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

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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(1914-1921) *Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana* and grammatical notes in the *Indian Antiquary*, which, though out of date, continue to be helpful especially in the absence of exhaustive modern studies on the subject.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 Sahitya*, 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 *Raghuvarajasaparakās* 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

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.

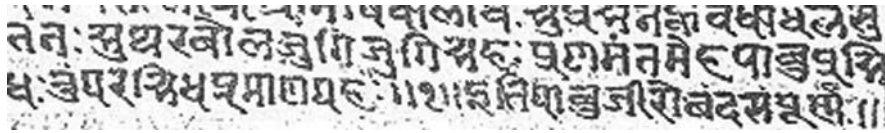
consulted by me, in particular their assessment of poetic metaphors, is based upon their professional knowledge of the contemporary Pabuji tradition, including oral and written transmission of medieval poetry. Despite all this help, some transliterative inaccuracies and debatable interpretations may 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 discuss 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. *praṇamaṇṭa meha pābu prasidha, (t)uṃ parasidha pramāṇa paha(m).*

In this line, the undecided notation of *tum/ uṃ* may result in two readings. First, if *tum 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 being⁶⁵ comparable to God”. But, taking in to account the word-order of this verse-line (“*tum parasidha pramāṇa paha(m)*”) would result in the literal interpretation: “you glory⁶⁶ 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 *tum 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 *chamd* II, in v. 28: *turī*, v. 40: *turaṃga*, v. 51: *turaṃga*, and v. 101: *tum*, while “u” and “uu” occur ten times in *chamd* II: v. 27: *u(m)laṭṭiyam*, v. 31: *vāhā-u*, v. 32: *upārai*, 33: *uṭhīyau*, v. 56: *ukara* and *ūpaḍi*, v. 59: *ūraṭṭiyai*, v. 76: *u(m)tha*, v. 86: *uṃchāla*, v. 97: *ūja*. The four occurrences of *tu* have been written in one of the following two ways:

तु तु

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

त्रापंतत्रैहिसतंगतुरी:

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 powerful ascetic).

⁶⁶ Reading *parasidha* as *parasiddha* (glory, fame).

three ways:

उ उ ऊ

See for example *u(ṁ)laṭīyaṁ* ((*chamd* II, v. 27: “ani ona asā hasa u(ṁ)laṭīyāṁ”):

अनिशोनअसाहसउलटीयः

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*:

ऊ

Chamd II, v. 41, *ūṁta līyaṁ*:

यौकरिकुंतलीयः

On the basis of above arguments, I would suggest that verse-line 101 is best read as: “*tum parasidha pramāṇa paha(ṁ)*”. Though it is of course conceivable that the poet or scribe of *chamd* II meant to write *uṁpara* in v. 101, I feel that it is more likely that the poet or scribe meant to write *tum 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 Dingal 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 *chamds*, *duhas*, *gits* 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 *chamda 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 jagajethī, jūdha jaivaṃta vinai jagajethī
8. juṛasī judha vinai jagajethī, jāgai vaira vinai jagajethī
9. jagajethīyaṃ 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.

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 chamda", 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 *chamḍa trotaka*.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 aṇiṃ jāya mūṃha mile
18. vadhiyā bhuja vyauma lagai vimalā, krama detaha ṭikama 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).

⁷¹ The metrical form of the *chamḍa trotaka* is described in chapter 3.

⁷² I read *laggi* as *lāgi* in verse-line 13 ("vaya saṃdara laggi dhramaṅga vikhaṇi").

⁷³ The name occurs as *vrimalā* in a comparable verse-line in *chamḍ* II (v. 35): "vadhīyā bhuja(ṇ) vauma lagai vrimalā, krama detai ṭikama jhema kalā". In both chamḍs, 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 *Chamḍ* I (v. 23): "kamadhaja vadamaṇa udāta kirā, kari sūrija nīṃsariyo sihashaṇi".

