the destroyer of the buffalo-demon Mahishasur is contained through the rendition of warfare and battle-death in terms of sacrificial heroism, a warrior's oblation of life to Shakti. In verse-line 18, the goddess Vimala is mentioned, a goddess who is identified by contemporary poets as a "local" form of the goddess Camunda, one of the many names attributed to Durga (cf. Goetz 1950: 30).[428] In verse-lines 28-29 and 34, the poet refers to the goddess as Shakti (*sakatīya*), accompanied by "thousands" *khecarī*s or battle loving yoginis, an image that also seems to call to mind Durga if the poet did indeed, as I think he did, meant to evoke the struggle between Durga (*Mahishasurmardini*) and the buffalo-demon. The bloodthirsty portrayal of Shakti in *chamd* I is reminiscent of like portrayals of Durga and blood sacrifice as the "celestial wine" drunk by her (cf. O'Flaherty 1975: 249). Lastly, I feel that the poet, when he described how Shakti's army of *khecarī*s devoured demons (*bhūcara*), perhaps meant his audience to hear in these verse-lines another echo of the battle

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[427] If a Sagati is thought to have performed supernatural deeds, an oral and/or written tradition may develop to spread her fame, and this may eventually lead to the establishment of a Sagati's own temple and the growth of a cult around one particular living goddess, like around today's Indra Kumari Bai and Sonal Bai in Rajasthan. For a list of Charani Sagatis worshipped in Rajasthan, see Samaur (1999: 503-539).

[428] In *chamd* II, in a comparable verse-line (v. 35), the goddess is named "vrimalā": "vadhīyā bhujha(ṃ) vauma lagai vrimalā, krama detai tīkama jhema kalā".

between Durga and the buffalo-demon, even though it is not wholly clear whether the mentioned "demons" are otherworldly creatures or enemy warriors who were rendered demons by the poet. Either way, it is not unthinkable that the poet used the image of yoginis devouring demons to evoke the goddess's battle with Mahishasur.

The portrayal of Shakti's army of yoginis (*jogaṇi*) and "incarnations" (*rupaṇi*) in verse-line 43 of *chamd* I can also be interpreted in two ways: first, as an army of unnamed Shakti incarnations; and second, as a reference to Charani *avatārī*s.[429] In an unclear verse-line (40) of *chamd* I, one does find an instance suggestive of the inclusion of Charani Sagatis in the battle proceedings, if *lagarī* and *baharī* are goddess-names comparable to Lamgi and Bamvari, the epithets accorded to Charani Sagati Avar and one of her seven sisters, as contemporary Charan poets have suggested (cf. Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 172).[430] The appearance of Charani Sagatis in war scenes would accord well, as shall be detailed below, with legends about the active part deified Charan women took in wars in Sindh and Rajasthan by instigating and leading Rajput armies in battle. The goddess of *chamd* II also appears to be Shakti, considering that Vimala (who, as noted just now, represents Caumunda and Durga) is mentioned again in verse-line 18 (like in *chamd* I). In addition, the vulture imagery of *chamd* II further documents the worship of the Goddess, either in her primeval form as mother earth or her warlike aspect represented by Shakti or Durga (cf. chapter 5).

### *Deval*

The poets of the Pabuji tradition also referred to the worship of regional forms of Shakti, in particular in *duha* I, where Deval (referred to as Devalde) is identified as a Charani Sagati or a living goddess of Charan origin. Unlike the poets of the *chamd*s, who only mentioned "a woman" when (in all likelihood) referring to Deval, Ladhraj did clearly identify Deval as a goddess. He is also the only poet who described Deval's role in Pabuji's story in some detail and recounts how Deval came to grant Pabuji the mare Kalvi (Kalmi Kesar), and subsequently called in his help to retrieve her stolen cattle, after which Pabuji set out to battle the cattle thief Jimda and eventually died at his enemy's hands.

In the first half of *duha* I, Ladhraj calls Deval by her name and identifies her as a *cāraṇī* (v. 146) and cowherd (*goharī*) (v. 205). After Pabuji battled Jimda and returned the stolen cows to Deval, Ladhraj (for the first time in this poem) identifies her as an *āiha* (woman or goddess) in verse-line 228 and, in verse-lines 289 and 376, as *sakati*, perhaps referring to a classical form of Shakti or to a Charani Sagati. Ladhraj's use of the name *sakati* could, of course, also refer to the primeval goddess

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[429] *Chamd* I (v. 43): "tālī mila nārada vīra ṭahā, ḍaba ru(ṃ)paṇi jogaṇi ḍāka ḍaha".

[430] *Chamd* I (v. 40): "lagarī baharī gaharī laharī, tira vāṃsuri vāṃ tahiṃ jāya tirī". If *vāṃtahiṃ* can be read as *vāṃnahiṃ*, this verse-line could also be interpreted as: "Swiftly the terrifying goddess(es) appeared (and) feeling thirsty, they "went" (and) "arrived" at the "blood vessels"".

Shakti herself. But, in view of the fact that Deval is today worshipped as one of the minor Charani Sagatis of Rajasthan and not as one of the important *pūrṇ avatārīs* (full incarnations of Shakti) points to the fact that Ladhraj, in referring to Deval as a *sakati*, meant to identify her as Charani Sagati and not as Shakti herself. From the assertion that Deval is a goddess in *duha* I, it can be inferred that the medieval process of deification was not limited to Pabuji but included Deval too, and that she has been worshipped from at least the eighteenth century onwards, and probably even earlier, keeping in mind that *duha* I is thought to have been composed in the beginning of the seventeenth century.[431]

Ladhraj's composition also gives a clue regarding Deval's human identity as he referred to her once a *gaṛhavī (gadhavī)*, a name used for Kaccheli or Kacch Charan communities (*duha* I, v. 205).[432] This identification links Deval with the pastoral-nomadic Kaccheli or Kacch Charan communities from Kacch (Kutch) and Saurashtra who were famous horse breeders and (like Deval) traded in horses (Ujval 1985: 28, Westpahl-Hellbusch 1976: 164). Today, Deval is held to be a *nimitt avatārī*, a form of Shakti (Sagati Bhavani) who was born to the Mishran (Misan) Charan lineage in village Bhoganiya near Jaisalmer (Samaur 1999c: 517). The Mishran Charan are known to have migrated from Sindh where some of their lineages are said to have converted to Islam. Though I expected Deval's devotees to have developed their own traditions about her, efforts to trace them proved unsuccessful. Unlike major Sagatis, it appears that Deval does not have many Charan devotees or different temples to her name, apart from a small temple under a Kher tree in her birth-place Bhoganiya where she is worshipped together with her sister Lacha Devi. She is apparently also worshipped in a Jaisalmeri Devi temple, together with Lacha Devi and the Sagati Birvari of the Charan Naraha (Nar) lineage from Saurashtra (Samaur 1999c: 516-17). It seems that Deval is mainly remembered for the role accorded to her in Pabuji's story, in particular for giving him the horse Kalvi who is thought of as an "otherworldly horse" (*alaukik ghoṛī*) and yet another *avatār* of Shakti in contemporary traditions. Deval probably is, and may have always been, a minor Sagati, worshipped by Mishran Charan and Bhil Bhopas but never given an important place of her own, at least not in the medieval and contemporary Sagati traditions studied by me. In the Pabuji temple at Kolu, the Shakti Devi and Deval are both represented by one hero stone carrying a carving of a trident, the symbol of the Goddess.

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[431] The medieval process of deification may have extended to Pabuji's mare Kalvi if my indefinite reading of verse-line 121 (*duha* I) holds true. In this instance, Buro explains to Jimda why he cannot have the mare, saying that Pabuji never stops thinking about his mare since "(she) was (his) mother" (*duha* I (v. 121): "mādī mana māṃ thīha, pābū naha bhūlai palaka"). Perhaps Kalvi has also been seen as an incarnation of Shakti (in this instance personified by Pabuji's nymph-mother) like in the extant *paṛ* and *mātā* epic of Bhil Bhopas, who portray both the mare and Pabuji's nymph mother as Shakti incarnate (Samaur 1999c: 516-17).

[432] Tambes-Lyche (1997: 27 n.14) describes Gadhavi as synonymous with Charans from Gujarat.

Though Charani Deval's name is not mentioned in either *chamd* under review, even so the poet does seem to refer to her in *chamd* I, where Deval's involvement could be read from verse-line 15 in which, I think, Deval has been evoked by the poet in speaking of a nameless woman who spurred Pabuji on to attack the (cattle) thief Jimda. Indeed, the evocation of the cause of Pabuji and Jimda battle (the horse Kalvi and Jimda's cow theft) in most of the selected poems can be read as a sign of Deval's involvement, even if her name has not been mentioned. It was, after all, the cow herd and horse trader Deval who gained Pabuji's protection by giving him the black mare Kalvi, and the ownership of the horse became one of the main reasons for the trouble between the Dhamdhal and Khici families. Though this part of the story is not directly hinted at in *chamd* II, not even by referring to a nameless woman, it does even so appear that the poet alluded to Deval's role in the proceedings when he ascribed the cause of the battle to theft, probably cow-theft, by referring to Jimda as a robber, "dhāṛīta" (v. 29, 67) and, in the *kalasa*, by stating that Pabuji "added to the fame of his sword" by coming to the rescue of cows (v. 96-97).

In the *parvaro* (like in the *chamd*s) Deval has not been mentioned by name either, though it is possible that it is she who was meant in verse-line 2, where the poet introduces a goddess from Kacch; a woman or goddess from Kacch (*āī kachu*) or Kaccheli, probably a Charani Sagati from Kacch and, most likely, a reference to Deval. Despite the fact that it is not altogether clear to me whether the *parvaro*'s poet really meant to evoke Deval, I do feel that his reference to a Kaccheli offers an indication of the connection between medieval Pabuji, Shakti and Charani Sagati worship. I imagine that a Kacheli Sagati, most probably Deval, was worshipped alongside Pabuji and Devi in the Rathaur hero's medieval temples at Kolu and Sojat. This notion was also inspired by the fact that Deval is now revered by Bhil Bhopas of the *mātā* epic in Kolu, where the Bhopas perform the *devala vālā paravāṛau* as part of their mata epic performance.[433]

Other equally slender but, I think, not improbable evidence for the medieval relation between Pabuji's worship and the worship of Deval in Pabuji's Kolu temple may be read from references to the medieval practice of tree protection in the *parvaro*. As shall be described in more detail below, the protection of trees is one of many narrative concerns of poetry dedicated to Sagatis, in particular Charani Sagati Karni. In the *parvaro*, the importance of the protection of trees may be read from Ratna's woeful tale (v. 28-43) about Pabuji's punishment of the Bhati Rajput Jaiti after the latter accidentally cut the Acacia tree (*Khejaṛa*) planted near Pabuji's temple. If the quoted interpretations hold true, it seems clear that not only Ladhraj but also the poets of the *chamd*s and *parvaro* described different forms of the

[433] The *devala vālā paravāṛau* (not transcribed for this study) contains elaborate descriptions of Charani Devalde's visit to Pabuji's court. This *paravāṛau* has little narrative content, but is full of embellishments and repetition, dwelling at length on the details of Devalde's dress, the drove of horses and cows she has in tow, and the sweets Pabuji offers to "his honoured guest".

goddess, including Puranic forms (Devi, Durga and Shakti) alongside her "regional forms", i.e. the Charani Sagatis of Rajasthan.

### *Hinglaj*

Apart from the poetic data contained by the *chamd*s, *duha* I and *parvaro*, I have not come across any other poems or stories pertaining to Deval's deification, and I have had quite some trouble in finding possible answers to the questions posed earlier: how, and when, did the Charani cow herder and horse trader Deval become Shakti Devalde? Can her deification be compared with Pabuji's elevation to divine status? As I hope to show, a generalized appraisal of the way in which female cattle keepers and horse traders of Charan lineages came to be worshipped in early-medieval times does help in assessing Deval's role in the Pabuji tradition. For this reason, I include here a discussion of the historical and mythical data that are part of traditions about Deval's spiritual foremothers and sisters, the myth-histories and temple-histories associated with the primary Sagati Hinglaj and two of her prominent *avatārī*s, the Charani Sagatis Avar and Karni.[434] As will become apparent below, a study of Charani Sagati traditions assists in recognizing yet another aspect of medieval kingdom formation and Rajput-Charan relations in Marwar, that is, the religious and political role conferred on Charan women and goddesses as "sisters" of Rajput men and as the divine guardians of Rajput realms (cf. Tambs-Lyche 1997: *passim*, 2004: *passim*). The following examination of the mythical accounts of the travels of Charani Sagatis and their people in Baluchistan, Sindh, Kacch and Rajasthan is also intended to offer insights into the relation between the transmission of narrative poetry and stories by different communities, on the one hand, and pastoral-nomadic life and politics, war, trade and religion in the western and south-western desert regions, on the other.

Charani Deval can be linked to Hinglaj, who is believed to have been an eighth-century Charani, daughter of Charan Haridas of the Gaviya (or Gauravia) lineage of Nagar Tatha in present-day Pakistan (Samaur 1999c: 503). For the Tumbel Charan clans of Sindh and Gujarat, she is a historical Charani who appeared amongst their midst as Kohani-Rani in the Hala (Kohana) Mountains of Sindh when the Tumbel were leaving the mountains for the plains (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 173). Kohani-Rani is remembered as literate Charani, chaste and an accomplished Yogini. She inspired the Tumbel to spread the cult of the goddess and brought them to Las-Bela for this purpose. According to the tradition, Hinglaj settled in a cave in

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[434] Much of what follows is based upon conversations with the Charan scholars and/or poets Banvar Singh Samaur (Churu), Chandra Prakash Deval (Ajmer), Subh Karan Deval and Sohandan Charan (Jodhpur), and Udaydan Charan (Siwana); upon conversations with the priests of Sagati temples in or near Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Barmer and Churu; upon conversations with devotees present at the 1999 Navratri celebrations at the Karni temple in Deshnok; and upon discussions between the living goddess Deval Baisa Maharaj and Charan poets and politicians who had gathered at the temple.

the Hingula[435] mountain range, west of the confluence of the river Hingol and the Arabian Sea. Here, she is now worshipped in the Saran Hinglaj cave temple by Charan and many other communities, including many different classes of graziers, cattle rearers and traders from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Sindh and Baluchistan since, at least, the ninth century. From legendary and historical data, it can be concluded that the beginnings of Charani Sagati worship in Rajasthan can be dated to at least the ninth century, when Hinglaj's incarnation Avar is thought to have been born in a village near Jaisalmer. This date accords well with the idea that Shakti worship in Marwar and the advent of Shakta-tantric traditions in Rajasthan can be dated to the early medieval period, from circa the eighth century onwards (S.R. Sharma 1996: 98).[436] The "appropriation" or "amalgamation" of regional and local goddesses into the Brahminical Shakti tradition in Rajasthan is a process that has been dated to the period between the fourteenth and fifteenth century (Hooja 2004: 371).

Hinglaj is known by many names to her eighteenth, nineteenth and early-twentieth century devotees, including Charan, Rajput, Marwar's Bania, Kanpathi and Naga Nath Yogi, Gosain, Sufi and Brohi-Charan followers.[437] She appears in different sources as Hinglaj Ma, Hingula, Hingulaja, Kottari, Carcika, Lal Devi (the "Red (Fire) Goddess") and the Puranic Devi Hanglaj. Her Sufi devotees think of her as Lal Chole Wale Mai ("Mother (with) the red shawl") and Nani or Nanea ("grandmother") (Samaur 1999a: *passim*). As Tambs-Lyche (2004b: 30 n.7, 2004c: 64) has remarked, Hinglaj may have been part of more ancient goddess cults (perhaps traceable to the fifth century) which may have become part of later Charani Sagati cults. Nowadays she is most commonly described as the first "full" incarnation of Durga embodied by a Charan woman. "Both the Puranic Devi Hanglaj and the Charani Hinglaj are now considered one" (Samaur 1999: 505).

The main idol of Hinglaj stands inside the Saran Hinglaj cave-temple. Pilgrims have reported how an undying flame burns in front of Hinglaj's image and have described the cave-temple itself as a womb or *garvaguphā* (Samaur 1999a: 59). The main ritual at Saran Hinglaj signifies re-birth, both in a rather literal as well as symbolical way. The pilgrims, after undressing, enter and leave the cave-temple through its narrow openings, and are thought to be reborn upon completing this ritual. After paying their respects to Hinglaj, they crawl out of the cave again on hands and knees and thus hope to gain spiritual deliverance. Upon emerging from Hinglaj's cave, the pilgrims become "twice-born", sinless as newborn children, and receive new clothes and consecrated food from the Chamgali Mai, who is thought to be a "virgin priestess" from a Baluchi Brohi Charan lineage and a full incarnation of

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[435] On modern maps, Hingula is situated near the Talar-i-band (Makran Coast Range).

[436] Archaeological evidence apparently suggests that earlier goddess cults in parts of northern and north-eastern Rajasthan should be dated to the period between the third and second century CE, when different groups of people are thought to have migrated to Rajasthan from the northwest (S.R. Sharma 1966: 49, Thapar 1999: 60-114).

[437] Brohi-Charans, like some Mishran and Tumbel Charan lineages of Sindh, are Charans who converted to Islam.

Hinglaj.[438] In this way all travellers become religious brothers and assume the title Kapadiya.

*The Saran Hinglaj temple (Courtesy: Khalid Omar, Karachi).*

The oldest temple dedicated to Hinglaj, east of the Indus, appears to be the Ludrova temple near Jaisalmer. All the way through the Thar Desert and in Shekawati, Hinglaj is also worshipped in caves, small temples near watering places, on platforms under trees or next to wells, and in the temples of Rajput forts. In Jaisalmer, for example, she is now worshipped in a small fort temple and is also believed to reside in the "Sal Tree temple" in the middle of the Garisar lake of Jaisalmer. Here, herdsmen till date come to water their cattle if enough water stands in the shallow desert-lake. Near Bikaner, Hinglaj's Kolajagat temple is found. In Bhanpur (on the road from Rajasthan to Kacch) Hinglaj has been enshrined as *Mahishasuramardini* in the Hinglaj Garh temple situated at the site where Hinglaj is believed to have meditated (Samaur 1999a: 60). And near village Siwana (district Barmer), the Than Mata Hinglaj temple has been established in a cave of the Chappan hills. A small stream of water trickles down from the rocks in which the temple was hewn and is collected in a cave, forming a source of drinkable water in the middle of the rocky desert. The temple's present-day Gosain Pujaris and her devotees from various caste groups of the surrounding villages credit Hinglaj with this marvel, i.e. making water flow from rocks.

[438] The Chamgali Mai is also referred to as Kottari, the naked goddess (Samaur 1999b: 56).

*Mahishasuramardini*

In our days, Sagatis are commonly presented as manifestations of Durga, Kali and/or "Shaktis of Rigvedic times", the "natural" or "original" Shaktis who, notes Samaur (1999: 20), manifested themselves as Charani Sagatis in medieval times. Hinglaj is, as a rule, associated with Durga, but also with Kali, Manasa Devi and Asapuri. From at least the nineteenth-century onwards, pilgrims on the way up to Saran Hinglaj halted to sacrifice goats or coconuts at temples dedicated to different Devis. Travelogues of pilgrimages to Saran Hinglaj also document how the Hinglaj cult is associated with many other mythologies, like combined Shakti and Shiva worship and the worship of Ganesh and Bhairu (Bhairav), the temples of whom were situated on the pilgrim trail up the Hingula Mountain (Samaur 1999a: 56-60). And stories about the heroic deeds of medieval and contemporary Charani Sagatis are often taken to be "echoes" of the struggle of Durga with the buffalo-demon Mahishasur as told in the Puranas. Colonial and contemporary sources also associate Saran Hinglaj with Durga's victory over the buffalo-demon (Eastwick 1973: 217, Samaur 1999a: 5). Thus it is said that Durga tore out the demon's tongue and flung it upon a rock in front of the cave temple at Saran Hinglaj where it remains till today. Hinglaj's Pujaris indicate a white streak of stone in the rocks near the temple's pool as the mark left by the demon's tongue.

The textual source most often quoted to link Charani Hinglaj to the Puranic Devi Hanglaj is the *Devīmāhātmya* section of the *Mārkaṇḍey Pūraṇ* in which she is said to appear first. I have not yet been able to trace these versions of tales about the "mountain-goddess" Hanglaj. The story apparently centres on the goddess Carcika who was born from the sweat that appeared on Shiva's brow after defeating the demon Andhaka, as told in the *Śiv Pūraṇ* (O'Flaherty 1975: 169). The newborn goddess licks the blood of the demon and Shiva tells her: "You will always be worshipped with oblations and flowers. You will be smeared with blood therefore your auspicious name will be Carcika." Thereupon the goddess roamed the earth, wearing a lion skin. She is believed to have eventually settled "in the best of places", the Hingula mountain range. The twelfth-century *Tantra Chunamani* is also listed as part of the Hinglaj tradition, for it recounts how Shakti's skull fell at Saran Hinglaj, as the result of which this place became a site of pilgrimage. Depending on which version one reads, it is also believed that the goddess's navel or the top of her head fell at Saran Hinglaj (O'Flaherty 1975: 250f, Payne 1997: 8, Samaur 1999c: 506).

Samaur (1999a: 56-60, 1999c: 503f) and Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 173) trace the Hinglaj tradition to several sources. First, as her name Kottari ("The naked") suggests, she is thought to be a form of a South-Indian mother goddess of the same name. Among Muslim devotees, she is popular as Lal Cholewali Mai and Nani or Bibi Hanglaj (Samaur 1999a: 56f). In addition, Pannebakker (1983) suggests a relation between Hinglaj, referred to as Nani or Nanea by Sufis, and a "primeval Babylonian goddess" who came to be represented as Hinglaj under the

name Lal Chole Wale Mai in eighteenth-century Sufi poetry. Perhaps Pannebakker here refers to Anahit-Nanaia, Hinglaj's "Iranian form" (Goetz 1950: 30). Westphal-

*Mahishasuramardini (Rajasthan, ninth century).*
*Courtesy of the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University.*
*Photo by Bruce M. White (2004 Emory Museum).*

Hellbusch (1976: 173) notes that Hinglaj has been worshipped in a Buddhist form in Afghanistan and Punjab as well, while the Minas and Bhil of Rajasthan worshipped her as a fearsome demon. Samaur (1999a: 56) adds "Sumerian" devotees to the list of communities that used to worship Hinglaj. Last of all, Payne (1997: 7) held that Hinglaj represented a form of Parvati. The study of the different mythical, legendary and literary histories of the Saran Hinglaj cult, relating them to many traditions, calls for more expertise than I can lay claim to. What I can do is make apparent how stories related to medieval Charani Sagati cults have been transmitted by different communities from the early medieval period onwards, and how the worship of Charani Sagatis has been connected to Hinglaj.

*Avar*

Many variant stories commemorate the tale of heroic deeds performed by Charani Sagatis who are believed to have lived after Hinglaj and who are considered her full or part incarnations. First in line is Avar (Awar, Avad), a full incarnation of Hinglaj who is said to have hailed from the Madhu or Sawauni Charan lineage of western Rajasthan. Tradition records that she was born in the year 831 in village Chalakanu (Barmer). As Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 169f) has shown, Gujarati Charan devotees recount many tales about Avar, many of which I have not been able to trace in Rajasthan. These Gujarati versions of Avar's myth-history are nevertheless briefly summarized below, together with Rajasthani versions, to paint a fuller picture of Avar's tradition. In Gujarat, Avar is generally portrayed as a daughter of the Mada Charan sub-clan who lived near Valabhi (Saurashtra). In some versions of her story, Avar is portrayed as an Apsara, a daughter of the Nagas, snake-worshippers who are thought to have been the original inhabitants of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Saurashtra. She has also been identified as Parvati in her role of divine foremother of several Charan clans. In southern Kacch, for example, the Charan Nara clan claims to derive from the offspring of Rishi Shankar (Shiva) and Mother Avar (Parvati) (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 98). Some such myths of origin are also told by the Rebari and cattle keeping Kacchela Charan, whose foremothers were created by Parvati who moulded two Charan men from Shiva's sweat and had them marry two nymphs, Gaveri and Averi, whose offspring became Rebari and Charan. Avar's name is also part of the origin tales told by the Tumbel Charan, highlighting the connection between Hinglaj, Charan communities of Kacch and the Makran coast and Samma rulers (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 148).[439]

Like Hinglaj, Avar is known by many different names, including Chalakanetji (Chalakarai), Sawauni, Themrarai, Kali Dumgar ki Rai, Tanotrai, Ai-nath, Katiyani, Vijaisen, Naganechi and Bhadriyarai. As the following summary aims to show, the meanings attributed to Avar's different names give an idea of the manner in which her cult spread in the western desert (and beyond) by becoming part of the heritage of different clans, communities and geographical traditions. Thus, Avar is worshipped as Chalakanetji in her village of origin, Chalakanu. She is called Sawauni in reference to one of the Charan lineage names associated with her. She is believed to have earned the epithet Themrarai (Ruler of Themra) by defeating "Hun invaders", killing "fifty-two Hun demons", including Themra and Gantiya. At the present-day Themrarai temple, stone and wooden plaques carved with the image of seven sisters and Bhairav (their brother or uncle) are offered. The stones are piled up on platforms in front of Avar's cave temple (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 171).[440]

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[439] These legends trace the creation of the Tumbel Charan lineage back to Shiva but also to a legend about Avar's fourth son who was adopted by a Samma Rajput pilgrim (as detailed in the beginning of this chapter under the heading "Rajput, Brahmin and Charan").

[440] It is not clear to me which seven sisters or goddesses are meant since their names vary according to different listings and tales. Karni's myth-history (see below) indicates that some Sagatis are believed to

Avar's migration to Jaisalmer may be chronicled as follows: during a period of drought, Avar's family moved to Sindh. There, Avar and her six sisters grew up to be so beautiful that Sumra Hamir of Sindh wanted to marry all seven of them and threatened to use force if his marriage proposal was not accepted. As a result, and on instigation of the Goddess, who "spoke through Avar's mouth", the family left Sindh to settle in the Temra hills near Jaisalmer. On the way to Jaisalmer, the family met the buffalo-demon Bakha. Avar killed the buffalo and, upon drinking his blood, started to long for Hamir's blood too. She sent a Bhil grazier to Hamir to tell him what had happened and to presage his death.[441] After settling her family in Temra, Avar returned to Sindh and organized a huge *dharanā* (fast) to compel Hamir to return the Charan lands he annexed. When Hamir refused to give in, the Charani recruited Bhati warriors of Jaisalmer and the Samma of Sammasatta and Punjab. With a huge army of Charan and Rajput warriors led by "hundred thousand" Charani goddesses, Avar defeated Hamir. The Bhati got to rule over Thar Parkar, while the Sammas acquired the rest of Sindh and named Avar, Ashapura.

The rather watered down Rajasthani versions of this story as recorded by Samaur (1999c: 508-514) credits Avar herself with the destruction of the kingdom of the Sumra. Versions of this tale centre upon the attentions of a Sumra ruler, at times identified as "Bangra", who after glimpsing one of the pink fingers of the heavily-veiled Avar extend beyond her burqa, promptly proposed marriage. Avar looked upon his request rather unfavourably, and she is believed to have destroyed the Sumra kingdom in rage. As a result, or so this tale continues, Avar had to move to Jaislamer where she (conceivably after halting on the way in Kali Dumgar) made her home and granted the erstwhile Sumra lands to Bhati Rajput warriors. The theme of marriage proposals from unacceptable suitors from other religions or classes and their disastrous consequences is very common in Marwar and Gujarat.[442] Such tales

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have been one of seven sisters in a biological as well as spiritual sense. The many varieties of local seven-sister cults may document, suggests Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 171), that these cults were popular before Charani goddesses came to be worshipped in this region and may illustrate how Charani cults took in (or were taken in by) other "much older" cults, perhaps traceable to the worship of "seven little mothers" (Saptamatrika) in Tantric Shaiva-Shaktik traditions (cf. Padoux 1990: 151f, Samaur 1999c: 20).

[441] Yet other tales recount how Avar met a Banjara on the way to Jaisalmer, near the river Sutlej. The Banjara, upon witnessing how Avar made the river passable by scooping up the water with her hands, thus drying it up, asked her to help him resolve tax-issues with Hamir. She advized him to fill the packs of his hundred-thousand oxen with sand and empty them again at the river's source thus changing the course of the Sutlej. As a result, Hamir's land became a desert. A similar story is told about Avar's sister Khodiyar who made the waters of the Rann retreat so that Rajput armies could pass it safely (cf. Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 175)

[442] For example, the refusal of Susani, a Mahajan Kuladevi, to marry the Nawab of Nagaur (Tessitori 1917a: 211) and the tale about Avar's sister Khodiyar who refused to marry Shiladitya Sattam and destroyed his state upon being proposed to. Khodiyar ("The Cripple") was the chosen goddess of the Rajput of Bhamnagar (Tambs-Lyche 1997: 22-26) and is also worshipped in Jaisalmer (Samaur 1999c: 814). A Rajasthani miracle tale explains her name, The Cripple, by recounting how she became lame when she slipped while on the way to administer nectar to her dead brother to bring him back to life (Samaur 1999c: 815).

invariably end with the destruction of kingdoms or villages, and the migration of entire Charan clans to other parts of the desert. Avar's fight with Umra Sumra, who upon becoming a Muslim called himself Hamir Sumra, is read as symbolic for the fight between Hindu and Muslim forces by Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 111). Though conflicts between Charan communities and early-medieval Sumra rulers often serve to explain why many Charan communities left Sindh and migrated westwards, their migrations were not only instigated by religious motives. As Avar's tale illustrates, famine or tax evasion were other reasons why Charan and Banjara communities are thought to have left Sindh. This point will be further discussed under the heading "mobile peoples".

In the Shekawati village Pabusar stands yet another temple dedicated to Themrarai. Avar's Meha Charan worshippers established the small temple next to an old well. The temple is, to my eyes, a rather unusual building, since I never saw any such temple before or since. I imagine that the round, clay structure built over the main sanctum was perhaps meant to represent a cave, reminiscent of Hinglaj and Avar's cave temples elsewhere.[443] By the looks of the building, a rather recent Themrarai temple has been built near Deshnok, the most important contemporary centre of Sagati cults. Avar's epithet Kali Dumgar ki Rai refers to a temple of the same name near Jaisalmer where the Charani is said to have halted *en route* from Sindh. Here, it is said, the Parmar ruler Jasbhan of Ludrova came to pay his respects and had a temple, dedicated to her, built on a hillock formed by black rocks (*kālī ḍūmgar*). Till date, Parmar Rajput lineages worship Avar in this temple with the sacrifice of goats. Outside the Kali Dumgar temple, like in the Temrarai temple, enormous piles of memorial stones with carvings of the seven sisters offered by devotees attest to the ongoing popularity of this cult.

The name Ai-nath refers to Avar's Kanpathi Nath yogini aspect, representing her as an ascetic, holding a kettledrum and begging bowl, wearing a loincloth and, in her ears, a glass *kuṇḍal* (earring). "Katiyani" evokes Avar's domestic talent; her reputation as a woman so accomplished in spinning wool that she was able to sustain all her people during years of famine by means of wool trade. And the name Bhadariya Rai connects Avar with a temple of the same name situated amid an *auraṇ* of Jal and Bor trees in Bhadariya on the Jodhpur-Jaisalmer road. Maharaja Gajsingh of Bikaner is credited with the construction of the temple in 1831, and apart from this relation between Avar and her Bikaneri Rathaur devotee, I know no other stories that connect Avar with this temple. Avar is also worshipped in Deshnok in the temple town of her own incarnation Karni. As Nagnechi, the Sagati is credited with giving material support to Rajput warriors. For example, she is believed to have bestowed 500 horses upon the founding fathers of the Kacchawa lineage thus

[443] It is also possible that this small temple represents a dome-topped, circular shelter, as Karni is believed to have built in Deshnok (see the description of Karni's temple below). Unfortunately, I was not able to contact anyone who knew stories about this temple.

enabling them to settle their scores with their enemies and establish their rule in Rajwarra (present-day Jaipur).[444]

*The Themrarai temple in Pabusar.*

As shall be documented below, very similar stories are told about other Sagatis, like Avar's part-incarnation Karni and the Gujarati Charani Baru, who are also credited with granting 500 horses to Rajput princes (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 114). The attribution of one and the same story to different Sagatis or vice versa (the attribution of different versions of one story to one Sagati) occurs quite often.[445] This is partly due to the fact that so many regional variants exist and were told and retold by various communities in different periods of time. The typified character of the stories, their stock narrative themes and the fact that the same stories are told about more than one Sagati, who may have been known under similar or different names, give further rise to uncertainty, at least in one who finds it important to know exactly which Sagati did what and when. I think it best to keep in mind that the attribution of the same heroic deeds and/or names to different Charani goddesses can be understood as part of a narrative tradition that casts all Sagatis as forms of Hinglaj and/or major or minor incarnations of each other, and this means that, in the end, it is the Mahashakti Hinglaj herself who is credited with the heroic deeds of all her *avatārī*s.

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[444] The Rathaur rulers of Jodhpur are known to worship Avar under the name Nagnechi, apparently connected to an origin myth that relates how the first Charans were divine beings who left Mount Sumeru after the number of the divine populace had increased too much. One of the heavenly Charans married the daughter of Naga, named Avari, who gave birth to Nagnechi (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 97f). The subsequent generations of this lineage are thought to people the southern coast of Kacch.

[445] See, for example, a Gujarati tale about Pabuji recorded by Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 114), which commemorates that it was the Sagati Karni from Deshnok (and not Deval) who gifted Pabuji his mare.

*Karni*

Third in line after Hinglaj is Karni Mata; she is worshipped as a part incarnation of Hinglaj and a full incarnation and disciple of Avar in several temples in Deshnok near Bikaner.[446] After the division of India and Pakistan, Deshnok came to replace Saran Hinglaj as the most important pilgrimage place for Charani Sagati devotees, and Karni is now the most renowned Charani Sagati of the region. When I visited the celebration of Navratri in Deshnok in 1999, thousands of her devotees from different backgrounds had assembled, though Charan worshippers seemed to be in the majority. During my visits, the officiating priests of Deshnok related their history to Bikaneri Rathaur Rajput lineages. Karni's main shrine is situated in a fort-like temple (*koṭ*) built by Maharaja Surat Singh of Bikaner (C. Charan 1987: 21).[447] In the present-day temple, the main worship ritual consists of the offering of coconuts, sweetmeats, flowers, etc. Karni's devotees come for the darshan of her image and to touch the eternal flame that Karni's Pujari waves over the heads of the assembled crowds.[448]

On the temple's main altar, Karni has been depicted like a Puranic goddess with a trident (*triśūl*) in her left hand and the head of the buffalo-demon Mahishasur in the other and a double garland of skulls around her neck.[449] She also wears the traditional skirt and headwear of western Rajasthani women, the *ghagarā* and the *oṛhṇī*, and not the *sāṛī* generally worn in more classical representations of Puranic and folk-goddesses in Rajasthan. Around her feet, rats (*kabhā*) assemble. The *kabhā* are believed to represent the souls of departed Charan devotees who live in the *kabhā* till it is time to be reborn, thus escaping the clutches of the lord of the dead Yama, with whom Karni is believed to have had an argument that remained unresolved.[450] At the stalls surrounding the temple, where devotees can buy religious

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[446] Second in line after Hinglaj is Bamkal Devi who is now remembered as the daughter of Mada, a Charan of the Sahuwa lineage and the sister-in-law of Avar Devi. Different traditions cite her birth place as Nano Bariyat Gharware near Siddhapur Patan or Garwhare village near Barmer (Samaur 1999c: 507-08). Little is known to me about this Sagati, apart from the fact that she now has temples dedicated to her in Barmer and Umarkot, and that some tales portray her as the *iṣṭadevi* (chosen deity) of Nanda Vana Brahmin communities and the Kuldevi of Pamvar Rajput lineages.

[447] Deshnok's other Karni temples include a temple in memory of her death near Lake Dhineru (Deshnok) where Karni is believed to have "left her body" and the Nehri temple, built around a Khejri tree. In this temple's cellar, Karni's *dhūnī* (ascetic fire) can be visited.

[448] In 1999, the living Goddess Deval Bai Sa of Mewar had also come to take part in the festivities. Though it was difficult for me to have a real conversation with this formidable lady as she was surrounded by Charan dignitaries all the time, it did become apparent that she sees herself as a part incarnation of Karni and counts Devalde of Bhoganiya among her spiritual sisters.

[449] Goetz (1950: 30) held that the "Charan prophetess Karni" was a historical incarnation of Durga Mahishamardini or Chamunda, and that her cult "superseded" this older Shaktik tradition in Rajasthan.

[450] In the temple, hundreds of chubby rats are offered sweetmeats and milk by Karni's devotees. The designation "rat-temple" for Karni's temple, as often used in popular media, suggests that it is the Kabhas who are worshipped here. This is not so: it is Karni who is worshipped.

*Devotional picture of Karni as a shepherdess (unknown artist).*

souvenirs and offerings to the goddess, are also sold reproductions Karni's portrait showing her in yet another light, i.e. as an old and greying woman with strong features, wearing Rajasthani clothes and jewellery, seated in a cave on a mat in the manner of an ascetic and surrounded by *kabhā*. In one hand she holds a trident and in other a string of beads (*mālā*). Her head and body are half covered with a black, woollen shawl (*oṛhṇī)*, resembling those worn by female graziers of different backgrounds who identify themselves as Charani Sagati devotees. In such paintings, Karni commonly sports a grey beard which, I was told, is testimony to her high age and miraculous powers.

Like her spiritual predecessors, Karni is thought of as a historical Charan woman who was born as Ridhubai to the Meha Khiniya Charan clan. She is remembered as the seventh daughter of one Charan named Meha Khidiya, who was born in the second half of the fourteenth century in Suwap and who died at the age of 141 (!) in 1538 (C. Charan 1987: 27, Samaur 1999c: 519).[451] Devotional poetry dedicated to Karni commemorates how her divine nature became evident at a very early age when she started performing miracles, earning herself the name "Do-er" (Karni), by curing cripple people, saving them from snakebites, granting them a son, and so forth (Barath 1987: 32-34). Karni is believed to have married Depal (Depa)

[451] Karni's birth has been dated to circa 1387 or 88 (Cf. Charan 1987: *nivedan*, Tambs-Lyche 2004c: 65).

of the Rohadiya Vithu Charan lineage of village Satika (Samaur 1999c: 519, Ujval n.d.: 35). This marriage brought Karni into a lineage of poets and gate-keepers long associated with Rathaur ruling lineages. Tambs-Lyche (2004c: 68, 78) notes that the fact that Karni is believed to have married, sets her apart from deified women who more commonly represent the literary and religious type of the "sacred virgin" who remains celibate in order to preserve her Shaktik powers.

The unmarried status of deified women may also be due to sociological reasons: a woman possessed with divine power is thought to scare off prospective husbands. Karni apparently did find a man who was not scared easily, a feat which need not surprise us since Depal is believed to have been a partial incarnation of Shiva. It is unclear whether or not one should see Karni and Depal's alliance as a real, in the sense of worldly marriage since it is believed that their marriage was never consummated and that Karni remained a virgin all her life. But the fact that she considered marriage at all appears to set her apart from other deified women and is the reason why Tambs-Lyche proposes that Karni married Depal for socio-political gain, i.e. to forge an alliance with the lineage of Vithu Charan, the poets of the Rathaur, and thus "further her political designs; sacred femininity allies itself to human chiefs: the Rathod patrons of her husband's clan" (Tambs-Lyche 2004c: 78).[452] Karni's role as Kuladevi or guardian of Rathaur Rajput realms and her "political designs" will be further discussed below.

