WHAT MAKES THE HEAD TURN?
THREE NARRATIVES OF LOVE AND WAR FROM MEDIEVAL WESTERN INDIA

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that this dissertation "*WHAT MAKES THE HEAD TURN?* **THREE NARRATIVES OF LOVE AND WAR FROM MEDIEVAL WESTERN INDIA**", submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** is my original work and has not been previously submitted for the award of any other degree of this or any other university.

(Aparna Kapadia)

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND DATES

- Due to technical difficulties, complete consistency in transliteration has not been achieved.
- All Gujarati and Marwari spellings have been transliterated according to their original pronunciations. The spellings of modern place names such as Gujarat, Rajasthan or Delhi have however been retained.
- Names of books that are not in English have been transliterated in accordance with their original pronunciations.
- All dates are in the Common Era, except where specified.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of a fifteenth century narrative called the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* composed by the *brāhmaṇa* poet Padmanābha in 1455, and two of its subsequent retellings, namely, the *Vāt Cahuhāṇa Songarāṅri Rāv Lākhaṇotarāṅri (The Story of the Sonigarā Chauhan Lineage of Rāv Lānkahaṇshingh)* in the *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt* , and the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt.* The *Khyāt* was composed by Muṇhot Nainsí, a *diwan* at the court of the Rathor ruler, Rājā Jaswant Singh of Marwar between 1648 and 1660. The *Vāt* belongs to an oral tradition and seems to have been put to writing by an anonymous author (authors?) sometime around the year 1740. The *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* tells the story of Alauddin Khalji's attack on Gujarat, including a sack of Somanatha (c. 1299), and subsequently on Jalor (c.1311), a fort and kingdom situated in modern Rajasthan that had traditionally been under the control of a branch of the Chauhan Rajputs known as the Sonigarās. It is a story of the battle between him and the Sonigarā Chauhan ruler of Jalor, Kānhaḍade. Both the later narratives also tell the same basic story with a number of modifications but belong to different genres and patronage contexts. Such texts have only recently been used for the reconstruction of medieval history, which tends to be dominated by the use of Persian sources. The colonial historians considered the Persian documents to be more scientific and reliable histories as they fitted in with their own historical traditions. Texts such as the *Prabandha*, which combined history with fantasy, were considered less reliable as historical source material. On

the other hand, several nationalist historians came to view narratives about Muslim attacks and Rajput resistance as evidence of organised, nationalistic defence of the Rajputs against a foreign enemy, often accepting the events or episodes mentioned in these as facts. More recently, historians studying the medieval period in South Asia are engaged in re-examining some of these texts, including folk narratives, oral histories and inscriptions, to understand the various social and political processes that may have been at work during the time.[1] These studies have come a long way from the traditional periodisation of Indian history and from the dynastic focus that had dominated the study of the region. Several of these works emphasise the need to highlight the 'processual' aspects of Indian history. In this context, the study of regional traditions has acquired some significance, as historians have come to question traditional colonialist historiography. The latter viewed the formation of regions in the wake of the disintegration of empires from the early medieval period as the major factor in the 'decline' and 'degeneration' enfeebled India and rendered her vulnerable to invasions from 'outside'. The present dissertation joins issue with these recent studies in exploring the implications that the memories of a certain event, preserved in a set of medieval narratives, can have for the social history of the region to which they belong, as well as its links with the wider history of the South Asian subcontinent. All three narratives under study contain the common motif of the Chauhan hero Viramade's head being brought before the princess (Alauddin's daughter),

[1] Some examples of such studies include the works of Dirk Kolff (1990), Phyllis Granoff (1991), J.D. Smith (1991), Richard Davis (1997), B.D. Chattopadhyaya (1998), Cynthia Talbot (2001) and Romila Thapar (2004).

who claims to be his lover of previous births. However depending on the political and patronage contexts of these narratives, the head's reaction to the Muslim princess also differs in each case. The implications of such motifs can thus be read within the historical contexts of the narratives.

Through the study of the three narratives, belonging to the literary traditions of a regional elite, I will endeavour to understand some of the historical processes that were at work at the regional level in medieval western India. A study of such processes, it is hoped, will help to recast the medieval as a dynamic period with continuities with the past.

Historiography

The narratives under discussion can be located within a literary tradition that belongs to the Rajputs, a social group that emerged as the regional elites of Rajasthan from about the fourteenth century onwards. As Deryck Lodrick has noted, the region of Rajasthan has in fact persistently been identified with them - a fact that "bears eloquent testimony to the historical importance of the Rajput presence in this part of India."[2] They have thus come to be an essential part of Rajasthan's regional tradition along with the desert environment, colourful clothing or the Marwari language. A historiographical review of studies on the formation of regions and regional traditions is therefore in order before embarking on a study of the three Rajput narratives.

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2 Deryck O. Lodrick, "Rajasthan as a Region: Myth or Reality?" in Karine Schomer, Joan L. Erdman, Deryck Lodrick, Lloyd I. Rudolph (eds.), *The Idea of Rajasthan,* Vol. 1, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001, p. 1.