⁷⁵ The title *sātavīsīya sūra* ("7 x 20 = 140 heroes") has remained in use for Pabuji's Bhil companions who are today identified as "sātavīsī Thorī" ("140 Thoris").

During the struggle, blood gushes like water and young warriors marry nymphs, that is: they die in battle. Narada⁷⁶ 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(m) bhūcara bhakhalīyai
29. kei yaṃkhaṇa grihyaṇa koḍa karaṃ, pala guda gila gila peṭa bharai

28. *Filling (her) begging-bowl, Shakti drinks (the warriors') blood, (while) countless Khecaris devour⁷⁷ (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: "paṇihāri 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.

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, referring 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 (Novetzke (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 karaṃ 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 tahim 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 goddesses’ 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

⁸¹ Reading *vāṃtahim* 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 maṃḍaim rāṃṇavīca aṛai, paṇagāṃ ghaṇa nīra jyum 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(ṁ)" in verse-line 58 can be read as *pa-r-ai(ṁ)*, 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 jīṁdarāva suṁ āya parai(ṁ)*] 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(ṁ)* 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 *chamda 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 *chamda 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 *chamds* is that *chamd* II (but not *chamd* I) is

⁸⁷ *Chamd* I (v.56): "riṁṇātāla vahaiṁ ghaṇa rosarīyā, ulāṁ jīṁma golāya u sarīyā". I interpret *golāya* as a form of *goliyau* (a kind of dagger) and *ulāṁ* as *olāṁ* ("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): "pharaṇṁta ghaṇa masalaṁta phirai, pābu jīṁdarāva suṁ āya parai(ṁ)".

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 storyline, *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(ṁ)ma sanāha bhara(ṁ), kasīya(ṁ)(ta)⁸⁹ jarada kaṛī bakaṛaṁ⁹⁰

16. kisi ṭopa raṁgāvali kaṁga⁹¹ līyāṁ, sira hāmthala soha sirai kasīyaṁ

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: *chakaṛaṁ*.

⁹¹ Unclear. Perhaps: *kraṁga* or *kūṁga*.

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 aṇṇī jāi bhuṃha milī⁹³

35. vadhīyā bhuja(ṃ) vauma lagai v(r)imalā, krama detai tīkama jhema kalā⁹⁴

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 bhaṇṇa, āghā anabhaṇṇa jhisā anaṇṇa

43. varīyāma saṃgrāma jhihāṇṇa va(ṃ)pe, kīyā tili kaṇḍīla su cīla kape

⁹² *Chamd II* (v. 19): "19. kari vāra ma lāvau vega kahai, vīṇāra vīṇa(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 aṇṇī jāya mūṃha mile".

⁹⁴ Compare *chamd I* (v. 18): "vadhīyā bhuja vyauma lagai vimalā, krama deta ha tīkama 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. *khākhū*¹⁰⁰ *pemala khamdhāra khalai, vagavāḷata vīsala vīsavalai*

49. *bhaṛa hekā heka vasekha bhaṛaṃ, pāradhī pāyaka pālha taṇa(m)*

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. L alas 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

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 caṃḍīyau iṇa rūpa saḷhe, mila pūnima caṃḍa niḡsatra 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(m)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's¹⁰³ 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

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 hero(e)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 *chamda 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 (*dhārām*) 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,

¹⁰⁵ *Chamd* II (v. 91): “taji raja riṛai dhārām tijaḍai, bhiṛa pālha paṛe bhala sātha bhiṛai”.

¹⁰⁶ *Chamd* II (v. 97): “jīṇḍai suṃ ju(ṇ)dha jāgi, kīyai ūjalai kiraṇṇmari”.

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 Jayal¹⁰⁸, (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 dhāmdhala rāva-uta

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 sīm(dha) olāṃḍi, viṇa lekhai sāmḍhī varaga*
 71. *āṃṇe dai aṇabhaṃga, ramato dhāmdhala 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 Kavlade¹¹¹ 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 “Ladhmalā”.