After her marriage, Karni continued to perform many miracles.[453] One miracle-tale recounts how Karni and her community left Satika to go to Deshnok in search of water and grazing grounds (Depavat: 78f). After Karni, her community and their cows arrived in Deshnok, she discovered that there was no proper *nehrī* (twig for churning yoghurt) to be found. The only twig available was a Khejri branch too old for churning. Karni planted the stalk and, in no time, it became a tree, yielding many *nehrī*s. This was the time when Karni is believed to have issued an injunction to prevent cutting Khejri and Jal trees, a ban which seems to be in place till today for the protection of the trees of the *auraṇ* surrounding the Deshnok temples. As discussed in chapter 6, and as the above interpretation of the *paravaro*

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[452] If Charani Sagatis can be thought of as resembling the literary-historical type of the *vīrāṃganā*, a warlike heroine dedicated to righteousness, wisdom and the defence of her people, it may be asked whether the traditional dichotomy between married (and benign and protective) goddesses as different from unmarried (or terrible and fierce) goddesses does indeed apply to Sagatis. Given Hansen's (2000: 270) description of the *vīrāṃganā* that suggests that these heroines were *not* defined through their relationships with men (framed as the role of mother, wife, etcetera) but just by their martial bravery and deeds, it seems possible that Charan communities accord a similar autonomous socio-political and religious role to Sagatis, independent of conventional male-female relations. Tambs-Lyche (2004c: 64) seems to suggest as much when he remarks that all Sagatis (whether married or not) can be seen as terrible *and* benign goddesses. Their sovereign status could also be read from the idea that her devotees think of Karni's husband as "strictly subordinate in religious terms, and while he benefits from the contact with the divine, [Karni] does not seem to be affected by her marriage" (Tambs-Lyche 2004c: 68).

[453] See Tambs-Lyche (1997: 65-71) for a comprehensive English rendition of her life's story. Yet other versions of her story can presently also be found via internet, for example via www.karnimata.com.

also indicates, the protection of trees was and is of prime importance for the cattle graziers of the Thar Desert since they provide fodder. The Khejri, Bor, Jharberi, Jhal, Khair and Neem trees, the cutting of which has been banned by the goddesses, provide the best cattle fodder (Samaur 1999c: 25).

### *Charani Sagatis as Kuladevis*

Karni is remembered as a prosperous and influential cattle owner during her days. She is said to have owned large herds of oxen and horses and thus was in a position to bestow 500 pack oxen and horses upon her loyal disciple, the Rathaur prince Bika, when he set out to found a new kingdom (Jayasingh 1987: 47-52, Westphal-Helbusch 1976: 174). And it is believed that she was the Charani who directed him in establishing a new kingdom in the desert at the site of the present-day Bikaner Fort (Jayasingh 1987: 50, Tamvar n.d.: 22-24). In addition, oral and written stories relate how she helped Bika and later Rathaur rulers against powerful enemies by forcefully bending the bows of Bikaner's army with "invisible hands", thus causing arrow volleys to fly with such force that the enemy had to beat the retreat.[454] The cowherd and goddess Karni eventually became the tutelary deity (Kuladevi) of the Rathaur of Bikaner. She is also worshipped under the name Nagnechi by the Rathaur Rajput rulers of Jodhpur. Similar tales serve to document how other Charani Sagatis came to be worshipped as the guarantors and defenders of Rajput supremacy. Such "foundation tales", at least the ones known to me, commemorate how Charani Sagatis lent the forefathers of different Rajput lineages a hand when they found themselves in need of help and thus became their Kuladevis. As noted above, Hinglaj became the chosen goddess of the Samma Rajput warriors of Sindh in this manner, and Avar is seen as instrumental for the founding of Kacchawa Rajput rule in early-medieval Rajasthan by supplying them with horses. Avar as Themrarai is worshipped by the ruling lineage of Bhati of Jaisalmer, and used to be worshipped by Sindhi Samma lineages. The Sisodia rulers of Mewar chose Charani Ban Mata as their lineage's goddess. In Gujarat, Avar's sister Khodiyar (Khoriyar) is worshipped as the Kuladevi of the erstwhile Gohil Rajput rulers.[455]

The stories that serve to connect Charani Sagatis with the establishment of Rajput supremacy are all highly typified and appear to follow the same pattern in

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[454] Testimony of Karni's continued protection of the Rathaur rulers of Bikaner and their subjects can be read from a tale that connects this Kuladevi to the rule of the twentieth-century Rathaur Maharaja of Bikaner, Gaj Singh. This story, set in the year 1937 when Gaj Singh celebrated 50 years of his rule, recounts how this jubilee concurred with a period of great drought. Crops withered on the fields, cattle died of thirst. Gaj Singh's emaciated subjects started to leave the state. The Rathaur ruler nevertheless commenced the jubilee festivities, dedicating them to the state's Kuladevi Karni. His trust was not betrayed. As legend has it, the moment the festivities began, a small black cloud appeared in the sky, followed by many others; rain started pouring down.

[455] Khodiyar's myth-history and the part accorded to her in medieval Saurashtra have been studied in great detail by Tambs-Lyche (1997: 22-26, 32-34, 80-84, 182-9).

western Rajasthan, Gujarat and Sindh. Common themes include the prophecies of Charani Sagatis guiding many would-be Rajput rulers in the choice of the location of their desert forts in Janglu Desh ("Jungle Land" or wilderness). Charanis are frequently portrayed as diviners or interpreters of the omens who, meeting wandering warriors in the desert, presaged their rise to eminence or ultimate ruin. Some Charanis are held to have provided warriors with tangible military support to consolidate their new territories. In western India, warring Charani Kuldevi were also represented as female warriors who battle alongside male warriors or at the head of armies, inspiring warriors to fight (cf. Bai n.d.: *passim*, Barath 1987: *passim*, C. Charan 1987: *passim*, Samaur 1999c: *passim*, N. Sharma 1999: *passim*, Tambs-Lyche 1997: 107). Avar, with a huge army of Charan and Rajput warriors and accompanied by (an equally symbolic number of) "hundred thousand" Charani goddesses, defeated Hamir. She is believed to have bestowed Thar Parkar upon the Bhati while the Samma obtained Sindh (Samaur 1999c: 509-510, Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 169). Avar and Karni are believed to have each bestowed the clearly symbolic number of "500" horses and/or pack oxen upon Rajput warriors to enable them to conquer their enemies and establish new territories.[456]

Other legends that connect Charani Kuladevis to the early stages of kingdom-formation in Rajasthan credit Charan women with protecting animals against Rajput and other hunters, taming camels and horses, guiding travellers through the desert and feeding warriors who got lost among the Thar sand dunes (Barath 1987: *passim*, Samaur 199c: 15-17, 503-539). Even vast armies, upon running out of water and food, could hope to be fed by Charanis. Often from rations made up of just one pot of yoghurt (*dahī*) and only one or a few pieces of bread, they managed to share these with all desert wayfarers since their modest supplies proved to be unlimited. Avar's sister Khodiyar, for example, supposedly fed King Chundasama Ra Navaghan's army and herds when he was travelling from Junagadh to Sindh in the eleventh century. Though Khodiyar had just one piece of bread, she managed to break it into enough portions to feed all.[457]

Charani goddesses were not just the Kuladevis of Rajput lineages, but also of Charan clans, either as legendary foremothers who engendered certain lineages or as guides who lead Charan communities from Sindh and Baluchistan to their present homelands, and/or as historical leaders who gave the different Charan clans their names (cf. Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 111, 137, 141, 164). All Charan clans and their sub-divisions have their own Kuladevis, for instance, Ravechi who is believed to be the foremother of the Nara Charans; Avar of the Asania, Bati, Jakhala, Maru and Thakaria Charans; and Rohadiya is the Kuladevi of the Nagnechi Charans.

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[456] The Rajput Hamir Gohil (1326-1364) is also said to have received money and 500 horses from a Sagati named Baru (Westpahl-Hellbusch 1976: 114).

[457] Like the story of Avar's half-grown child, quoted just now, that was put in a dish and set afloat until it was rescued by adoptive parents or the miraculous drying up of rivers to enable Charanis and their retinue to pass, the story of Khodiyar's distribution of bread of course bring to mind biblical narrative themes.

Versions of tales that relate Charan lineages to certain Kuladevis recount, for example, how Hinglaj led a group of Charans to Las-Bela, while Kodiyar brought them to Bhavnagar, and Avad-Mata lead their migration into Rajasthan. The first codification of Charan marriage customs is also ascribed to a Charani Sagati, the thirteenth-century Rajbai Mata, who is credited with establishing the conventions which rule Charan lineage relations till today.

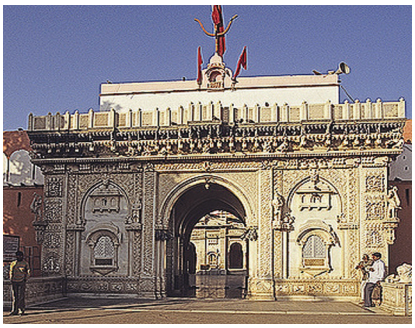
### *Temple construction*

As Tambs-Lyche (1997: 268-271) has argued in depth regarding the function of goddesses in traditional Kathiawar, Charani Kuladevis had a pivotal role in the establishment of political and military Rajput power. It is not all together clear to me to which era the initial stages of the "politicization" of the Sagati cult (the participation of deified Charan women politics and economics) could be dated to in Marwar. Most tales about Charani horse trade, heroism and the help they extended to Rajput warriors seem to be either undated or based on data which are difficult to verify. The different data associated with one and the same goddess in oral and written traditions are rather confusing. Avar, for example, is said to have been born in the ninth century and to have brought the Mada Charan to Jaisalmer in the tenth century, while she fought with Hamir who probably lived in the thirteenth century. As was noted above, the many different data associated with Charani Sagatis are probably the result of oral transmission techniques and the use of many names, at times similar ones, for the goddesses as well as the use of different calendars. Several scholars have put forward that the socio-political and religious process of politicization seems to have been an early-medieval occurrence. In Gujarat, Tambs-Lyche (1997: 61) writes, Charani Sagatis gained a central place as the Kuladevis of Rajput kingdoms in the period between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (S.R. Sharma 1996: 98) dates the connection between Shakti worship and Rajput lineages to eight-century Shakta-tantric traditions in Marwar, but whether this worship includes the worship of Charani Sagatis is unclear.

The fact that Karni is the Kuladevi of the Rathaur of Bikaner suggests that on this goddess was conferred a religious and political importance during her lifetime or immediately after her death, which is dated to the end of the fifteenth century. The myth-history of Avad and Hinglaj Mata, who have also been accorded Kuladevi status, could (but not necessarily does) date the process to earlier centuries. The eighth and ninth century worship of Hinglaj and Avar indicates the early beginnings of Sagatis' political role in Sindh, Kacch, Saurashtra and western Rajasthan. The history of the different construction phases of some of the Jaisalmer and Deshnok temples dedicated to Avar and Karni, however, offers an indication of the periods in which the politicization of the Charani Sagati cult and their relations with Rajput rulers took on material form. Thus Avar's Themrarai temple near Jaisalmer has been traced, on the basis of rock edicts kept at the temple, to 1375 by Samaur (1999:

504). Subsequent Bhati rulers of Jaisalmer, like Juhar Singh Bhati, took an interest in the temple and installed a rock edict at the temple premises in 1586. The Bhati Amar Singh is said to have built the temple *burj* (bastion, dome or tower) in the same year. Later, Rathaur rulers have also added to the temple: Jaswant Singh is credited with completing the upper part of a *burj* in 1703 while Raj Singh of Bikaner had a second *burj* erected and donated a bronze temple-bell in 1828. These data suggest that myth-history, temple legend and rock edicts connect Avar with the early beginnings of Bhati territorial expansion in the fourteenth century, but that royal interest in the ornamentation of her sanctuary increased in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and that this was also the period when real construction work (as opposed to the establishment of rock-edicts) got underway.

This impression is also documented by the limited but suggestive history of the building of the main Karni temple in Deshnok, which implies that formal relations between Karni and the Bikaneri Rathaur rulers can be dated to the first half of the sixteenth-century when the present-day stone and marble temple, resembling a small fort (*koṭ*) with bastions, was erected by Rathaur Jaitasi to celebrate his victory over Kamran (Bhargavan 1987:75f). Legend, on the other hand, dates the initial construction of the temple somewhat earlier since it is believed that the sixteenth-century temple was erected over a clay "ghūṃbhaṛ", a dome-topped, circular shelter that today constitutes the temple's main sanctum. Karni built the *ghūṃbhaṛ* herself, her devotees believe, and thus date the initial stages of construction to the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century, but this does not mean that the temple already received active Rajput patronage at that time. What is known with some certainty is that later Rathaur benefactors, like the early seventeenth-century Rathaur Sur Singh, added the silver entrance gate to Karni's sixteenth-century temple (Bhargavan 1987: 76). The eighteenth-century ruler Bhakta Singh is credited with the gift of the gold-plated door that now leads to the inner sanctum. Judging from the construction of (and additions to) the present-day main temple in Deshnok by Bikaner's rulers, Karni's importance as a Kuladevi should be dated to the sixteenth century.



### *Mobile peoples*

While the political history of the relations between Rajput ruling lineages and Charani Kuladevis is an important aspect of Charan traditions, the narrative content of most oral and written poetry about Sagatis relates their traditions first and foremost to the concerns of pastoral-nomadic communities. The socio-political role

and divine status ascribed to medieval Charanis is defined in terms of protection and compassion, apparent in their efforts to guard the lives and livelihood of other people, in particular the goddesses' dependants and devotees. As was remarked just now, feats of heroism ascribed to Charani Sagatis include acts of self sacrifice.[458] Like a Rajput's sacrifice in battle, Charan self-sacrifice can be seen as a form of sacrificial heroism given that Charan women are believed to have given up their lives (or threatened to do so) to prevent cattle-thefts or to reclaim stolen cattle, acts of self-sacrifice which resemble Pabuji's heroism and are at times compared to a Rajput's sacrifice in battle.[459] Samaur (1999: *passim*) puts great emphasis on the perceived heroic nature of Charani self-sacrifices by favourably contrasting their heroism with the battle death of Rajput warriors, arguing that a Charan's or Charani's self-sacrifice surpasses a warrior's death for, from some Charans' point of view, it takes more courage to inflict death upon oneself than to "merely" have oneself slain by an enemy.[460]

Other narrative themes of the stories about Hinglaj, Avar, Karni, Deval and other goddesses that underline the importance of the pastoral-nomadic context for understanding Charani Sagati cults can be read from tales about Charan guides and Charani women who used to help caravans and armies to survive in the desert and find their way among the sandy dunes, semi-arid planes of Sindh, the Thar Desert and the salt-lakes of Kacch. Charanis are often credited with miracles pertaining to water, obviously a scarce commodity in the desert. They are thought to have filled empty wells with water, turn brackish water into potable water, find new wells, water cattle and cause rain. Charanis, as the presiding goddesses of trees and *oṛhaṇ*, are believed to ensure the protection of such sources of cattle fodder. Stories about Charanis feeding armies, protecting their devotees' herds, trading in or giving pack oxen and horses to Rajput warriors, and tales about Charan men who safely guided caravans underline how warriors and traders relied on Charan men and women for

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[458] The Charani Sagati's tradition of self-sacrifice apparently links them to the tradition of *satī*, which is said to inspire widows to cremate themselves alongside their dead husbands (cf. Tambs-Lyche 1997: 61, 189). I know of one Marwari tale about a Sagati named Amba Devi of Arasur who is remembered for becoming a *satī* (Samaur 1999c: 515).

[459] While it is said of Rajput warriors that they practised a form of the Charan custom to inflict wounds upon oneself, they reportedly mutilated themselves or offered parts of their own bodies to the gods by way of sacrifice and to extract a boon (Ziegler 1998: 283, n.83).

[460] Charani women, like Charan poets, could reportedly also be extravagant in their demands and use the special powers ascribed to them to bully people into parting with goods or money. This has led to the description of *tyāge-dhāge* and such practices in terms of "blackmail" and "female vengefulness" (Munshi Hardyal Singh 2000: 117, Tambs-Lyche 1997: 46 (quoting Tod), Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 129). These terms, like the common practice of translating *tyāge-dhāge* with "suicide", do not, I feel, help in rendering the meaning attributed to the ideal of self-sacrifice as voiced by Charans. Considering the negative associations suicide has in contemporary western and Indian academic discourses, "self-sacrifice" or "self-inflicted death" seem better words to convey the heroic connotation that the ideal of self-sacrifice has in Marwar, in particular since the ideal of self-sacrifice includes several customs, not just self-inflicted death, but also fasting, the sacrifice of one's blood by stabbing oneself or the sacrifice of a limb.

their survival in the desert. And vice versa, Pabuji's battle to protect Deval's cattle documents the safeguard Rajput warriors were supposed to extend to Charan cattle, granted that they were not too busy robbing cattle from Charan herders, like Jimda Khici was.

The pastoral-nomadic background of Sagati traditions is also made explicit by the location of Saran Hinglaj and other temples dedicated to Charani goddesses as they are found on intersecting caravan routes and harbours connected by overland and overseas trade between Baluchistan, Sindh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Their temples were situated on desert routes that linked medieval markets like Multan, Kabul and Delhi, via Jaisalmer, Barmer, Rajgarh, Nagor, Pali, Jodhpur, Amber, Bikaner and Shekawati. Saran Hinglaj, for example, situated near the banks of the Hingol river in Samakarata and Khald Pradesh was positioned on trade routes connecting Baluchistan and Sindh with Gujarat, Jaisalmer, Marwar, Bikaner, and Rajput kingdoms further east, north, south and west. In sum, the Sagati temples were situated on caravan routes through the western desert regions that were part of a corridor or "thoroughfare zone", a semi-arid region extending from the middle-eastern countries up to western Rajasthan and the salt lakes and arid planes of the Rann of Kacch in Gujarat (cf. East and Spate 1950: 54, Ludden 1994: 7f). The western desert was a strategic region: it connected the South-Asian peninsula to Iran and Central Asia and, via Baluchistan, to the Middle East. Camel and pack oxen caravans between Sindh, Marwar and further to the Mughal heartlands, Delhi and Agra travelled via Burhanpur, Amber, Ajmer and Pali, carrying wool, milk and butter, salt, grains, cotton, opium, tobacco, indigo, sugarcane and mustard seed.[461] Imports into Rajasthan consisted of goods like dried fish, grains, silk, iron, weapons and spices from Sindh and Multan, horses from Kathiawar and, perhaps, Sindh, and of textile, dates, coconuts, glass, gold, elephants, alcohol, dried fruits and embroidery from all directions.

According to Devra (1978: 582), the medieval desert routes witnessed lively trade between areas north and west of Rajasthan and the desert cities of Jaisalmer, Rajgarh, Bikaner, Nagor, Barmer, Pali and Jodhpur, which were well-connected with Ajmer, Amber (Jaipur), Alwar and Kota in the east. It can be assumed that the Charani Sagati temples owned their geographic position to caravan trade. They were situated on crossroads that connected important cities, towns and ports, like the temples of Hinglaj and Avar situated in and near Jaisalmer described as the biggest western desert market for woollen cloth, blankets and caps in medieval times. Other important wool-centres were located in Bikaner, Jodhpur and Shekhawati, all situated on Charani Sagati pilgrim routes as well as trade routes. The position of Charani Sagati temples dedicated to Hinglaj, Avar and Karni near wool centres and cattle markets like Barmer, Koljagat, Bikaner and Pabusar also indicates their involvement with the medieval

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[461] My description of trade in the western desert is based on Bernet Kempers (1941: 39), Devra (1978: passim), G.N. Sharma, (1966: 312-21), Maclean (1989: 45), Saxena (1994: *passim*), Tod (1972 I: 171, II: 133, 154-158, 236, 500f, 554) and Rousselet (1983: 151).

trade in cattle, horses, dairy products, wool and leather. The Than Mata Hinglaj temple in district Barmer was built alongside routes connecting Sindh, the western Thar Desert, Rann of Kacch and, via Pali, eastern Rajasthan. Sagati temples were, moreover, situated near horse breeding centres in Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Kacch, Kathiawar, Umarkot, Multan and the banks of the River Luni (Deloche 1980: 237, Maclean 1989: 45, Tod 1972 II: 125, Ziegler 1994: 194).

Tod (1972 II: 125) noted that there were several horse-fairs in nineteenth-century Marwar "where the horses of Cutch and Cattiawar, the jungle[462] and Mooltan, were brought in great numbers. Valuable horses were also bred on the western frontier, on the Luni, those of Rardurro being in high estimation". Similarly, the medieval breeding centres for cows, oxen and camels have been located in areas near Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur, cities which were centres of Sagati worship too. In view of common references to Charanis as Gujarati horse traders, it seems that their trade centred on Kacch and Kathiawar. Thus, as noted just now, Sagatis like Baru from Gujarat are credited with granting horses to Rajput princes (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 114) just like Deval has been credited with granting Pabuji the mare Kalvi. In *duha* I (v. 205), Deval's identification as a *gaṛhavī (gadhavī)* clearly connects her to the Garhavi Charans from Kacch and Saurashtra who were famous horse breeders and (like Deval) traded in horses.[463] Other stories, like the one listed above, connect Deval to the Mishran Charan who migrated from Sindh to Jaisalmer. Such tales could be suggestive of links with Sindhi horse breeding centres in Umarkot and, perhaps, the Makran coastal areas *en route* to the Saran Hinglaj temple. An instance that seems to be indicative of horse trade between Gujarati ports and the coast of Makran is the idea that the Kathiawari (or Kutchi) horse breed originated from crossbreeding between Gujarati horses with Arab horses which were shipwrecked off Veraval Port on the west Indian coast (Van der Geer (forthcoming) 2008: 149).[464]

From a geographical view point, the unity of the desert tracts of Baluchistan, Sindh, western Rajasthan, Kacch, Saurashtra and Shekawati is rather obvious. The

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[462] It is unclear whether Tod's reference to "the jungle" refers to horse breeding centres in "Jangla Desh", a common name for Bikaner, or in Lakhi Jangal in Punjab or in other "jungle" areas like, perhaps, the salt lakes of Kacch.

[463] The idea proposed by Digby (1971: 21f, 28, 49) and propounded for Marwar by Ziegler (1994: 194f) that "local" horse breeds were inferior breeds unfit for warfare is rather problematical considering Hendricks's (1995: 251-52, 279-281) description of the local Marwari and Kathiawari (Kutchi) horse breeds as good war horses, famed for their speed and hardiness. These breeds, considered a mix of Gujarati breeds with Turkmeni or Arab breeds, did serve as excellent war horses since they were fast, able to withstand extreme temperatures and strong enough to carry a man, his armour, shield, sword and lance for long distances through the most difficult terrain (cf. Van der Geer (forthcoming) 2008: 149, 153). Perhaps the Marwari war horse has been confused with the undersized, mixed breed "village" horses often described as "wretched little ponies" in colonial and Mughal sources and as "country-bred nags or ponies" by Digby (1971: 28).

[464] An instance which would throw a historical light on Tessitori's (1916: 111) reading of Nainsi's *khyāta* in which the chronicler describes Pabuji's mare, a horse of "superior qualities", as born to Kacchela Charans from a mare fecundated by a mythical "marine horse", perhaps a shipwrecked Arab (see footnote 461).

cultural connections between the regions have remained somewhat blurred. The legends and historical data that detail the migrations undertaken by stock-rearing and grazier communities of the western deserts allow us to imagine what the cultural connections may have been like. Most Rajasthani and Gujarati tales about Charani Sagatis locate their parental villages in desert zones west of Jodhpur, towards Jaisalmer, Barmer and Umarkot and, in Hinglaj's case, Nagar Tatha. Legend furthermore commemorates how migrations through the desert were often set in motion by Charani Sagatis. As noted earlier, Hinglaj is thought to have led Charans to Belas. Avad told the Tumbel Charan of Lodrani to go to Sindh under the leadership of the Sumra of Baluchistan. She was also the woman who led her people

*Approximate location of Baluchi, Sindhi, Rajput and Gujarati communities c.1300-1400 (Courtesy: University of Texas Libraries).*

to Jaisalmer to escape from Sumra Hamir's attentions. And Karni is believed to have guided her clan from Suwap to Deshnok to escape a drought. Other legendary data tell of the migration of the Tumbel Charan of Bhada from Sindh to Gujarat. The Tumbel say they used to live like Sindhi communities until the fourteenth-century when they helped Dodha Sumra in his fight against Khilji. This narrative theme is also common among Rebari and Jat. In the ninth century, the Jareja-Samma warriors are thought to have migrated from Sindh into Kacch bringing along yet another Charan group, probably Tumbel sub-clans.

Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 104-105) traces seasonal and more lasting migrations, leading to semi-permanent settlements to the ninth and later centuries when Charan, Jat, Gujar, Rebari, Rajput and other pastoral-nomadic communities travelled to and from Baluchistan, Sindh, Gujarat and Rajasthan and, probably, onwards in all directions of the wind. She notes a marked increase of Charan migrations to Kacch, Saurashtra and western Rajasthan as a result of tenth-century invasions into Sindh by Ghaznavides, eleventh-century Ghorid invasions, and

thirteenth-century battles with Khilji armies. Warlike periods apparently set long-term migration in motion and, at the same time, a "Verschmelzungsprozess" through which different pastoral-nomadic communities came to share similar names and myth-histories. Stories about conflicts between Sumra rulers and Charani Sagatis can probably be dated to these periods. Other reasons for travelling through the western desert regions, as the traditions about Hinglaj, Avad and Karni also document, were caravan trade, cattle trade, seasonal migrations in search of grazing grounds, famines, and oppressive tax regimes.

The migrations undertaken by grazier and cattle rearing communities of the western desert are thought to have led to an "ethnogenesis" of the title Charan and other occupational titles. Designations like Ahir, Charan, Bharvad, Maldhari or Gavachi were most often used to define graziers and cattle breeders according to their animals and were primarily occupational (as opposed to ethnic or caste) titles, which could be accorded to or taken on by different pastoral-nomadic groups. In other words, such titles were achieved and not ascribed titles and are comparable to the early-medieval status of Rajput that could be achieved by warriors from different communities. Thus Gavachi, the name accorded to Kacchela Charan in *duha* I, is an occupational title that was also used for Charan, Ahir and Bharvad graziers and keepers of oxen. Moreover, the keepers of buffaloes, camels and oxen could (and did) also unite as one tribe with farming communities (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 218). Similarities between some sub-clans of Charan, Jat-Baluch, Rebari and Bharvad further highlight the variegated history of these communities. The Agarvacha Charan clan from Kacch, for example, is said to have more in common with Jat-Baluch and other buffalo-rearers of the South-Iranian marshes than with other Kacchi Charan (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 142f, 180).

In the same way, Charan can also be looked upon as an occupational title meaning "poet" and "grazier". The Bharot Charan, for instance, used to think of themselves as Bhati warriors until they took up the profession of poet and the title Charan (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 138). The name "Charan" was taken on by many other medieval lineages from different social groups and regions like Baluchistan, Sindh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Malwa and South India. And even those Charan groups who pride themselves on being different from grazier Charan communities, like the courtly Maru Charan, also count among their ranks graziers of all kinds of animals.[465] Though the literate Maru Charan of Marwar were the most renowned clan of poets (in their own and other Charan's eyes) who prided themselves on their positions at Marwar's courts and stressed the difference between themselves and grazier clans, other Charan lineages counted known poets among their ranks too. A case in point is the Tumbel Charans who were known as a martial community and as

[465] Enthoven (1922: 274-75) noted that among the courtly reciters met by him, many belonged to the four main divisions of village Charans, suggesting that low as well as high castes had become part of courtly Charan lineages in his time (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 102).

the poets and genealogists of the Sumra rulers of Sindh (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 149).[466]

Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 95) has suggested that the sharing of the title Charan by different groups "[i]st meistens das Symbol eines langwierigen ethnogenetischen Verschmelzungsprozess, wird hier für die Charan angenommen, dass sie aus Elementen verschiedener Einwanderungswellen und einheimischer Bevölkerungsgruppen, die mit ihnen in Kontakt gerieten, zusammengewachsen sind". Along these lines, it is possible to think of Charan as an "open identity" which (comparable to early medieval Rajputhood) used to be open to individuals and communities who took up as their profession the rearing or grazing of livestock and horses or the composition of poetry, the guidance of caravans, or livelihoods as traders or warriors. This is also recorded, in a way, by the many different myths of origin connected with Charani Sagatis, by their relationship with different communities, and by the variety of trades practised by them. Charani Sagati worship used to bind together different stock-rearing groups. The Rebari, for instance, feel connected with Charan communities through Sagati worship; Rebari priests at present serve at Sagati temples in Kacch and Saurashtra. Common origin myths render Rebari mythical "blood relations" of Kacchela Charan who rear cattle, for both groups claim to be the offspring of the two Charan men created by Parvati.[467] Other Charan clans have mythical kinship relations with the pastoral-nomadic Ahir and Kathi. The first mentioned are commonly considered the most ancient of graziers, the offspring of Avar's father or brother, which earns them the title "Mama" (Mother's brother) of the Charan. Likewise, Charan also address the Kathi of Saurashtra with "Mama" (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 161).

The geographical, socio-economic and cultural relations that bound the medieval inhabitants of the western desert can also be read from similar occupational identities like those of the blacksmiths, goldsmiths or hunters of the western desert tracts. The Lohari blacksmiths and Sonar goldsmiths both travelled between Sindh and Rajasthan and still form largely nomadic communities in Rajasthan and, perhaps, Sindh. The hunter, tanner and leatherworker communities like the Khosas, Shikari, Chamar, Koli, Bhil, Dhed and Meghwal also used to live in the deserts of Sindh and western Rajasthan in medieval times, and were (and in Rajasthan often continue to be) itinerant people. The "bardic" occupation of different pastoral-nomadic peoples represents further links between the various desert regions. Charan, Bhat and Langha poets, as well as Mirasi, Manghaniyar and Jat "minstrels", all one way or another served the Baluch, Sumra and Jareja-Samma Rajput of Baluchistan

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[466] The Tumbel Charans in Saurashtra have been described as the reciters of panegyrics and genealogies who declaim heroic poetry about deeds of valour in battle to inspire warriors. Some Tumbel were thought to be able to reveal future events (see Blochmann 1927: 251).

[467] The two Charans married two nymphs, the sisters Gaveri and Averi, and their offspring are known as the Rebari and Charan. Similar stories are told about Ahir, Bharvad and Kathi graziers and define Charan cattle keepers in Kacch and Saurashtra as the "brothers" of Rebari and Bharvad (Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 160).

and Sindh, and the Rajput warriors of Gujarat and Rajasthan (cf. Burton 1851: 69f). And Deloche (1980: 257) notes a likeness between pack-oxen owners like the Banjara, Charan and Bhat groups, adding that they shared cultural traits with semi-nomadic camel keepers who travelled from the Indus to the north-western frontier. As a final point, I would like to note that there appears to have existed the same kind of likeness between the Sumra of Sindh (who are traced to Rajput "extraction" by Westphal-Hellbusch 1976: 239-240), Baluchi hill tribes and Rajput warriors of Marwar, Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Gujarat. All these communities seem to have had rather a lot in common as is suggested by their portrayal as medieval warriors and rulers, patrons of pastoral-nomadic poets and singers and worshippers of Charani Sagatis.

### "*Charanization*"

Charan history does not document that Charan communities "took on" Rajput and/or Brahmin "caste" characteristics. And I do not feel that it is helpful to explain the assorted priestly and martial status of some Charan as the result of past marriages between Charan, Rajput and/or Brahmin men and women. It seems more probable that Charan identity, like early-medieval Rajput and Bhil identities, was ascribed according to different occupational characteristics which included dual identities like those of priestly warriors and warlike priests. This is also suggested by Palriwala (1993: 47), who notes that Charan men did not try to pass themselves off as Rajput warriors but thought themselves "as good as Rajput warriors if not ritually superior". The same can be said of the comparison between Charan and Brahmin religious specialist. During my fieldwork, I heard tales which underlined the distinction between Charan and Brahmin status and which, when told by a Charan respondent, often documented that Charan see themselves as superior beings. This vision harks back to the martial characteristics ascribed to Charan men, rendering them more courageous than Bhat poets who claim Brahminical status and who, Charan poets say, lack qualities indispensable to poets who serve martial patrons. Claims to a status superior to the rank of Rajput follow a similar line of reasoning: Charans are as brave warriors as Rajput men but wiser and blessed with real authority since they are poets and thus wield the power of both the word and the sword. Perhaps this means that Charan poets thought of themselves as a different class of beings altogether, an "additional social category", which is comparable to the self-image of contemporary Bhat performers who, as Snodgrass (2004: 266-67) observes, define bards and poets as yet another class of persons, a class which functioned on the same elevated level as kings and priests.[468] This class of persons

[468] The mutability of martial and other occupational identities in the desert kingdoms of western Rajasthan does not, I think, give reason to understand Charan-Rajput relations in terms of a "irreversible dichotomy" between worldly power and transcendent authority or a "bipolar pattern" of priestly and royal authority in terms of kingly and Brahminical roles as described by Heesterman (1985: 141, 157). See,

can, according to the Bhat's view of social hierarchy, be seen as superior to kings and priests since bards and poets wield the power of language and are thus able to decide whether kings or priests will indeed be placed at the centre of society or whether their authority will be called into question.[469]

The many different tales of geographical and mythical origins, myth-histories and readings of the name Charan further suggest that many different communities took on the name Charan, and that not all groups who today call themselves Charan necessarily had a common origin. Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 199-201) proposes on the basis of her study among Gujarati graziers that "[W]hat bound all Charans was the name Charan". Charan grazier communities from different backgrounds and their sub-clans not only had their names in common with each other but also with grazier communities like Jat-Baluch, Rebari, Banjara and Bharvad. Thus, I would like to propose, "Charan" can best be thought of, like the title Rajput or Bhil, as a name that included and united communities with different backgrounds, including different religious background (Hindu and Muslim Charan clans) and occupational identities: genealogists, poet-historians, visionaries, religious functionaries, cattle rearers and graziers, traders, caravan guides, messengers, warriors, bankers and money-lenders.

The different communities who ascribed themselves (or were ascribed) the title Charan came from various regions, ranging from Baluchistan, Sindh, Gujarat and Rajasthan to Malva and South-India, and connected these regions with each other through trade in cattle, camels and horses, and as traders and transporters of desert produce and imports from surrounding regions. The history of trade in western desert regions makes it easier to imagine how the deification of Charan women, including Deval, may have come about. Though the above resume offers no definitive answer to the question when the Charani cow herder and horse trader Deval became Shakti Devalde in Marwar, it does allow us to imagine that like other Charani Sagatis, Deval became part of Rajput history and poetry dedicated to Pabuji because of the historical and/or narrative importance accorded to her gift of a horse that enabled Pabuji to go to war in order to protect cows. Her deification is a process which started later, as could also be read from the fact that she is not (like in the seventeenth century *duha* I) portrayed as a goddess in the *chamd*s. Thus, I would suggest, her deification can probably best be dated to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Had the Dhamdhal Rathaur become a ruling lineage (that is to say: had they not been defeated by Jimda) Deval could have become a regionally recognized Sagati (like Karni), and a cult could have developed around a temple

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however, Tambs-Lyche (1997: 260, 270f) who does define the relations between Rajput King, Brahmin and Charan in Kathiawar in terms of a binary opposition between "worldly" and "religious" power represented by the "king-Brahmin formula" of classical studies.

[469] By putting stress on poet's ability to construct and legitimize royal authority (or undermine it) through words, Bhat performers aim to question conventional (and certainly more dominant) interpretations of the primacy of either priestly or royal authority at the centre of popular and scholarly evaluations of the relationship between kings and Brahmin priests (Snodgrass 2004: 266).

dedicated to her under the royal patronage of the Dhamdhal Rajput warriors. But as it is, Deval's cult seems to have never developed much further than her village Bhoganiya and nearby Jaisalmer.

Though one should be careful in reading historical processes and events from geographical distribution, the position of medieval temples and trade centres along caravan routes that interconnected Baluchistan, Sindh, and the former Rajput desert realms in Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Marwar do appear to add meaning to the narrative content of Sagati traditions. The geographical unity and former cultural and pastoral-nomadic resemblances between the western desert areas and its peoples allow us to see the "immigration" of pastoral-nomadic peoples into Rajasthan as part of age-old peregrinations of cattle rearers, graziers, (horse) traders, caravan guides and warriors in search of livelihood and pastures from perhaps the ninth century onwards, or even earlier. The pastoral-nomadic context of Sagati traditions also makes it easier to explain why Deval, like many other Charanis, was in the first place portrayed as a horse-trader and cattle keeper. In the Pabuji tradition, the account of the Dhamdhal-Khici dowry negotiations, especially the conflict over Pabuji's black mare Kalvi, further highlights Deval's importance as a horse trader. Likewise, the above-quoted stories about a number of Sagatis who gifted the symbolic number of 500 horses to different Rajput rulers are also illustrative of the fact that horses and, as a consequence, Charani horse traders were important to the establishment of Rajput rule. In Marwar, the value of horses for fifteenth century Rajput rulers to demarcate and patrol their realms, protecting them against other Rajput claimants has been well-documented. The importance of (horse) traders, caravan trade and the martial and religious role ascribed to Charani women helps us appraise why Charan communities were accorded such an eminent role in early and late medieval processes of Rajput kingdom formation.

For Charan and Rajput warriors, Sagati worship clearly was an effective way to express their status and ambitions. Common Rajput men were supposed to look upon Charanis as sisters (Tambs-Lyche 2004c: 64). Dominant Rajput lineages adopted Charani Devis as the guarantors and defenders of their supremacy, seemingly documenting up a process of "Charanization" since it appears that apart from (and perhaps more than) the importance attributed to the Agnikul myth and Brahman Purohits for raising Rajput warriors to the status of rulers, Charani goddesses were accorded prominent roles in medieval Rajput politics. The dependency between Rajput and Charan communities was couched in terms of religious kinship as well as through Charani Sagati worship. The Charan were not only the poet-historians of Rajput rulers, but also the religious "guardians-in-law" of the Rajput brother of their women in their roles as the fathers, uncles, brothers, husbands and sons of living goddesses.

The question asked earlier, i.e. whether legends that hint at eighth and ninth century worship of Hinglaj and Avar indicate the early beginnings of the Sagatis' political role remains difficult to answer. It is clear that Hinglaj and Avar or, more

precisely, their religious cults have done quite a bit of travelling in the western desert regions.[470] Their temples were built in the Hingula mountain ranges, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Deshnok, Gujarat and Shekavati. These names may be read as evidence of the geographical reach of this particular Charani Sagati cult from the ninth-century in medieval Sindh. Perhaps Charani Sagati worship spread from Hinglaj Saran to the desert of Jaisalmer (where Avar's earliest temples are said to have been established) and from there on to Bikaner and north-eastern districts like Shekawati. Not enough is known about Sagati history, however, to support such a reading. It is, at present, also possible to imagine that the worship of Hinglaj, Avar and their sisters of later periods developed from Shekawati, and from there on spread to temples of goddess worship in the Thar Desert and further to the west by claiming Hinglaj or other Charani Sagatis as their "foremother". Or should the legends be traced to the Rann of Kacch and Sindh, the "geographical centre of Hindu cattle breeders", as Westphal-Hellbusch (1976: 239) said, and to Gujarati Charani Devi myths? Finally, one could also think of Jaisalmer and Umarkot in the heart of the desert between Sindh and Marwar as the primary centre of Charani worship.

*Sagati on horse back (Hinglaj temple, Jaisalmer).*

[470] Possible relations between South-Indian war goddesses like Korravai and Avar's sister, the Gujarati Charani Sagati Khodiyar, remain unresolved. If these myths can be thought of as part of southern, northern and western traditions of similar narrative themes and sculptured iconography, it seems that this theme travelled from Uttar Pradesh to South India in the period between the first three centuries to the fifth century (cf. Van der Geer (forthcoming) 2008).

*Contemporary portrayal of Pabuji accompanied by Dhembo, Camda, Deval and Pemal. In the background, various epidsodes from Pabuji's story have been depicted including the watering of Deval's cows at a well near the Kolu temple and Rupnath meditating under a tree (unknown artist).*

# 9 Kolu

Divinity takes on many forms in the hearts and minds of believers. In poetry dedicated to Pabuji, manifestations of the divine provide evidence for diverse forms of worship, in particular devotional imagery related to Shaktik, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Bhil Bhopa, Nath and Jumjhari worship in Marwar. The main focus of this last chapter will be the relation between the poetic references in the selected poems to various beliefs and worship practices, in particular Jumjhari, Bhil Bhopa and Nath beliefs, and classical imagery, evoking Vishnu, Shiva and the heroes of the *Rāmāyaṇ* and *Mahābhārat*. The religious strands that converge in the medieval poetry dedicated to Pabuji can also be understood from the epigraphical records, shrines, hero stones and present-day devotional practices at Pabuji's temple in Kolu, and at Jhararo's open-air altar in the Thar Desert surrounding Kolu. As I hope to show in this chapter, a study of the contemporary context of the Pabuji tradition, as reflected by epigraphic, iconographic, oral and anthropological data collected during my fieldwork in Kolu, helps in imagining the possible contexts and functions of the medieval poetry studied by me. This aim is also furthered by a summary of the poetry and prose tales about Pabuji as told in Kolu today. But first, I will call to mind once more the literary and religious images that the medieval poets used to evoke different kinds of gods, including folk-gods, deified forefathers, Vishnu, Shiva and Ganesh. Then, I will examine a few of the many forms divinity is believed to have taken on in Marwar and will follow this up with a brief survey of the beliefs, worship practices and narratives that are part of the contemporary Pabuji cult in Kolu.

