Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Kamphorst, J.

Citation

Kamphorst, J. (2008, June 18). *In praise of death : history and poetry in medieval Marwar (South Asia)*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/12986

Version:	Not Applicable (or Unknown)
License:	Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/12986

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

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

---

[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

---

[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**-āg**ai**, 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: *macha**rāla** khaig**āla** ros**āla** mane*, *vikar**āla** ghaḍ**āla** jak**āla** vanai*, that is partially sustained in the next verse-line (46): *ḍhiṃc**āla** bhuṃj**āla** suḍr**āla** dhayaṃ*. And in the latter half-line of verse-line 46, all first letters alliterate: ***sā**tavīsai **su**ra **sa**ghīra **sa**yaṃ*.

---

[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 kaṛāṃ, 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

---

[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

---

[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.

---

[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: "*u̲ṭahi* ... *u̲vārī*" (*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

---

[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

---

[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

---

[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*:

---

[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*).

---

[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*.

---

[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

---

[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

---

[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]

---

[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.