¹¹⁰ “Sāgara sīm(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, kyum mārūṃ lyum kālavi

154. būṛā tāharī bāṃḥa, 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 (*āheṛī*) who resemble god (*sura*) and are *sāmvalā*, "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. caṃdā 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

¹¹² *Duha* I (v. 238): "thorī tere thāṭa, corī surahī corāṭāṃ", and verse-line 254: "āheṛī āviyācha, sura sadā laga sāmvalā".

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 baṁdhava mareha, vīkhāṁ bharato guṁjavai".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 māṁḍa, uḍīyo dhāṁdhala rāva-uta
 356. khīcī dala khāṁṛeha, rami ḍaṁḍe holī ramai
 357. māthā viṇa māṁḍeha, rahi rahi dhāṁdhala rāva-uta
 358. sira bāhiro satrāṁha, pābū kitāi pāṛato

355. *Son of King Dhamdhal! Upon 'attacking' (your) head, (Jimda) cut it off.*
 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.*

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): "uḍaiṁ ā(ṁ)kāṛīṭha, lekhai bāhiro lohaṛai. dekhe deve dīṭha, vaḍa jhudha teṇa vakhaṁṇīyo".

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's¹¹⁸ 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 āśīsa, 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

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). Hildebeitel (2001: 318) describes the use of indigo coloured cloth as "carrying overtones of menstrual pollution".

¹¹⁸ In verse-line 373 two or more Charanis ("cāraṇīyām") 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 Goraknath’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 Goraknath in what may be a reference to a ritual of the Kanpathi (split-ear) Nath Yogis of Rajasthan (v. 445): “o āmalī rū rāya, kohika kerā-ita kāmādhām”. 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 pāmcaṇo. jharaṛai mātho jhālī, kāco dāmte 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

¹²⁰ *Duha* I (v. 388-89): “bhuvā bhojāyāṃha, mā māsī mausāliyāṃ. bālaka lyau bāyāṃha, vaira sahī o vālastī”.

¹²¹ *Duha* I (v. 436): “tiṇa jīdo to khāra, būro 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, prāmṇa vacai paraṇāvasūṃ
 504. nakaṭā na choḍuha, moṛu sira jhararo 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 Kalarupa¹²³ (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 caṃḍa suraṃḍa, ila tāṃ laga rahijā amara”. The poet concludes by stating that Jhararo is an immortal warrior to whom no suffering will attach itself.

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 caṇḥī 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(ṁ) sai āṛhāro tarai
81. cavadasa cāṁda 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. saṁ 1827 vi sai rā vaisākha vada 10 dine likhatu paṁ 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 bhopāṁ nu kahai
11. thāpila pīṭha jathāpa, āṁṇū 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*

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 *dhola* 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 (*Khejara*) 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 *melās* (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(m)jhāri, ajagai bi-ūpara karai
- 47. ukāre ke vāra, kaṭa kām āgila koṭaṛo
- 48. pābū pāsara ṇā ha, kalu ara phaujām nām karai
- 49. to paratāpa huti ha, vijakai dhāmdhala 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'.*

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 pām 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(m)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 ladhaj devī hukama.

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 (*gits*), 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 *rāṭhaurā 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-camels¹³⁶ 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)lī¹³⁹ baisā(ṁ)¹⁴⁰ valharām sū, uṭhai¹⁴¹ jhoka avārī

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 sūryasiṅgha rau, gīta rājā gajasiṅgha rau josi gamgadāsa rau kahyau, gīta rāva mālade rau bārāṭha harasūra kṛta*. I have not been able to trace data about the poets Josi Gamgadas and Barath Harsur.

¹³⁶ Shekavat (1968: 25, n.17) translates *sāṁdhariyā* and *kaṁālī* both with “she-camels” (*ūṁṇiṇiṁ*).

¹³⁷ Sindh as a region “south” (*laṁkā*) of Marwar or Ravana’s mythological Lamka. In Shekavat (1968: 25) it is clear that Sindh is meant (v. 3): “vegara pālha līyā varadāi, siṁdha taṇā sāṁdhī 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(ṁ)*, *baisī(ṁ)*, *besī(ṁ)*, or perhaps *baisau(ṁ)*.