### *Divinity personified*

Side-by-side with different aspects of the goddess, the poets of both *chamd*s evoked images of different forms of Vishnu and Shiva (cf. my summary of the narrative content of the selected poems in chapter 3). Vishnu's *avatār* Ram is mentioned in the opening-lines of *chamd* I, when the poet pays homage to the *Rāmāyaṇ*'s hero-god. And in both *chamd* I and II, one also reads about Vishnu's dwarf-incarnation Tikama, with whom Pabuji is equated to highlight the Rathaur hero's bodily strength. Also, both *chamd*s include similes comparing Pabuji to the ascetic Shiva, bringing to mind the ascetic and sacrificial nature of Pabuji's heroism.

In *duha* I is found the widest range of religiously inspired images, i.e. imagery describing religious practices, like Jhararo's initiation into Gorakhnath's band of yogi's, or imagery referring to religious ideals, gods and goddesses in a historical and/or literary and metaphorical way. Apart from references to Shakti and Charani Deval,

Ladhraj also calls to mind images to evoke Vishnu, the Nath guru Gorakhnath and the worship of popular hero-gods and/or deified ancestors. In the last episode of *duha* I, for example, Ladhraj refers to Vishnu's heaven as the place where Pabuji goes to after dying in battle. In this episode, the poet also describes Nath beliefs and cultic practices, when dealing with the adventures of Pabuji's nephew Jhararo and his initiation in Gorakhnath's sect. Images related to the worship of deified forefathers are part of tales about Pabuji's belligerent torso that can only be halted after a blue cloth has been thrown over it, bringing to mind, as was argued in chapter 5, similar tales associated with contemporary Jumjhar worship in Marwar. And Ladhraj's reverence for regional folk-gods is evident from Pabuji's elevation to divine or semi-divine status and from Ladhraj's description of himself as Pabuji's servant who prays to the Rathaur hero for protection.

The various devotional strands that come together in the medieval *parvaro* include Bhil Bhopa worship of Pabuji as a hero-god and deified ancestor, the worship of different forms of Devi, and a reference to "all other gods". Among the latter, the poets perhaps count the triad Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma and, possibly, other Rajasthani folk-gods like Devnarayan and Teja, though they are nowhere mentioned by name. In the *parvaro*, some aspects of Pabuji's medieval Bhil Bhopa cult and its rituals are detailed, in particular the way in which Bhopas may have performed healing rituals in the past and the importance accorded to temple drums. This poem provides evidence for the medieval status of the Bhil as Pabuji's priests, healers and, perhaps, the medieval performers of a devotional and ritual epic which (like the extant epic tradition) centred upon the worship of Pabuji.

To conclude this summary, I will once more discuss the imagery contained in the shorter compositions dedicated to Pabuji even if not all included imagery is clearly identifiable as "religious'. Especially *git* I, with its focus on the martial ideal of protection and on tales of camel robbery, seems a straightforwardly martial, and not religiously inspired, poem. It, moreover, appears to be one of the few studied compositions that is not related to goddess worship, for Pabuji's battle death is not mentioned. Nor does this *git* contain other similes which would allow an interpretation of Pabuji's heroism in terms of Shaktik ideals of sacrifice. *Git* I does seem to be reminiscent of classical epic culture as could be read from the poet's reference to Lamka (*laṃkā*), the place where Pabuji is said to have robbed a herd of she-camels, and which could, of course, be interpreted as a reference to the demon-king Ravana's island Lamka in the *Rāmāyaṇ*. The use of "pachīṃ" in verse-line 4, however, implies that Lamka was pictured as a place in the west or an unspecified "western region". Because of allusions to Pabuji's theft of camels from Sindh in other medieval and contemporary versions of this story, it seems more probable that "Lamka" did not refer to Ravana's island but to an actual place in an unspecified region west of Kolu. Perhaps the medieval poets, like today's Bhopas, meant to refer to villages named Lamkesariyo or Lamkiyo which (depending on the version of the story) are thought to be located in Sindh, Kacch, southern Rajasthan or South India

(Smith 1991: 83).[471] But, since contemporary performers of Pabuji's epic do identify the Lamka of Pabuji's story with Ravana's Lamka, one could imagine that the poet of *git* I meant to connote both mythical and actual geography by comparing Sindh, the region where Pabuji's rivals held sway, with the *Rāmāyaṇ*'s Lamka, the kingdom of Ram's enemy, the demon-king Ravana.

*Git* III offers evidence for medieval Pabuji worship in Kolu. This composition also seems to document how some poets may have aimed to establish a link between the Rathaur hero-god, on the one hand, and Shiva and Devi, on the other, by comparing Pabuji's heroic qualities to Shiva's asceticism and Devi's magnificence. The poet of *git* III further compared Pabuji's religious influence or worldly power to the Nath's Gramth. And he matched Pabuji's strength up to Arjuna's bow by pairing the "Wielder of Spears" Pabuji with the "Bowholder" Arjun from the *Mahābhārat*. Another reference to this epic is found in *duha* II, the poet of which likens Rajput warriors to the heroes of the *Mahābhārat* and the local battle at Kolu with the battle of Kurukshetra. The poet of *git* IV, lastly, stated that Pabuji earned his fame by waging a war in order to protect the Charan's cows. Though neither Charani Deval nor Shakti have been evoked explicitly, Bamkidas's poem does connote the ideal of sacrificial heroism by portraying Pabuji as a warrior-hero who sacrifices his life in battle by giving up his marital happiness. Thus, I feel, one may imagine that Bamkidas, like other medieval poets, was perhaps also inspired by Shaktik ideals even if he did not refer to goddesses directly.

### *Pabuji's temple*

The above-surveyed religious strands coming together in Pabuji's medieval tradition are also part of the present-day epigraphical records, shrines, hero stones and worship practices at the Kolu temple, the contemporary centre of Pabuji worship. The extant temple lies in the middle of a sizeable *oṛhaṇa* (*auraṇ*), a vast sandy plain cut in two by the metalled road which connects Jodhpur with Phalodi. Small flocks of goats, sheep, camel and oxen graze among the *oṛhaṇa*'s weathered shrubs and trees and beyond where the sandy planes of the Thar Desert extend in all directions. Surrounding Kolu, scattered among small sand dunes, one finds tiny lakes, caves situated in red rock formations jutting out from the yellow sands, and numerous hero stones (*devaḷī*s and small cenotaphs (*chatarī*s). The *devaḷī*s and *chatarī*s serve to commemorate the deaths of warriors and other local heroes and heroines, like *satī*s, widows who immolated themselves on the pyre of their husbands or to honour the collective *jauhar* of Rajputnis which they performed upon hearing the news of their husbands' (impending) defeat and death in battle (cf. Tessitori 1916: 109).[472] The

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[471] In their performance of the *byāva rau paravāṛau* discussed below, the contemporary Bhopas of the Kolu temple refer to Lankitale as the place which was robbed of its camels by Pabuji.

[472] Reportedly, mothers who burnt themselves on the pyre of deceased sons can also be honoured with a *devaḷī*.

hero stones and cenotaphs are most often found near wells, either old wells which have fallen to disuse or newer wells from which people still draw water. The old, abandoned well opposite the Pabuji temple's main entrance is now said to be the source wherefrom Pabuji watered Deval's cattle and where the final battle between Pabuji and Jimda Khimci took place.

Village Kolu is made up of numerous hamlets of round clay-huts with matted roofs and/or square brick houses that lie scattered throughout the desert at considerable distances from each other. The huts and houses are surrounded by sandy fields where pumpkins and barley grow, if the rains permit or household finances allow for the purchase of water to irrigate the fields.[473] Kolu has a sizable population of cattle-keepers and farmers who claim Dhamdhal Rathaur Rajput status and/or Bhil ancestry, a few households of Jat, Dholi and Nath communities, and a small number of villagers who refer to themselves as Purohit.[474] The senior priest of the temple, the knowledgeable Rajput Tulsi Singh Dhamdhal Rathaur, counts persons of all social strata as visitors to the Kolu temple, except for the formerly untouchable community of Meghwal who used to be, and often still are, leatherworkers. Though the latter do now present their offerings at Pabuji's temple, they do not cross the temple altars' thresholds.[475]

Among regular visitors to the temple are Rathaur, especially of Dhamdhal ancestry, and Jat, Nath and Purohit devotees. Mishran Charan who converted to Islam and Sindhi Muslims also visit Pabuji's shrines. During Navratri, people of all kinds of caste backgrounds from all over Rajasthan, and a few from neighbouring states and even from Kolkata, attend the celebrations at the temple. Devotees from all over Marwar visit Kolu throughout the year. Newly-wed men, for example, visit the temple to circumambulate Pabuji's altars with their brides, before taking them home to their parents' houses. The borders of the brides' dress are tied to the grooms' clothing and they thus lead their wives around the temples, hoping to ensure a long marriage. Women who wish to become pregnant or who desire male offspring come to tie small strips of cloth to the red temple's window bars, promising to return to the temple with offerings for Pabuji, after their wish has been

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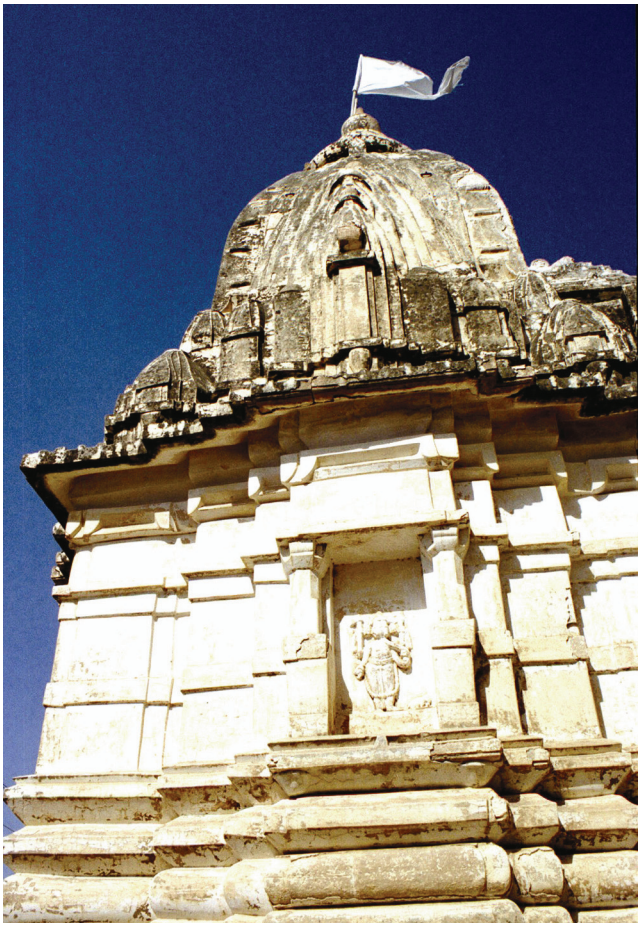
[473] During my visits to Kolu, the villagers were struggling with the consequences of four years of drought, and were busy opening up old wells in the hope that the old wells could provide water as the new wells had dried up. Those people who could afford it would water their cattle and small fields with water bought from private entrepreneurs who brought it in tanks from Phalodi.

[474] Jat communties are traditionally classified as agriculturalists in Rajasthan, but in the desert they (like all other inhabitants) have to combine agriculture, cattle keeping and trade to survive the harsh climate. Dholi are performers of folk songs usually accompanied by drums. Nath are followers of Gorakhnath or other Nath guru's. Rajpurohit are now defined as the erstwhile priests at Rajput courts; they now claim Brahmin status and are the genealogists of Bhil communities in Kolu.

[475] It is the constitutional right of Megwal to visit temples, but I gathered that old habits die as hard in Kolu as anywhere else. By way of compromise, formerly untouchable devotees can come up to the temple compound but cannot, like other devotees, enter Pabuji's shrines to genuflect and personally offer *prasād*. Instead, they are required to hand over their gifts to the priests who will offer them to Pabuji's hero stones on the main altar.

granted. Pabuji's Rebari devotees also visit Kolu, but no longer, like in the past, bring along their camel (dromedary) herds to take the round of the temple compound and thus ensure the lasting good health of their animals or seek the hero-god's help in curing camel diseases. Until two decades ago, the Rebari were rather welcome to bring their herds along, the temple priests indicated, but now fodder has become scarce and there are no longer enough trees and shrubbery for the camels to graze on.[476]



*Vishnu's Varaha avatār at the Kolu temple.*

[476] My questions about this matter received indirect answers, which gave me the impression that, just like elsewhere in Rajasthan, there is a growing tension between the inhabitants of Kolu and the Rebari. With the development of irrigation and agriculture, grazing-lands have become scarcer in Rajasthan. But since irrigation and agriculture were not at all developed in Kolu, the apparent tension between more or less settled graziers and farmers, on the one hand, and pastoral-nomadic Rebari, on the other, should probably be attributed to the ongoing process of desertification and the resulting dearth of fodder in Kolu (cf. Gupta 1991: 325-40 and Robbins 1998: 86).

Within the Kolu temple compound, two shrines or small temples have been built next to each other, both with a rectangular sanctum topped by small pavilions with embellished ceilings and outer walls. As noted in chapter 5, the oldest, "red temple", is thought to have been constructed in 1458 on initiation of a warrior-patron named Dhamdhal Khimamra. The second temple, the "white temple", was built more recently, probably in the eighteenth century. Within the compound, hero stones for Pabuji and his Thori companions, the Nath ascetic Jhararo-Rupnath and a carving of a goddess's trident are found. On the outer walls of the temple, depictions of classical gods like Vishnu, Shiva, Parvati and Ganesh are found. The daily *pūjā*s (worship services) for Pabuji are at present performed in the red temple, in front of an altar containing numerous old and new *devaḷī*s depicting Pabuji, most often as a warrior carrying a lance and/or sword and shield and seated on a horse. On some hero stones, Pabuji is accompanied by one or more Bhil retainers who carry bow and arrows.[477] In front of this collection of hero stones, a flame is kept burning with daily offerings of incense. One *devaḷī* carries a rudimentary carving of a trident, evocative of Shakti and Charani Sagati Devi. As remarked in the previous chapter, there appear to be no other *devaḷī*s which could be related to Charani Deval.

On the outer walls of both temples, several stone images of classical deities are found. Carvings on the exterior of the red temple represent Vishnu's Narasingh *avatār*, Varaha *avatār* and a third image that is no longer recognizable. On the outer wall of the white temple, much eroded stone depictions portray a man (or woman) wielding a sword, a man with a smaller figure on his right knee (probably representing Shiva and Parvati) and an image of Ganesh. Other images of classical gods are found on commemorative pillars (*kīrtistaṃbh*s), including a four-sided pillar in the middle of the courtyard bearing the image of Ganesh, a weathered image of a man or woman with a trident and two unidentifiable carvings that are eroded beyond recognition. The *kīrtistaṃbh*, left of the white temple, has four sides with images of gods that the Pujaris were no longer able to identify, except for a worn image of Ganesh, recognisable only by his trunk. These carvings are not used as objects of devotion. It is unclear whether they have ever been used for devotional purposes in the past. Today, Kolu's priests and devotees do not seem to relate the temple-carvings depicting Vishnu or his classical *avatār*s to Pabuji's role as an embodiment of Lakshman.[478] The main objects of devotion are Pabuji's hero stones

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[477] Several hero stones carry inscriptions which date them to the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most hero stones, however, are undated or so weather-beaten that it is difficult to read their inscription. The *devaḷī*s kept at the Kolu temple show remarkable differences in style and iconography, seemingly representing different historical representations of Pabuji. As I am not an archaeologist or art-historian, I can only guess at the historical context and/or social groups which the different styles may represent. My guess is that some of the bare, unadorned *devaḷī*s represent "early" perhaps "tribal" renditions while the more ornamented and highly crafted *devaḷī*s perhaps represent a regional Rajput style or school and later medieval iconography inspired by Mughal depictions of warriors and their horses.

[478] *Avatār*-linkage can be very clearly read from the iconography of the Pabuji-Lakshman temple at Pushkar. This brand new temple, which I visited in 2000, was built by the *Rabārī Sammelan*, a modern Rebari caste association. In this temple, Pabuji is unambiguously worshipped as an incarnation of

positioned on two ledges of the red temple's altar. On the highest ledge stand three hero stones with Pabuji's image, of which only the inscription on the middle one is (partly) readable, dating it to Samvat 1770 (1713 CE). On the lower ledge, four more hero stones depicting Pabuji stand together with one hero stone dedicated to Pabuji's nephew Jhararo, with inscriptions that have become illegible.

Jhararo has been represented as a small figure with long hair, a severed head (identified as his uncle Jimda Khici's) in one hand and a water pot or begging-bowl in the other. In his ears, Jhararo wears the traditional Kanpathi Nath yogi earrings.[479] Nath relations with Kolu may be dated to at least the eighteenth-century, judging from the inscription on a memorial pillar in the centre of the temple compound that documents that it was erected in 1709 by one Narottam Nathji, the son of Karni Dan, a Paliwal (a title which commonly refers to Brahmin Purohits from Pali).[480] However, the present Pujaris of Kolu remember Narottam Nathji a Rajput priest who was converted and became a member of the Kanpathi Nath. Today, he is thought of as a Kanphati Nath yogi (Paliwal, *jāti* Dharmath) from Savarije, a village neighbouring Kolu.

Though I have not been able to talk with Jhararo's Nath devotees, it even so became clear that the Nath now worship Pabuji's nephew as the Nath Yogi Rupnath. This boy-yogi is worshipped in the Kolu temple and at his own open-air altar (*bhākharī*) on a hillock in the desert, some thirty kilometres away from the Pabuji temple. During Navratri celebrations, I was told, Nath yogis come all the way from Kashmir to visit Rupnath's desert shrine since they believe it to be the site where Rupnath attained *samādhī* (spiritual liberation) after "seven years" of meditation. His shrine is also believed to be the spot where Rupnath departed for heaven, seated on his horse. During my visit to the *bhākharī*, villagers passing-by were eager to show me where Rupnath's foot left an imprint in the rock and also pointed out the hoof marks left behind by his horse, indicating round blotches in the rocky surface. At the open-air altar, there are no images of Rupnath as a child-yogi, carrying his uncle's head, like in the Kolu Pabuji temple. The two hero stones worshipped at the open-air altar depict Rupnath in a fashion equal to Pabuji, i.e. as a horse-rider, holding a weapon, probably a dagger, in one hand.[481] A small cave in the rock underneath the altar was pointed out as Rupnath's ascetic-hearth (*dhūnī*). It now also

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Lakshman. Not one traditional hero stone or statue of Pabuji is found in this temple compound; instead the altars house big brightly-coloured plaster statues of Lakshman, Ram, Sita and Hanuman.

[479] These three symbols, by which Jhararo is usually recognized, are not found on another hero stone identified as Jhararo's and kept in the temple's side-wing. This stone represents him as a lone standing figure without any attributes.

[480] A very weathered inscription which I render as follows: "*1767 vaisāk sudhī 6 śri pabuji maharāja karnī dānda putra palīwāla jātī dhamatha gāoṃ savarīje narottama nathaji maharaja di raja śri śardāra simghajī re vāra meṃ*".

[481] When I was at Rupnath's *bhākharī*, a young Pujari from the Kolu temple came along and officiated at the altar, offering *prasād* to Jhararo on a makeshift fire and ringing the copper bells, which hang from surrounding shrubbery.

serves as a place of worship for Nath yogis and for members of all castes in the neighbouring villages.

Rupnath's *bhākharī*.

### *Thori shrines*

Opposite the entrances of both the red and white Pabuji temples, rectangular stone slabs carrying the images of Pabuji's seven Bhil or Thori companions have been positioned. The carvings have been elevated on small pedestals roofed by *chatarī*s. One pedestal stands opposite the entrance of the white temple, the other opposite the red temple's entrance, their *chatarī*s contain respectively two and one stone slab with the images of seven bearded men with bow and arrows. Rajput and Bhil devotees at Kolu identified these men as Ishal, Vishal, Kaku, Baku, Harmal, Camda and Dema, the seven Thori archers who fought alongside Pabuji.[482] The stone slabs serve as shrines where especially Bhil devotees worship the Thori.[483] It is here, next to the Bhil shrines, that Pabuji's contemporary Bhil Bhopas (priestly performers) sit and stage the *paravāṛau*s that are part of Pabuji's *mātā (drum)* epic.[484] The Bhil Bhopas of Kolu hold that it was Pabuji who appointed their forefathers, the Bhil archers, to perform the *mātā epic*. Several stories are told to explain how this came

[482] At times, Harmal is also identified as a Rebari warrior.

[483] After paying their respects at Pabuji's altars, most devotees also visit the Thori shrines and stand in front of them with folded hands. Some devotees genuflect in front of the Thori shrines. During nightly performances, a small oil-lamp was lit in front of the shrines, similar to lamps lit in front of Pabuji's altars on such occasions.

[484] I use *paravāṛau* to refer to the contemporary *mātā* tradition and to differentiate between this tradition's *paravāṛau*s and the earlier-discussed medieval *parvaro*.

about. One tale commemorates how Pabuji ascended to heaven during a competition with Sumra Bangra (a Muslim *pīr* and small-time ruler from Sindh) and refused to come back down to earth again until the Bhil played their drums. Another story traces the beginning of the *mātā* tradition to the time when Pabuji, upon receiving the mare Kalvi from Deval, ascended straight to heaven on his steed. In heaven, the horse was tied to Indra's throne and Pabuji could therefore not return to earth. Acting upon Deval's advice, Pabuji's seven Bhil archers then covered earthen pots with the Charani Sagati's shawl (*oṛaṇī*,) converting them into drums (*mātā*) that they played while burning incense, and thus brought Pabuji and Kalvi down.

Only a few members of Kolu's Bhil community, said to consist of 80 to 90 houses or extended families, now perform the *mātā* epic. They are referred to as Bhopa (priestly-performers and devotees), Ganewalle Thore (singing Thori), *mātā* Bajane-walle (*mātā* players), and Bhagats (Bhaktas) or devotees of Pabuji and the Bhil archers. The *mātā* players identify themselves first as Bhil and secondly as Thori and Bhopas.[485] It seems that the medieval designation Thori ("thief") is not translated in a derogative manner in Kolu, but is understood as the historical name for Pabuji's heroic Bhil comrades, especially the Thori Camda, Pabuji's faithful commander, whose deeds are remembered in terms of Rajput-like valour.[486] The Rajput patrons of the Bhil Bhopas further define them as members of the *gāyak jātī* (professional singers and performers) and as Pabuji's Sevaks or Pujaris (devotees and priests).

No oral tradition seems to exist which still contains legendary or other recollections of early Bhil history, at least none that could be shared with me. When asked about the initial stages of their history in Marwar, the Bhil of Kolu answer that their early history is "too long ago to remember". Some references to Bhopas are found in eighteenth-century temple inscriptions. In the white temple, for example, an inscription on a yellow *devaḷī* dates it to Samvat 1770 (1713 CE) when it was donated by one Bihari Das during the reign of Ajit Singh. In an unclear reference the name of one "Bhopā B(h)āgachaṃda" is also mentioned. It has remained unclear, however, whether this Bhopa was Bhil or, like today's priests, Rajput or other devotees who referred to themselves as Bhopa.

During my fieldwork, I became acquainted with two families of Bhil *mātā* players in Kolu: the brothers Asha Ram and Bonne Ram, and the brothers Khumbha Ram, Rupa Ram and Jetha Ram, all aged between 45 and 50 years, married and

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[485] Bhopa is a title, which can also be used for Pabuji's devotees of any social group, including Rajput priests and lay devotees from different caste backgrounds who call themselves Bhopa.

[486] Thori was traditionally a term used for hunters. With the establishment of Rajput rule in the area, the title probably gained a derogatory meaning, namely 'thief'. The Bhopas of Kolu, however, appear to use the title as a honorific, along with titles like "Samat" (warrior) and "Samvala" (dark, black). The latter name is also used for the blue god Krishna, hero of the *Rāmāyaṇ* epic (cf. *Visvambhara* 1997: 25-29). The *paṛ* Bhopas interviewed by Smith in 1991, on the other hand, seemed to prefer the title "Nayak" while this name is not used by the Bhil Bhopas of Kolu who think of Nayak as a title which the Banjaras started to use for themselves after they settled down to agriculture.

fathers. Asha Ram and Jetha Ram were considered the most able performers as they know more episodes than the others do. The two families Ram both listed four generations of male family-members who played the *mātā*s at Pabuji's Kolu temple and who (like the present-day *mātā* players) learned their art from their fathers. Only male Bhil play the *mātā*, women are not allowed to touch the drum or sit next to it during performance. The extant *mātā* epic as performed in Kolu, does not seem to know any written text. All previous generations, like the present performers, were non-literate.[487] Today the sons of the *mātā* players do learn how to read and write at school. Although Asha Ram still instructs his sons in the performance of the epic since Pabuji is their family's *iṣṭadev* (chosen deity), he would nevertheless prefer his offspring to find a job "in the city" and get on in life.

The *mātā* players keep Pabuji's tale and stories about their Thori ancestors alive through the oral transmission of *paravāṛau*s and explanatory stories that are not part of the *mātā* epic but are told to expound upon the meaning now attributed to Pabuji's tale.[488] The Kolu Bhopas define "*paravāṛau*" ("great deed") as a narrative about Pabuji's heroic deeds on earth, when he was alive. Every Bhopa knows a different amount of (and different versions of) *paravāṛau*s.[489] In theory, the *mātā* epic knows 24 *paravāṛau*s, but it is not clear how many episodes Pabuji's *mātā* epic in actual fact contains since the number of episodes listed by the Kolu *mātā* players most often referred to symbolic figures and not to the total of episodes that they could really perform. The *mātā* epic is "fully cultic", i.e. it is only performed in ritual settings.

The Ram brothers perform their *paravāṛau*s in pairs while seated next to the Thori-shrine opposite the main (red) temple. Each performer accompanies the sung poetry-text of the *paravāṛau*s by playing two *mātā*s, drums made of earthen pots covered with goatskin. The *mātā*s are bought from a potter's family in Kolu specialized in making them and then covered with hides acquired from goats that have been sacrificed to the Goddess. To underline the special qualities of their instruments, the *mātā* players stressed the fact that they do not use just any hide, like those that can be bought from the market. The drums are unique instruments, the Ram brothers explained, and indispensable for the performance of Pabuji's epic since Pabuji's epic can not be performed properly or brought to a propitious end without the *mātā*s. Till today, the Bhopas' drums are said to "bring Pabuji down

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[487] The Ram brothers of both families hold that the *paravāṛau*s performed by them were composed by one Charan Napaji, a horse trader who composed a prayer to Pabuji during a period of famine. Pabuji came to his rescue and granted him (cattle) wealth. Whether Napaji composed the text in writing or orally seems to be no longer known.

[488] The recordings of the *mātā epic* under review were made during the celebration of Navratri at Pabuji's temple in Kolu in the "great months" of Bhadavau (August-September) and Asoj (September-October). Subsequently, I regularly visited the Kolu temple to record *mātā* performances at the time of daily worship or as a patron of *mātā* concerts when the drums were played exclusively for the benefit of my research.

[489] *Paravāṛau* is also defined as an episode, the characteristic "building block" of epic narrative cycles.

from heaven", a reference to the legendary origin of the *mātā* tradition, which (as noted just now) is believed to have been born when the Thori brought Pabuji down from heaven by beating their *mātā*s.

The drums are most commonly played in the course of daily *pūjā*s, usually at daybreak and at sunset when the Rajput priests perform *āratī* (worship ceremony) at the main altar. Such performances include the occasional singing of (parts of) a *paravāṛau*.[490] A comprehensive performance of more than a few *paravāṛau*s is usually staged during devotional ceremonies like the celebration of Navratri in Kolu when *jagran* (all-night performances) are staged.[491] The *jagran* recorded by me began at sunset and lasted until well after midnight. Before the performance began, oil-lamps were lit in front of Pabuji's temples and the Thori shrines. The audience was primarily made up of men, village elders and the Rajput priests of the temple.[492] In addition, all night, male villagers, the herders of cattle and other passers-by kept dropping in to visit the shrines and listen to the *mātā* performance for a while.[493]

### *Contemporary paravāṛau*s

To understand some aspects of contemporary worship practices at the Kolu temple, in particular the worship of Thori warriors by Bhil Bhopas, I will now briefly discuss the content of the four *mātā paravāṛau*s that I recorded (1999-2001) titled: *Jalama rau paravāṛau*, *Byāva rau paravāṛau*, *Vāhara rau paravāṛau* (also referred to as *Ḍhaiṃbā rai sūrāpaṃṇa rau*) and *Jhararājī rau paravāṛau*.[494] I have not yet been able to undertake a comprehensive analysis of all the *paravāṛau*s' content, form and performance context. What follows, therefore, is no more than a first attempt at describing the episodes' content. The performance recorded by me began with the *Jalama rau paravāṛau*, dealing with Pabuji's birth story. The first five verse-lines of this episode are an elaborate description of the celebrations surrounding Pabuji's birth, during which auspicious songs resounded in Kolu, a

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[490] The Rajput temple priests do not take part in the *mātā* performance, but at sundown junior Rajput priests blow conch-shells, ring temple-bells and forcefully strike a large temple drum in unison with the Bhopas' thunderous pounding of their *mātā*s. Afterwards, the priests distribute *prasād* among the *mātā player*s, villagers and temple staff present.

[491] The *mātā epic* is also performed at the request of Pabuji devotees in their homes in Kolu and surrounding villages, usually during Navratri. This aspect of the performance has not been part of my fieldwork.

[492] Women visit the temple during the day and are escorted by their husbands or other family members. The nightly performances witnessed by me were not attended by village women. At first, I sat on a carpet, far from the *mātā* players. The all-male audience politely ignored me. Later on, I was asked to take a seat nearer to the *mātā* players. My fellow audience continued to kindly ignore me.

[493] Every so often, the nightly performance was interrupted when its audience and performers shared *prasād* and smoked *bīḍī*s or a *huqqā*. Around ten o'clock a long dinner break was held. After the performance had ended all the oil-lamps were extinguished, the doors to the main altars closed and the temple gate locked.

[494] My understanding of the recorded *paravāṛau*s is for the most part based on their transcription and Hindi rendition by Subh Karan Deval. Their transliteration can be found in the appendix.

golden plate (*thāḷa*) was beaten, and women danced to its beat, while their ankle bells filled the air with a sound "sweet as nectar". Then, pearls are offered to the infant prince to celebrate that "Pabuji has taken birth as a son in the house of Dhamdhal" (v. 1-5). The boy is bathed in a golden utensil and wrapped in yellow-coloured silk while his father Dhamdhal has brown and white sugar distributed throughout Kher,[495] to the king, his feudal lords and all other inhabitants of the realm (v. 6-10). The Bhopas describe in some detail how the news about the "auspicious occasion of the birth of a son" is received (v. 11 to 15). The Raja rewards the bearer of the good news with dried fruits, golden earrings and, upon the messenger's request, also gives him golden bangles. To Dhamdhal, the Raja sends a Brahmin messenger (Ravat) to convey "hundreds and hundreds" of good wishes.[496] The assembly of the feudal lords also thank Dhamdhal's messenger a "thousands times" for the happy news he brought and offer him dried fruits, a colourful turban and a gold-plated coconut.

In the next verse-lines (16 to 21), it is described how the messenger (now referred to as the astrologer Joshiji) returns home, visits Dhamdhal's house and reads Pabuji's horoscope. The *mātā* players start out by describing how Joshi takes a hasty bath, washes his clothes, ties his turban and worships the god Asutosh. "Looking very handsome", Joshi then goes on his way taking along his horoscope book. When the royal priest (Rajapamdit) arrives at the house of Dhamdhal's father Asthan, he finds him seated on a carpet surrounded by all his family members.[497] Then Pabuji's birth horoscope is read (v. 21 to 24). The Joshi proclaims that Pabuji has been born at a very auspicious time and enumerates the propitious omens surrounding Pabuji's birth; the child was fed milk by a lioness and he was surrounded by fragrant Kesar trees, like a god. Upon being asked about the boy's future, the astrologer tells the family that Pabuji is an incarnation of Lakshman and he predicts that Pabuji will ride a horse named Kalvi Ghori and will be accompanied by Bhil heroes named Dhembo and Sonal.[498] Joshi also foresees that Pabuji will attain martyrdom in the course of protecting cows. In the last verse-line (25), the *mātā* players dwell on Pabuji's name-giving ceremony during which Joshi prophesies that the newborn will become famous under names like Pabu Bhalalau (Spearwielder Pabuji), Lakshman Avatar (Lakshman-incarnate), Kamlaputra Gaurakshak (Kamla's son, the cow protector).

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[495] Kher, the name of early-medieval Rathaur territory.

[496] During their performance, the *mātā* players referred to the "Brahmin messenger" as a Ravat (a *jajamān* of Charan poets), an astrologer (Joshi) and royal priest (Raj-pamdit).

[497] Asthan asks Joshi to join the family and sit with them on the carpet, but the astrologer effusively declines, saying that for him a *bhājota* (a round, wooden slab covered with yellow-coloured cloth) would suffice. This verse-line may be read as the astrologer's oblique refusal to share a carpet with Rajput warriors.

[498] Sonal does not play any role in any of the *mātā paravāṛaus* recorded by me, while Camda, who does figure prominently in the *byāva rau paravāṛau*, has not been mentioned in this episode at all.

The next episode, the *byāva rau paravāṛau*, tells the tale of Pabuji's wedding. In the opening-lines, the Bhopas explain that the Thori heroes Camda and Dhembo are Pabuji's spiritual brothers because Dhembo embodies Bharat, and Camda embodies Shatrughan, Lakhsman's two brothers.[499] Camda and Dhembo are portrayed as Pabuji's faithful bodyguards who always move one step ahead of their lord to assure that no harm will befall him (v. 2). In verse-lines 3 to 9, the preparations for Pabuji's wedding are elaborated upon. The *mātā* players recount how Camda distributes rice yellowed with *haldī* (tumeric) to invite people to Pabuji's marriage party. All gods, town-dwellers, brothers and relatives of the Rathaur dynasty (and their sisters and daughters) are invited. In the meantime, Pabuji is dressed as a groom and seated on a platform (*śrīngāra chowkī*). Dhembo helps Pabuji dress. The hero looks like a "full moon among stars".[500] On Pabuji's request, Camda surveys the arrival of the guests. Durga arrives riding her lion and Sarasvati travelled to Kolu by goose. The great hermits Mehaji Mangaliya and Harbhu Shamkla have also come, as have the chieftains of all Rathaur clans. Only Pabuji's brother-in-law, Jayal's lord Jimda, is not present. But Jimda did dispatch a spy, a man in the disguise of a yogi, to satisfy his curiosity about Pabuji's marriage party. Camda recognises the "odd yogi" as a spy and brings him in front of Pabuji, proposing to pierce Jimda's scout with a spear and thus "send him to heaven". But the "great kind-hearted Pabuji" shows mercy and treats Jimda's emissary with "guest-like respect", offering him a horse to ride on and a golden ring, thus winning the spy's heart. Then, flags are hoisted, music instruments resound, women sing auspicious songs and Pabuji's marriage party sets out for the bride's house.

The following verse-lines of the *byāva rau paravāṛau* (v. 10-27) do not, as one may expect, deal with Pabuji's wedding but with a dialogue that unwinds between Pabuji and Charani Deval, who halts the hero's marriage party on the way to Umarkot. When Camda asks her what marriage-gift (*nega*) she has come to claim, wearing a black-coloured dress and thus representing a bad omen for the marriage party's progress, Deval ("who is Parvati incarnate") says that she has not come to claim a gift but to ask who will protect the fort in Pabuji's absence. When she hears that only Pabuji's elder brother Buro remains behind, Deval protests because Pabuji's marriage party will not be complete without his elder brother. The *mātā* players make it clear that the real reason behind Deval's objection is the fact that she has little faith in Buro since his and Jimda's cattle herds are grazed together, i.e. Buro is in league with Jimda. Deval therefore asks Pabuji to leave Dhembo behind to protect the fort. But Pabuji refuses, saying that without Dhembo, there will be no

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[499] This renders the Thori heroes Pabuji's mythical blood relations since Pabuji is seen as Lakshman incarnate. Likewise, the folk-god Baba Ramdev and Pabuji are at times also presented as brothers, when Ramdev is identified as an incarnation of Ram and Pabuji-Lakhsman as Ramdev's younger brother.

[500] A phrase also used in *chamd* II (v. 47): "47. suhaṛāṃ caṃdīyau iṇa rūpa sajhe, mila pūnima caṃda nikṣatra majhai", where it applied to Camda.

one able to consume the huge quantity of opium with which the bride's party will welcome them.

Deval then insists that Pabuji leaves behind the warrior Camda, or Salkha, or the Rebari Harmal. Pabuji again protests and says that he cannot possibly leave those three warriors behind either. Camda is needed to distribute the presents among the bridal party and Salkha has to interpret the omens they will meet on the way. And Harmal cannot be dispensed with since he will guide the marriage party to Umarkot. When Deval inquires how Harmal, who is still a boy, can guide the party, Pabuji answers that it was Harmal who showed him the way when he went to Lankitale to rob camels and that Harmal has been his "path-leader" ever since. Finally, Deval asks Pabuji to return the mare Kalvi to her, so that the horse can protect the fort. Pabuji turns her down once more. He cannot give her the mare, says he, since he has pledged to protect the cattle of his protégés with his life and he needs the mare to do so. Then who will protect her, Deval asks, after Pabuji has taken along everybody to Umarkot? Pabuji assures her that he will protect her himself. Deval just has to climb on top of Kolugarh's Gunjave well and call out for help and he will immediately come to her rescue. When Deval doubts whether her voice will bridge the distance between Gumjave and Umarkot, Pabuji tells her to take on the form of a bird and fly to Umarkot to ask for his help herself. Thus, after Jimda robs Deval's cows, she takes on the form of a bird and flies to Umarkot where she perches on the fort and calls out for help. The *mātā* players concluded this part of their performance by describing how Pabuji, on hearing the bird cry, leaves his bride without completing the prescribed rounds around the ceremonial fire and sets out to protect Deval's cows (v. 27).

The third *paravāṛau* recorded by me, *vāhara rau paravāṛau* (also referred to as *ḍhaiṃbā rai sūrāpaṃṇa rau)* tells the story of Thori Dhembo and his battle with Jimda. To begin with, it becomes apparent that Dhembo, who (it appears in this *paravāṛau*) did get left behind to guard the fort despite Pabuji's protestations in the previous *paravāṛau*, grinds and consumes large quantities of opium (v. 1 to 8). Upon becoming fully intoxicated, Dhemba decides to leave for the battlefield. First, however, he pays a visit to Pabuji's stepmother Kamladevi and asks her for her blessings. Kamladevi, gauging Dhembo's intoxicated and belligerent mood (he is "overflowing with *vīraras*") begs him to spare Jimda and thus save her daughter Pemal the sad fate of widowhood. "Vir Dhembo" rides his horse and joins Pabuji's army, "roaring like a bull". Pabuji scolds Dhembo for joining him in battle instead of staying behind and guarding the fort like he had been instructed to do. Dhembo answers that he is more worried about Pabuji's wellbeing than about the safety of a stone fort. Dhembo asserts that Pabuji needs his help to win the battle since it was only with Dhembo's help that Pabuji could protect Hindu religion by punishing the Yavans of Kacch and Multan who had killed cows and peacocks.

Verse-lines 9 to 18 relate how Dhembo (and not Pabuji) rescues Deval's cows and single-handedly challenges and eventually conquers "cow-robber Jimda".

Dhembo challenges Jimda saying: "O Jimda! You have brought these cows this far, but now this hero will not let you take them any further". On hearing Dhembo's challenge, Jimda halts the herd and sits down to take rest, he then says to Dhembo: "O Hero Dhembo! You people brought back your own lord, the incarnation of Lakshman, unmarried. This is a great injustice!". Dhembo answers: "O Jimda! Your dynasty knows bachelors. We, however, accomplished our lord's marriage in great happiness". Jimda then warns Dhembo to turn back for Jimda's army is too big for Dhembo to tackle it alone. Dhembo is not impressed and warns Jimda that he is only alive because Dhembo's promised Kamladevi not to render Pemal a widow. But the promise does not forbid Dhembo to kill all Jimda's soldiers. The Thori warrior chivalrously gives Jimda a chance to attack first but Jimda's "bullets and arrows" cannot touch Dhembo for he has gained special powers through meditation. Then it is Dhembo's turn to attack and he kills Jimda's younger brother Maimdarava,[501] and wipes out the Khici army. Only Jimda is left standing. Dhembo returns Deval's cows to Kolu, saying: "O Cow-mothers! You should be like arrows and move fast. Do hurry up. I will take you to Kolu *maḍh* and offer you water from the Gunjave well".

In the last three verse-lines (19-21) of the *vāhara rau paravāṛau*, Dhembo no longer has any part to play. The Bhopas instead evoke Pabuji's battle with Jimda's uncle Bhut Bhati from Thanot (near Jaisalmer). Bhut Bhati has marched upon Kolu with "900 hero soldiers" in answer to Jimda's call for help. The Dhamdhal and Bhati armies clash at the Gunjave well. In the meantime, Deval ("who is the cause of the origin and obliteration of this universe") takes the form of a musk shrew (*chūchūṃdara*).[502] With her sharp teeth, she cuts the bowstrings of the soldiers in both armies, a subterfuge Deval employs because she wants all soldiers to take up their swords and lacerate each other. And thus it happens: all soldiers die. The only survivors are Pabuji, Jimda and Deval. Pabuji then asks Deval (who is again acknowledged as Shakti incarnate by the *mātā* players) for four boons: [1] he does not want to remain a boy, nor does he want to become an old man; [2] he wishes for divinity that will last as long as the earth and sky continue to exist; [3] he wants to become invisible and thus be able to "see the world" without "earth-dwellers" being able to see him; and [4] he asks for the ability to come to the immediate rescue of his devotees when they find themselves in need of him. With these boons, Pabuji hopes to become a man who can "influence Maya", i.e. a man who can see through the illusory character of the world as perceived by the senses.

The last episode discussed here is the *jhararājī rau paravāṛau* about Pabuji's nephew, the child-yogi (*bālayogī*) Jhararo. In this episode, the *mātā* players portray the boy's initiation into Gorakhnath's Kanpathi Nath sect (v. 1-48). Upon meeting Gorakhnath and his caravan of disciples, Jhararo ignores the disciples warnings

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[501] Also referred to as "Maimda" and "Mayamda".

[502] Hindi *chūchūṃdar* refers to the Grey Musk Shrew (*Suncus murinus*) but is at times also rendered as "Musk Rat" (personal communication A. van der Geer).

about the fact that meeting a caravan of Sadhu's is an ill-fated omen. Jhararo is not frightened and expresses his wish to join the Nath travellers and learn more about their Guru. The travellers tell him that Goraknath is a yogi with special powers. When Goraknath performs a fire ritual, fire emanates from his ascetic hearth and not clouds of smoke, like from other yogic hearths. And Goraknath does not wear a red coloured loincloth, like other yogis do, but a yellow one. After the caravan has come to a halt and Gorakhnath's tent has been put up, Jhararo shakes the tent strings and is brought in front of Gorakhnath. The boy then expresses his wish to become the Guru's disciple. Goraknath tries to make the boy realize that it is not simple to become a Nath's disciple. In order to wear the Nath earrings as a mark of initiation into the sect, one's earlobes have to be pierced with a dagger. And one also has to strip naked in order to perform the Nath's fire ritual. Jhararo is undeterred and assures Gorakhnath that he will not feel any pain. He requests the Guru to pierce his ears and to let him perform a fire ritual. Upon seeing the child's determination, Gorakhnath pats his head and makes him his disciple. When Jhararo's ears are pierced, not blood but milk flows from his lobes. Thus Jhararo proves that he is a remarkable disciple, worthy of his Guru's stature.

After his initiation, Jhararo (now named Rupnath) continues on his way to Jayal to meet his aunt and take revenge on her husband (and Rupnath's uncle) Jimda Khici. This part of the *paravāṛau* (v. 48-57) provides a (to my mind) illustrative example of the details with which the *mātā* players narrate Pabuji's epic. In verse-lines 48 to 51, the *mātā* players describe how Rupnath enters Jayal and camps in an orchard which, after having remaining dry for 12 years, suddenly becomes green. We learn that it is because of the boy's "pious foot-dust" that the orchard revives and bumblebees begin to circle its flowers. On hearing how the orchid has become green again, Rupnath's aunt ("Bua") thinks: "A person of the Rathaur dynasty must have entered the orchard, or else it could not have become green". Verse-lines 52 to 57 portray the meeting between Rupnath and his Bua. When the two come eye to eye, Rupnath turns his back on his aunt who then "lets a milk-stream from her breasts flow towards Rupnath". For, the *mātā* players explain, Rupnath's aunt knows that "if the boy belongs to her parent's family, her breast-milk will flow towards the boy and touch him. But if the boy proves to be unrelated, her milk-stream will come to a halt before touching him". The moment his Bua's milkstream touches Rupnath's back, he turns to face his aunt and looks at her. Then Bua understood that this boy was indeed a member of her father Buro's dynasty and that he had come to take revenge for the death of Buro and Pabuji at the hands of Jimda Khici.

In verse-lines 58 to 75, the *mātā* players continue with the story of Jhararo's revenge. We learn how his aunt leads Rupnath to where Jimda lays sleeping. The *bālayogī* seats himself on top of his sleeping uncle's breast. When Jimda wakes up, he at first ridicules the boy but soon discovers that Rupnath has miraculous powers. Jimda then begs for mercy and promises to arrange Rupnath's marriage with his elder brother's daughter if his life be spared. The boy pays no heed to Jimda's words

and beheads his uncle, spurred on by his aunt. When his aunt asks Rupnath for her husband's head (since she wants to become *satī* with it), Rupnath implores her to become *satī* with Jimda's headless body because he wants to take his uncle's head along to Kolu. The end of this episode, as told by the *mātā* players, differs rather a lot from the final events of the story about Jhararo as told in *duha* I. The child-yogi sets out for Kolu carrying his uncle's head and riding Buroji's mare Dhela. But before their destination is reached, Dhela gives birth to a foal at the site which is now known as Rupnath's *bhākharī*. In the last verse-lines (76-77), the *mātā* players remind their audience that Dhela's footprints (and those of her foal) still mark the rocks where Rupnath's open-air altar is found today.

*Geo-myth: the footmark of Rupnath at his bhākharī.*

### *Attributed meaning*

When asked about the meaning one may attribute to their performance, the *mātā* players recounted several additional, explanatory stories to shed light on the significance of the above-described events. First of all, the Ram brothers, their patrons and audiences, expand upon the importance of Pabuji's battle with Jimda.[503] The brothers do not, however, highlight the battle between the two protagonists but instead accentuate the fact that Pabuji gave his word to Deval and kept it.[504] Most

[503] Like most conversations that took place during fieldwork, the talks I had with the Ram families in Kolu were "group talks". The recording of interviews invariably aroused the interest of villagers who happened to pass by. The assembled audience would all contribute to the interviews, giving their opinion on matters they felt strongly about.

[504] The importance of keeping one's promise is also accorded special significance in Tulsi Singh Rathaur's version of Pabuji's birth story (Kolu, June 2001). He relates how it is Pabuji's mother, the nymph, who vouches to return to Pabuji in the form of a horse in the herd of Charani Deval. In this tale the fact that Pabuji's mother gave her word is emphasized; the nymph incarnates as the mare Kalvi because she "gave her word from her own mouth". By becoming Kalvi, she was, moreover, instrumental in securing Pabuji's fame since Pabuji could not have embarked on his heroic enterprises without a steed. Yet another reading was suggested by some bystanders, who held that the nymph's incarnation as Pabuji's horse was in the first place motivated by a mother's wish to be with her son and, secondly, by her desire to see her son earn eternal fame in the world by protecting the poor and weak.

significant, the devotees said, is the fact that the Rathaur hero died to keep his promise. According to his devotees, it is this fact which sets Pabuji apart from all other divine beings, whether classical Gods or folk-gods.[505] Till today, the people of Kolu feel, it is Pabuji they can trust upon in times of need. There is no other god who comes to the rescue of his followers as swiftly as Pabuji does as is illustrated with tales about the hero-god's present-day miracles, commemorating the help Pabuji extended to a brother, neighbour, uncle's wife or niece's husband. When, for example, the brother of farmer Bhannai Singh fell into a well and couldnot get out again, he only needed to recite Pabuji's name for Bhannai Singh to happen to pass near the well and hear his brother. The well was dug out and Bhannai Singh's brother, who had remained miraculously unscratched, was rescued.[506]

The Ram brothers stress the selfless character of Pabuji's deeds. Pabuji did not (they say) battle or rob for his own sake to enrich himself or to acquire status, but, on the contrary, fought solely for the benefit of others. He died to protect Deval's cattle, not his own. Evidence for his selflessness is also found in the idea that Pabuji did not fight wars to conquer territory. The *mātā* players relate how Pabuji after defeating Rajput enemies re-installed them on the throne and gave them back their land. Likewise, when the hero-god stole camels from Lankitale, he did so out of altruism, i.e. to present the camels as part of the dowry he gave to his niece.[507] The hero-god's selfless sacrifice is also key to the Ram brothers' understanding of the *vāhara rau paravāṛau*, notwithstanding the fact that this episode deals mainly with the bravery of Dhembo and not with Pabuji's heroic deeds. The Ram brothers nonetheless feel that it was Pabuji who protected his half-sister from widowhood by refusing to kill her husband Jimda. Thus the Rathaur warrior gained everlasting fame and became a hero-god, say the Ram brothers, because he died to fulfil his promise. The fact that Pabuji's demise is not actually mentioned in any of the performed *paravāṛaus* does nothing to diminish the significance the *mātā* players attribute to it.

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[505] See Smith (1980: 70) who points out that the importance attributed to giving one's word or making a vow is a common feature of South-Asian epic. In the *Mahābhārat*, for example, the making and keeping of promises can confer power to the person who undertakes such a task, as is the case with Bhisma's vow to remain celibate.

[506] Similar stories are connected to individual hero stones at house altars in Kolu village. The middle-aged Rajput farmer Bonne Singh relates how his grandfather found a Pabuji Devali and brought it home to worship it. When a thief came to steal his grandfather's solid-golden ring, Pabuji retrieved it and punished the wrongdoer. Likewise, Pabuji is believed to offer a helping hand when someone is about to arrive late for an important meeting, by speeding up his scooter or car. And the hero-god is also known to appear when someone's store of opium threatens to be finished, granting his devotees a fresh supply. These and similar stories are told with much good-humour, so much so that I at times wondered whether some stories were perhaps told to test my credulity.

[507] According to Pabuji's devotees, the medieval ideal of selfless sacrifice still informs present realities though it is also clear that, in these days of Kaliyuga, it is no longer an ideal that many people aspire to fulfil. The Ram brothers and their audience commonly agreed that it is rare today for any one, including Rajput men, to act selflessly or to keep a promise. But if any one were to undertake a "big promise" today, and manages to keep it, he or she will certainly become divine like Pabuji.

The heroic roles attributed to Pabuji's Thori warriors in the different *paravāṛaus* do, in addition, function as a way to highlight the martial, Rajput-like characteristics of the Thori whom the present-day *mātā* players think of as their forefathers. The warrior status ascribed to the Thori warriors (and consequently to the *mātā* players) serves to assert contemporary Rajput status, a claim that is underscored by tales that illustrate that Pabuji saw his Rajput, Bhil and Rebari companions as equals.[508] One such tale details the selfless sacrifice of seven Thori grooms and their marriage parties who on their way to their brides' houses happened to pass by the battlefield where Pabuji battled with Jimda. Pabuji, according to the custom which prescribes that one should feed one's guests, fed all the Thori and their parties and then sent them on their way. But the Thori grooms and their guests insisted on joining Pabuji in battle, saying that they could also fight in their marriage attire, just like Pabuji. I was told that it is because of this legend that Bhil devotees are ceremonially fed near the Thori shrines in the Kolu temple till date.

Another story told to confer high status to the Thori warriors and their devotees recounts how, after Pabuji's defeat, the blood-streams of warriors from different social backgrounds began to mingle on the battlefield. When Charani Deval tried to prevent the intermingling of blood by building small earthen dams between the different streams, Pabuji's voice was heard from heaven. He summoned Deval to stop damming up the blood, since all who had fought with him had thus demonstrated their martial valour, and were Rajput warriors. Hence their blood should be allowed to mingle. This tale was explained to me in almost similar versions by people of different castes, including Pabuji's Rajput and Bhil devotees. From the interpretations of these stories by different narrators, I gained the impression that Bhil devotees told the tale to underscore Pabuji's egalitarian outlook on caste, while some of the Rajput who told the tale evoked Pabuji's gallantry to underline another aspect of the tale, i.e. the "glorious Rajput past" but not the egalitarian implications of the story.

The Rajput priests and *mātā* players in Kolu, upon being asked, also elaborated upon whether narrative details of the medieval and present day poetry and prose stories should be considered "true". Especially Tulsi Singh Rathaur's viewpoint clearly illustrated the distinction made between what people hold to be factually true and potentially true. The first category of truth includes anything written in stone, like temple pillars' inscriptions or other edicts in stone, since it is held that their data cannot be changed easily and they therefore preserve what was true in the past and is regarded nowadays as fact. Tulsi Singh Rathaur also put great stress on the accuracy of the written word, especially prose chronicles, but did not

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[508] Some Kolu Bhil families claim Bhati Rajput origin and trace their family to the Bhati of Pokaran and Jaisalmer but these claims are generally refuted by the priests of the Kolu temple. Though they do grant that the Bhil are *like* Rajput (since they fought bravely at Pabuji's side), and that the medieval Thori were of Vaghela Rajput extraction, they at the same time doubt that today's Bhil could be in any way related to Rajput lineages.

class the manuscript tradition of written Dimgal poetry among this category.[509] Dimgal poetry about Pabuji, like today's *mātā* epic, is considered part of orally transmitted traditions. And oral data, the priests of the Kolu temple say, retain symbolic meaning, not factual messages. This does not mean that oral transmissions of either poetry or prose are held to be untrue. It means that the authenticity of the tradition is not defined according to what people *believe* to be true. Accordingly, the validity of tales told about Pabuji is assessed according to whom tells a story. In this context, Tulsi Singh Rathaur put forward that the different stories about Pabuji constitute different truths. There is the truth of Bhil devotees, who will elaborate on the role of Thori Camda and his companions when they tell Pabuji's story, but there is also the truth of Rebari devotees, who will want to emphasise the role of Rebari Harmal when they tell Pabuji's tale. Likewise, Rajput renditions of the story will stress the heroic example for their community set by Pabuji. And Charan poets will highlight Pabuji's protection of Deval and her role in the events of his life.

### Avatār-*linkage*

An outstanding feature of the contemporary *mātā paravāṛau*s, as compared to the medieval Pabuji tradition is, of course, the manner in which Pabuji's story is connected to the *Rāmāyaṇ*. In contemporary tales about Pabuji, he has come to embody Ram's brother Lakshman, an example of *avatār*-linkage that, as noted earlier, cannot be read from the medieval Pabuji tradition. In the *jalama rau paravāṛau*, Pabuji and Lakshman are linked in a rather straightforward manner. The *mātā* players name "Lakshman Avatar" as one of Pabuji's titles together with names like Pabu Bhalalau, Kamlaputra and Gau-Rakshaka. *Avatār*-linkage also serves to relate other protagonists of the *Rāmāyaṇ* and Pabuji's story to each other, like in the *byāva rau paravāṛau*, where the Thori warriors Camda and Dhembo are explicitly identified as incarnations of (respectively) Ram and Lakhsman's younger brothers Bharat and Shatrughan. In this context, the *mātā* players explain that Pabuji and his Thori companion are brothers in Pabuji's story, just like they are in the *Rāmāyaṇ*. The *paṛ* Bhopas reportedly consider Dhembo an *avatār* of either classical epic hero Bhim or Hanuman but the *mātā* players do not make such a link. They see Dhembo as an incarnation of Bharat. Their portrayal of Dhembo does, even so, evoke physical aspects ascribed to Bhim, the insatiable and reckless *Mahābhārat*

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[509] Manuscript versions of medieval poetry dedicated to Pabuji seem to play no part in Kolu. Smith's (1991: 18) information that a printed copy of a twentieth-century version of Pabuji's tale is kept at Kolu temple appears to be accurate no longer since neither the Bhil nor the Rajput priests had heard of this poem. They had, however, heard of Nainsi's sixteenth-century chronicle in which a prose-version of Pabuji's story has been recorded. On reading one of my copies of this tale Tulsi Singh Rathaur declared himself to be rather disappointed since he had expected Nainsi's written account to contain factual information about the live and times of Pabuji. But Nainsi's version of Pabuji's story contained no details that he did not know already through contemporary oral renditions. Therefore, Tulsi Singh Rathaur assumed that Nainsi must have recorded in writing a prose version of a medieval oral poem.

protagonist, who symbolizes "heroic excesses" as well as the physique of Hanuman, Ram's "immense and impetuous" associate (Smith 1980: 48-78). Dhembo ("the Fat") resembles this hero type because of his enormous appetite, in particular for opium, and because of his physical strength; he single-handedly defeats Jimda's army. Along these lines, Dhembo's martial valour could be characterized as irrepressible, like the bravado displayed by Bhim and Hanuman. It seems to me, however, that the *mātā* players did not mean to portray Dhembo as a irrepressible in the sense of recklessly irresponsible all the time for Dhembo does remain true to the promise he gave Kamlade and did not kill Jimda thus sparing Pema the fate of a widow. However, if the quoted similarities in the physical aspects of the two heroes are sufficiently meaningful, we may think of these likenesses as possible narrative links between Dhembo and Bhim which (as far as I can see) would be the only straightforward allusion to the *Mahābhārat* in the *paravāṛau*s. Unlike the poets of the medieval Pabuji tradition, the *mātā* players appear to have been more inspired by the *Rāmāyaṇ* than by the *Mahābhārat*.

The relation between the protagonist of the *Rāmāyaṇ* and Pabuji's epic is also elaborated upon with explanatory stories that are not part of the *mātā* performance, relating the "unfinished business" of the *Rāmāyaṇ* with the events that unfold in the *paravāṛau*s. One of these stories connects Pabuji's wedding to the promise Ram is thought to have given in jest to the demoness Supriyamkha (Shurapanakha) pledging that she will marry Lakshman in a subsequent incarnation. Again, the fact that Ram made a promise is given central importance. It is because of his pledge, the *mātā* players say, that Pabuji and Phulvamti take three rounds to complete the prescribed four rounds necessary to wed Lakshman to Supriyamkha. This is so because Supriyamkha had walked around Lakshman only once (instead of the prescribed four rounds) when it became clear to her that he did not intend to marry her. When she reminded Ram of his promise, Ram promised her Lakshman in marriage in a next life. Hence, Lakshman incarnates as Pabuji and Supriyamkha takes birth as Phulvamti, and together they complete the unfinished wedding ritual.

*Avatār*-linkage in classical epic and in Pabuji's epic can be thought of, following Smith (1980: 69), as an "apparatus of myth-making" that assists in establishing causal links between events. From this angle, incarnations together with curses, vows and the workings of fate can be seen as "narrative tools" employed to create connections between protagonists and events in one epic or between the protagonists and events of two different epics. The *mātā* players use this tool to connect the protagonists of Lakhsman's and Pabuji's tales by making the hero-god wed Phulvamti, thus picking up where Ram left off when he promised Lakshman's hand to Supriyamkha. Such heterodox versions offer new interpretations of the old facts of classical epic. As an example, Smith (1980: 68f) quotes heterodox readings which propose that the goddess by incarnating as Sita who is then abducted by Ravana did so to prompt Ram to act according to dharma and thus bring into being the result required by fate, e.g. Ravana's defeat. In this way, the goddess becomes

fate's representative, or the "divine arbiter" of epic tales; she is the one who ensures that fate can take its course. Smith (1980: 73) also interprets the role accorded to Deval in Pabuji's *paṛ* epic thus and it seems to me that the *mātā* players' portrayal of Deval can be understood likewise. The Ram brothers do unambiguously refer to Deval as "the cause of the origin and destruction of the universe", and portray her as an incarnation of Shakti and of Shiva's consort, Parvati. Deval can also be seen as fate's representative since it is Pabuji's promise to protect Deval which eventually sets all events in motion; if Deval had not given the horse Kalvi to Pabuji, Jimda would not have stolen Deval's cattle, Pabuji would not have come to her rescue and he would not have been killed in battle. This interpretation also presents itself upon reading in the *byāva rau paravāṛau* how Deval's intervention leads to Pabuji's and Jimda's armies' defeat after she has taken on the form of a musk shrew to break both armies' bowstrings. The goddess perhaps also chose this course of action to bring about Pabuji's death. Though this cannot be perused from the *paravāṛau*s, Pabuji's death does seem to come about through Deval's help as may perhaps be gauged from the four boons Pabuji requests from Deval. In particular his wish to attain divinity and to become invisible could be understood as one way of saying that Pabuji reaches heaven, i.e. dies.

Looking at *avatār*-linkage from a socio-political point of view, it becomes clear that the mythical family ties between the main protagonists of the *paravāṛau*s and some *Rāmāyaṇ* protagonists and their incarnations are, in the first place, meant to enhance the status of Pabuji's cult and the Thori and *mātā* players' eminence. This can be construed from Pabuji's identification as Lakhsman, thus linking his tradition with classical mythology, and the *byāva rau paravāṛau*'s portrayal of Camda and Dhembo as Pabuji-Lakhsman's mythical "blood relations": the embodiment of Bharat and Shatrughan. In this context, a*vatār*-linkage serves to underline the status of the Thori companions in Pabuji's retinue and, more importantly, their Bhil descendants, who are in this way "written into" a mythical genealogy and trace their ancestry to *Rāmāyaṇ* protagonists. In addition, Camda and Dhembo's Rajput-like roles in the *paravāṛau*s and the heroism ascribed to Thori in explanatory stories (like the one about the seven Bhil grooms who fought at Pabuji's side) also serve to ascribe status to the Bhil, not in mythical terms but by referring to medieval martial ideals. The *mātā* players not only recount how bravely the Thori warriors fight, but render Dhembo's actions the central concern of their narrative in the *vāhara rau paravāṛau*. It is Dhembo, not Pabuji, whom the *mātā* players portray as the main hero by ascribing deeds to him that are more commonly attributed to Pabuji in other, medieval and contemporary, versions of the story. In the *vāhara rau paravāṛau*, it is Dhembo who rescues Deval's cows, returns them to her, and promises to water them. It is, moreover, Dhembo and not Pabuji who kills Jimda's brother Maihadrav and defeats Jimda's army. Dhembo moreover reminds Pabuji that it is only with his help that he can win battles, for it was he who helped Pabuji to "protect Hindu religion".

Though the active role attributed to Dhembo could, as Smith (1980: 63) does, be understood as an attempt to render Pabuji a truly ascetic hero, comparable to Ram, i.e. a passive hero who does not act and thus does not get involved in the cycle of *saṃsār*, it seems that, from a historical perspective, the heroism ascribed to Dhembo is chiefly meant to enhance the Rajput-like warrior status claimed by the *mātā* players. This, I think, is the *mātā paravāṛau*s main function today: forwarding Bhil Bhopa claims to Rajput status in a way that resembles medieval claims to ascribed Rajputhood. It is, however, also clear that it is no longer enough to claim Rajput-like status, or to enumerate the heroic deeds of warrior forefathers, be they Thori or Rajput. To be truly upwardly mobile in contemporary Kolu society, one's history also needs to be linked to protagonists from the *Rāmāyaṇ*, a link which, for some of Pabuji's devotees, serves to establish themselves and their story-telling tradition as part of modern definitions of what "mainstream Hinduism" is or (rather) ought to be.

### *Ritual function*

Contemporary *avatār*-linkage, the assertion and/or attribution of Rajput status, and their place in prevailing definitions of "mainstream Hinduism" are instrumental in voicing competing claims to status, articulated by different groups like Rajput or Bhil, rendering the performance of Pabuji's *mātā*-epic part of an on-going "battle of words" which serves to settle matters of socio-political power, caste status and divine hierarchies. The contemporary battle of words, as I see it, will be outlined below by discussing the ritual function of the *mātā* performance in Kolu, and the way in which different people talk about the Pabuji tradition and its worship practices, in particular the status presently claimed by the *mātā* players.

Bhopa, one of the titles the *mātā*-players use to identify themselves as the priestly performers of Pabuji's epic, is most commonly used as a title for religious specialists from different backgrounds.[510] In Rajasthan, in general, the title "Bhopa" is used most as a designation for priests, healers, mediums and other esoteric specialists who perform curative rituals, and channel the soul of deceased warriors or other wandering spirits. Bhopas render religious services to many groups including Rajput, Bhil, Charan, Rebari and Bhat.[511] Anthropological studies of contemporary Bhopa traditions make clear that their epic performances and worship practices are part of trance traditions that serve to channel the souls of forefathers and other (semi) divine beings. In Rajasthan, spirit possession is generally referred to as *chāyā* or *bhāv āṇo*, when the "shadow", "sensation" or "feeling" of a spirit's or

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[510] Bhopa is at times also defined as an "honorific cognomen" especially used for Bhil Bhopas (Lalas: 1962-1988) or as a derogative term.

[511] We can further distinguish between the occupational traits and patrons of different Bhopas. Thus, the *mātā* Bhopas, patronized by Rajput priests and other devotees of Pabuji, perform episodes of Pabuji's epic accompanied by drums. The *paṛ* Bhopas, chiefly patronized by Rebari and Rajput devotees of Pabuji, perform the epic in front of a story-cloth (*paṛ*) to the tune of string-instrument.

god's presence overwhelms a medium. In Gujarat, the present Bhopas of the Rebari of Kacch render their title as "the one through whom the goddess speaks" (Frater 1989: 96). Spirits are thought to have many forms. The Rebari ascetic and Bhil Bhopa mediums, who today live in the Aravallis, are known to feel the presence of different kinds of divine beings, including folk-gods, goddesses, and spirits and ghosts like Jhumjhars, Bhomiyas and Mamas.[512] Such otherworldly beings are not solely made up of family-spirits but are also believed to be the souls of warriors who (like Pabuji) died a violent death, most often in the course of protecting cattle against robbers. The latter class of beings is worshipped by people from many different social groups within one village or region.

All the aforementioned spirits have one thing in common: they cannot find peace after death and need to be appeased through worship by Bhopas. Especially those spirits who are believed to be malevolent and set on haunting a person, family or village need to be pacified in this way. When properly worshipped, by singing or re-enacting a warrior's heroic deeds, his spirits, it is believed, can be assuaged and may become a benign being who can manifest itself to or in a Bhopa and may help finding solutions for his devotees' problems, by answering questions or assisting in cures through a medium. In this way, Kothari (1989: 104, 110) proposes, the worship of dead ancestors and/or warriors can be connected over time to traditions centred on the worship of folk-gods like Pabuji's and, accordingly, defines Pabuji's epic as an elaboration of a Bhomiya story, which is performed to appease the warrior's spirit.[513]

It seems, however, that the curative function of the Kolu *mātā* epic performance is no longer connected to a trance tradition, since the *mātā* players are rather uncommunicative about this aspect of the contemporary Pabuji tradition. In the past, they say, some *mātā* players used to experience the *chāyā* (shadow) of their medieval Thori forefathers, usually when the Rajput temple priests donated meals to the *mātā* players in Pabuji's name to commemorate the battle that the seven Thori and their marriage parties waged at Pabuji's side. Today, the *mātā* players are still ritually feasted at the temple but no longer practise possession as part of this ceremony. The Ram brothers define their *mātā* performance chiefly as a summons or a prayer, a way to obtain Pabuji's blessings and secure his help and protection or to enlist Pabuji's assistance in healing sick people and animals, not through trance, but through performance. The Bhopas do, however, continue to quote stories about the Thori who, with Deval's help, brought Pabuji and his mare down from heaven by playing the *mātā*s. This story underlines the special qualities attributed to the *mātā*s and commemorates how the first *mātā*s were made according to the instructions of the goddess Deval, and it also brings to mind trance traditions like those of the Gujarati Bharwo who hold that the goddess Sawan *Mātā* had their magical trance-

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[512] Kothari (1989: 109f), in addition, also distinguishes Pitras and Pitranis (malicious family-spirits).

[513] Srivastava (1994: 70f) describes forefather worship and "shamanic" rituals of trance as part of the Rebari Bhopa tradition and links these customs to Pabuji's cult.

inducing drums made for them (cf. Werz-Kovacs 1984: 138, 152). When asked about the meaning of these stories, the *mātā* players emphasized that it is not the practice of trance that their stories document but the above-mentioned ritual function of playing the *mātā*s to gain Pabuji's attention and blessings by performing his *paravāṛau*s and thus bringing Pabuji down to earth in an altogether symbolic sense.

### *Animal sacrifice*

It is my feeling that the Bhopa's reservation when talking about past rituals of possession is rather understandable when seen in the light of present-day definitions of what "pure" "mainstream" Hinduism is considered to be. This feeling was strengthened by the answers elicited by questions about ritual animal sacrifices at Kolu. While, I was told, buffaloes and goats used to be sacrificed to Pabuji at the Kolu temple "a long time ago", now (it was made very clear to me) this ritual is no longer part of the ceremonies conducted by Pabuji's Rajput priests. Though *mātā* players and other Bhil devotees do continue to sacrifice goats in front of the shrines of their Thori ancestors, this practice appears to be an exclusively Bhil affair. During the ritual, the Rajput priests are careful not to "offend Pabuji's sensibilities" by hanging a cloth in front of Pabuji's temples' entrances before the Bhil Bhopas lead a sacrificial goat into the temple. And though Bhil Bhopas are still allowed to bring a living goat into the temple compound and lead it in front of the Thori shrines to ascertain whether their forefathers will accept the offering, the Bhil are not allowed to slaughter the animal inside the temple courtyard.[514]

During discussions about trance traditions, animal sacrifice and the position of formerly untouchables like Meghwals in Kolu, people emphasized that the Bhil *mātā* players are part of a "pure" community, on a par with Rajput warriors but, all the same, a separate community, and not of Rajput parentage. The *mātā* players' main patron, Tulsi Singh Rathaur, also brought up the Bhil's prolonged association with Pabuji as his chosen performers, the only ones who may play the *mātā* and sing Pabuji's epic. He explicitly portrayed the Bhil as Hindus, thus further advancing the Bhil's ritually pure status, by recounting how Pabuji saved the Thori, who were very poor and open to conversion, from becoming Muslim by enlisting them in his army. Ever since, it is said, the Bhil of Marwar remained within the folds of Hinduism. The Rajput priests also underscored the comparatively high status ascribed to present-day Bhil and their Thori forefathers by referring to them as a very loyal and

[514] If a goat (or in earlier days, a buffalo) begins to shiver in front of the Thori shrines, it is taken to mean that the Thori accept it as an offering and the animal is slaughtered. Wetsphall-Helbusch (1974: 181) has also remarked on this custom and describes how Charan graziers used to only sacrifice those goats which started trembling in front of the altar or bulls who pointed their head in the direction of the altar, as a sign that they were accepted by the goddess.

brave people (*wafadara kaum*) who at times matched their Rajput patron's bravery and martial prowess.[515]

The stress put on the status ascribed to Bhil Bhopas by Rajput priests perhaps served to avoid association with unwelcome aspects of devotional practices in Kolu, in particular traditions of trance and animal sacrifice. It proved difficult to ascertain since when these aspects of Pabuji worship were disassociated from the contemporary cult. Though the "purification" of Shaktik and Tantric sacrificial rites in Rajasthan is commonly dated to early medieval times, when Jains started preaching the sacredness of all life, the reported practice of contemporary animal sacrifice in Rajasthan does suggest that not all social groups were swayed by Jain ideals, whether in the past or in more recent times (cf. Dominique-Sila Khan 2003: 15). Perhaps the attempts to standardize or "purify" Pabuji's cult can best be dated to nineteenth-century attempts at defining a homogenous, communal Hindu identity as a means to politically mobilise Hindus and thus gain access to power and economic resources.[516] Or maybe the attempts of some of Pabuji's devotees to secure a "mainstream" Hindu image for his cult are inspired by contemporary Hindu nationalist politics as propagated by the Bharatiya Janta Party in Rajasthan (cf. Tambs-Lyche 1997: 127). Though I have not been able to study this aspect of contemporary identity politics in any detail, I do think that the "cleansing" of the cult can be dated to historically rather recent times considering the fact that the ritual sacrifice of goats is still practiced in Kolu, even if it is not officially approved of by some Rajput priests.

Present-day ambitions to become part of "mainstream Hinduism" which seem to account for current efforts to sever connections between Pabuji worship and aspects of forefather' worship by Bhil Bhopas, perhaps also help in explaining the nearly complete absence of iconography or devotional practices dedicated to Shakti or Charani goddesses and the hesitation with which some priests talked about Jhararo-Rupnath's worship by Kanpathi Nath yogis in Kolu and at Rupnath's open-air altar. The relative dearth of evidence for the worship of Shakti or Charani Sagatis at the Kolu temple seems all the more remarkable since, in the present-day *mātā* epic, Deval has been accorded an important role. Today's definition of mainstream Hinduism evidently does not combine very well with the non-vegetarian image and association of some Shakti and Nath cults with animal sacrifices, meat-eating, eroticism and the use of opium and alcohol. But the enthusiasm displayed for the new imago seems rather lukewarm. Even the move away from animal sacrifices as practised by Bhil Bhopas, by putting up a cloth in front of Pabuji's temple to allow him to "close his eyes" to the sacrifice, does appear rather half-hearted and more

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[515] This point was further supported by equating the seven Thori warriors in Pabuji's retinue with the seventeen Samat (warrior-heroes) who are believed to have fought at the side of the renowned Rajput ruler Prithvi Raj.

[516] Peabody (2001: 819f) argues that the enumeration of group identities, "in which caste defined the privileged "site" for articulating data on people" became of prime importance for identity politics as part of the strategies of colonial rule during the 1860s and 1870s, a period of "high colonialism".

inspired by keeping up outward appearances than by any fundamental understanding of, or adherence to, the concept of ritual purity. Likewise, the "banishing" of the worship of the goddess or images of Charani Deval, if that is indeed what happened, also has a rather laissez-faire feeling to it since Deval continues to be worshipped by the Bhopas through the performance of their *mātā* epic. Besides, the goddess's trident is still worshipped at the temple altar where it has been given a place among Pabuji's hero stones.

### *Rival codes*

The various beliefs, architectural forms, worship practices and attributed meanings that exist side-by-side in Kolu reflect different self-images which give rise to different perceptions of the divine, but are, nevertheless, all part of similar attempts made by different people in different times to enhance their status. As Tulsi Singh Rathaur put forward, all the different stories about Pabuji constitute different "truths". Socio-political circumstances do, of course, determine the amount of truth or authority people claim for and/or ascribe to a tradition, characterising one strand of worship as more true (or some practices as purer) than others. This is underlined by the apparent frictions between, for instance, Bhil Bhopa sacrificial rites and the way some Rajput devotees and priests value these rites. But, as the somewhat awkward, at least when seen from outside, co-existence of Rajput, Bhil, Shaktik and Nath forms of worship in Kolu illustrates how different strands of worship do, all the same, continue to exist alongside each other. Thus, the history of the Pabuji tradition and its present-day practices, like Charani Sagati cults, can best be seen as resulting from "several competing principles of organisation" or rival codes forwarded by different groups, in different socio-political, religious and historical circumstances (cf. Peabody 2003: 78-79). By seeing this process as an ongoing battle of words, a battle which is never wholly settled but which continues to enhance long-established and at times "new" identities, it becomes easier to appraise how the different medieval and contemporary genres of the Pabuji tradition took shape by assuming various narrative and stylistic features. As I will argue in the next and last chapter of this study, this is a process which is best gauged by looking at the importance attributed by the poets to the different protagonists of the medieval as well as the contemporary traditions.

*Abandoned well with an undated hero stone dedicated to Pabuji and one of his Bhil archers (Kolu* oṛhaṇ*).*

# 10 By Way of Conclusion

In praising the battle deaths of warriors, the poets of the Pabuji tradition sought to portray the life-enhancing aspect of the warriors' deaths by evoking their sacrifice as a way to ensure the continuation of cosmic and societal orders. The poets evoked the sacrifice of one's life to safeguard collective ideals as a way to achieve worldly and spiritual goals. Among worldly goals, the protection of cattle and the continuation of warrior lineages were prominent, while the maintenance of the equilibrium between the worlds of men and gods inspired spiritual goals. The poets of Charani Sagati traditions were also inspired by sacrifial ideals, in particular the (threats) of self-mutilation or self-inflicted death by Charan women and men. In both the Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions, Shaktik ideals were important sources of inspiration, for the poetic ideals of sacrifice found expression in depictions of death as an oblation to one of the many forms of the Goddess, including Mother Earth, her scavenging creatures, Shakti, Durga, battle-loving Yoginis, Rupanis and Charani Sagatis like Deval.

Ideals of sacrificial heroism are at the heart of the medieval poets' descriptions of Pabuji's battles over cattle, his death and (when mentioned) his deification in most of the studied poems. However, the medieval poets evoked these narrative themes (battle over cattle, death and deification) in dissimilar ways, and the themes do not occur in all poems in the order listed just now. It has become apparent that death and deification do not always represent twin themes in poetry dedicated to Pabuji and I have argued that Pabuji's deification should not be thought of as the result of a sequential development of narrative as has been summarized in this study's introduction. My study of the different poems dedicated to Pabuji does not give reason to think that narratives about the hero's deification, which did begin with local stories about the death of this small-time Rathaur hero, subsequently developed into tales about a deified forefather. Nor have I found evidence to suggest that tales about forefathers evolved to become regional tales of epic stature by accentuating Pabuji's divinity and (on a supra-regional level) his classical *avatār* status that links him to Lakshman. The study of the narrative content of medieval and contemporary poetry about Pabuji's divinization suggests that the ascription of divinity is a process that does not necessarily follow a sequential order beginning with the glorification of a historical warrior and steadily progressing via the worship of forefathers and the elevation to the status of local godling to the regional recognition of a warrior-hero like Pabuji as the incarnation of a classical hero-god or of Vishnu.

This study documents that Pabuji has been delineated as a martial *and* divine hero, a deified forefather *and* a godling *and* (possibly) an incarnation of Vishnu in different texts from different periods of time but *also* in one and the same

composition. Another reason why I do not think of Pabuji's deification as the result of a sequential process represented as a narrative pattern of the "violation-death-deification-revenge" type is that Dhamdhal Rathaur history indicates that not all warriors, who die in the course of protecting cattle, are subsequently deified. Unlike Pabuji, his forefathers and contemporaries have not been ascribed divinity or even semi-divine qualities, although they are believed to have died a similar death as did Pabuji. A further indication that deification is not always the result of a sequential narrative process is Charani Deval's indeterminate role as a cattle keeper *and* horse trader *and* Shakti *and* Charani Sagati *and* an unnamed goddess in *duha* I.

The clearest example of the non-sequential or inclusive way in which Pabuji has been accorded divinity can be found in *duha* I and the medieval *parvaro* in which three different aspects of deification have been united; first, the warrior's elevation to semi-divine status; second, his worship as a deified forefather and godling; and third, the suggestion of the medieval beginnings of *avatār*-linkage as can be read (though rather inconclusively) from the narrative link made between Pabuji and Vishnu in *duha* I. The parallel occurrence of these different forms of deification can also be understood from the roles ascribed to Pabuji's Bhil companions or to Charan women like Deval. The study of today's worship practices at the Pabuji temple in Kolu further exemplifies that different forms of deification do not necessarily progress in a sequential manner, but can exist side by side as is shown by the contemporary worship of Pabuji's Bhil comrades-in-arms that includes forefather worship and *avatār*-linkage with classical gods through the depiction of the Bhil warriors Camda and Dhembo as (respectively) Ram's younger brothers Bharat and Shatrughan.