7. pāta līyai āṃṇī pramavale, sā(ṃ)rā jhoka savhārī(ṃ)
8. pāchima diṣi pābū pādharai, vegaja kamadhaji vālī
9. pa(ṃ)ra dīpām 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 warrior¹⁴⁵ Pabuji quickly 'returns' (from) the southern 'region'.*
9. *(With) 'lustrous'¹⁴⁶ weapons Pabuji 'robbed' the Badshah¹⁴⁷ (of his) she-camels.*

A shorter, somewhat different version of *git I*, the seven verse-lines long (including the title) *gīta pābū dhāṃdhaḷauta rāthaura 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 rāthaura rau*
2. pābū pāṭa rai rūpa rāthavarām, sevai tūjha sadhīrā
3. vegara pālha līyā varadāi, siṃdha taṇā sāmḍhī rā
4. pābū parabata kīyā pādharā, gharahara pāmḍhara ghoṛai
5. sīhā harai līyā sāmḍhī rā, lākhā ūpara loḍai
6. pachama taṇī pābū pāṭaudhara, bīrhāi kamamdhaja vālī
7. para dīpām hūṃ āṃṇī pragaṛī, kivalai rāya kamālī

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

¹⁴¹ Blotched. Perhaps: *muṭhai*. However, alliteration would require: "*ṭṭahi ... ḡvārī*" (*mitr varṇ vainasagāi*).

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): "kamamdhaja vālī".

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: "vegara pālha līyā varadāi, siṃdha taṇā sāmḍhī rā". It, therefore, seems more apt to trace "dīpām" to "dīpaṇau": "camakanā, shobhā denā".

¹⁴⁷ I interpret "kivalai rā-i" as "badshah", based on Shekavat (1968: 25), who reads "kivalai 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(ṁ)ṭhavaṛe, seve tujha sadhīrā
3. vegaḍai pālī varadā-ī, sahi laṁkā taṇā sāmḍhaḍiyā

2. pābū pāṭa rai rūpa rāṭhavaṛām, sevai tūjha sadhīrā
3. vegaṛa pālha līyā varadāī, siṁdha taṇā sāmḍhī 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 Umarmkot. 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 Rajasthan Research Institute (Chaupasni) as becomes apparent from the poem's subtitle: *Sāmḍū 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 nāmṁa pāyau
11. rāja (kam)varī [rahī camvarī]¹⁴⁹ caḍhī
12. āpa bhamarī taṇī pīṭha(ṁ) āyau

10. neha nava rī jikā vāta cita na dhārī
11. prema gavarī taṇo nāmḥa pāyau
12. rāja kaṁvarī rahī caṁvarī caḥī
13. āpa bhamarī taṇī pīṭha āyau

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 *gits* 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: "dhrībachara dhrībachara". 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 vanyau tiṇa vari mai(ṁ)

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.

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(ṁ) bhūcara bhakhalīyai".

Git IV

The poet Barahat Amaradas, the composer and/or reciter of the 16 verse-lines long *git 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: "gurāṇa gravaṇa jimi nātha rā gramtha" (N.S. Bhati 1973: 78).¹⁵⁴ In verse-lines 14 to 15, Pabuji is praised for his patronage of the temple (*thāmna*) 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 khalām pāre kitām. sura maṇḍala bhediyo prathī sīdho" (N.S. Bhati 1973: 78).

Git V

The nineteenth-century *gīta pābūjī rau āsiyā bāṁkīdāsa 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

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 *yogis*, 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): "paḍhiyau 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".

¹⁵⁵ *Duha* II (v. 1): "pavaṃga alāgai pāgi, sāṃcara tau sūdhau nahī".

¹⁵⁶ *Duha* II (v. 10): "pābū pāri paṭhāṃṇa, pāsi kamala paṛiya pachau".

¹⁵⁷ I interpret "jāṃṇa" as "savāri".



Poetry recitation by Shri Charan Samdu.