The deification of the medieval Bhil archers has not been recorded in the medieval sources studied by me and I am not sure whether *avatār*-linkage between the brothers Camda-Dhembo and Bharat-Shatrughan should be seen as a relatively recent occurrence or whether this kind of identification also occurred in medieval times. Either way, it is clear that both forms of deification can exist alongside each other in the contemporary and medieval tradition and that forefather worship is not a form of deification that inevitably precedes *avatār*-linkage as an earlier stage. Put differently, even if forefather worship can be shown to be earlier in time than *avatār*-linkage, this does not mean that one form of deification arises from another, nor does it rule out the continued, parallel existence of other forms of deification.

In addition, I have also not come across reasons to imagine that different stages of deification are "effected" (in narrative terms) through different genres acquiring distinct forms as a local battle-death story gains a wider geographical spread. The medieval manuscript poems studied here do not substantiate the idea that shorter compositions were part of an earlier tradition of heroic or praise poetry from which longer "truly epic" genres developed. This study does show that the medieval manuscript tradition contained poems with different narratives, plots,

imagery, length and functions that were preserved (and continue to exist) alongside each other just as different forms of deification did (and do).

Changes in the narrative content of poetry dedicated to Pabuji and Charani Sagatis are best understood, as I hope to have shown in the second part of this thesis (chapters 6 to 9), by studying the socio-political and religious history of the Charan and Bhil communities who transmit poems and stories about Pabuji and Charani Sagatis and not as the result of poets changing their stories to appeal to regionally larger and socially more diversified audiences (as Blackburn put forward) nor (as Hiltebeitel proposes) because a story about the hero of a particular caste community can travel as long as his caste identity remains the same (cf. chapter 1). While it is evident that stories do indeed "travel", it seems to me that such journeys do not represent phases in time or refer to geographical travels of "caste" communities, in that the stories' journeys did not start at clearly marked beginnings to arrive at easily identifiable destinations. As I shall argue in more detail below, the journeys of medieval story-telling communities did not stick to "straight and narrow roads", and neither did the history of their identities or the literary history of the poetic and prose genres that are part of their narrative traditions.

### *Desert tradition*

The Rajput and Bhil protagonist of the studied poems bring to mind the quintessential early-medieval warrior: the itinerant young man on a horse armed with a spear, sword and/or bow-and-arrows and waging "wars" best described as small-scale battles set off by cattle looting expeditions that resulted in battles over the possession of cows, horses and camels. Early medieval history makes clear that this kind of men was not only the protagonist of heroic-epic poetry, but also figured in recurring semi-historical prose stories about fights over the ownership of cattle, in particular cows, camels and horses. The poets of the Pabuji tradition spoke to their medieval audiences of a very local, at times regional martial tradition of Rathaur, Khici and Bhil warriors. This was not a rural tradition of armed peasant classes which made up the greater part of regional war bands and armies in medieval North India. The studied compositions bring to mind yet another, comparable tradition, one which I have come to think of as a "desert tradition", part of the world of pastoral-nomadic peoples of the Great Indian Desert, including graziers, warriors, poets and traders. An important concern of these peoples was the protection of their "mobile wealth", the cows, camels and horses, and this is also the foremost narrative concern of the selected poems. The main cause for the conflict between the Dhamdhal and Khici lineages was the theft of cattle.

The poets gave voice to the identity and ideals of medieval warriors who prided themselves on the achieved (rather than ascribed) status of Rajput, an enterprise which, I feel, was based on the politics and martial ethics inspired by the worldview and survival strategy of mobile peoples even in late-medieval times when

Rajput history is more commonly depicted in terms landed rights, agricultural produce and revenue, irrigation and the gift of land in dowry to seal territorial bonds between Rajput brotherhoods. In this respect, the studied poetic sources and my overview of what little is known about the history of the three major communities bound up in Pabuji's story (Bhil, Charan and Rajput protagonists) highlight a not often recognized aspect of the history of the western desert regions. Though it is evident that the poets also saw Pabuji and some of his fellow-protagonists as noble warriors and kings (the protectors of the earth), poetic references to territorial rights are scant. Pabuji, his Bhil and Rajput warriors (and Charani Sagatis too) are primarily portrayed as engaged in pastoral-nomadic concerns: the protection (and theft) of cattle.

The selected poetic *and* the consulted prose sources pertaining to Dhamdhal Rathaur, Bhil and Charan history remain rather silent on subjects that could be thought of as typical of the lives of settled farmer communities (agricultural revenue, farm products and animals, and irrigation). Even the occurrence of a well in *duha* I, one of the few instances that could be understood as resulting from an agricultural concern with the irrigation of land and the growing of crops in the desert, also refers to a pastoral-nomadic setting: it is mentioned in the context of Deval's demand upon Pabuji to water her thirsting cows. Cattle as a narrative theme also underlies the depiction of the troublesome kinship and marriage relations in the seventeenth-century *duha* I. It is the battle over cattle that gives rise to family feuds and the breakdown of dowry negotiations. The enmity between the Dhamdhal and Khici warriors in *duha* I, for example, are related to Buro's theft of Khici cattle and Pabuji's refusal to gift his horse in dowry. Moreover, the one time that a poet expressly speaks of "Kshatriya dharma" (in *git* I) he defines it in terms of the protection of cattle and not as a warrior's struggle over landed rights or the protection of a kingdom.

### *Medieval identity politics*

Pastoral-nomadic interests form a thematic thread binding together all the studied poems. It is probably the shared pastoral-nomadic history of variegated desert communities that best explains why open, achieved warrior identities have long remained (and to a certain extent still remain) at the heart of not only Rajput identity but also of Charan and Bhil identity in medieval Marwar and (to a more limited extent) in contemporary Marwar too. Even in late medieval times, when Rajput identity is thought to have become less open (i.e. more clearly delimited as to who could call himself a Rajput), even during this period, the roles and ranks ascribed to Pabuji and his companions continue to reflect a wide range of meanings and (self) perceptions, comparable to the way in which early-medieval Rajput status was ascribed. I feel that it is this aspect of the historical and poetic identities of the people who transmit Pabuji's story and traditions about Charani Sagatis like Deval

that is most evocative when it comes to answering a few of the historical and literary-historical questions posed.

My review of the history of the socio-political and religious backgrounds, and of the geographic scope of Bhil and Charan identities, suggests that these used to resemble early-medieval Rajputhood in that they also may be thought of as open identities which could be achieved by people from different backgrounds engaged in a variety of pastoral-nomadic trades and occupations. The many different tales of geographical and mythical origins, myth-histories and readings connected with Bhil, Charan and Rajput identities united communities with different backgrounds, including different religious backgrounds (Hindu and Muslim Charan clans) and martial, commercial, poetic and occupations like warrior, poet, protector of cattle (and cattle rustler), cattle and wool trader, graziers, caravan guides, messengers, visionaries and religious gurus as well as other ritual specialist.

The poets' portrayal of the religious roles accorded to Charan, Rajput and Bhil devotees of Pabuji and the goddess in the first place served to negotiate socio-political power relations, in particular the relation between Rajput warriors, Bhil warriors and retainers, and Charan keepers of herds. As discussed in chapters 6, 7 and 8, power relations in medieval Marwar have been most commonly portrayed in terms of competing claims to ritual and socio-political superiority leading to assertions of dominance and conflicting communal identities. A process that has in many instances led to the criminalisation of communities who did not accept assertions of pre-eminence and authority as forwarded by courtly Charan poets, Rajput ruling lineages, Mughal sovereigns or British colonial administrators. My study of the claims and counter-claims which constituted medieval "identity politics" also indicates that assertions of elite Rajput and Charan identities as forwarded by royal Rajput lineages and Charan court poets did serve as a touchstone of status in medieval times, i.e. as a way to appraise the status of individuals and communities and gauge their eminence vis-à-vis other communities and their consigned place in the medieval hierarchy.

The studied identities did not, however, function solely to define "in-groups" versus "out-groups" or the relative status of a community vis-à-vis another community. Yet another, to my mind, key aspect of Bhil, Charan and Rajput identities are the metaphorical kinship relations voiced through poetry and myth-history that bound together different communities. The poetry and stories dedicated to Pabuji and Charani Sagatis indicate that fictive kinship ties may have been as important an aspect of medieval identity politics as were factual kinship relations. The Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions bring together a plethora of peoples including Ahir, Charan, Rajput, Rebari, Bharvad, Bhil, Khati, Nath, Baniya, Meghwal, Dedh, Gosain, Muslim and Sufi devotees. In symbolic terms, kinship terminology served to integrate (but not assimilate) different peoples from different places and with different occupational identities into a loosely unified collectivity or "desert community" bound together primarily by the worship of deified forefathers

(Jumjhars), symbolic fathers (Rajput warriors and rulers) and mothers (nymphs, different forms of Shakti, Charani Sagatis and Kuladevis).

The extension of kinship terminology to socio-political and economic relations of dependency among communities defined these relations in terms of parental and sibling roles, maternal and paternal connections or marital bonds. Sagatis were worshipped as the "foremothers" of several Charan lineages and Charani Sagati worship also inspired the shared origin tales of many other desert communities, thus symbolically binding together different stock-rearing and grazier communities as well, in particular the Ahir, Bharvad, Kathi and Rebari. By tracing back their lineages to the offspring of two Charan men who are believed to have been created by Parvati, these communities came to conceive of each other as mythical siblings. The Ahir and Kathi, the grazier communities that are considered the oldest among the different desert inhabitants, are at times also thought of as the offspring of Sagati Avar's father or brother, and are therefore looked upon as the uncles ("Mama" or mother's brother) of some Charan communities. Rajput-Charan interaction is also defined in terms of metaphoric sibling relations, for Charan women were thought to be the sisters of Rajput men. And Charani Sagatis who became the Kuladevis of royal Rajput lineages fulfilled a protective motherly role which, interestingly, was also a martial role: one that evoked the warlike aspect of the nurturing role ascribed to mothers by showing up the Sagatis' warlike qualities and their willingness to give their lives in battle to protect their "children".

The study of the medieval Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions suggests that it is the inclusiveness of their stories which best explains their medieval and continuing appeal to many different audiences since their tales take account of the myths and histories of a broad spectrum of communities and their diverse religious affiliations. I do not mean to suggest that metaphoric kinship ruled out conflicts and rival interpretations of the past or rival claims to pre-eminence forwarded by different groups. We have seen that kinship ties not only stand for interpersonal relations of dependency and protection but, similar to actual kith and kin relations, also prompted arguments over one's position in relation to other family members, as when sons aim to outshine their fathers, a mother's preference triggers sibling rivalry or the loyalty of wives to their own family is construed as treason (like in *duha* I). In spite of the problematic character that relations of dependency and protection may have had, these relations were (and continue to be) the other main reason for the appeal engendered by the Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions. The metaphoric family ties which these traditions spawn give voice to reciprocal relations of dependency between the different communities who need each other to survive in the harsh desert environment especially when journeying along desert routes, facing cattle robbers and war, oppressive taxes and, during times of drought, thirst and hunger, fodder scarcity, cattle diseases, human illnesses and death. This mutual dependence can be read from tales about Pabuji's protection of Charan cattle. It can also be read from the Charani Sagati traditions, in particular from stories

which recount how Charan men and women helped caravans and armies to survive in the desert by offering guidance and protection against robbers and by miraculously making food and water available. As we have seen, Pabuji has also been credited with providing water. The poet of the medieval *parvaro* describes how Pabuji subjugated a demon in a well to water Deval's cows.

### *Charan and Brahmin*

The story-telling traditions of the various communities which were part of the above-described "identity building project" included different gods, goddesses and worship practices centred around local and regional traditions, and did not necessarily include classical (in the sense of Puranic or Brahminical) perceptions of the divine, the forms it can take and the socio-religious roles it inspires. The poets' choice of words studied in chapter 6 indicates that there existed a Marwari "poetic and political grammar" that did not even include the word "Rajput", even though the poets did clearly think of Pabuji as a Rajput or "prince" (the son of King Dhamdhal). Yet, the poets described Pabuji and other warrior protagonist first and foremost in terms evocative of local history, that is, as the scion of the ruling Rathaur or Kherecau lineage. Similarly, the portrayal of the Bhil warriors as Paradhi, Samvala, Thori, and so forth also indicates that local definitions of warriorhood were the poets' primary frame of reference. Likewise, the poets of the Pabuji tradition also did not seem to have felt the need to refer to Rajput warrior as Kshatriya. As I have tried to document, the poets did not use Kshatriyahood as a frame of reference for describing warriors (except in *git* II, defining Kshatriya *dharma* in terms of the protection of cattle). The lack of references to Kshatriyahood seems all the more significant in the context of theories about the use of the Agnikul myth to define Rajput claims to royal blood and landed status in Brahminical terms.

I have interpreted the relative lack of this kind of poetic references as an indication that the Agnikul myth was not a major source of inspiration for the poets of the Pabuji tradition. This does not imply, of course, that classical or Brahminical values had no part to play in the history of the region. The themes which are part of different versions of the Agnikul myth (like the defeat of enemies, cow theft, retaliatory sacrifice and divine assistance offered by different gods) can be read from the Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions, in particular from references to the Goddess's Puranic form and to Charani goddesses as the personifications of Durga. Themes shared with Agnikul myths are also apparent from the way in which Charani goddesses came to be seen as Rajput clan goddesses and the protectors of Rajput realms. Such narrative concerns suggest a literary-historical relation with the Agnikul myth. It has, on the other hand, also become clear that such themes were not a primary concern of the studied story-telling traditions since they figured as one of many different concerns, which did not all represent classical themes traceable to pre-twelfth century South Indian versions of the Agnikul myth. Apart from Charan

and Rajput myth-histories, the religiously inspired imagery of the Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions also accommodates the mythical histories of the Baluchi, Bhil, Nath and Sufi pastoral-nomadic communities of western Rajasthan, Kacch, Sindh and Baluchistan. Thus, the Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions accommodate stories from regions like Baluchistan (and perhaps further west) that were far beyond the reach of classical Hindu traditions.

### *Narrative development*

Along with the many different communities, stories indeed did travel. In trying to trace the paths story-telling traditions may have taken in medieval Marwar and in trying to see the way in which these stories continue upon different journeys in contemporary Rajasthan, I feel that "travel" indeed serves as an evocative metaphor to understand the narrative development of Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions. One of the central themes of the history of the different kinds of warriors, poets, graziers and traders of the Great Indian Desert consists, after all, of their travels. The history of the development of the different story-telling traditions, including prose and narrative poetry, reflects the different journeys people undertook. However, the stories' journeys should not be represented as an orderly, straightforward development or route fitting chronological frameworks or developmental "paths" represented in terms of a linear journey from A to B; from one village or region to another. Like the travels of mobile communities of the Great Indian Desert, medieval narrative development may be thought of as a flexible, interweaving and crisscrossing process through which stories changed in content and form as they moved along straight or circular migratory routes between Baluchistan, Sindh, Gujarat and Marwar and perhaps further on journeys to South India, Central Asia and eastern regions. Other stories may have followed linear routes to and from Marwar travelling with communities during seasonal journeys or permanent migrations to the more fertile Indus delta in the west in search of fodder for their animals. Yet other stories may have returned to their point of departure unaltered. And who knows how many stories or story elements fell along the roadside or were lost among the sand dunes or crossed a point of no return, perhaps continuing west beyond Baluchistan.

Along the desert routes, many different kinds of travelers met, journeyed together for a while, parted ways, settled down in new regions for shorter or longer periods of time, traded with each other, grazed and watered their cattle, and engaged in battles. On their various ways, some traveller's progress was thwarted by bands of warriors and thieves, while others perished of thirst trying to reach their destination and yet others took detours to find alternative routes. It is in the course of these travels that legendary and historical details were added to stories, story-lines altered and new story-lines invented including protagonists with different social and religious backgrounds and from different geographical regions. Such an appraisal of

the narrative development of story-telling traditions in the desert also makes it somewhat easier to perceive why so many different poetic forms have become part of the Pabuji tradition, and why different historical functions, including religious, ritual and martial functions, can be ascribed to them. Like narrative variations, differences in prosodic form may also be seen as the result of the mobile lifestyle of pastoral-nomadic poets inspiring distinct genres that existed side by side. The study of the Pabuji tradition suggests as much in that the medieval manuscript versions of the poems represent different prosodic structures that all became part of Marwar's manuscript tradition and continue to inspire contemporary poems dedicated to Pabuji. The ongoing diffusion of Pabuji's story clearly bears out how different oral and written genres continue to be juxtaposed and exist side-by-side like *mātā* and *paṛ* epic performances, short and long compositions of narrative poetry, devotional songs, explanatory prose stories, modern plays and poems, and so forth.

My assessment of the mobile aspect of the history of Charan, Bhil and (to some extent) Rajput communities also enables us to look afresh at some aspects of Pabuji's divinization. It is because so many different communities became part of what I think was a "desert community", that the Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions came to accommodate many different themes including narrative elements traceable to local Jumjhar cults, Bhil Bhopa devotional practices, Shakti, Shaiva, Vaishnava and Charani Sagati worship and stories about the Nath guru Gorakhnath and Sufi pilgrimage to Hinglaj's shrine. Several of the men and women (Pabuji, his Bhil archers and Charani Deval) to whom divine status was ascribed in the studied poetic sources were thought of as fathers and mothers, like the deified warriors who have been cast in a protective, fatherly role or in the role of husbands of the earth. Charani women like Deval were commonly portrayed as the legendary or historical foremothers to whom different communities trace their origins. It is this aspect of the Pabuji and Charani traditions which, I would like to suggest, may have served as the main source of inspiration for the different ways in which divinity was ascribed to Pabuji and Charani Sagatis. The clearest instance of this purpose of deification is of course the portrayal in the contemporary *byāva rau paravāṛau* of the Bhil archers Camda and Dhembo as the embodiment of Bharat and Shatrughan, rendering them Pabuji-Lakhsman's mythical blood relations.

### *Caste*

Metaphoric kinship ties enabled various desert communities to give shape to relations of socio-political, religious and economic dependence in terms of interpersonal relations. This finding is of special interest if seen in the context of the confusion that arises when communal identities are described primarily in terms of caste and conceived of as fixed, ascribed and exclusive identities. As this study illustrates, thinking of Bhil, Charan and Rajput identities in terms of caste proves to be a considerable barrier in trying to come to a more even-handed interpretation of

their past since it inspires a dichotomous understanding of identities conceived of as excluding or even negating each other. It is this way of viewing medieval pastoral-nomadic identities that gives rise to questions as to whether Charan status resembled the rank of Brahmin or Rajput; whether warriors can be priests; whether poets can perform ritual tasks; whether graziers can compose poetry; and whether heroes can be robbers (or vice versa, whether robbers can be heroes). In order not to complicate the issues at hand, I have consciously avoided the use of the term "caste" and instead referred to group, community or occupational identities. But it is, of course, not possible to really steer clear of the five-letter word when writing about the history of Hindu communities.

Caste was an important tenet of socio-political organisation in medieval Marwar and continues to be important (apparently becoming more and more so) in the region today. However, by not using caste as an explanatory tool, it has become possible to reflect on several aspects of medieval identity politics that did not refer primarily to exclusive caste-like identities. The poets of the Pabuji and Charani Sagati traditions praised their protagonists and versified their deeds without referring to issues traditionally associated with caste like ritual purity and impurity, endogamy, the eminence attributed to Brahmin communities and the classification of Rajput identity as a caste of warriors (Kshatriya). In again emphasizing this aspect of the traditions, I do not mean to imply that Bhil, Charan and Rajput identities were at no stage of the described histories commensurate with caste. It does, on the other hand, seem to me that this study highlights that caste was not as important a framework as constructions of royal Rajput caste status would have us believe. The same can be remarked about descriptions of Bhil, Charan and Rajput caste identities in administrative colonial sources, including the travelogues consulted by me and written by British, French and other European travellers on yet other journeys through the western desert regions.

To conclude this final chapter, I would like to briefly consider another question which has presented itself in the course of writing this thesis, i.e. whose voice, among all those voices recorded, should one ascribe most importance to? Which claims to being heard do we honour, to which self-perceptions do we ascribe historical significance or "truth"? It seems to me that the studied stories represent "best" and "right" interpretations of the past in different contexts. For, as the priest of the Kolu temple, Tulsi Singh Rathaur, has been quoted as saying in chapter 9: the Pabuji tradition has room for tales reflecting different interpretations of their shared past by different communities. Such interpretations should be evaluated according to who tells a story and the different (not necessarily defined as oppositional) truths individuals and communities would like to forward. Against this background, I imagine that the mythical Kshatriya status ascribed to ruling Rajput lineages was forwarded in very specific contexts, i.e. when a ruler felt the need to enhance his position vis-à-vis Rajput men of equal rank or when brotherhoods aimed at countering competing assertions to status by other royal Rajput lineages or Mughal

and British competitors to regional power. In relation to Mughal and British constructs to legitimize their sway, Rajput rulers must have found it effective to communicate their claims to status by presenting themselves as noble warriors, descendants of an ancient lineage of Kshatriya warriors. However, the achieved, inclusive identities described in this study would have been more effective in altogether different settings: when Bhil, Charan, Rajput and other desert communities attempted to define power relations amongst themselves by calling upon symbolic or real kinship ties. It seems to me that this is the reason why inclusive identities remained important throughout the medieval period (and to a certain extent, up to the present day) in particular in the desert areas where the different communities long remained dependent upon each other for survival. The history of royal Rajput patronage of Pabuji's temple in Kolu and tales about Charani Sagatis suggest that Rajput royalty also aimed to justify its ruling aspirations by referring to the achieved, inclusive identities lionized in poems dedicated to Pabuji and Charani goddesses. This must have amounted to a sound political strategy since local Rajput rulers would have been able to garner much more popular support by building temples to local warrior-gods like Pabuji and by adopting Charani goddesses as their guardian deities than by summoning Kshatriya status and classical traditions to authenticate their rule.

# APPENDIX

## Academic Transliterations

# Transliterative Standards

For the sake of convenience I partially repeat my description of the transliterative standards in chapter 2 below. If the academic transliteration of annotative or orthographic problems is restricted to one particular manuscript they are remarked upon in footnotes to each manuscript.

If the gist of a word or verse-line remains unclear, because the writing is blotched, or because a letter is hard to decipher or could be read in different ways, I offer the transliteration[517] of alternative possibilities in the footnotes. In the transliteration of primary sources I not quote the mute or inherent "a" at the end of words. Within all transliterated words, the mute "a" is retained throughout. I do not employ capital letters at the beginnings of verse-lines nor for the names of people or gods, place names, and so forth, thus reflecting the nonexistence of capital letters in the studied texts. I also do not follow the scribes' numbering of the manuscript poems since most poets employed irregular or nonexistent numbering. Instead, all manuscript poetry has been re-numbered per verse-line.

In trying to keep my transliteration of the selected manuscripts as factual as possible, I remark on words and letters which the poets inserted or crossed out and note blotched letters or words in the footnotes to my transliterations. I transliterate Dimgal and contemporary Rajasthani texts according to their spelling as documented by the studied manuscript and oral sources. Variant spelling practices in different manuscripts are noted as are the different notations and spellings encountered within one manuscript. Apart from difficulties arising from different and/or unclear notations or blotched handwritings, complications also surface because of the different spellings that the scribes employed for one word, at times in one sentence; like the scribe and/or poet of *chamd* II (v. 5-6), who spelled: *jhagajheṭhī*, *jhagajaiṭhī* amd *jagajheṭhī* and *jagajeṭhī*. I have tried to keep to the spelling as noted down in the medieval sources and to represent non-standardized notations and spellings inspired by different chirographic practices and metrical needs. When in doubt, I refer to Subh Karan Deval's transliteration of a word or to Shekavat's (1968: 25) publication of a version of *gīta pābū dhāṃdhaḷauta rāṭhauṛa rau* and N.S. Bhati's (1973: 78-85) Hindi text editions of manuscript versions of *duha* I, the *parvaro* and poems published by him (*git* III, *git* IV and *git* V).

The fact that more than a few manuscripts are rather blotched and that some manuscripts appear to have been written over an older text, perhaps in order to save paper, and that the *anusvār*s of older texts still shine through subsequent texts, makes it difficult to establish whether a dot should be read as an *anusvār*. When in doubt, I have bracketed indistinct notations of *anusvār*s thus: *kā*(*ṃ*)*la*. I bracket

[517] In writing "transliteration", I refer to the academic transliteration of Rajasthani and Dimgal throughout.

blotched or faded letters or unknown notations in the same way: "*aṃgi*(*da*)". These unclear notations are remarked upon through footnotes. Whole words or sentences between angle-brackets refer to words or sentences that have been inserted when insert signs were added by the scribes in the manuscript margins to indicate that a word or sentence needs to be incorporated. For example (*duha* I v. 50): "kava[lā][518]de tata kā(ṃ)la, vīkhāṃ bhari coṛe viṛaṃga".

The orthography of the Rajasthani alphabet differs from Hindi in a few respects (see Lalas 1988: 21-36 and Metzger 2003: 17-22). Specific Rajasthani usage includes "ḷa", "ja", "jja" and "ǰjha", and "cca", "ccha". The latter are at times used interchangeably.[519] However, neither the orthography described by Lalas, nor Metzger's rendition of different Rajasthani scripts, is at all times reflected by the scripts of the manuscripts under review. Hindi "ṣa" and "śa", according to Lalas (1988: 31), are represented by "sa" in Rajasthani, are indeed hardly ever employed in the manuscripts under review but they are not entirely unknown either. In the first verse-lines of *chamd* I (ms. 5470), "śa" appears four times.[520] In this instance, this usage can be explained as inspired by the use of a Sanskritic grammatical form (*gurabhyau*), but this explanation does not shed light on the usage of "śa" in *chamd* II (v. 47) "nikṣatra" or in *chamd* I (v. 23: "sihaśāṃ").

The notation of "ḍa" and "ḍha", "ṛa" and "ṛha" is ambiguous in most manuscripts since these are not always distinguished from each other by a dot next to or underneath the letter (cf. Metzger 2003: 20). See, for example, *git* I in which the scribe differentiated between "ṛa" and "ḍa" in a variable manner, spelling "camels" as *sāṃḍhaḍiyā* (v.2) and *sāṃḍhīṛīyā* (v.4). In addition, "ṛa" appears to have two different written forms, at times representing "ḍa" and "ṛa" that can be read as either in most manuscripts under review. When no clear distinction can be made between "ḍa" and "ṛa", or "ḍha" and "ṛha", I transcribe "ṛa" and "ṛha" since "ḍa" and "ḍha" have not been included in the reprint of the first part of Lalas's dictionary (one only finds the lemmas: "ṛa", "ṛha" and "ṇa"). In some manuscripts the difference between "ṛa" and "ḍa" (and so forth) is clear, like in *duha* I and the *parvaro*. The difference between "ṛha" and "ḍha" is, however, not at all times clear in this manuscript either since "ṛha", which is used throughout *duha* I and the *parvaro*, now and then seems to signify "ḍha".[521]

In most manuscripts (but especially in *chamd* II) it is at times difficult to distinguish between "gha", "dha" and "tha". Moreover, as noted above, "ca", "cca", "ccha", and "ja", "ǰja" and "jha" are at times used interchangeably and are written in several different ways. Likewise in most manuscripts it is difficult to distinguish

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[518] An insert-sign follows *kava*, indicating "lā" in the manuscript margin.

[519] For example: "Caraṇ" or "Charaṇ" or "Ccharaṇ".

[520] *Chamd* I (v. 1-2): "śrī rāmāya nama, śrī sarasvatya nama, śrī gurabhyau nama, atha mehā viṭhū rā kahīyā śrī pābujī rā chaṃda".

[521] In the *parvaro*, for example, *ṛhola* seems to be a clear reference to the Bhopa's drum (*ḍhola*) (v.4): "dhāṃgaṛavā thī ṛhola, māḍāṃ vāghai maṃgāṛīyo".

between “va” and “ba”, like in *duha* I (v. 28), where it is unclear whether “vasai” or “basai” was meant. When both readings (“va” or “ba”) result in the same meaning, this usage has not been commented upon through footnotes. When the different notations affect the meaning of the words (which they as a rule do not) this is remarked upon in footnotes, using “blotched” to signify blemishes or faded signs, “unclear” to signify unknown notations or unclearly written or otherwise unidentifiable letters, and “probably” to signify probable readings.

Other specific notations include the use of *daṃda*s within words, for example when a *daṃda* separates syllables within one word. This usage is also noted in the footnotes, like in *duha* I (v. 236) “devaladehā”, where a *daṃda* precedes “de” and “hā” is followed by two *daṃdas*: “devalade/hā//”. This usage was probably inspired by the need to stress the metrical pattern and/or meaning of the verse-line, for the same notation is found in the next verse-line (v. 237) where *daṃda*s precede and follow “ha”, reading “marade/hā//”. And a *daṃda* in the manuscript margin (outside the text proper) often signifies, as noted in footnotes, the completion of the letters “ā” and “ī”, like in *duha* I (v. 248), where one reads “vīsari”. If the *daṃda* in the manuscript margin is interpreted as completing the “a” (which it most probably was intended to do) one reads: *vīsāri*.

It should be noted here that I depend heavily on Subh Karan Deval's transliterations of *chamd* I (Ms. 9727) and the contemporary oral Mātā epic compositions. Needless to say, lingering inaccuracies in the final transliterations of these texts are wholly my responsibility.

## *Chamd* I (Ms. 5470)

*atha mehā viṭhū rā kahīyā shrī pābujī rā chaṃda*
1. śrī rāmāya nama, śrī sarasvatya nama, śrī gurabhyau nama
2. atha mehā viṭhū rā kahīyā śrī pābujī rā chaṃda
gāhā cosara
3. va(ṃ)sa kama(ṃ)dha pāla varadāi, vegaṛa vahaṇa varaṇa varadāī
4. vaira haraṇa vā(ṃ)kāṃ varadāī, vā(ṃ)kāṃ pādharaṇa varadāī
5. udīyo kula khīcī aṇabhaṃgo, āvadha hātha jiṃdo aṇabhaṃgo
6. ari ā(ṃ)gamai tiko aṇabhaṃgo, āpai pāṃṇa ja(ṃ)so aṇbhaṃgo
7. jīṃdā pāla[522] vi(ṃ)nai jagajeṭhī, jūdha jaivaṃta vinai jagajeṭhī
8. juṛasī judha vinai jagajeṭhī, jāgai vaira vinai jagajeṭhī
chaṃda troṭaka
9. jagajeṭhīyaṃ jīdā pāla jage, adhapati anamīṃya āpa vage
10. khalakhāra aspāra[523] na bola khamai[524], mau nāhā koi kiṃnaiṃ vidha ṭaṃka namai
11. pābu jiṃdarāva pramāṇa(ṃ) pahuṃ, gayavaṃta giṛāla sapūra grihu
12. bahakopi huvā viradaita viṃnai, vādhāraṇa vīrati jūjha viṃnai
13. dhāṃdhalāṃ khīcīyāṃ vaira dhike, vaya saṃdara laggi dhramaṃga vikhaiṃ
14. paha phāṭīya pāsa raṇā phīrīyā, pābu dhara khīcīya pasarīyā
15. pāla trīya āyi puṃṇai praghaṛā, jiṃdarāva upāṛiya desa jaṛā
16. uṭhīyo dhikhi paurasa pāla āso, joi ātasa rālīya ghrata jīso
17. bhita colacakhīya ata rosa bhile, mukha mūṃcha aṇīṃ [jāya][525] mūṃha mile
18. vadhiyā[526] bhuja vyauma lagai vimalā, krama detaha ṭīkama jema kalā
19. bhaṛa bhīṃca hakālāya pāla bhalā, hala vega caṛho vahalā vahalā
20. vaṛa tuṃga virata vilaku(ṃ)līyaṃ, asa choṛai ilā asa utāvalāyaṃ[527]
21. sākhatiṃ palāṃṇa[528] maṃḍāṇa sahā, tasalīma karai taṃga tāṃṇa tahā
22. vapa pāla taṇai raja ema vasī, ghaṭa(ṃ) jāṇi mahesa vabhata ghasī
23. kamadhaja vadaṃna udāta[529] kirā, kari sūrija[530] nīṃsarīyo sihaśāṃ
24. ṛhīṃcāla bhujāla ruṛrāla ṛhahe, sātavīsīya sūra sadhīra sahe
25. kekāṃṇa vimāṃṇa siṃcāmna kala, uḍīyāṃṇa athāṃṇa jhaphāṃṇa(ṃ) ilā
26. tiṃya oṇa lagai jala ṣhroṇa taṇī, vaha joti udhyauti sisaṭa vaṇīṃ
27. hasi nārada siṃbha aca(ṃ)bha huvā, judha vāra vare vari raṃbha juvā
28. patra pūri sakatīya rata pīyai, lakha khecara(ṃ) bhūcara bhakhalīyai

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[522] Blotched. Perhaps: *pala* or *pola*.
[523] Blotched. Perhaps: *ampāra*, *abhyāra* ?
[524] Perhaps: *kadhai*.
[525] Insert sign indicating "jāya" in the manuscript margin.
[526] The word *vādhiyā* followed by *vayī*, the latter was crossed out.
[527] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *utāvalāīyaṃ*.
[528] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *lpalāṃṇa*.
[529] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *udota*.
[530] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *sugeja*.

29. kei yaṃkhaṇa grihyaṇa koḍa karaiṃ, pala guda gila gila peṭa bharai
30. kei khāga sūṃ khāga vibhāga karaiṃ, jhaṭakāṃ baṭakāṃ hoi ṭopa jharaiṃ
31. tara jūṭa rahe kahuṃ nāharase, tāṃ[531] paṛīyā kahuṃ jodha pacāharase
32. dhurilāṃ[532] mukhi boha vidha pheṇa ghaṇīṃ, vica vājatri gāja abāja vaṇīṃ
33. kasīyā camarāla sūṃḍāla kanaiṃ, ura tāla vayāla chaṃchāla anai[533]
34. paṇiṃhāri sakatīya kūbhaṃ patrāṃ, ghaṇa ghāṭa bharaiṃ jala rūka ratrāṃ
35. gaja bāja guṛeta gadā(ṃ) gurajā(ṃ), paṛa sīsa jhuvai purajāṃ purajā
36. taṛaphaiṃ dhaṛa hekaṃ dīyaiṃ takīyā, chalakā judha heka karaiṃ chakīyā
37. judha chāka nijāka dhamāka jūvā, halakāra dhanaṃka dhu(ṃ)kāra huvā
38. riṃṇatura[534] nagāra gu(ṃ)jāri[535] rūṛai, paṛi sāra apāra kīmā(ṃ)ra paṛai(ṃ)
39. kaṭi tuṃṇa kabāṇa suṃbāṃṇa kasai, dhari pāṃṇa su(ṃ)bāṃṇa javāṃṇa dhasai(ṃ)
40. lagarī baharī gaharī laharī, tira vāṃsuri vāṃ tahiṃ jāya tirī
41. kei ghaṭa ko ghaṭa kuraṭa kīye, laṭa laṭa jaṭa dhara sīsa līye
42. iṇa bhāṃti(ṃ) thayā muṃhage asagā, muṃhamela huvā kari saimnasagā
43. tālī mila nārada vīra ṭahā, ḍaba ru(ṃ)paṇi jogaṇi ḍāka ḍaha
44. āyā bhaṛa pāla taṇā anaṛaṃ, joya kāyara kaṃpai i vega jaṛaṃ
45. māṃsāla bhukhāla paṃkhāla miḷe, haṭhāyāla[536] rosāla[537] jaṭāla hale
46. hoi(ṃ) hāṃsa haṛava(ṛa) hāka huī, judhi jogaṇi vājīya ḍāka[538] juī
47. kari sena su(ṃ) tribhā(ṃ)gaṃ suṃvāga kasī, dahuvai jhala vola jalāṃ darasī
48. ukalī kari āgi jalāṃ ukaḷī, mili sena vinai dina ghora milī[539]
49. paṛa vesa daṛa daṛa sīsa paṛai, dhari dhāri ragata guṛika dhaṛai(ṃ)
50. ari pāṃṇa suṃ bāṃṇa anaṃta karaiṃ, aba āya ana(ṃ)ta āna(ṃ)ta haraiṃ
51. paṛi[540] dhupi jaṛāṃ ojaṛāṃ gupatā, mili sāra chatīsīyu(ṃ) māramatā
52. ati dhīra maṃḍaiṃ rāṃṇavīca aṛai, paṇagāṃ ghaṇa nīra jyuṃ tī paṛai
53. tara vāra na lādhoi pāra tahāṃ, jiṃdarāva gaemiṭi baṃdha jahāṃ
54. jiṃdarāva taṇī(ṃ) ghaṛa sena jā(ṃ)hā, mīlagā[541] boha āya samaṃda mahī(ṃ)
55. nīyathāṃ ta(ṃ)kā yāko ha āya juī, maṭa kuṭarāṃ gaṭa cohaṭa mahī(ṃ)
56. riṃṇātāla vahaiṃ ghaṇa rosarīyā, ulāṃ jiṃma golāya u sarīyā
57. hayā(ṃ) gaya kāyara phāṭa hīyā, narasūra ghaṇā bhaṛa neṭha hīyā
58. pharaḷaṃta ghaṛā masa[542] laṃta phirai, pābu jiṃdarāva suṃ āya parai(ṃ).

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[531] The letter *ta* followed by *oṃ*. The latter was crossed out, resulting in: *tāṃ*.
[532] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *dhuālaṛilāṃ* or *dhuglaṛilāṃ.*
[533] In the original copy of the manuscript *anai* is written, in the scan, *anai* reads like *ana*.
[534] The word *riṃṇatura* is followed by *guṃjā*, but the latter was crossed out.
[535] Unclear. Perhaps: *guṃjāra*.
[536] Unclear. Perhaps: *haṭhīyāla*.
[537] The word *rosāla* followed by *ṭa*, the latter was crossed out.
[538] The word *ḍāka* followed by *ṛaṇe*, the latter was crossed out.
[539] Unclear. Perhaps: *milā*.
[540] Unclear. Perhaps : *paṛe*.
[541] Unclear. Perhaps: *mālagā*.
[542] Blotched. Perhaps: *musa*, *bhusa*.

## *Chamd* II (Ms. 9727)

*Atha*[543] *pābujhī*[544] *ro chaṃda mehaijhī rā kahyā*
1. vaṃsa kamadajha pālha vardāī, vegaḍa virada vahaṇa varadāī
2. vera hare vāṃko varadāī, vāṃkāṃ pādhoraṇaṃ varadāī
3. ūdīyo (…)[545] kula khīcī aṇabhaṃgo, āvadha hatha jīdo[546] aṇabhaṃgo
4. ari āṃgamei na ko aṇabhaṃgo, āpaha pāṃṇi (i)asai aṇabhaṃgo[547]
5. jhiṃdo pālha binhai jhagajheṭhī,[548] jhudhi jhaivaṃta binhai jhagajaiṭhī
6. jhāgai vaira binhai jagajheṭhī, jhuḍisī jhudha binhai jagajeṭhī[549]
chaṃda troṭaka[550]
7. jhagajheṭhī jhiṃdā pālha jhagai, adhapati[551] anāṃmī āpa āgai
8. khala khāla khayāra na bola khamai, naha koī kehī pati ṭāṃka namai
9. pābū jīṃda la pramāṇi pahaṃ, gahamaṃ tageṛā lasa puragahaṃ
10. bahū kopa hūā biradeta binhai, vādhā raṇa vīrati jujha binhai
11. vayaṇai vidha vāta na kāī valī,[552] ṭali saiṃdha sagapaṇa mā(ṃ)ma ṭalī
12. dhāṃdhalāṃ khīcīyāṃ vaira dhukai,[553] vaisaṃdara jāṃ[554] ṇidamaṃ gavikhai
13. melai dala jiṃde paccha(ṃ)rīyo, pābu sira khīcī pasarīyo
14. jhiṃdarāva vanā bhaṛa joi jhakāṃ,[555] kī jhaṃta parva taṇī kaṭakāṃ[556]
15. bhala hoi huka(ṃ)ma sanāha bhara(ṃ), kasīya(ṃ)(ta)[557] jarada kaṛī bakaṛaṃ[558]

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[543] Or: *agha*. In this manuscript, the letters *gha*, *dha* and *tha* at times greatly resemble each other.
[544] The consonants *ja* and *jha* are at times used interchangeably. In addition, the scribe also employs two different ways of writing *jha*.
[545] An illegible letter precedes *kula*.
[546] In this manuscript no standardized spelling has been used, as can be read from the different spellings of Jimda: *jīdo* (v. 3), *jhimdo* (v. 5), *ji(ṃ)da* (v. 8) and *jhiṃdarāva* (v. 14). Likewise, Pabuji's name has been spelled: *pābujhī* in the title and *pābujī* in the concluding verse-line.
[547] *Aṇabhaṃgo* is followed by a sign resembling "3", which represents a hyphen in this manuscript.
[548] Within this and the next verse-line, four different spellings of *jagajeṭhi* are found, i.e.: *jhagajheṭhī*, *jhagajaiṭhī*, *jagajhethī*, *jagajethī*.
[549] The verse-lines 1 to 6 have been numbered per two verse-lines (1 to 3) in the manuscript. They closely resemble the *gāhā cosara* of *chamd* I: "*3.* va(ṃ)sa kama(ṃ)dha pāla varadāi, vegaṛa vahaṇa varaṇa varadāī, *4.* vaira haraṇa vā(ṃ)kāṃ varadāī, vā(ṃ)kāṃ pādharaṇa varadāī, *5.* udīyo kula khīcī aṇabhaṃgo, āvadha hātha jiṃdo aṇabhaṃgo, *6.* ari ā(ṃ)gamai tiko aṇabhaṃgo, āpai pāṃṇa ja(ṃ)so aṇbhaṃgo, *7.* jīṃdā pāla vi(ṃ)nai jagajeṭhī, jūdha jaivaṃta vinai jagajeṭhī, *8.* juṛasī judha vinai jagajeṭhī, jāgai vaira vinai jagajeṭhī". The couplets which follow the first three, opening couplets, named *chaṃda troṭaka*, remain unnumbered in the manuscript.
[550] A sign resembling "ī" in the manuscript margin completes the "o" of *trotaka*.
[551] Unclear notation. Perhaps *audhapati*.
[552] A sign resembling "ī" in the manuscript margin renders *vala*, *valī*.
[553] Probably: *vaira dhikai*, cf. *chamd* I (v. 13): *dhāṃdhalāṃ khīcīyāṃ vaira dhike, vaya saṃdara laggi dhramaṃga vikhaiṃ*.
[554] The sign "*ā*" in the manuscript margin completes *daraja*, resulting in *darajāṃ*.
[555] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *phakāṃ*. However, alliteration would require: *jhakāṃ*.
[556] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *katakaṃra*.
[557] Unclear. Perhaps: *te*.
[558] Perhaps: *chakaṛaṃ*.

16. kisi ṭopa raṃgāvali kaṃga[559] līyāṃ, sira hāṃthala soha sirai kasīyaṃ
17. tasa rūpa taṇā kasaṇā[560] tasīyā, jhogiṃ(d)ṛa(ṃ) hūvā[561] bhaṛa jhusaṇīyā
18. khurasāṇī khaga chatrī(ṃ)sa kharā, nija aṃga sucaṃga ḍahaṃta narā
19. kari vāra ma lāvau vega kahai, vīṇāra viṛa(ṃ)gāṃ jīṇa vahai
20. ma(ṃ)ḍi puṭhi ghalāṃṇa[562] laga(ṃ)ma mukhai, riṇa pākhara rola ghaṃṭāra rūkhai
21. kasi taṃga turī sa ba sājha kīyāṃ, dila hījai bāli vrichoṛa[563] dīyaṃ
22. tima rāva rake bataṇā(ṃ) tarase, anabhaṃga hūā asavāra ase(ṃ)
23. jhīṃdarāva caṛai jamarāva(ṃ) jhisai, dala(ṃ) hālai dhāṃdhala desa disau
24. hoi hāṃsa hūkama[564] sanāha hūyaṃ, bhubhaṃga bhaye chatrapati bhayaṃ
25. pāṃghe pura kaṭaka hilai praghalā, jhiṃdarāva ki jāṃmali hema jhalā
26. vahatai dali vaji jhamī visamī, ghalī chāḍī sesana bhāra ghamī
27. ani ona asā hasa u(ṃ)laṭīyaṃ, gira jhaṃgara pādhara gāhaṭīyaṃ
28. trāpaṃta aho nisa taṃga turī, hurīyā nijha leyaṇa drikhū vurī(ṃ)[565]
29. phuṭī pauha pāsa raṇā phirīyā, pābu dhara khīcī pa(ṃ)sarīyā(ṃ)
30. le āthi kare baha loba halaṃ, ghaṇa ghāṭa vale disa paṃgha gharaṃ
31. pukāra mukhaṃ[566] puli vega page, āyau vāhāu pālha agai
32. pāla tīrā va pu(ṇ)ai pagaṛā, jhīṃdarāva upāṛai desa jaṛā
33. uṭhīyau dhikha paurisa pālha isau, jhojhana bhilai ghrita dāva jisau
34. bhrita cola cakhī ati rosa bhilī, mukha muṃcha aṃṇī jāi bhuṃha milī
35. vadhīyā bhujha(ṃ) vauma lagai v(r)imalā, krama detai tīkama jhema kalā
36. bhala bhīṃca hakārai pālha bhalā, hala vega caṛhau vaihalā vaihalā
37. vaṛatuṃga vīrata jha viloka liyaṃ, asi choṛai lāsi utāṃvalīyai
38. sākaita lagā(ṃ)ma palāṃṇa sahā, tasalīma kīyā taṃga tāṃṇi tahā
39. sohaṛe vapi vega sanāha sajhe, kiramāla karagi chatrīsa kaje
40. aṇabhaṃga turaṃga āraṛhī(ṃ)aṃ, surahī chali surati sanaḍhiyaṃ
41. pābu sira neta para(ṭha) vīyaṃ, kālavī caḍhīyau kari ūṃta līyaṃ
42. bha-(u) pālha taṇā pārādha bhaṛaṃ, āghā anabhaṃga jhisā anaṛaṃ
43. varīyāma saṃgrāma jhihāṃma va(ṃ)pe, kīyā tili kaṃdīla su cīla kape
44. dhaṇahāla bāṃhāla jhāṃṭāla dhayaṃ, haṭhīyāla laṃkāla trikāla hayaṃ
45. macharāla khaigāla rosāla mane, vikarāla ghaḍāla ja kāla[567] vanai
46. ḍhiṃcāla bhuṃjāla sudrāla dhayaṃ, sātavīsai sura saghīra sayaṃ
47. suhaṛāṃ caṃdīyau iṇa rūpa sajhe, mila pūnima caṃda nikṣatra majhai
48. khākhu[568] pemala khaṃdhāra khalai, vagavāla ta vīsala vīsavalai

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[559] Unclear. Perhaps*: kraṃga* or *kūṃga*.
[560] The word *kasaṇā* is followed by *pa*, which appears to have been crossed out.
[561] Unclear. Perhaps: *huvā*, *phūvā*, *phuvā*.
[562] Unclear. Perhaps: *palāṃṇa*.
[563] Blotched. Perhaps: *dri choṛa.*
[564] Blotched. Perhaps : *hūlama*.
[565] Alliteration would require: "*hurīyā...huri(ṃ)*".
[566] Unclear. Perhaps: *murkhaṃ*.
[567] *Kāla* is followed by a hyphen.

49. bhaṛa hekā heka vasekha bhaṛaṃ, pāradhī pāyaka pālha taṇa(ṃ)
50. hūyā sātavīse sātha heka manaṃ, dhana dhana narapati dhana dhana(ṃ)
51. dhāṃdhala samau bhrama dhuṃha dhaṛai, khata māragi pālha turaṃga khaṛai
52. bhaṛa pāila mehala bhīṃca bhalā, jhilīyā paṃthi pādhari jujhaka(ṃ)lā
53. dhara dhūjati[569][*pāī dhanakha dharaṃ, karajoḍa kadāla kha-uga*[570]*karaṃ*
54. *pāika āghaga*] milai praghalaṃ, pāradhī lodhī ghāsa palaṃ
55. levā sraga ārati praba ladhai, vāhasūvāṃ pālha pramāṇa vadhai
56. ukarasa nihasa hamasa iasī, dava ūpaṛi (ḍ)aṃbara gaiṇa disī
57. vadhi teṇa rajhī aṃgi(da) pālha vasī, ghaṭa jāṃṇi vabhuti mahesa ghasa
58. kamadhaja vadana sajoti karāṃ, suraji[571] nīsarīyo seharā
59. ima dhāṃdhala asi ūraḍīyai, khīcīyā(ṃ) dala ā(y)aṛīyau[572] khaṛīyai
60. vikha vāṇi vacana jīṃdai vasu(ṃ)vāṃ, vaga vālī(ṃ) saṃmī vāhasūvā(ṃ)
61. dhini dheṇa dhaṇī[573] dhāṛīta narāṃ, phaujāṃ sira vāṃṭā joṛa pharāṃ
62. nīsāṃṇa dahuṃ dali(ṃ) nīdhasīyaṃ, harakhe palacāra mane hasīyaṃ
63. tālī mila nārada vīra tahā, ḍi(ṃ)ma (rū)pī[574] jogaṇi ḍāka ḍahā
64. ghaṭa pālha taṇīṃ jīṃdarāva ghaṛā, nihaseha sobhaṭa āyā naiyaṛā[575]
65. paṛīyā ra pa(ṃ)khai dhikhi sāra paṇī, jali kamṭhali vīja jhabaki jaṇī
66. balīyā gaḍha[576] bola dalāṃ bigahaṃ, guṇa tāṃṇi kabāṃṇa sapura gahaṃ
67. samarī gaṇī pāradhīye savare, kīyā (ku)ṃḍala rāha ganāma karai
68. sarapura samuha vīchaṭi samaṃ, mila ghora aṃdhāraka meha namaṃ
69. chaṃṇakāra khataṃga nīchaṭi chaṇaṃ, rūgha vājiyaṃ khāra[577] dhanakha raṇaṃ
70. phara phāṛi sanāha sabāha phaṛaṃ, bhaloṛaṃ bha(ṃ)bhāra bheda(ṃ)ta bhaṛaṃ
71. gajhīyau gaiyaṇā gadharā gahataṃ, mili ghāi ghaṇai dali rīṭha mataṃ
72. jhīha(ṛa) jha(gr)ai suradhāra jhaṭā(ṃ), nikaṛā bhaṛa pālha taṇā nihaṭā
73. hui haka kaṭaka sudhaka hamaṃ, sābaka kasaka dhasaka samaṃ
74. jhabaraka jharaka jhāṭaka jharai, phāraka pharaka nāraka phirai

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[568] Unclear. Probably *khāṃkhu*, cf. *chamd* II, v. 93.

[569] The word *dhūjati* followed by an insert-sign, which probably refers to the verse-lines scribbled in the top-margin of the manuscript, which read: "pāī dhanakha dharaṃ, karajoḍa kadāla kha-ugakaraṃ, pāika āghaga". By inserting this verse-line in v. 53 and v. 54, which read "Dhara dhuja ti milai praghalaṃ, pāradhī lodhī ghāsa palāṃ", the first letters of all the last and first words of the half-lines of both verse-lines achieve alliteration: *Dhara dhuja ti-( pāī dhanakha dharaṃ, karajoḍa kadāla kha-ugakaraṃ), (pāika āghaga) milai praghalaṃ, pāradhī lodhī ghāsa palāṃ*. The poet may have meant to achieve end-rhyme for after inserting the verse-lines from the top-margin, the last words of all half-lines end with *aṃ* (*āṃ*).

[570] To mark the scribe's notation, *khauga* is transliterated *kha-uaga*.

[571] Above *suraji* a word has been scribbled, probably *jaṇiṃ*. It is unclear whether or where *jaṇiṃ* was meant to be inserted. No insert-sign has been added.

[572] Unclear. Perhaps: *ṛayau*.

[573] Or: *dhaṇā*.

[574] Blotched. Perhaps: *sūpī*. Following *chamd* I (v.43: *tālī mila nārada vīra ṭahā, ḍaba ru(ṃ)paṇi jogaṇi ḍāka ḍaha*) *rūpī* appears more likely.

[575] Unclear. Perhaps: *taiyaṛā*.

[576] Probably: *gaṛha*.

[577] Blotched. Perhaps: *khāsara*.

75. kasaṇaka taṛak(i) baṭaki kaṛāṃ, pāṛi kilaṛa kadhaṛa kapaḍā(ṃ)
76. kharaṛaka khaṛaka bhaṭaka khamī, u(ṃ)thaṛaka laḍaka daṛaka amī
77. maraṛaka maṛaka asidha muṛai, judha[578] pālha anaiṃ jiṃdarāva juḍai
78. dhamachaṭa gāhaṭa haipha(ṃ)ṭa dharā, k(o) paṭa āvaṭa masaṃṭa karā
79. nīyachaṭa pahaṭa nihaṭa nare, sara sāra saṃbāra samāra sa(ṃ)re
80. khalakaṭa vikaṭa āvaṭa khisai, vīya[579] chaṭa sobhaṭa maṃsaṭa vasai
81. khaga jhaṭa vikaṭa āvaṭa phalai,[580] bhaṃbhaṭa ju-aṭa bhrigaṭi bhalai
82. mila caṭa subhaṭa baṃdhaṭa milu, hujaḍā hatha pālha laṛai dujhalai
83. kālavī kari hākula mora kalā, lakha thāṭa phirai kapi jhaṃpa lalā
84. asavāra abhaṃga sucaṃga iase, riṇi jāi jaṇau jaṇi rūka rasai
85. macharā-la khaigāla rosāla mate, rohirāla baṃbāla bhālāla rate
86. vimuhāla vīdhāla vicāla vapai, uchāla baṃdhāla saṃghāla apai
87. jīnasā-la jaṃjāla jaṛāla juā, hāḍāla guḍāla ḍalāla hūyā
88. dhaṛaḍhāla viṛhāla ulāla ṛhalai, nicharāla nayāla paināla nalai
89. galimāla guthāla raṃbhāla gahaṃ, karimāla bhuyāla ma(ṃ)sāla kahaṃ
90. maṃsāla bhukhāla paṃkhāla milai, gudāla rasāla ḍalāla gilai
91. taji raja riṛai dhārāṃ tijaḍai, bhiṛa pālha paṛe bhala sātha bhiṛai
92. vi(ṃ)ḍhi pā(ṃ)ṇa samaṃpe dhena vaṛai, caṃdīyai riṇa nāmau caṃda caṛai
93. lo(ṃ)hāṃ baliyā vaka sraga lahe, riṇa khāṃkhu pemala sati rahai
94. kīyā pāradhīyai kali nā(ma) kathaṃ, sātavīsai si(ṃ)dhā pāla sathaṃ
95. rāṭhauṛa(ṃ) saṃgrāma karai rahīyo, ga-u vāhara pābu go grahīyau
ka(ḷa)sa
96. govāhara go grahai, pāla piṃḍa juṛai iasī(ṃ)[581] pari
97. jīṃdai suṃ ju(ṃ)dha jāgi, kīyai ūjalai kiraṃmari
98. vāṃnā raṃbha vareha, vāna kamadhajaṃ[582] vādhai
99. pūri āsa palacarāṃ, līyā āma khidhau lādhai
100. supra sana hūve dhāṃdhala sutana, suthara bola ju(ṃ)gi jugi saha
101. praṇamaṃta meha pābu prasidha, (t)uṃ parasidha pramāṇa paha(ṃ)
102. iti pābujī ro chaṃda saṃpūrṇa(ṃ).

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[578] Or: *kudha*.
[579] Unclear. Perhaps: *vāya*.
[580] Unclear. Perhaps: *khalai*.
[581] Blotched. Perhaps: *osī*(*ṃ*).
[582] Unclear sign. Perhaps "*ā*", which would result in: *kamadhajāṃ*.

## *Duha* I (Ms. 402)[583]

*shrī guṇesāya nama, atha pābūjī rā duhā likhyate*
1. shrī guṇesāya nama, atha pābūjī rā duhā likhyate
2. devī de varadāṃna, muṇato ima ladhamālīyau
3. pābū suraparadhāṃna, gāuṃ to tūṭhai guṃṇe
4. sura nāyaka sūṃḍāla, varadāyaka huije vale
5. bhala pābū bhūpāla, mala kahai kīrata muṇūṃ
6. pābū patiyāroha, kaliyuga māṃ thāro kamadha
7. sevaga juga sāroha, rākhai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
8. dunīyāṃ paradeseha, bhīṛa paṛī pābū bhujai
9. rima saba lāre seda, rākhai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
10. pābū tūṃ pratapāla, dohītarī dohītarāṃ[584]
11. karatau khoṭai kāla, ūpara dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
12. bharanava nidha bhaṃḍāra, hara lūṃṭāyā huṃsīyai
13. porasa caḍhave pāra, āve dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
14. to jāyāṃ rī katha, bhālā lāmai sāṃbhalī
15. ākhu sudha aratha, dūhā suṇi samajhai dunī
16. kamadhaja rāva sikāra, caḍhi caṃcala vana cālīyo
17. lubadhī jīvāṃ lāra, paṛīyo pīṇa na pākaṛe
18. trīkhāvaṃta talāva, vali āyo baipāraro
19. dīṭho kamadhaja dāva, āgai jhūlai apaccharā
20. pīchāṃ nai pāṃṇīha, kapaṛā lenai kudīyo
21. ke ke kūṃkāṃṇīha, gharavasīyā de lugaṛā
22. kamadhaja yuṃ kahīyoha, akana kuṃvārī[585] apacharā
23. dekho mujha dīyoha, to kapaṛā deu turata
24. piṇi paravasa paṛīyāṃha, suṇa dhāṃdhala sācī sutha
25. vijaṛā ha(ṃ)tha bījāṃha, paraṇī chāṃnai ātu paraṇi
26. araja amhīṇī eha, to su ekaṇi vātarī
27. nā to nahī kadeha, kahi tīyauṃ sāṃbhala[586] kamadha
28. maiha pati minakhāṃ māṃhi, vasai kade naha devatā
29. raṃbhā aitha rahāya, mana jaukhai āe milo
30. tava dhāṃdhala ta hatha, paraṇā e cala apacharā

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[583] The handwriting of Ms. 402 (*duha* I and the *parvaro*) is rather regular. Occasional unclear notations include the notations of *daṃdas* and unclear or blotched notations of *anusvārs*. The spelling used in this manuscript also appears to be rather regular, except for a few instances, like in *duha* I, the spelling of the name of Pabuji's companion Camda as *caṃdā* in verse-line 257 and *candā* in verse-line 259. In *duha* I, the difference between the letters "ṛ" and "ḍ" is clear. The difference between "ṛh" and "ḍh" is not always plain for it seems that "ṛh", which is used throughout manuscript 402 is now and then meant to signify "ḍh", like in the *parvaro* (v. 4) where *ṛhola* is a clear reference to the Bhopa's drum (*ḍhola*).

[584] Followed by an unclear sign, perhaps a *daṃda* with a hyphen.

[585] Blotched. Perhaps: *kuṃcārī*.

[586] The word *sāṃbhala* is followed by *ma*, the latter has been crossed out.

31. raṃbhā sūṃ atirāta, ke vāsara rahīyo kamaṃdha
32. apachara nūṃ ādhāṃna, rahīyo hutau rāṭhavaṛa
33. pābū pūta pravāṃṇa, jāyo subha velā jade
34. raṃbhā nu rājīha, kari kolu āyo kamaṃdha
35. vāṃsai verājīha, paraṇī trī hu(ṃ)ī nipaṭa
36. ugai ravi āveha, āthuṇa huvai jāvai avasi
37. vinī naha cāveha, ke dina iyuṃ gamīyā kamadha
38. o amalāṃ huya aṃdha, jāvai ketha thitīyo kamadha
39. sahī sutrī sanamaṃdha, kavalāde mana suṃ kahai
40. dekhe pati eka dīha, adharaiṇī ga-i[587] uṭhīyo
41. āpaṇa achai abīha, kamalāde vāṃso kīyo
42. dhāṃdhala nu dhāeha, āī samhī apcharā
43. ā vā(ṃ)sai āiha, vālama to valī taraṇi
44. pītama tāharo puta, lījai huṃ kāṃno līyuṃ
45. kavlade karatuta, āi dekhaṇa āṃpaṇī
46. iyuṃ kahi huya alopa, ati khyārī[588] thī apacharā
47. kamalāde thī kopa, kari dhāṃdhala tata khiṇa kahai
48. nirabudhī nārīha, katha loke sācī kahī
49. hu isa hoṇa hārī, pābū le ghara disa pulo
50. kava[lā][589]de tata kā(ṃ)la, vīkhāṃ bhari coṛe viṛaṃga
51. bāṃha pākaṛi bāla, hularāe harakhī hiyai
52. pābū le pala māi, ghoṛā khaṛa āyā ghare
53. vara vājaṃta vajāya, kahīyo jāyo dīkaro
54. nipa dhāṃdhala navanidha, yuṃ samapai āsāluvāṃ
55. prīthī māhi prisadha, kī kā jāyā rī karai
56. dina dina vādhai deha, varasa varasa mai ana vadhai
57. pābū tū prata peha, kākā pita baṃdhava kahai
58. pekhe dina pugeha, rāva dhāṃdhala cisaraṃmīyo
59. uṇa ṭhāhara ugeha, kiraṇā laga buṛo kama(dha)
60. buṛo bai sāṃṇeha, ṭīkai rāva dhāṃdhala taṇai
61. jayo dhura jāṃṇeha, hālai pābū rau hukama
62. khaiga alaṃga khaṛeha, pābū aṇajāṃṇyo paṛai
63. trijaṛā hatha trajaṛeha, vasadhā kīdhī āpa vasi
64. tosu suṇi taravāri, pābū mhe pohacāṃ nahī
65. japatā(ṃ) yu jodhāra, sāṃvata dhāṃdhala sī hauta
66. paṛīyo apachara peṭa, kava[lā]de[590] moṭo kīyo
67. tiṇa pābū kuṃṇa jeṭa, āvai dhāṃdhala rāva uta
68. pābū paravāṛāha, ākhāṛā kīdhā abhaṃga,

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[587] To mark the scribe's notation "i" following "a" is transliterated *a-i* (*ga-i*).

[588] Unclear. Probably: *pyārī*.

[589] An insert-sign follows *kava*, indicating "lā" in the manuscript margin.

[590] An insert-sign follows *kava*, indicating "lā" in the manuscript margin.

69. guṇa bharijai gāḍāha, vādhai dhāṃdhala rāvauta
70. sāgara sīṃdha olāṃḍi, viṇa lekhai sāṃḍhī varaga[591]
71. āṃṇe dai aṇabhaṃga, ramato dhāṃdhala rāvauta
72. pābū tuṃ paṇeha, ābū dhara dhuṇai anaṛa(ṃ)
73. sūṇīyo suratāṃṇeha, rāṃṇe dhāṃdhala rāvauta
74. kavalāde ika vāra, beṭā bulāya binhai[592]
75. vaigau karo vicāra, hava baī moṭī huī
76. bījo loka bahoṛi, dījai sonala devaṛāṃ
77. jīdai pemāṃ joṛa, mo mana mai buṛau muṇai
78. mātā vaiṇa pramāṃṇa, kīdhā būṛai rā kahā
79. vara sonala vākhāṃṇa, bhalalo idhakā bhaṇai
80. pemāṃ parṇāvoha, soḍhāṃ kā sīsodīyāṃ
81. dekho chai dāvoha, āpāṃ khīcī ā galo
82. sāraṃgīyo sareha, māsyau yuṃ pābū muṇai
83. vātāṃ vīsāreha, niṭha paṛi cītāro nahī
84. būṛo phera jabāba, karatau pābū thī kamāṃdha
85. hitarī kahī hisāba, sārāṃga mhe māsyo sahī
86. pemāṃ nu paraṇāya, vaira tiko hīja vāṛhisāṃ
87. vātāṃ suṇi vetāya, pābū hui uṭhai parau
88. muṇi jāṃtā māiha, bhāi bhojā i suṇo
89. budhihīṇo bāiha, mūkhi(ṃ) kīcī nu ma dhyau
90. mātā buṛai mela, ālocai pābū asana
91. khīcī hutau khela, āna kīyāṃ na vaṇai avasi
92. nipa melhe nālera, jāyala le jāye jarū
93. suṇi jīdai hui sera, vidha su shrīphala vaṃdīyo
94. jāyala hutā jāṃna, cupa kare khīcī cale
95. āyā yuṃ asamāṃni, chibatā kolu chātrapati
96. sāṃmhā sāṃhelaiha, saṃpa dhāṃdhala āyā sako
97. aṇabhaṃga ameleha, kudā(ṃ)vaṃto kālavī
98. lābhai nahī lākheha, puṛa mai maṃḍī jai pakhai
99. isaṛe ārekheha, joī dāṃ māṃ nāṃ juṛai
100. ārāhaiṃ asavāra, jo e jo e[593] jāṃnīyā
101. poha mai pailau pāra, vīda vakhāṃṇai kālavī
102. mahārai mana māṃ nīha, ā ghoṛī leuṃ avasi
103. japai yuṃ jānīha, bhole rā sāhiba bhalāṃ
104. pukha(ṃ) terā narapāla, nā jīdā desī nahī
105. suṇi taharo savāla, magamaṛau kahīyo mato
106. kahai jido yekaṃti, desī kesari dāyajai
107. kārā ṭhoṛāṃ suṃ rāṃti, karasāṃ āṃpe ṭhākurāṃ

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[591] The "ā" of *varagā* has been crossed out, rendering: *varaga*.
[592] A *daṃda* follows *bi*, rendering: *bi/nhai*.
[593] Unclear notation. Perhaps: *joai joe*.

108. kālhe sāraga kuṭi, māharo pita vyāṃ mārīyo
109. lakha vita līdhā luṭi, vaira tiko māṃgu vaḍo
110. kahīyo kiṇa hekeha, alakhā khīcī ājarā
111. sāhiba viṇa samadheha, kamadhāṃ paisā se kīyo
112. vara toraṇa vaṃdeha, kāra joṛe māṃyāṃ kanai
113. cavarī te thara ceha, āye le pherā abhaṃga
114. hathalevai rau hātha, raṃḍha (ma)[594] lāgī jhālī rahyau
115. pahi dhāṃdhala pārātha, kara choḍu dhyau kālavī
116. ghoṛā deu ghaṇāha, būṛau iṇa para bolīyo
117. ānaha aṃgamanāha, so pābū rai mana samī
118. būṛā sāraṃga bāpa, misa kuṛai thai mārīyo
119. avaḍau vaira uthāpi, kāraṇa (ye)kaṇi kālavī
120. hatha levai hāthīha, kahato yuṃ būṛo kamaṃdha
121. mādī mana māṃ thīha, pābū naha bhūlai palaka
122. vadi khīcī tīṇa vāra, ghari ghoṛā hāthī ghaṇa[595]
123. vita māṃharai vaipāra, kyu na luṃ kālavī
124. būṛo baṃdhava rīha, gati jāṃṇai ḍīlāṃ gamai
125. vātāṃ vinhe rahīha, hauṇī thi su to huī
126. būrau bauha cītoha, mātā suṇi teṛe muṇai
127. na māne na pītoha, pābū to chīto prataki
128. muṇi būrau māiha, dosa tako monu dīyo
129. pābū paihalāiha, āṃpāṃ nu ati pālīyā
130. vīrai(ṃ) varajaṃ tāṃha, mai kīdho so pāṃmīyau
131. khuṭai nahī khātāṃha, mātā suṇi būṛo muṇai
132. chehaṛo vichāiha, mai samajhā yo mo disā
133. puṇi lāgū pā aiha, to ina māṃnai tripaṭa
134. karasuṃ kamaiha, nisacai bhogavaṇi nripati
135. vāḍho vurā(ṃ)iha, ke kuṛī sācī kahe
136. āī ro upadesa, suṇi būṛo bolai samatha
137. kāṭu jāi kalesa, āgai husī(ṃ) sa dīsa sī(ṃ)
138. taba būṛau(ṃ) tetāla, vapa thī jāṃṇi vaṇāvīyo
139. kāraṇa kamadhāṃ kāla, kahi ari nai rājī kīyo
140. gaṛha vāṛāṃ rī gāṃya, āye nai lejo avasi
141. kamdhāṃ ma nai karāya, koi vāhara na karai
142. vīro to khatravāṭa, āpaṛasī ujavālasī
143. kaṃtā o karakāṭa māṃ no to mata mārijo
144. prabhaṇai yuṃ pragāṭa, ājūṃṇo tūṃ yekalo(ṃ)
145. ma maro ālai mā(ṃ)ṭa(ṃ), lyau gāyaṃ dhyo kālavī
146. pābū nu pyarīha, cavi būṛo ati cāraṇī

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[594] Blotched.

[595] Blotched. Perhaps: *gahaṇa*.

147. mauṃ hasara vicārīha, kesara thāṃ desī [ka]maṃdha[596]
148. jīdai mana mai jāṇi(ṃ), kheṛe(ṃ)cai dākhī kharī
149. puṇīyā tetha pravāṃṇa, pābū naha māḍu parati
150. būṛo kahai bījuha(ṃ), sāṃbhali sāraṃga sāṃha uta
151. to suṃ na patī juha, durisa[597] kahi kari deva co
152. aṇabhaṃga sāṃbhali āṃṇa, nisacai monu nātha(ṃ)rī
153. pābū jīva pravāṃṇa, kyuṃ mārūṃ lyuṃ kālavī
154. būṛā tāharī bāṃha, valata[598] sahī na vāḍha su
155. puro vinhai pahāṃha, sukha payo choḍe su [ka]ra[599]
156. rāva būṛo rajīha, huya mana māhe[600] hālīyo
157. muṇi āgali mājhīha, kathā kahī choḍāi kara
158. bhāi de ghara bheda, paṛaṇāi bāi parī
159. narapati vāta na dekha, karaṇī thī kīdhī kamaṃdha
160. pemāṃ paraṇījeha, jhāila lego jhīṃdarau
161. nara nārīyāṃ saneha, vāsara sukha(ṃ) su volavau
162. karake kālava tīta, cita vasī khīcī taṇai
163. tana māṃ nītī mīta, kahatau rahatau kālavī
164. suṇi vātāṃ sārīha, vātāṃ būṛai vīra rī
165. agho utārīha, hava khīcī hīkhai hutā[601]
166. pābū paratāyoha, iṇa kāraṇa tama āparo
167. o avasara ayoha, marasī sātrava mārinai
168. lyo lyā yā nā lera, tata rai mai soḍhāṃ tanau
169. vīrai kunā vaira, japi pābū jagāṛīyā
170. nā kāro na vaṇaiha, kahiyai yekaṇi kāraṇai
171. [pu]ṇi soḍhī paraṇeha, suṇi mo mrita hosī satī
172. shrīphala soḍharoha, vedo gata vidha vaṃdīyau
173. pābū paraṇe vāha, kheṛecai khaṛīyā khatāṃga
174. māraga hatāṃ[602] māṃhi, nāhara ḍavā nīsarai
175. pābūjī poharāi, cyāra pohara kahai caṃdīyau
176. naiṛī niradhārīhī (rahai),[603] māharī mrita pābū muṇai
177. soḍhaī suṃpīyārīha,[604] rahasī tela caḍhī rakhe
178. muṇi māthai māreha, kari caṭakā pala kālavī

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[596] Though no insert-sign was added by the poet, it appears that here "ka", scribbled in the margin, has to be inserted to precede *maṃdha*.
[597] Unclear. Perhaps: *hurisa*.
[598] Unclear. Perhaps: *valabha*.
[599] An insert-sign precedes “ra”, indicating “ka” in the manuscript margin.
[600] The “u”, which follows *mā*, has been crossed out.
[601] A *daṃda* follows *hu*, rendering: *hu/tā*.
[602] Blotched. Perhaps: *vatāṃ*.
[603] Blotched, probably because the scribe meant to cross out *rahai*.
[604] Blotched. Perhaps: *suṃpīyārā(ṃ)ha*.

179. āyā ilagāreha, umarakoṭa utāṃvalā
180. soḍhāṃ sāṃmhai laiha, āyā kari dauṛhā amala
181. mili mana mai mulakeha, dhani bāī dī dhāṃdhalāṃ
182. pherā cyāra phireha, ṛerā laga āyā dahu
183. kahīyo sīkha kareha, rāṃṇe dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
184. soṛhāṃ saṃbhalīyoha, ye pābū pāṛo akhata
185. chehaṛāṃ viṇa chū(ṃ)ṭāṃha, kyu hālo kahi nī(ṃ) kamaṃdha(ṃ)
186. bhālālau bhākhaiha, suṇi sāsū sālī sutrī
187. rājī hui rā khoha, vaigī sīkha dīyāṃ vaṇai
188. jhehī ākhi araja, soḍhā bhelā hui sako
189. poha harakhāya paraja, rāji ārogau māṃharai
190. aṇabhaṃga ārogeha, āye soḍhāṃ āṃgaṇai
191. sukha pāyo sagaleha, sāsarīye pura(ṃ)vāsīyāṃ
192. so(ṃ)ḍhī nu de sīkha, jīvaṃto gaḍha gujavai
193. vaigī bharajau vīkha,[605] muvāṃ ma melo ye kalā
194. mana māhilā mileha, sīkha kare saba sāthā suṃ
195. pābū para(ṃ) bhāteha, caḍhī kolu nu cālīyo
196. sārāṃgasutī suṇīyoha, pābū gau paraṇī javā
197. mitrī su muṇīyoha, mana cāhyau ṭāṃṇo milyo
198. tātā bhaṛa teṛeha, phajara saṃvā cheṛā phirai
199. khīcīṛāṃ dala khoṛi, ulaṭa kolu nu orīya(ṃ)[606]
200. rāvata rātorāti(ro),[607] āya utarīyo gūṃjavai
201. puṇi tiṇahīja paribhāti, kolu dūṃ koyā kaṭaka
202. lakha gāyāṃ lenaiha, halavai halavai hālīyā
203. pābū padhā(ṃ)neha, cāhyo melo caṃdīya[608]
205. karatau goharī kūka, āyo gaṛhavāṛāṃ asana
206. ākhāṃ vāta(ṃ) acuka, dhaṇa līyā jāila dhaṇī
207. cālī cāraṇīyāṃha, jaṇī jaṇī būṛo japai
208. surahī lī suṇīyāṃha, kamadhaja(ṃ) kukāu kahai
209. būṛo yuṃ bola(ṃ)ta,[609] ra(ṃ)janī dina dukhīyo rahuṃ
210. amāṃma lejo aṃta, kuko jāi kamadhāṃ kanai
211. būṛai būlāyeha, koṭavāla kolu taṇo
212. kamadhāṃ kahāyeha, koi vāhara ma karo
213. cāraṇīyāṃ cā(ṃ)līha, kamadhā(ṃ) ghari ghari kukatī
214. pāle tāṃ pālīha, būṛo tiṇa na bolato
215. laja bāhirāṃ ligāra, koi bolo re suṇi buṃbaṛī

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[605] Blotched. Perhaps *vikha*, preceded by a *daṃda*.

[606] Blotched. Perhaps: *orīyā(ṃ)*.

[607] Here, "ro" was crossed out.

[608] Unclear. Perhaps: *caṃdīyā*.

[609] Blotched. Perhaps: *bolota*. However, alliteration with *a(ṃ)ta* in the next verse-line would require: *bola(ṃ)ta*.

216. yekaṇi vaiṇa ucāra, bholī tu ghari ghari bhaṭaki
217. kheṛaicāṃrai khoṭa, devalade dekhai nahī
218. iha(ṃ)ṇa jaṇa rī oṭa, jāya pābū pukāraje
219. kamadhama[610] kharī kahīha, nahī ghare pā(ṃ)bū nari(ṃ)da
220. satra sābatā sahīha, jāyai nahī deval japai
221. rāvata ādhī raiṇa, āyo paraṇīje avasi
223. vigatā sāṃbhali vaiṇa, cita khusī hui cāraṇī
224. sāṃma to nu su[bhā][611] rāja, kahīyo ghari āyo kamadha
225. āja amhīṇī āvi, nisacai havai na jā vasī
226. surahī lī suṇa sīha, kāṃme tiṇa velā kamaṃdha
227. pābū jala pīsīha, bahi khala gāyāṃ vālīyāṃ
228. iyuṃ kahatī āiha, vāhāa(ṃ)ra vāhara vegaṛā
229. lakha ke līdhī gāyā,[612] tarasa karaṃtī cāraṇī
230. pābū suṇi(ṃ) pu(ṃ)kāra, gāyāṃ khīcī legayā
231. devalade dukhī yāra, rovai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
232. sāhula saṃbhalīyāṃha, kāhuli mana māṃhe kamadha
233. cupa cupa cāraṇīyāṃha, rahi kahi dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
234. cāraṇīyāṃ rā cita, trijaḍāhatha suṇi ṭalakīyā
235. dhenāṃ le dhāṛīta, vuhā dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
236. dekhe devaladehā,[613] vaha khīcī gāyāṃ vale
237. muṇīyo to maradehā,[614] iyuṃ raṭato dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
238. thorī teṛe thāṭa, corī surahī coraṭāṃ
239. khīcī hīyai khaṭāṭa, lāyo mhārai caṃdīyā
240. puṇi caṃdo suṇi pālha, putrī mo paraṇījasī
241. sāhiba sabalo sāla, rahasī dhāṃdhala rava-uta
242. caṃdā vāhar cāli, nāhara nākāro ma kari
243. ari phaujhāṃ uthali, āye paraṇāvāṃ avasi
245. locana mukha kari lāla, kahi caṃdo lokāṃ kathana
246. peyo[615] savaṇe pāla, koi rākhai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
247. caṃdā tuṃ cītāri, bola aṛhāṃgā bolato
248. vaiṇa tike vīsari,[616] kiṇa kāraṇa monuṃ kahai
249. caṃdā tu tilamāta, jīva sadā kari jāṃṇatau
250. ghaṭa(ṃ) olai kī ghāta, muha sara melhai jo marada
251. caṃdā caharaṃtoha,[617] rāta dihāṛai rāvatāṃ

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[610] Blotched. Perhaps: *kamadhana*.

[611] An insert-sign follows *su*, indicating *bhā* in the manuscript margin.

[612] Unclear. Perhaps *gāya* followed by a *daṃda*.

[613] Unclear. A *daṃda* precedes "de" and "hā" is followed by two *daṃdas*, reading: *de/ ha //*.

[614] A *daṃda* precedes "ha", while two *daṃdas* follow it, reading */ha //*.

[615] Unclear. Perhaps: *pekho*.

[616] If the *daṃda* in the manuscript margin was meant to complete the "a", *vīsāri*. If not: *vīsari*.

[617] The phrase "kāṃ dhurā thī kāpurasi", which precedes "rāta dihāṛai rāvatāṃ", has been crossed out.

252. na bolai niratauha, kāṃ dhurā thī kāpurasi
253. caṃdā tu paracāḍa, agai hī nita āvatau
254. āhe(ṃ)ṛi āvīyācha, sura sadā laga sāṃvalā
255. caṃdā kari kari coṭa, sasā mṛiga nāhara suvara
256. kāṃma taṇau hīja koṭa, huvo sadā rahavo[618] huto
257. caṃdā ye ucāṭa, mana mā sabalau maharai
258. vadhāvai khatravāṭa, māṭhā paṛato tu miṭai
259. candā vāhara caṛhi, maṃdā paṛi maṃcai marāṃ
260. ila jīyai viṇa aṛhi, kī karisī kahato kamadha
261. caṃdā tuṃ to phāṃna, ghara būṛā kahi tau ghaṇā
262. nāhara vāra ni[619]dāṃna, suṇi āpāṃ muyāṃ sudharai
263. caṃdā mata cukeha,[620] iṇa motai avasāṃṇa thī
264. mo yekala mukeha, kāla kitā jīvīsa kahi
265. ākhai āheṛīha, kaṛavā mhāṃ ma kaho kathana
266. dhāṃdhala ghaṛī gharī, satra māre kari sāṃsahī
267. ṛholāṃ vāgāṃ ṛhīla,[621] pābū hacama[622] karo palaka
268. asi tāharī asīla, karavāṛo sajha kālavī
269. jada lākhīṇau jiṇa, maṃḍe de āhi lāṇa mukha
270. pāṃḍava ati para vīṇa, hājara kī sūṇīyai hukama
271. vaigau kare va(ṃ)ṇāva, bagatara hāthala ṭopa baṃdha
272. raṭato dhāṃdhala rāva, lyāvo lyāvo kālavī
273. mādī lakha majhāri, kudai kapi vāṃ dī(ṃ) kuraṃga
274. āṃhacai hui asavāra, revaṃta dhāṃdhala rāva-uta[623]
275. vaḍa vaḍa bhīca vākārī, khāge kari kari khāṭa khaṛi
276. tāpaṛi jodha ti vāra āpaṛi dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
277. pābū upāṛeha, kalaha kaṃ raṃtī kālavī
278. nāṃkhe nasāṛeha, rima ghaṛa dhāṃdhala(ṃ) rāva-uta
279. māre maihadarāva, sāradha pāve sātravāṃ
280. ghoṛā naraye[624] ka ghai, lāgai(ṃ) su dharatī luṭaī
281. jīdo jovaṃtoha, pābū[625] bovaṃto prisuṇa
282. ra(ṃ)ṭato rovaṃtoha, vīramuvo piṇa(ṃ) pāla vaca
283. khīcīṛā khisīyāha, hukamī jīdai rā hutā
284. dekho ghara dīsīyāṃha, gāyāṃ le pābū vale
285. ubhī māraga āya, devalade āḍī dusaṭa

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[618] Blotched. Perhaps; *rahato*.
[619] An illegible letter precedes "ni" .
[620] Blotched. Perhaps: *bukeha*.
[621] Probably: "ḍholāṃ vāgāṃ ḍhīla".
[622] Blotched. Perhaps: *havama*.
[623] Unclear. Perhaps: *rātra-uta*.
[624] The word *naraye* is followed by an illegible letter.
[625] The word *pābū* is followed by a *daṃda*.

286. suṇi cāraṇī sabhāva, dhāva vale lyau dhāṛavī
287. vadalai goharī vīra, mai jīṃdairo mārīyo
288. phuṭai hīyai phakīra, taive lā(ṃ)i saṛo tavai
289. mo gāyāṃ marasīha, suṇi pābū kahatī sakati
290. tai di narī tirasīhā, rāṃbhai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta(ṃ)
291. pāvai jala pyāsīha, khala gāyāṃ khījāṛīyāṃ
292. kohara kālāṃ sīhā, rātī dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
293. bhālai(ṃ) bhā(ṃ)lāloha, āyo kohara uparā
294. vasadhā vahāleha, re lī dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
295. pābū pāṇī pāya, cāraṇīyāṃ nu caṃdaiyai
296. bagasī vega bulāya, dhenāṃ dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
297. pābū sukha pauṛheha, cāraṇi gāyāṃ le cale
298. kolu āya(ṃ) kaheha, ana huṃtī vāta asaṃna
299. būṛā to disa būṛa, dhāṛi paṛī[626] dhara dhāṃdhalāṃ
300. kahīyo āvai kūṛa, vahīyo dhāṃdhal rāva-uta
301. bivanai pābū vīra, yuṃ suṇīyo būṛai abhaṃga
302. āchaṭi khaga adhīra, dhāyāṃ dhāṃdhala[627] rāva-uta
303. bore[628] asvāreha, āpaṛīyo būṛo ābhāṃga
304. vairī vākāreha, kari gairī jāvai kaṭhai
305. jhīdā jamarāṃṇaha, jamāi jāṃṇai ja(ṃ)gata
306. a-i doi[629] āpaṇāha, kade na[630] hī kahīyo kamadha
307. japa to jāyalavāla, gayāṃ le pābū gayo
308. ālai māṭa upāva, rāji vaḍā kījai rakhe
309. khīcī-a(ṃ) ṇa khuṭeha, mārayuṃ būṛo muṇai
310. nāṭho na chuṭaiha, hātīyārā pābū hiṇai
311. mo baṃdhava māreha, aṇbhaṃga pābū ubare
312. kahi suṃsa kareha, rahi rahi dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
313. jīdā aṇa joiha, tai kīdhī būṛo kahai
314. haunī thī huiha, kuṛama bole kāpurasa[631]
315. kuṛā vaiṇa ma katha, būṛā baṃdhava rājhī ro
316. yetha chūḍāye āthi, māharo bhāi marinai
317. tāharī vāta trijāta, nakaṭā huṃ manu nahī
318. pābū vira nripata, tai māryau būṛau tavai
319. mo baṃdhava mareha, vīkhāṃ bharato guṃjavai

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[626] Unclear. Perhaps: *paṛi*.

[627] An unclear sign in the manuscript margin follows *dhāṃ*, perhaps reading: "na", which would result in: *dhāṃnadhala*.

[628] Probably: *bāre*.

[629] An insert-sign follows *do*, indicating "i" in the manuscript margin.

[630] Followed by "ka", which was crossed out.

[631] If the "ā" in the manuscript margin was meant to complete *kapurasa*. Otherwise: *kapurasa*, followed by a *daṃda*.

320. pābū pādhāreha, rāṃma duvāī raji rī
321. re jīṃdā tu rīṇa, mata bhākhai būṛo muṇai
322. pābū vīra pravīṇa, māryo tai kyuṃ mela suṃ
323. rīṇa na bhākhū rāji, kāja vinā kaṃkala karo
324. lokā khaka[632] mālāja, miṭasī sālāṃ mārīyāṃ
325. jīṃdā tāharau jora, jāṃṇa hu būṛo japai
326. nāṭho tadai niṭhora, mārāṛe pita murakhā
327. būṛā mata boleha, bārāṃ bāṃ[633] to duri vacana
328. kula sagalo koleha, rahasī jāsī rāṭhavaṛa
329. āgai balatī agi, bhalāha[634] dho bhaṭakīyo
330. khīcī upara khāga,[635] to lai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
331. nāṃkhai khaiga nirāṭa, disa[636] dhāṃkhai khīcī taṇī
332. jhī kapaṛe khaga jhāṭa, thāṭa virole rahi suthara
333. nārājī niralaṃga, aṃga khataṃgāṃ utare
334. (ra)jora vare riṇa jaṃga, kīdho doya ghaṛīyāṃ kamadha
335. ā ḍe jhaṭake āya, pāṛe būṛo pāṭi pati
336. tada khīcī pacha tāya, rosai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
337. āpata mā āloca, khīcīṛā karatā kharo
338. suṇi sāhiba tadi soca, japi pābū mārāṃ jhara[637]
339. jīṃdai mana mā jāṃṇi, sācī ye pābū suṇī
340. to kula sagalai kevāṃṇa, kāṛhai sisavā vīsa[638] kari
341. nāhara tha(ṃ)ko na cīta, pābū kohara poṛhīyo
342. āṃpāṃ jāya acīta, māthai paṛi maṛi mārisāṃ
343. caṛhaī khīcī cāleha, aṃpāṃ[639] pābū uparā
345. sutai uṭha(ṃ) saṃbāhi, dhāyo dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
346. āgai āheṛīha, bali pābū vākārīyā
347. purī mara paṛīha, khīcīṛā lāgā khisaṇa
348. jhīdo jāyalīyāṃha, vākārai veṛhīmaṇo
349. dekho dāyalī yāṃha, nāṭha hī chuṭo nahī
350. nauṛā āya bineha, khīcīṛā chāṛai khataṃga
351. āḍo āya aṛeha, vājai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
352. uḍaiṃ ā(ṃ)kārīṭha, lekhai bāhiro lohaṛai
353. dekhe deve dīṭha, vaḍa jhudha teṇa vakhaṃṇīyo
354. bāṃṇāṃ sarāṃ bāṃḍa, tuṭai lakha khīcī(ṃ) taṇā

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[632] Unclear. Perhaps: *yaka*.
[633] Blotched. Perhaps: *chāṃ*.
[634] If the "ā" scribbled in the manuscript margin was meant to follow *bha*, we should read: *bhālāha*.
[635] Blotched. Perhaps: *phāga*.
[636] Blotched. Perhaps: *visa*.
[637] Blotched. Perhaps: *jharū*.
[638] Blotched. Perhaps: *visavā vīsa*.
[639] Blotched. Perhaps: *aṃyāṃ*.

355. mathai upari māṃḍa, uḍīyo dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
356. khīcī dala khāṃṛeha, rami ḍaṃḍe holī ramai
357. māthā viṇa māṃḍeha, rahi rahi dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
358. sira bāhiro satrāṃha, pābū kitāṃi[640] pāṛato
359. muṇi khīcī mitrāṃha, būḍī thāṃ budhi bāhirāṃ
360. milanai mitrī seha, mati pheravi kīdho mato
361. vaki visaā vīseha, pābū iyuṃ paṛasi pahavi
362. lākhī raṃga loiha, oṛhāi tana uparā
363. isaṛī ajoiha, kīdhī tada paṛī o kamadha
364. arīyāṃ ojhāṛeha, parīyāṃ jala cāṛhe prabhati
365. paṛīyo lakha pāṛeha, riṇa mai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
366. jhīṃdai vacā[641] jyāṃrīha, kahiyā cāṃdai ye kathana
367. pemāṃ ati pyārīha, rāṃḍe dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
368. malavaṭa khīcī māṃṇa, pala vaṭa(la) hutā pākaṛe
369. pābū vāca pramāṃṇa, kī jīdo choṛe kamadha
370. sāte[642] vīse sura, paṛi pābū rī pa(ṃ)khatī
371. caṃdā satra cakacura, viṇa(ṃ) lekhai kīdhā vaṛhe
372. pābū dharatī pāṛi, khīcī ghara disa salakīyā
373. cāraṇīyāṃ rī cāḍa, viṛhīyā dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
374. vali pābū jīvaṃta, cali āi ka(ṃ)hi cāraṇī
375. kai kali mai kīrati, rakhu dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
376. pābū iyuṃ prabhaṇaṃta, sāṃbhali devalade sakati
377. pava vaikuṭha vasaṃta, thāpi prīthī māṃ thāpanā
378. de devī āsīsa, kamadhaja rā suṇi suṇi kaghaṃna
379. varadhā koḍi varīsa, sauha japasī dhyāsī jagata
380. pābū tau pāchaiha, devā tana dakhai dunī
381. kuṇa vākhāṃṇa karaiha, rasaṇāṃ dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
382. pā(ṃ)bū to pratāha, kiṇa hutā jāvai kahya
383. suṇi āgai suratāha, kamadhaja tāharī kahu
384. vātāṃ vaja vajīyāṃha, paṛi būṛo pābū paṛe
385. caṛhi cālīsa tīyāṃha, kamadhāṃ ri kaṭhe caṛhaṇa
386. nripa būṛai rī nāri, idhakī ā kīdhī acaṛa
387. jharaṛo peṭa maṃjhāra, kaṭārī le kāṛhīyo
388. bhuvā bhojāyāṃha, mā māsī mausālīyāṃ
389. bālaka lyau bāyāṃha, vaira sahī o vālasī[643]
390. prabhaṇai iyuṃ pravāra, gahilī ḍoḍa gahelaṛī
391. maha ko kahai saṃsāra, māta pakhai bālaka marai

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[640] Unclear. Perhaps: *kitāi(ṃ)*.
[641] Or: *vaca*, followed by a *daṃda*.
[642] Or: *sāte*, followed by a *daṃda*.
[643] Blotched. Perhaps: *valasī*.

392. tavatī pāli talāva, pīpala bāṃdho pālaṇo
393. vali hīcolai vāva, kara aṃguṭhai dudha kari
394. beṭau būṛairoha, āṃphe hui moṭo avasi
395. khīcīṛāṃ khāroha, lāgai yu vidhanā likhyo
396. udhami bolī āthi, būṛā pābū rī binhai,[644]
397. haṭha kari nāṃnī hādhī,[645] bālaka de satīyāṃ valī
398. jharaṛo iyu jhīlaṃtoha, hui moṭo satīyāṃ hukami
399. ākhari anītoha, pīṛaṃ to paṇihārīyāṃ
400. māṃmī piṇa tiṇa māṃhi, āya jala bharavā uṭhai
401. saba dina iyuṃ saṃtāya, yeka dina kahi o(ṃ)yo khati[646]
402. māṃṭī paṇo ma dākhi, bhāṃji ghaṛā pāṃṇī bharati
403. lyuṃjhe velā lākha, paihalī hī mai pālīyo
404. tātī kako tāta, mātā bhrātā mārīyā
405. jhāṃṇāvai nī jāti, satrava māre sakajā
406. āṃhacai jharaṛo āya, kahīyā nāṃnī thī kathana
407. kuṇa kāko kuṇa māta, kuṇa pitā māharai kavaṇa
408. karatī ghaṇā kalāpa, nāṃnī o māṃnai nahī
409. sūto kiṇa heka sāpa, japi pāpaṇī jagāṛīyo
410. tāharo būṛo bāpa, kāko to pābū kamadha
411. iṇa moṭo āsāpa, jyāṃnu māryā jīdarai
412. suṇi jharaṛo su(ṃ) dhoha, jāyala nu javai jaru
413. budha su prata budhoha, jogī hu jāṃnīyo
414. nijarāṃ gorakhanātha, dīṭhāṃ paga jhāle dahu
415. hita su māthai hātha, paraṭhe jogi puchīyo
416. kuṇa bālaka kuṇa kāja, kuṇa dukhīyo dīsai[647] kahai
417. āyasa māharo āja, bhāga khule thāṃ bheṭīyāṃ
418. taba jharaṛo tiṇa vāra, vātāṃ vivarāṃ su vighana[648]
419. āyasa rījha apāra, kari celo kahiyā kathana
420. jharaṛā māharī jhuṭha, āṃṇa khīcī vahī agai
421. rahiyo huṃ piṇa rūṭhi, jai dina thī ga-irī japī[649]
422. jī(ṃ)dai jogāṃdrāha, kuḍī tāharī āṃṇa kari
423. muṇi caulo machaṃdrāha, suṇi jharaṛā moṭo samadha
424. būṛāvata būṛaiha, paraṇāi pemāvatī
425. kari khīcī kuṛaiha, kārā dyo mo kālavī[650]
426. jore huya jaṃjāla, kesari (dyo) pābū kumakha

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[644] Probably: *binhai*. Or *bi* followed by a *daṃda* and *nhai*, resulting in "*bi/nhai*".
[645] Perhaps: *hāthī*.
[646] Perhaps: *ṣati*.
[647] Two *daṃdas* follow *dī* (*dī / /*).
[648] Two *daṃdas* follow *vighana* (*vighana / /*).
[649] Unclear.
[650] A *daṃda* follows *kāla* (*kāla / vī*).

427. kamadha vasū hui kāla, mata cūkai būṛo muṇai
428. gāyāṃ garhavāṛāṃha, lejo the mhe na laṛāṃ
429. puro pravāṛāṃha, pābū āpaṛasī prathama
430. munī yo māro mata, surahī dyau ghoṛī saṭai
431. suṇi jīṃdo kahai sati, naha mārūṃ pābū nripat
432. salau samajhāvaiha, jīdā nu būṛo(ṃ) jaṃdai
433. hīyai saca huvaiha, nau to kījai devaco
434. khīcī āṃṇa kharīha, kahi gorakha māharī karī
435. veṛhāṃ bhalī (bu)rīha, huvai piṇa pābū rahaṇa
436. tiṇa jīdo to khāra, būṛo pābū hiṇa vinhai
437. mujha hukama jā māri, kahi gorakha jharaṛā[651] kamaṃdha
438. āyasa mo sira āca, taiṃ dīdhā jharaṛau tavai
439. (sa)satra māra sauṃ sāca, āraṃkha[652] kahi ko gaṃmacau
440. sira maṃge huṛa[653] syāṃma, hai tonūṃ desi [avasa][654]
441. kamadhaja tāharau kāṃma, pūrai paṛai(ṃ) yo pārikho
442. hīya(ṃ)ṛai maṃjhi harakhāya, gura vaṃde khīdho gavaṇa
443. jāyala jharaṛai jāya, gorakhanātha jagāṛīyo
444. vīṭhai dhanū ḍarāya, jāye pāya lāgai jagata
445. o āmalī ṛū rāya, kohika keṛāita kāṃadhāṃ
446. na līyai bhugati na khāya, pahalo ke tada puchīyo
447. kalo hu(ṛa) kahāya, lyāvo sira to huṃ leūṃ
448. dasarāhā ro dīha, mela hutī huṛa mārīyo
449. bālaka ro mana bīha, paṛīyo lyāyā pāṃcaṇo
450. jharaṛai mātho jhāli, kāco dāṃte karaṛīyo[655]
451. satra dekhe ura sāla, jogī olakhīyo jarai
452. āyasa ralī āita, hasi ḍakha ḍakha mana mā huvo
453. dusamaṇa huvā ducīṃta, sopai paṛi baharai sako
454. premāṃ kanai prakāsa, jāye kathīyo jīṃdarai
455. vairī karaṇa viṇāsa, au ko jogī āvīyo
456. kāṃya[656] mo bola kahaṃta, moṭai kula mai māharau
457. kuṇa ubarīyo kaṃta, tau āgai kahatī tīyā
458. phaigara krama phuṭoha, sūto trī vā ika suṇe
459. jotu(ṃ) kuṇa jhuṭhoha, kai kāṃ to sācī kahai
460. pemāṃ puchevāha, āi ādhī rāti rī
461. kamadhāṃ rā kevāha, tu levā āyo tripaṭa
462. āyasa audra kīyoha, iṇa monu olakhīyo

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[651] Blotched. Probably: *jharaṛo*.
[652] Unclear. Perhaps: *āraṃpha*.
[653] Unclear. N.S. Bhati (1973) reads: *hūi*.
[654] Blotched. N.S. Bhati (1973) reads: *avasa*.
[655] Blotched. Perhaps: *karaṛāṃ ayo*.
[656] An insert-sign follows *kāṃ*, indicating *ya* in the manuscript margin.

463. kiṇa kamadhaja kahīyo, nārī mhe sikha nātha rā
464. āyasa kuṛa ma ākhi, jhūṭhī to dīsai nijara
465. motī vāta ma rākhi, kā to mārāṛu[657] kamaṃdha
466. māī kuṇa māraiha, jogī mhe gorakha japāṃ
467. suṇi khīcī sāra iha, kāsuṃ chai jā kuka nhīṃ
468. jogīṛā(ṃ) jīṃdoha, nīṃdāṃ mā sūto nripata
469. uṭhasī unīdoha, suṇasī to desī sajhā
470. mati hīṇī māiha, motī asuhāi ma kari
471. jīṃdā nu jāiha, muṇi vaigī to mārasī
472. jogī taṇā jabāb, pemāṃ suṇe pichāṃṇīyo[658]
473. amhīṇai kula āba, satrava hi saṛhī calāvasā
474. mo citā meṭoha, jāṃṇū tonu jogi nā
475. būṛā ro beṭoha, tāharo jharaṛo nāṃma tavi
476. vijakhe karai[659] vicāra, āyasa hutā ātimā
477. nārī ā niradhāra, pāṃtara nhī to pemāṃ bhuvā
478. jāṃṇāyo jiṇavāra, āpaṇa yo pemāvatī
479. yuṃ mukha huta ucāra, re jharaṛā kuṛo ma kahi
480. bīhe māṃ bījeha, koi nahī pemāṃ kamaṃdha
481. dhāṃdhalaṃ mo dhījeha, sudhi bāhirā hu svāsaṇī
482. ātama ulasīyoha, olakhi lohī āparo
483. bhuvā bhātrījoha, māho maiṃ sāyāṃ milai
484. bīrā bālī vesa, resa na sakai rima joravara
485. naiṛā āpaṇa nesa, jā pācho pemāṃ japai
486. bhuvā tuṃ bholīha, kī ulī pailī karai
487. sakharī sa sulīha, kāheka ghāta vatāya ghara
488. bālo bolāyeha, pemāṃ sukha pāyo nipaṭa
489. dhīraja dharāyeha, āye mo vāṃsai avasi
490. āyasa lāri avāsi, caṛhi pemāṃ khīcī taṇai
491. sūtau sāma nisāsa, jā jharaṛā mārai japai
492. jharaṛo(ṃ) jhajhakhāṃṇoha, caka dekhe khīcī taṇā
493. jāgai jhamarāṃṇoha, vali pācho pemāṃ vaṃdai
494. kamadhāṃ vhau jo keṛi, phiṭa phiṭa tuṃ pācho vaṃlai
495. bīhe māṃ sira beṛi, mraga[660] nidrā sūto marada
496. būṛāvata boleha, bhuvāre lāgo bhalo
497. ākhai tana oleha, ghātai naha porasa ghaṇo
498. pācho vali prākrama, bhuvā dikhalābu bhalo
499. jīdā māraṇa jāṃni, mahilāṃ di somala pīyo

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[657] Blotched. Perhaps: *mārādu*.
[658] Blotched. Perhaps: *khichāṃṇīyo*.
[659] Blotched. Perhaps: *jharai*.
[660] N.S. Bhati (1973) reads: *mriga*.

500. upari chātī[661] āya, būṛāvata baiṭhau bahisa
501. jāyala rāva jagāya, kāko pita māṃgu kahai
502. jīṃdo jāgai joya, kālarūpa dīṭho kamadha
503. kahi to samo na koya, prāṃṇa vacai paraṇāvasūṃ
504. nakaṭā na choḍuha, moṛu sira jharaṛo muṇai
505. tāharī jaṛa to ṛuha, to jāṃṇe būṛai taṇo
506. iyu kahi jharaṛai āci, khaṃjara lenai khovīyo
507. velā bījī vāca, nārī suṇai na upaṛī
508. vapa tīvi choṛeha, le mātho cālai capala
509. ve bai(ṭha) hoṛeha, kāko pita bhuvā kahai
510. mātho de monuha, bhātrījā lyu bhāṃvaṇā
511. deva kā(ṃ)rija donuha, sudharai mo huvāṃ satī
512. tada jharaṛai tatakāli, pemāṃ (sira) samape pule
513. katha ugai kiraṇāla, vātāṃ saga(ṃ)lai vāparī
514. tada vājāṛe tura, basāhiba gali laye satī
515. kāṭhe caṛhī karūra, pemāṃ ujavālai paṛhū
516. pābū rai pāyeha, āya jharaṛai ākhīyo
517. jāyala mai jāyeha, jālama māre jīṃdaro
518. (bha)khai bhālāloha, bhātrījā jāyo bhalāṃ
519. amha kula ujavāloha, pakhi bālau pīṛho pakhe
520. suragira gaṃga sama(ṃ)da, tara tārā tīratha tavu
521. sūraja caṃda suraṃda, ila tāṃ laga rahijā amara
522. suṇīyā vaiṇa rasāla, pābū rā jharaṛai pratakhi
523. būṛāvata biradāla, rājī huya ramato rahyau
524. pābū to pratāpa, āja lagai jharaṛau amara
525. tīna na lāgai tāpa, kali khālaṭi tāṃ laga kamadha
526. iti pābūjī rā dūhā.

## *Parvaro* (Ms. 402)

*atha pābū rā prāvāṛā likhyate*
1. atha pābū rā prāvāṛā likhyate
2. vāghai māhī vidhe[662] ka, nahī māmnai āī kachu
3. ila mai vājo eka, dhāṃgaṛavā maṛhi dhāṃdhalāṃ
4. dhāṃgaṛavā thī ṛhola, māḍāṃ vāghai maṃgāṛīyo
5. bālāyo jasa bola, bhope bhālā lo subhaṭa
6. kahatau rāva kamaṃdha, ākho the keī araja
7. pābū kanai prabaṃdha, tāva bhopā vāghā taṇau

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[661] A *daṃda* follows "chā" (*chā/tī*).
[662] Blotched. Perhaps: *vine*.

8. vāghai jorāvara, lope maṃgāyo ṛhola[663] rau
9. pābū tiṇa pukāra, sāṃbhali dhāṃdhala sīha-uta
10. kamadhaji upari kopa, kīdho bhopāṃ nu[664] kahai
11. thā pila pīṭha jathāpa,[665] āṃṇū ṛhola[666] utāvalo
12. pābū dukhave peṭa, gāṛhau vāghai kamadha ro
13. sākarava ḍosa meṭa, kūka phūṭī okhada kase
14. guṇa nuhavai ligāra, bhopā bharaṛā pūchīyā[667]
15. e[668] pābū upagāra, kīdhau vājā kāraṇai
16. tata khiṇa bhopā teṛi, puṇatāṃ paṛiyo paṃtaro[669]
17. pābū[670] rāvata peṛa, sāṃbhalau thāro sako
18. sācai muṃṇa sīcoha, pābū ro ghāto puṇai
19. īsaṛau ū sīcoha, kīdho yuṃ sājo kamadha
20. vāgho ṛhola[671] vajāi, pābū rai lāgai page
21. pāchau maṛhi[672] pauhacāra, thā pe sojhita thāmpanā
22. kamadhaja prāṃ māṃṇa kareha, karūṃti kuṃ Bhopa kahai
23. tada sīcau ghateha, vāghai sukha pāyo bahuta
24. vājatra vajāṛeha, sojhati maṛha ghāye sarasa
25. pābū pūjāṛeha, hara khāṛe vāgho hiyai
26. jodha hara joeha, pābū rai lāgau pagai
27. pācho paha cāeha, dhāmgavāya ṛhola[673] rau
28. rope ratanā deha, khejaṛa khāviṛa pākhatī
29. viṇa samadhai vāṛheha,[674] jaṃgai bhāṭījai tīyai
30. ratanāṃ ro vaṃtī, kolu maṛhi pābū nhai
31. āī ākhaṃtī, jorā varāṃkī[675] jhaitīyai
32. vāhara pābū vīra, muṇi bāī kahi māharī
33. dhāṃdhala ratanāṃ dhīra, karū kahai ūpara kamadha
34. bhāṭī nu bhelau, māre kīdhama sosa nai
35. mila mina pāṃ melau, tālau[676] vīchai jai nīyo
36. lākhe kahi lokeha, veha likhe jaṛa vāṛhiyo
37. naine naha dekheha, thī[677] pābū rī thāpanā

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[663] Probably: *ḍhola*.
[664] Followed by "m", which was crossed out, resulting in "nu".
[665] Unclear. Perhaps: *jathāya*.
[666] Probably: *ḍhola*.
[667] Unclear. Perhaps: *puchīyā*.
[668] Prior to "e", *muṇa nu have* was written prior and crossed out.
[669] Perhaps: *yaṃtaro*.
[670] Prior to "pābū", *kha* was written and crossed out.
[671] Probably: *ḍhola*.
[672] A *daṃda* follows *maṛhi*, perhaps *maṛhī* was meant.
[673] Probably: *ḍhola*.
[674] Unclear. Perhaps: *ghāṛheha*, though the rules for alliteration suggest: *viṇa ... vāṛheha*.
[675] Blotched. Perhaps: *varīkī*.
[676] A *daṃda* follows *tā* (*tā/lau*).

38. jaitau yu japai, khunī hu pābū ro kharo
39. guṇa haī dukha gamaiha, topāi e āvu turata
40. rāvatajī thāroha, vara jaṃtāṃ taravara vāṛhiyo
41. ropu rū pāroha, sonārī kari sāṃgarī
42. yuṃ kahi usīcoha, kīdhī ve dina dūri kara
43. nimakha māṃhi nīcoha, jaitai nu jovāṛīyo
44. gaṃgai hu upagāra, bhālālai kīdho bhalau
45. muhiyaṛase khomāri, daulatīyo bhāgau durita
46. jhālā suṇiju jhāri, ajagai biūpara karai
47. ukāre ke vāra, kaṭa kāṃ āgila koṭaṛo
48. pābū pāsara ṇāha, kalu ara phaujāṃ nāṃ karai
49. to paratāpa huti ha,[678] vijakai dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
50. pābū tāharī pūṭhi, āe khūṃ nīuvarai
51. deva parā krama dutha,[679] vasadhā dhāṃdhala rāba-uta[680]
52. vaṃsa vāṃkhāṃṇeha, kīrati mohana dāsa kavi
53. dīdhī dugāṃṇīha,[681] rī[682]jhe dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
54. budha bāhiro bolauha, bhrama paṛīyā ghari ghari bhaṭika
55. dai anacīta ḍaloha, āṃṇe dhāṃdhala rāva-uta
56. pābū pāra na pāṃmi, tāī loke jasa tāharo
57. sūṇi budhi sāsū sāṃmi, jasa gāyo ladharājīyai
58. pābū pāṛosīha, devī mīthai hātha de
59. japīyo tojasa jīha, kamadhaja yuṃ ladharāja kahi
60. e mosū upagāra, kījai kari joṛe kahu
61. nita uṭhe naṃranāha, kīrita bhuṃju māharī kahī
62. rājī tiyāṃ rakhavāla, huī jo rāva sīhā harā
63. bhālālā bhupāla, velā ati paṛīyai vikhama
64. kathī ladhā te krītā, mo pyārī pābū muṇai
65. paṛhai sūṇai supravīta, tiṇa upara karasūṃ turata
66. āja lagai aṇajāṃṇi,[683] dukha to nu sabalo dīyo
67. suṇi tāharī suvāṃṇi, rājī hai ladharājīya
68. kaha to rāva kamaṃdha, tu sevaga devī taṇo
69. so sabalo sanamaṃdha, āṃpāṃ chai ladharājīyā
70. tonu chaiyari tīna, pāṛosī jasa ekā prabhā[684]
71. āja pacho ākhīna tāharo huṃ madha kara taṇā
72. ladhīyā lokā ika, devī tina bhina devatā

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[677] Blotched. Perhaps: *thāṃ*.
[678] A *daṃda* precedes and follows ha (*/ha/*).
[679] Blotched. Perhaps: *huṭha*.
[680] Probably: *rāva-uta*.
[681] Blotched. Perhaps: (*h*)*ugāṃṇīha*. Alliteration would require: *dīdhī ... dugāṃṇīha*.
[682] Followed by "dha", which has been crossed out.
[683] Blotched. Perhaps: *aṇji-jāṃṇi*.
[684] Unclear. A *daṃda* precedes and follows *prabha* (*/prabha/*).

73. visahathī vāyaka, sūṇī[685]yā chai māharā sakai
74. devāṃ māṃhi dubhāṃti, rī kahu mata le vato
75. khitavā sī sūra khāṃti, jasa gāyo ladharājīyai
76. bhālālā bhara māī, lo kāṃnu keī lūṃḍīyā
77. māharai manuṛā māṃī, bhinana hasaba deve bhagita
78. jasavaṃta jodhāṃ ṇaiha(ṃ), chatra dhārī pratapai chato
79. mītāṃ teṇa muṇaiha, jasa pābū ladharājīyai
80. pābū krīta puṇīha, satrau(ṃ)[686] sai āṛhāro tarai
81. cavadasa cāṃda raṇīha, caitra māsi citrāna kṣatra
82. dūhā murasai doī, pābū rā ati prīta thī
83. suṇi lokāyai[687] soī, kahyā ladhai devī[688] hukama
84. iti pābūjī rā dūhā sampuraṇaṃ
85. saṃ 1827 vi sai rā vaisākha vada 10 dine likhatu paṃ khusyala carī āsarāmadhye
86. g̱rī, cha, ṣrī, chā, ṣrī, chā.

## *Git* I, *git* II and *duha* II

### *Git* I (Ms. 15009)[689]

1. *gīta pābūjī rau*.
2. pābū pāṭi re rūpaka rā(ṃ)ṭhavaṛe, seve tujha sadhīrā
3. vegaḍai[690] pālī varadāī, sahi laṃkā taṇā sāṃḍhaḍiyā.
4. pābū ai parabata kīyā pādhara, gharahara[691] pākhara ghoṛe
5. sihā harai lī(ṃ)yā(ṃ)[692] sāṃḍhīṛīyā, lāi lākhāṃ muhaḍe laḍai
6. rāte (i)lī[693] baisā(ṃ)[694] valharāṃ sū, uṭhai[695] jhoka avārī

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[685] In *sūṇīṇīyā*, "ṇī" was crossed out.
[686] In *satrau*(*ṃ*)*ta*, "ta" was crossed out.
[687] Blotched. Perhaps: *lokoyai*.
[688] A *daṃda* follows "de" (*de/vī*).
[689] In this manuscript, it has proved difficult to establish whether the *anusvār*s represent nasalization signs or not. The poem has been written over an older text, which has now almost faded except for some *anusvār*s which are still visible.
[690] Probably: *vegaṛai* (cf. Shekavat [1968: 25], who has *vegaṛa*). In manuscript 15009, the scribe differentiates between "ṛa" and "ḍa" in a rather variable manner, spelling "camels" as *sāṃḍhaḍiyā* (v.2) and *sāṃḍhīṛīyā* (v.4 ).
[691] Here, if what appears to be an earlier notation of *anusvār*s is taken into account one reads: *gha*(*ṃ*)*ra*(*ṃ*)*hara*(*ṃ*). Shekavat (1968: 25) has *gharahara*.
[692] Probably: *līyā* (cf. Shekavat 1968: 25).
[693] Unclear sign, probably representing "i".
[694] Unclear whether the letters "ba" and "sa" were meant to be crossed out, or whether they should be read as *baisā*(*ṃ*), *baisī*(*ṃ*), *besī*(*ṃ*), or perhaps *baisau*(*ṃ*).

7. pāta līyai āṃṇī prama vale, sā(ṃ)rā jhoka savhārī(ṃ).
8. pāchima disi pābū pādharai, vegaja kamadhaji vālī
9. pa(ṃ)ra dīpāṃ sūṃ lyāyau(ṃ) pābū, kivalai rāi kamālī.

## *Git* II (Ms. 8234)

1. *gīta*. taṇī baṃdhāvaṇa netabaṃdha dharaṇa soḍhāṃ tan(ī)[696]
2. taraṇa caṃdra (ba)dana[697] kaja varaṇa tābū
3. amara katha karaṇa prathamāda sira ūmadā
4. paraṇabā[698] āviyau rāva pābū.
5. jhīṇa(ṃ) ga(ṃ)ṭhajoṛa[699] paṭa bāṃdha kara jhālīyau
6. jaṭhai vara vīdaṇī heka joṛī
7. cāraṇāṃ taṇau vita dhāṛa cāliyau[700]
8. ghāliyau jyā gamai roa ghaurī.
9. neha nava rī (ji)kā vāta cita na dhārī
10. prema gavarī taṇau nāṃma pāyau
11. rāja (kam)varī (*rahī camvarī*)[701] caḍhī
12. āpa bhamarī taṇī pīṭha(ṃ) āyau.
13. dhrībacha(ṛa) dhrībachaṛa akara pai dharatīṃ
14. kula[702] (na)ṭa baṭā jyūṃ makara (k)aratī
15. kālakā cakara jyūṃ nāvaṛī keviyāṃ
16. bhaṛī sira kālamī ḍakara bharatī.
17. jyāga rā gīta suṇa(ṃ) pri(taṃ) na rījikai
18. prīta hada cāraṇāṃ hūṃta pālai
19. vita rau vāharū vaṇyau tiṇa vari mai(ṃ)
20. cīta raja rīta vaṭa taṇai cālai.
21. āvatā dekha raṃga dhāṛivyāṃ kayai yama
22. vājatāṃ nagārāṃ nāvaṛayau vī(ṃ)da
23. jāvatāṃ ābai dhana lera naha jāṃṇa dūṃ
24. jaṭhai paga thobhīyā saṃbharī jīmda.
25. hāka suṇa khīcīyāṃ nātha naha hāliyau

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[695] Blotched. Perhaps: *muṭhai*. However, alliteration would require: "*utahi* ... *avārī*" (*mitr varṇ vaiṇasagāī*).
[696] Blotched. Perhaps: *tan*(*ā*). N.S. Bhati (1973: 83) reads *tanī*.
[697] Unclear. N.S. Bhati (*ibid.*) reads *badana*.
[698] Probably: *paraṇavā* (cf. N.S. Bhati 1973: 83).
[699] In this manuscript, "ṛa" is written resembling "u". Compare *joṛī* (v. 6), *dhāṛa* (v.7), *dhrībachaṛa* (v.13), *nāvaṛī* (v.15), etcetera.
[700] N.S. Bhati (1973: 83) has: "cāraṇāṃ taṇau vita dhāṛa meṃ cāliyau".
[701] An insert sign following *varī* refers to illegible words scribbled above, perhaps reading: *rā darā*. N.S. Bhati (1973: 83) has *rahī camvarī*. Subh Karan Deval (personal communication) suggests: *jikā rahī*.
[702] Blotched. Perhaps *kulī*.

26. mūcha vala ghāliyau bāṃdha mālau
27. aṭhī kuḷaṃ ujālai pāla adhrīyāmaṇai
28. bhūjāḷai jhāḷiyau hātha bhālau(ṃ).
29. bājya khaga jhaṭaka behu(ṃ)vā kaṭaka[703] bicālai
30. vikhama dhaṛa phūṭa sira saṭaka sahiyā
31. lotha hūto paṛe tūṭa māthā laṭaka
32. raṭaka pa(ṃ)tha aṭaka varavīra rahiya.
33. phera bhuja seḷa ara viroḷaṇa phāṃ(dha)lāṃ[704]
34. ghera dhaṇa bāṃdhalāṃ khaṛau vaḍagāta
35. chilachilā patara bhara jogaṇī chakā
36. chataradhara dhino jī dhāṃdhalāṃ chāta.
37. caṃda ḍāṃmai jisā paratha jima mana naṃmā
38. sāṃparatha karī tana kāca sīsī
39. āvalā jhūla rāvata paṛe avīḍhā
40. viḍhe saṃga(ṃ) sāṃvaḷā(ṃ) sāta vīsī.
41. teṇa dina bāṃdha paṇa āca khaga toīyau
42. boliyau sāca ūjavālavā bola
43. pāḷabā vacana paṇa mara rahiyau prathī
44. kālamī saḍhai vita vālabā kola.[705]

## *Duha* II (Ms. 14458)

1. *pābūjī dhāṃdhala āsthāṃnauta rā dūhā*.
2. pavaṃga alāgai pāgi, sāṃcara tau sū dhaunahī
3. bhālau[706] trījai bhāgi, dhavīyau dhāṃdhali rāva ūta.
4. kalahaṇa kolū kāha, kāi kalahaṇa kurakheta kā
5. sahaiṃ sorī khāha, rūpaka dhāṃdhala rāva ūta.
6. pālha suṇe pokāra, gāyāṃ cī ahalī gamata
7. aṃbara biṇi ādhāra, rahata na dhāṃdhala rāva ūta.
8. pābū iṇi pari ja-i, pahi loi ūṭhavatāṃ pavaṃga
9. kiri vaisaṃ nara vāi, dhamīyau dhāṃdhala rāva ūta.
10. pābū pāṛi paṭhāṃṇa, pāsi kamala paṛīyā pachau
11. bālaka jyūṃ vauha jāṃṇa, rīkhai dhāṃdhala rāva ūta.

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[703] The "ā" in *kāṭaka* was crossed out, resulting in: *kaṭaka*.
[704] Unclear. N.S. Bhati (1973: 83) has: *kāṃdhalāṃ*.
[705] According to the poet Shivdatta Samdu (personal communication, January 2001), the above version of *git* II is incomplete since it is known to have four more verse-lines in the contemporary Charan tradition, i.e. "*sagata tha hukamī dhinojī dhāṃdhala sutana*, *jagata dhina māṭa piṭa jikāṃ jiṇiyo*. *Kahai kāḷi giravarau ukata para māṃ raga katha*, *samaṃdrā lagga bārakāṃṇa sugiyau sabha*".
[706] A *daṃda* follows *bhālau*, and was crossed out.

## *Contemporary Mātā paravāṛo*s

Below, I have included the transliterations of four contemporary *mātā* epic *paravāṛau*s performed by Asha Ram, Bonne Ram, Khumbha Ram, Rupa Ram and Jetha Ram and recorded during visits to the Kolu temple in the period between 1999 and 2001. The *mātā* epic *paravāṛau*s are titled: *Jalama rau paravāṛau*, *Byāva rau paravāṛau*, *Vāhara rau paravāṛau* (also referred to as *Ḍhaiṃbā rai sūrāpaṃṇa rau)* and *Jhararājī rau paravāṛau*. My understanding of the recorded *paravāṛau*s is based on their Rajasthani transcription and Hindi interpretation by Subh Karan Deval and on conversations with the *mātā* epic performer Jetha Ram and the temple priest Tulsi Singh Rathaur. Explanatory remarks in the footnotes refer to personal communications by Jetha Ram and Tulsi Singh Rathaur (Kolu 2000) who assisted with the transliteration of some episodes. Bracketed words in italics signify words and meanings added later by Jetha Ram to clarify the meaning of a verse-line or to add words omitted during the performance. Lingering mistakes are, of course, my own.

## *Jalama rau paravāṛau*

1. rāṭhauṛāṃī ghara kaṃvara jalamiyā, mārū vājai sovana thālajī.
2. ai ghara ghariyai haraṣa vadhāvaṇā o jī ghara ghara baṃṭī jī vadhā iyāṃ.
3. paravāṛau rāṭhauṛāṃ ghare nita navo bhāijī, cāṃnaṇī nai cavadasa rī rāṭa dhāṃdhalajī rai kaṃvara pāla jalamiyā.
4. motiyāṃ rai badhāvai kaṃvara halarāvaṇā, hāṃjī raṇake nai jhaṇakai vāje sovana thālajī.
5. āja rāṭhauṛā ghara ānaṃda rā auchāṛajī rājadhaṇī ūpara navagaja dala caṛhai.
6. liyā kaṃvara nai sovana kuṃḍe saṃpaṛāyajī rāja vīṃṭiyā resama rā potaṛā, lapeṭiyā resama rai pīle potaṛā bhaījī.
7. have māravāṛ meṃ baimcī jai guṛa rī bheliyāṃ, bārai maṇa baiṃciyāī mustī khāṃḍa.
8. pahalaṛī badhāī rāja darabāra pachai baṃṭāī badhāī sagalai sahara (*se'ra*) meṃ hurejī.
9. he badhāī eka vadhāū mela (*ḍirāvasā*) vadhāī rāj loga dhāmdhala beṭesī jī re eka vadhāū rāvatāṃlaga melāṃjī badhāyāṃ dhāṃdhalaji (*baiṃṭasī*).
10. eka rau kevatāṃ doṛiyā doya ghāra rāja dūjai ūpara māṇasa āṃga– loraji thaṭe juṛa baiṭho gehalotāṃ rai raja darabāra jī rājala jī badhāyāṃ jhaṭa beṃṭiyā jī.
11. rāva dhāṃdhalajī nai lākha badhāī dīra vāṃjī rāja lāḍesar kaṃvara jalamiyā.
12. iṇa bolīrā mhai karatā imarata koḍajī rāja moṃhaṛa, bharāūṃ thārāṃ khāraka khoparāṃ sovana muralī bīṛāūṃ vadhāū rai konajī rājabhalo, itarī vadhāī le thārai gharai sidhāvajī rāja, vadhāī gurū josiyāṃ ī māṃgalai re jī.
13. kuṃdaṇa kaṛo hai vadhāū rai hāthajī rāja ravaṛau gharāṃ nai mālhatāṃ re jī.

14. he jī thaṭa juṛa baiṭho gaharo josījī rau sātha jī sabha meṃ jaṭhai badhāyāṃ beṃṭiyai bhaījī, riṛamalajī sī lākha badhāī (*dirāvasāṃ*) jajamānāṃ meṃ haraṣa badhāvaṇā.
15. iṇa bolīrā mhai karata imarata koḍajī rāja thāroṃ bharāūṃ khāra karano parājī bhaījī, solavaṛe sone ro deve josi nārelajī rāj baṃdhāvai josī rai mauliyau, itarī vadhāī lai ghara thāṃrauṛe jāve jī vadhāī baṃtāī sagale sahara meṃ ji.
16. saṛa vaṛa karai gurū josī sināṃna ara nicovai peraṇa rā dhotiyā, aṃvalīṃ nai saṃvalī bāṃdhai purohita josī pāga jī rāja aṃgaṛai opatā.
17. khevai purohitajī agara caṃdaṇa rau dhūpa jī rāja sāmhāya bhole bhagvāna rai jī.
18. he dikhai gurū josī pothī lie hātha jī rāja mhārā āve josī peca saṃvāratā.
19. thaṭa juṛa baiṭho gaharo dhāmdhalajī ro darabārajī rāja ara bole re kula āsathāṃ nai jī juṛa utāro jājama rī ḍavī kanāra virājo vaḍa dālī rāja jājamāṃ.
20. jājama virājai thāṃrā bhāī nai umarāvajī mhārai to ḍhalāvo pīlo pātiyo.
21. vāṃcau gurū josī vāra nakhatāṃ rī kai tiva rāja kāṃī rai nakhatāṃ mai kaṃvara jalamiyā bhaījī rai.
22. cāṃnaṇī cavadasa rī hai rai vaṇa rāta jī rāja pūnama rī ghaṛiyā meṃ pāla jalamiyau re jī, kesara kyārī meṃ liyo baluṛau avatāra jī rāja (*dūdha*) cuṃghāyā siṃghaṇī māta ro.
23. vāṃcau gurū josī bheda nakhatā rai ke thāṃna rāja ligana kāṃī likhāyo kuṃvara lekha mai.
24. sonala nai ḍhaibauṃ likhāyā kaṃvara paradhāṃna jī rai balai likhāī ghoṛī kālamī, pirathī meṃ hove bhālālau umarāvajī rā gāyā ro kaṃvalade rau lichamaṃṇa vāharūjī.
25. vāṃcau gurū josī bheda nakhatāṃ rī ke (*tiva*) jī rai rāja kāṃī balūṛau nai nāṃma batalāvasāṃ, hai rai pirathī meṃ hove bhālālau umarāvajī pābū bhurajālau ke kaṃvara batalāvajau gāyāṃ kaṃvalā dai rā lichamaṇa vāharū.

### *Byāva rau paravāṛau*

1. cāṃdo ara ḍhaiṃbo lāralai jāṃme (*jalama*) rā bhāī.
2. rāmadevajī rāma, pābūjī lichamaṇa, dhaimbo bharatha aura cāṃdau shatrughna.
3. ai cyārūṃ ī (*lāra*) le jalama meṃ rājā dasarathajī rā cyārūṃ ī kaṃvara hā.
4. cāṃdo nai ḍhaimbo, Pābūjī rā mara jīdāṃna sāṃvaṭa jako pābūjī rai āgai rahane sātha diyo.
5. buḍhojī dumāta bhāī pābūjī ro jitarau sātha nīṃ diyo uṇa sūṃ jyādā sātha ai sāṃvata dīno.
6. pābūjī cāṃdā nai kahyau ke cāṃdā paradhāna savā maṇa haldī meṃ cāvala pīlā karāya nai phera do lichamaṇa deva rai nāṃla rā.
7. cāṃdau paṛūttara dīnau phera diyā cāvalīyā dhaṃṇī lichamaṃṇa devarā.
8. āṃ cāvalāṃ sūṃ nivatiyā nagarī rā loga (*deva*) ara (*nivatī*) rāṭhauṛā rī gota ara biana savāsaṇī.

9. bīṃda bāṇa baiṭhā pīlai pāṭa – tela ara pīṭhī caṭhāyā dhaṇī rai sira saivarai.
10. āḍī ḍauḍī divī rai kanātāṃ khacāṃya tela ara pīṭhī utārai ghaṃṇī rai ḍhaiṃbaṛau.
11. kesarīyai bāgai bīṃda baṇa baiṭhā rāva kolū rā rāṭhaurā jāṃnī vaṃṇa baiṭhā kiratyāṃ rau jhūla rau.
12. suṇoṃ mhārā cāṃdā paradhāṃna kuṃṇa kuṃṇa padhārayā dhaṃṇī rai neta rai.
13. līlī chaṛī rau bhāloṃ līdhāṃ hātha cāṃdājī phira gare nirākhiyā jāṃniyāṃ rā jhūlarā.
14. saba padhāriyā rāṭhauṛa kulī rā loga, siṃgha caḍha padhārī mātā sāradāṃ.
15. padhāriyā mehājī māṃgaliyoṃ, harabu sāṃkhalā, aika nīṃ āyā bahanoī jāyala rā khīcī jiṃdarāva.
16. dubāro calato ho, bahanoījī kāṃī kiyo ki herāvata ne jogī ro bheṣa karāya nai uṭhe melhiyau.
17. o pato karaṇa nai ki jāṃna meṃ kuṃṇ kuṃṇ jāya rahyā hai aura kuṃṇ kuṃṇ nīṃ jāya rahyā hai.
18. aṭhai raha rahyau phiratai jogī rī dekhī cāṃdājī āṃkha phiratā jogī ne cāṃdājī batalāvīyau.
19. kaṭhai bābājī thāroṃ ghara bāra kisī dhūṃṇī meṃ jogesara to tāpā gau.
20. cāṃdā rai savāla sūṃ herāyaṭa haṛabaṛāya gau vo hai hai karaṇa lāgau.
21. tada cāṃdājī uṇa rī bāṃha pakaṛa nai pābūjī kanai lāyā ara kahyau.
22. jovau pābūjī āparā bahanoī heravata melhiyau.
23. hukama ḍirāvau to maiṃ iṇā nai bhālāṃ rī āṇgiyāṃ āgai cāḍha nai māra dūṃ.
24. pābūjī cāṃdā nai kahyau: mata do iṃna herāyata neṃ doṣa o tau dhaṃṇī phuramāyau jada āviyau.
25. sovana mura kī bīṛo herāyata rai kāṃna ghoṛa, bagasāvau rāṭhauṛā rī jūnī bhāla rau.
26. herāyata rai soṃvana murakī kāṃna meṃ bīṛāya ara caḍhaṇa sāru ghoṛo bagasāya nai pābūjī sīkha dīvī.
27. jhīṃṇī rai jhīṃṇī uṛa rahī jāṃnāṃ me gulāla kesara kisturī rau mārū vāṃri jānāṃ meṃ jholā paṛai .
28. caḍhatī jāṃnā rā bājai bhālālā rai ḍhola aṃvalai mūṃḍā rā bajaiṃ suramā bāṃkiyā.
29. caḍhatī jāṃnā rā ghura rahyā traṃbāgala ḍhola bājatai nagārai jāṃnā cāḍhiyai.
30. caḍha caḍha jāṃnā ā gaī polāṃ bāra āṛī phira phira yūṃ bolī bhavānī cāraṇī.
31. uṇa rai suraṃgau nahīṃ ho bhīno vesha ho hada suganāṃ rai.
32. hisāva suṃ pābūjī ghoṛī nai ḍhābī ara cāṃdā nai mela nai devala nai āṛī phira nai māraga bāṃdhaṇa ro kāraṇa pūchiyau.
33. līlī chaṛī ara bhālo sūrā cāṃdājī rai hātha doya paga suro hī sagatyāṃ rai sāmhā bharai.
34. kāṃī cāraṇiyāṃ māṃga rahī thāṃrau naiga kaṃvārī jāṃnā rā thāṃ māraga kyūṃ bāṃdhiyā.
35. nahīṃ māṃgāṃ bhālālā mhaiṃ jānāṃ rī lāga mhai to pūchāṃ keṃ koṭa meṃ rūkhālā kiṃṇa nai rākhiyā.

36. sagalā jaṇā jāṃnā cāḍhiya jāya lārai to būḍhājī nai rākhiyā.
37. tada devala bāī kahyau: bhāī thāṃrā nai le jāṃvau thāṃrī jāṃna, bhāī bīnā kī karathāṃ toraṇa bāmdasau.
38. nahīṃ hai bhālālā mhanai buḍhājī rī paiṭha būḍhājī ara khīciyāṃ rau dhana bhelau carai.
39. būḍhājī ne le jāvau thāṃ jāmna, ḍhaiṃbā nai koṭa rau rūkhālau rākhadau.
40. pābūjī kahyau: ḍhaiṃbā sāṃvata rī mukhāṃ bāhara bāta mata kāḍha, ḍhaiṃbā bina saiṃṇā rā amala kuṃṇa ārogasī.
41. chaḥ chaḥ mahinā būhī soḍhā rī amalāṃ rī katāra bhara bhara gāṛā maṃgavāyā bhūrī bhāṃgarā.
42. tada devala bāī kahyau: ḍhaiṃbā nai bhalāṃī lejāvai thāṃrī jāṃna mhārai cāṃdājī nai rākhau rūkhālā koṭarā.
43. tada pābūjī kahyau: cāmdā sāṃvaṭa rī mukha bāhira mata kāḍha cāṃdā bina saiṇāṃ rī lāga bāga kuṃṇa cukāvasī.
44. tada devala bāī balai kahyau kai to salakhā sāṃvata nai rākhau rūkhālau koṭa rau.
45. tada pābūjī kahyau: salakhā sāṃvaṭa rī mukha bāhara mata kāḍha salakhā binā kuṃṇa mhāṃrai sugana vicārasī.
46. tada devala bāī haramala rāīkā nai rākhaṇa rī kahī to pābūjī kahyau: haramala rāīkā rī mukha bāhara mata kaḍha, haramala le jāve mhāṃnai disa māragāṃ.
47. haramala rāīko to hai choṭo bāla, o kadarau vhai gayau māraga rau bhomiyau.
48. lūṭa ra lāyā lāṃkā gaḍha sūṃ jakai dina rāta (*la sāṃḍa)* balatarā utariyā soḍhāṃ rai bāga meṃ uṇa dina sai haramala mhāṃnai lai jāvai disa māragāṃ.
49. tada sagatī rau avatāra devala bāī kahyau ke sagalā jaṃṇāṃ le jāvau thāṃrī jāṃna mhārī iṇa kesara nai pāchī bhaṃvārā meṃ lāya do.
50. tada pābūjī yūṃ kahyau: kesara ghoṛhī rī mukha bāyara mata kāḍha, sīsa maiṃ maṃḍāyā sāṃvaṭāṃ rā kaure kāgadāṃ, thārī madada rau kola iṇa ghoṛī sāṭaīja hai.
51. tada devala bāī kahyau: sagalā jaṇāṃ le jāvo dhaṃṇī rī jāṃna mhārī abalā rī sāyala kuṃṇa sāṃbhalai.
52. tada pābūjī devala nai visvāsa baṃdhātāṃ kahyau: caḍha gūṃjavai dejai bhavānī helau pāṛa caṃvarayāṃ baiṭhoṛauī sāyala sāṃbhalāṃ.
53. tada devala bāī kahyau: alagau ghaṇau suṃnījai soḍhāṃ rau ūmarakoṭa ara alagau gadī rau gūṃjavau sāyala suṃnī jasī kīkara.
54. tada pābūjī kahyau: karalejai devala bāī sugana ciṛī rau bhaiṣa āṃṇa bolajai soḍhāṃ rai kāṃgarāṃ.
55. jada devala bāī sugana cīṛī ro rūpa dhāra ne ūmarakoṭrā kāṃgarāṃ bolī.
56. pābūjī tīna pherā caṃvarī meṃ liyā, cauthe phere bhālālau pagalyā ḍhābiyā vacanāṃ rā bāṃdhiyā pābūjī.
57. caṃvarī sūṃ hī gāyāṃ rī vāhara cāḍhiyā.

### *Vāhara rau paravāṛau (ḍhaiṃbā rai sūrāpaṃṇa rau)*

1. bhāṃga ghoṭī, ghoṭa nai pyālā piyā, ṭhīka nasai mai vhai gayā jaṇai vai vāhara cāḍhiyā, jyūṃ hī vāhara cāḍhiyā autha sūṃ āpa āsīsa laiṇa sārū kāṃvalādai mātājī rai dvārai padhāriyā ara araja karo: de mātā (*hasa*) karanai maune sīkha vairī mhārā jāvai choṭī nāṃkhiyā.
2. tada mātā kaṃvalādai kahyau: dīkhai ḍhaiṃbā thārī visariyoṛī ḍāvi āṃkha, bāī pemala nai de jai amara kāṃcalī (*jiṃdarāva rai ghāva mata dhālajai*), tada uṇāṃ kahyau: rūpiyāṃ sūṃ pyārau lāgai vyāja jaraṇī mhāṃ karatāṃ pyārī lāgī ḍīkarī.
3. tada mātā kahyau: bhiliyoṛī bhāloṛī nai ṭālau ṭālajai sīdho vāra mata kara jai.
4. pābūjī rī vāhara vhaitī uṇa meṃ hī ḍhaiṃboṃ jāya ghoṛo bheliyo, gāyāṃ surahiyāṃ meṃ dhaṛū kai sūraja ro sāmḍa vāhara meṃ dhaṛū– kai amalī ḍhaimbaṛau.
5. ḍhaibaṃ nai dekha pābūjī kahyau: kiyā ḍhaibāṃjī gajaba ghaṇā kāṃma sūnā hī choṛa āyā gaṛha koṭa nai, tada ḍhaibeṃ kahyo: kāṃī bhālālā mhāṃnai bhāṭā ḍhīṃḍhāṃ sūṃ kāṃma mhāṃnai to bhalāvaṇa bhālālā rai mūṃgauṛe dīlarī.
6. dhaṃnī nai sāṃvata āyā dhābo dhāba, dhaṃṇī rai saijoṛe sāṃvata utarai, thaiṃ kara gayā rāṭhauṛī bholī bāta mhāṃ binā paravāṛā kisyāṃ thai jītiyā, mhāṃrai sātha sūī thāṃ paravāṛā jītiyā.
7. kaccha mulatāna meṃ kaṭata gau ara mora (*uṭhai*) turakāṃṇī bhāṃga hiṃdavāṃṇī bhālālā mhai kari.
8. dhaṃṇī nai sāṃvata āyā dhābau dhaba vahatī vāhara meṃ ghoṛo ghamaṭā liyau.
9. gāyāṃ vahatī hutī vāṃrai pāgaṛa āgala ghoṛo dhākala phito kiyo.
10. caḍhatāṃ khaṛatāṃ lāgī damaika jaija jāvaṭā vairī – gāyā rā dhāṛetī – nai nijarāṃ dekhiyo, tada ḍhaiṃbe kahyau: gayo jāyala rā thūṃ ghaṃṇa ghaṃṇoṛī bhāṃya, abakai maradāṃ rai dhakai āviyau (*vājiyau*), tada jiṃdarāva nai gāyāṃ rokaṇī paṛī ara vo gāyāṃ nai roka nai baiṭha gayo ara ḍhāibāṃ nai kahyau: kiyā ḍhaiṃbājī thai gajaba ghaṇā anyāva thai to kaṃvārāi lai āyā dhaṇī lichamaṇa deva nai, tada ḍhaibeṃ kahyau: kaṃvārau raiyo jāyala rā thāro kula paravāra mhai tau ghaṇa koḍāṃ paraṇāya lāyā mhārā lichamaṇa deva nai, jiṃdarāva ḍhaibeṃ ne kahyau: ḍhaiṃbaṛā thūṃ ghoṛo gharāṃ nai ghera ekalaṛī asavārī mata nai sāṃcarai, mhārau dala mokalau hai ara thūṃ eka lau īṇa sārū pāchau jā parau, tada ḍhaimbe jiṃdarāva khīcī nai kahyau: bola jāyala rā mukha suṃ sāra saṃbhāla mhaṃnai bola (*ākhara*) sālai kaṃvalāde mātarā – māṃ vacana māṃgiyā ve mhanai yāda heṃ nitara pahalā hī vāra meṃ thanai māra to (*khatama kara deto*).
11. baiṭho ḍhaiṃbau garavata gauḍī khāya, ākhariyai baiṭhoṃ muḍḍā (*kāṃkaṇa rā muḍḍā*) nāṃkhhiyā kahyau: aṭhā sūṃ āgai nahīṃ jāūṃ.
12. tada jiṃdarāva ḍhaiṃbā nai kahyau: ḍhaiṃbaḍā ghattiyāṃ (*gharatta*) meṃ ghoṛā rai dāṃṇo dalījai uṇa hī bhāṃta tūṃ bhī aṭhai abāra ghoṛāṃ rā poṛāṃ sūṃ dalīja jāṃvasī.

13. tada ḍhaiṃbe jiṃdarāva nai kahyau: ghaṇāṃ rā jāyala rā rovai māṃ ara bāpa ghaṇāṃ rī roījai jājama rāṃṇiyāṃ, mhai ekalo hī thāṃrā nai ghaṃṇā raṛavā sūṃ (*rovāṇa sūṃ*).
14. pachai uṇa jiṃdarāva nai yūṃ kahyau: karale pahalā thāroṛī vāra mhārai vāhyauṛī dharatī jhālasī, tada jiṃdarāva bandūkāṃ ara tīra vāhaṇā sarū kiyā, goliyāṃ ara tīra jitarā vāhyā ve sagalā jogaṇīyāṃ jhāmpa liyā, ḍhaiṃbājī rai lāgaṇa nīṃ diyā kyūkai causaṭha jogaṇiyāṃ ara bāvana vīra vāṃrai vasa meṃ hūtā.
15. abai ḍhaiṃbe jiṃdarāva nai sāvaceṭa karatāṃ kahyau: jāyalā rā huvo mana meṃ husiyāra, abai āvai saiṃṇā rai hātharī, ḍhaiṃbājī vāra karaṇa lāgā, jiṃdarāva rau bhāī maiṃdarāva pābūjī rai sāvai hī paraniyau hūto so pahalā hī vāra meṃ uṇāṃ nai pāṛa liyā, bholai re pāṃta rai chūṭo tīra ṭolī rā ṭīkāyata nai pelaṛāṃ hī pāṛiyauṃ.
16. jiṃdarāva kalapate kālajai kahyau: kiyā ḍheṃbājī thai ghaṇā anyāva mhārī moṭiyāṃ rī māḷa ralakai reṭa meṃ, tada ḍhaiṃbe kahyau: bhole nai pāṃtareṃ chūṭa gayo sagata bāṃṇa jako pāṃcā rai bāhyauṛī pacīsāṃ meṃ nīsarai.
17. dholai māra haṭāī khīcīyāṃ rī phauja pāḷo nai ura bāṃṇau bahanoī nai choṛiyau ara kahyau: mārata bahanoī jhagaṛai rī pahaloṛī coṭa paṇa caḍhata nai mātā kaṃvalādai mhanai pāliyau.
18. pachai uṭhāsūṃ gāyā nai pāchī ṭolī tīkhā tikha bāṃdhau thai gāyāṃ nāla thāṃnai jāya' ra pāūṃlā koyara gūṃjavai.
19. jiṃdarāva khīcī budha bhāṭī rau bhāṃṇa jo hūto, uṇa māmā nai kahavāyau ka dhāṃdhalāṃ rī phauja mhārī phauja ne to māra dīvī ara abai mhanai bhī khatama kara desī so ūpara karo to ājarī veḷā hai, jada navasau ghoṛā kāṭhī caṛhanai budha bhāṭī rī phauja uṭhai (*gūṃjavai*) pūgī.
20. pābūjī uṇa jagai virājamāna hūtā, pūrī phojāṃ khāṃḍāṃ sūṃ laṛi karaṇa ke cāraṇī sagatī devala jako ki upāvaṇa ara khapāvaṇa vālī hai. caka cūṃdarī ro rūpa dhāraṇā karane kabāṃṇā (*dhanuṣāṃ*) rī ḍoriyāṃ kūraṭa nāṃkhī jiṇa sūṃ donūṃ hi phojāṃ khāṃḍāṃ sūṃ laṛījā nai kāma āya sake.
21. donūṃ kāṃnī rī phaujāṃ kāṃma āyagī , uṭhe jiṃdarāva khīcī pābūjī ara devalabāī cāraṇī ye tīna ija jīvata rahyā, pābūjī sagata devala sūṃ vacana māṃgiyā: (i) na rahūṃ bālaka na rahūṃ būḍhau, (ii) dharatī asamāṃna taka mhārau paraco revai, (iii) mhai duniyā nai dekhūṃ paṃṇa duniyā mhanai nīṃ dekha sakai, jaiṛo mhanai alopa kara, (iv) mhārī bhagatāṃrī helo pāḍatāṃi mhārā bhagatāṃ rī sahāya vhai, chokaṛī chāyā ro karaṇa hāra hoūṃ.

### *Jhararājī rau paravāṛau*

1. būṛhāji rai kāṃma āyāṃ ara gehaloṭa ṇajī re saṭī vhiyāṃ pachai jharaṛājī nai vāṃ rai nāṃne rai pauchāya diyā.
2. jhararājī thoṛā moṭā vhayāṃ jada nāṃnījī vāṃnai gāyāṃ rā ṭogaṛiyā – bāchaṛā – carāvaṇa malhaṇā sarū kara diyā.

3. eka dina jhararājī rī māṃmiyāṃ rīsāṃ balatī kahyau ke kiṃṇaro to jāyoṛo ara duḥkha kiṃṇa nai deve.
4. māṃiyāṃ uṇanai bālūṛau ara satiyāṃ ro jāyoṛo kaṃvara kaiya ne ija batalāvatī.
5. māṃ – bāpa rau nāma nahīṃ levatā, jaṇāṃ eka dina rai samai nānī māṃ jāya nai uṇa nai jagāvaṇa sārū helo pāṛatī kahyau.
6. ūṭho bālūṛā nīṃda naiṇāṃ rī nivāra, āja kyūṃ sūtau khūṃṭī tāṃṇa thārai dātaṃṇa rī velā ṭaḷai.
7. tada jhararaijī nānī nai kahyau: eka dātaṃṇa to kiyo kāla rai pragāla, eka dātaṃṇiyo jalama sudhāra rau.
8. nānī kahyau: bālūṛā tūṃ ūṭha ara dogaṛiyā auchera ve bhūkhāṃ mare hai.
9. nānī rai kahyau uṇa baḷate jalate bāchaṛiyāṃ (*ṭogaṛiyāṃ*) nai auchera to diyā paṇa vana meṃ jāye ne ṭogaṛiyāṃ nai agāṛai pagāṛai kara kabjai karane āpa vana meṃ khūṃṭī khāṃca nai sūyagau.
10. jada nānī māṃ depārau ara pāṇī rī bhuṛakī leya'ra vana mai pūgī ara bālūṛā nai ḍhūḍhiyau.
11. uṇa nai sūto ṛau dekha nāṃnī māṃ bolī: kāī bālūṛā lāvai rāṭhauṛī rī rīta, tūṃ kyūṃ sutau khūṃtī khāṃca nai.
12. tada uṇa nānī māṃ ne pūchiyau: kuṇa hai nānīmā mhārī māṃya, kiṇa rai rājā rau hūṃ mai ḍīkarau?
13. nānī kahyau: nahī hai bālūṛā thārai māṃ ara bāpa, thanai to ābhai chiṭakāyau ara dharatī jheliyau thāre māṃ bāpa hai ī konī.
14. tada uṇa kahyau: itarī nānī mā jhūṭha mata bola, kada ābhau ara dharatī bhelā huā?
15. tada nānī pūchiyau: kisī māṃmī kāṛhī thanai rāla'ra gāḷa, kisī māṃmī thanai mosā boliyā.
16. uṇa batāyo: choṭoṛā māmīsā kāṛhī rāla'ra gāḷa, moṭoṛā māmīsa (*mhanai*) mosā boliyā.
17. uṇa rai bāla hatha nai dekhatāṃ chevaṭa nānīmāṃ nai uṇa nai kahaṇau paṛiyau ke: khīciyāṃ dhāṃdhalāṃ bājī raṇa maiṃ taravāra uṇa dina ābhau nai dharatī bhelā huā.
18. uṇa dina thārai mai naina (*pa*) paṛagī, nāṃnī uṇa nai baṭāyau ke: gehalotaṇa rāṃṇī hai bālū thārī māya, būṛhoji rāṭhauṛa rau tūṃmo bhī ḍīkarau.
19. ā bāta suṃṇatāṃ hī uṇa nāṃnī nai kahyau ke: ṭogaṛiyā bāchaṛiyā thārā syāla nāharāṃ ne bhulāya, mhārau to mana ṛau lāgo bhagavā bheṣa meṃ.
20. jāūṃ nānī māṃ mhaiṃ to jāyala desa, vaira ṭo leṇau mhanai mhārai kākā ara bāpa rau.
21. būṛhājī gāyāṃrī vāhara nahīṃ caṛhiyā tada devala cāraṇī uṇāṃ nai kahyau ke mhārau sarāpa jhelaṇau paṛasī ke.
22. jogī hoya nī sarasī būṛhoji thāṃrau mo bhī ḍīkarau. devala bāī rai uṇa sarāpa rai kāraṇa jharaṛojī bhagavāna bheṣa dhāraṇa kara liyo.
23. siyālai rā uṭhā sūṃ vhīra vhetāṃ uṇa āparī cādara meṃ jāgatā dhūṃṇā nai bhī sāthai bodhaliyo ara uṭhāsūṃ kolū maṭha ravāna huo.

24. āyau bālūṛau oraṇa re neṛau najīka sāmhī dīṭhai oaraṇa rai boraṛai.
25. phira phira bālūṛau karai oraṇa meṃ daṃdota uṭhai bhāṭhai mukha bātāṃ karai.
26. pāla kākājī agyā bāṃdha rāya, vaira mhanai lāvaṇau kākai bāpa rau
27. abhau bālūṛau binhaiṃ hatha joṛa bhāṭhā rī pūṭaliyāṃ mukha bātāṃ karai.
28. tada pābūjī uṇa nai visvāsa baṃdhāṃyau: bhala khaṛiyai jāvai tūṃ jāyala re desa thārai moharai khelāuṃ caḍhiyoṛo kesara kālamī.
29. jharaṛaujī uṭhāsūṃ ravānā huvā tada māraga mai sāmhī gurū gorakhanāthajī rī jamāta milagī.
30. uṇāṃ kahiyo ke hai bālūṛā thārai suganāṃ meṃ phaira sāmhī to thanai milagā jogī jamātarā.
31. vo bhī uṭhai jamāta meṃ bhelo vhaiṃgoṃ ara sāthiyāṃ sūṃ gurūjī rī pahacāṇa rā ahanāṃṇa pūchiyā.
32. tada sāthiyāṃ una nai kahyau ke: bījā jogiyāṃ rai dhūṃṇā rā dhamarola gurūdeva rai adhara divalau jagai.
33. bījā jogiyāṃ rai paharaṇa nai kāhī rī laṃgauṭa gurū bābai rai paharaṇa nai pītāṃbara dhotiyo.
34. tada jharaṛaijī gurūjī rai tambū re dora sūṃ hilolā devaṇā surū kiyā.
35. tada gurūjī rai pātavī cele sociyo ke keto taṃbū nai lāgī hai pavana rī pheṭa ke bāra hai (*bārai*) barasāṃ khīliyāṃ jūnī paṛī.
36. celo ba'rai āpa'ra dekhiau ara kevaṇa lāgau ke, nahiṃ lāgī gurūjī taṃbū mai pavana rī phaira bāharai varaṣa ro bālau sevā kare.
37. uṇa pāṭavī cela rūpanātha nai gurūjī rai nijara kiyo, gurūjī uṇa nai pūchiyau
38. kāṃī bālūṛā thanai laḍiyā māṃ ara bāpa kāṃi āyau bhāyā sūṃ rīsaṇai.
39. bhūkhau vheṭau jīmme cāvala bhāta, rūṭhau vhetau karova gurūjī manāvaṇā.
40. tada jamāta rā jogī masakarī karatāṃ kahyau ke iṇa nai to sagalī jamāta rau celo karalo jiṇa sūṃ sagalāṃ rī sevā karato rahasī.
41. tada uṇa bāla jogī rūpanātha kahyau ke: celāṃ ro celo vhai bālā rī balāya mhai to celo vhai sūṃ gurūjī āpo āparau.
42. tada gurūjī ne una nai samjhāvatāṃ kahyau ke: dorau kaṭārī kāṃnā ghāva dorau adhara dhūṃṇī rau tāpaṇau.
43. tada uṇa araja karī ke mhanai to saba so'rā hai, tada gurūjī uṇa rai morāṃ hātha diyau ara celo tharapiyau āpau āparau ara kāṃnā kaṭārī ghālī.
44. tada bījā jogiyāṃ rai būhī lo hīrī dhāra bālā jogī rai dūdhāṃ rī dhārāṃ sāṃcarai.
45. gurūjī bhī kahyau: celā muralī maiṃ kīnā tīna sau sāṭha paṃṇa gurū celā rī joṛī to abai juṛī, uṇa jāgā uṇa gurūjī sūṃ vacana liyā ke.
46. jogī ro vesha kara liyo aura gurūjī sūṃ vacana leyane jholī jhaṇḍā liyā bagala meṃ uṭhāpa nai paṛa chūṭā jāyala rā jūnā māragāṃ.
47. eka to vāso vāsiyā māraga rai māṃya dūjoṛe vāse jāyala rī sīṃva sāṃcarai.
48. sūkho hai bāraha varaṣāṃ sūṃ jāyala ro bāga so sūkhoṛe bāga meṃ jāya āsaṇa ropiyo.
49. jada sūkho ṛai bāga meṃ bhaṃvarā bhaṃṇa kiyā, raṭhauṛā rī kulī rā (*hī uṇa sapa rū*) bāga harā bharā vha gayā phūla khila gayā.

50. bāga jada hariyo vhe gayo tada jharaṛājī rī buā jāṃniyoṃ ke raṭhauṛā re kula rā minakha rai āyāṃ binā to o bāga hariyo vhai nahīṃ sake.
51. tada buājī ṭogaṛiyā tolā re misa bāga re kāṃnī jāṃvā ro maho kiyo.
52. buājī togaṛiyā tolaṇa rai misa vhīra vhai ne bāga re pāse āyā ara jharaṛājī rī najara sūṃ najara milī.
53. tada jharaṛājī apūṭhau baiṭha gayo. buājī uṇa nai dekha ne āpare thaṇa rai dūdha rī dhāra sāṃdhī.
54. ve sociyo ke mhārai kula ro hai tada to dūdha rī dhāra theṭa pūga jāvasī ara nahīṃ to bīca meṃ hī thaṃbha jāvasī.
55. buājī dudha rī dhāra sāṃdhī to vā sīdhī jharaṛājī rai maurāṃ rai māthai lāgī, ara vo mūṃḍo sāmhī pheṛiyo.
56. tada buājī nai visvāsa huvo ke o hai to mhārai kula rau, buājī rai sāmhī jāya jharaṛejī praṇāma karane.
57. buājī nai kahyau ke vo to āparo vaira levaṇa nai āyo hai so buājī sūṃ vacana māṃge, āgyā māṃgī.
58. tada būājī kahyo kī gaṭha rai daravājai (*pola*) babbara shera baṃdhyā hai ara pilaṃga rai dolā kālā nāga poharo deve hai .
59. vāṃrāṃ sūṃ to kīkara baca sakelā, sherāṃ ūpara mhārā gurūjī hai mahanta (*mauta*) ara nāgāṃ sarapāṃ mhaiṃ bhī hāṃ gārūṛī.
60. mai ṭhe (*huṛiyā*) rai sisa māthe mūṃḍaṛo pherane serāṃ āge nāṃkhiya to sera to gaharī nīṃda meṃ so gayā (*jāṃṇai khāṭo pīca nai sūṭā vhai*).
61. dūdha rā kaṭorāṃ māthe mūṃḍaṛo pherane nāgāṃ rai āge sirakāyā to nāga bhī gaharī nīṃda meṃ so gāyā (*jāṃṇai mara gayā vhai*).
62. iṇa bhāṃta serāṃ ara nāgāṃ ro bandobasta karane hole hole jāya ne jiṃdarāva rī chātī māthai baiṭha gayo (*rupanātha*).
63. tada jīṃdarāva ḍakha dakhāya nai hāṃsiyo (*uṇa bālaka – jogī ne āparī chāti māthai dekhane*).
64. vo sociye ke iṇane to pasavāṛo pheratāṃ hī masala nāṃkha sūṃ.
65. paṇa jada jīṃdarāva ūtḥaṇa rī kosīsa karī to vo bālaka – jogī to sau maṇa silā jeṛo bhārī lāgau.
66. uṇa rai pasavāṛo pheraṇau bhī hāthe nahīṃ rahyo, tada uṇa vilāpa jīva – dāna rī bhīkha māṃgī.
67. ara pālau – u (*bāṇoṃ*) pābūjī rai jāṭa devaṇa rau kola kiyo, ara uṇa ne āpa rai baṛai bhāī rī dhīva paraṇābāga ro bhī vacana diyo.
68. tada lārai ūbhauṛī buā kahyau: ulaṭī rāṭhauṛāṃ thāṃrī rīta kākha meṃ to katārī ara bairī sūṃ batāṃ karai.
69. tada (*diyo bālūṛo kaṭārī para hātha*) jharaṛai kaṭāra hātha meṃ leyane jīṃdarāva ro sisa bāṛha liyau.
70. tada buāṃ jharaṛājī sūṃ vo sīsa māṃgiyo kyūṃki uṇa ne sīsa leyane sati vhe ne pī hara.
71. ara sāsarau donūṃ hī ujavālaṇā hā, tada buā nai jharaṛai kahyo ki: satī vhe pau vhai to dhaṛa rai.

72. sāthe vhai jāvo sīsa to le jāsūṃ mhai mhārai sātha maim.
73. itarau kahanai sīsa jholi meṃ ghāla ne vo būṛhojī rī ḍhela ghoṛī jiṇane jīṃdarāva jāyala le gayo ho – para savāra vhai ne kolū rai māraga vhīra huo.
74. uṭhā sūṃ cāla mai jharaṛājī jada kolu maṭha rai kanai rūpanāthajī rī bhākharī pūjau.
75. tada uṭhai uṇa rī ghoṛī ṭhāṃṇa diyau, uṭhai ūṃna meṃ bhaṛiyāṃ pachai vechāṃgāla dhore nikaliyā.
76. prakaṭa vhīyā uṇa ḍhela ghoṛī ara bacherā paga bhākhara meṃ āja dina taka māṃḍiyoṛā hai.
77. o paraco hai rūpanāthjī ro navadasama rau aṭhai melo bharījai ara tairasa cavadasa ro uṭhai rūpanāthajī rī bhākharī māthai melo bharījai.

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## Samenvatting

*In Praise of Death. History and Poetry in Medieval Marwar (South Asia)*.
("Lofzangen op de Dood. Geschiedenis en Poëzie in Middeleeuws Marwar [Zuid-Azië]").

Deze multidisciplinaire studie levert nieuwe inzichten op aangaande de literaire geschiedenis van oorlogsvoering en martiale identiteiten in Marwar (noordwest India). Middels een literair-historische analyse van Marwari heroïsche en epische gedichten, schetst de auteur een beeld van het martiale ethos van strijders in Marwar, een voormalig rijk in de Thar woestijn. Centraal staat de betekenis die dichters toe kenden aan de dood van strijders op het slagveld en de poëtische beelden waarin hun dood werd vervat.

Kamphorst interpreteert de Marwari lofzangen op de dood middels een diepgaande analyse van gedichten opgedragen aan de vergoddelijkte Rajput strijder Pabuji. De beschrijving van de uiteenlopende vormen en aspecten van de schriftuurlijke en mondelinge Pabuji traditie laat zien hoe de dichterlijke opvattingen over de dood werden geïnspireerd door een ascetisch ideaal van wereldverzaking: Hindu krijgers werden geportretteerd als asceten die hun leven opofferden in de strijd. Kamphorst's interpretatie van de poëtische Pabuji traditie maakt duidelijk dat een dergelijke zelfopoffering kon leiden tot een narratief proces van deificatie ofwel het toekennen van een goddelijke status aan (semi) historische strijders. Deze studie voegt toe aan contemporaine inzichten in de betekenis van martiale dichtvormen, en met name aan theorievorming aangaande het narratieve proces van de deificatie en de socio-politieke functie die aan dit proces kan worden toegekend.

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**1999-2004** Ph.D. Researcher. Research School CNWS, Leiden University. Archival research, anthropological fieldwork and translation of Rajasthani and Hindi sources to English. Teaching South-Asian History, Religion and Language classes. Contributions to academic seminars in Europe and India.
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## ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Forthcoming 2008. "The Poetry of Militarized Masculinities (South Asia)". Birkbeck College Seminar *Masculinity as a Historical Category*. London: University of London.

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