In the context of South Asia it has generally been held that from the post Gupta period one can observe the beginning of the process of region formation. While discussing the features of the medieval period in Indian history, N. R. Ray, in his Presidential Address to the Indian History Congress in 1967, pointed out that it was from the seventh and more pronouncedly the eighth century onwards that one finds 'regionalism' as an important feature of Indian polity – that is, the political and military powers of dynasties such as the *Gurjara – Pratihāras*, the *Rāśtrakutas*, the *Pālas* or the *Çolās,* were identified by their regional boundaries.[3] Further, Ray suggested that this was noticeable not only in the political sphere but also in other aspects of social and cultural life. Thus the period between the eighth and the twelfth centuries also saw the beginnings of regional schools of art and architecture, such as the Eastern school comprising Bihar, Bengal and Assam, the Central Indian School, the Western school and the *Çolā* school.[4] Similarly, language, literature and script also began to acquire a regional flavour.[5] Despite the establishment of the overarching Mughal authority over northern India and parts of the south, from the sixteenth century onwards, the crystallisation of regional traditions remained an ongoing process.

More recently, B.D. Chattopadhyaya has suggested an alternative approach to the emergence of regional polities in this period. This development, according to him, can be viewed as a part of the larger process

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3 N. R. Ray, "The Medieval Factor in Indian History", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 29th session*, Patiala, 1967, p. 19.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p. 20.

of regional and local state formation that was at work in the subcontinent. In his introduction to the collection of essays titled *The Making of Early Medieval India,* B.D. Chattopadhyaya traces the beginning of this process to the period between the third and the sixth centuries AD, but more particularly to the period after the sixth century.[6] He identifies the expansion of state society through the process of local state formation, the peasantization of tribes and caste formation, and cult appropriation and integration,[7] as the three major interconnected processes that were at work through all the phases of Indian history. Chattopadhyaya sees the formation of state societies as the major integrating factor in the development of regional political, economic and socio – cultural trends.

In his study, Chattopadhyaya has focussed on local state formation as, "when studied in the context of its local manifestation, state formation makes intelligible a wide range of relationships, whereas discussions regarding the state from 'the stratosphere of a rarified concept' rarely succeeded in grasping such relations."[8]

Chattopadhyaya does not address the issue of the contribution of the Islamic states in this process but underscores the role of the brahmanical, and more particularly the Rajput ruling lineages in his work. What is significant about this work is that it provides an alternative approach to the study of the post-Gupta – pre-Sultanate period, which has till recently been viewed as a

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6 B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Introduction", *The Making of Early Medieval India,* OUP, New Delhi, 1994, p. 17.

7 Ibid., p. 16.

8 Ibid., p. 19.

period of crisis and decentralisation rather than one in which continuous creative processes were also at work in the wider history of the subcontinent. The study also brings to light the fact that, apart from the larger regional states like those of Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan, which began to take shape during the reign of the Delhi Sultans, there also existed and continued to emerge a large number of local and sub-regional states whose emergence can be traced approximately to the early medieval period.

These simultaneous processes of local and regional state formation are highlighted in Nandini Sinha Kapur's work on the gradual emergence of the Nāgdā-Āhaḍa Guhilas in Rajasthan from a local ruling group to a regional power.[9] This family of Guhilas came to supersede a number of other Guhila families by transforming itself into a regional power by the thirteenth century and came to dominate the area of Mewar. The author notes that while the tenth century was a "crucial phase in the history of the Guhila dynasties as it witnessed the crystallisation of a state apparatus among them"[10], it was the Nāgdā-Āhaḍa branch that was able to mobilise the material base and device a complex military and administrative structure which integrated both Guhila and non-Guhila chiefs. They were also able to furnish favourable matrimonial alliances and utilise various legitimating devices such as origin myths and patronage of popular religious institutions and cults in order to establish themselves as the dominant power of Mewar. What is significant for our purposes is the fact that junior branches of the Nāgadā-Āhaḍa Guhilas

[9] Nandini Sinha Kapur, *State Formation in Rajasthan: Mewar During the Seventh-Fifteenth Centuries,* Manohar, New Delhi, 2002.

[10] Ibid., p. 52.

continued to emerge along the peripheries of the new state and in fact "did not disrupt the process of state formation initiated by the main line; instead expansion of the kinship network caused rivalries, rather than diffusing them."[11] Thus state formation at the local level continued despite the emergence of certain lineages as regional powers. The Chauhan kingdom of Jalor is one example of this kind of localised state that Chattopadhyaya and Nandini Sinha Kapur discuss.

The process of regional state formation from the early medieval period onwards can be seen as being simultaneously accompanied by the development of traditions specific to the region. Studies of the history of regions and regional traditions in a subcontinent as environmentally and culturally diverse as South Asia are therefore extremely important. Historians, both Indian and European, have recognised this fact and, over the last two centuries, produced monographs tracing the histories of various regions and regional dynasties. Many of these writings, however, have treated a region as merely a regional kingdom or an administrative unit. Historians and anthropologists have only recently begun to explore questions related to what goes into the *making* of the distinctiveness of each region. These questions however are not easy to answer, as many of the elements that go into the making of a region are often fluid and unquantifiable. Despite such constraints, there have been attempts, over the last four decades, by scholars to understand the process of regional formation through the study of different

[11] Ibid., p. 81.

regional traditions. Three significant works in this regard are *The Cult of Jagannatha and the Regional Tradition of Orissa* edited by A. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G. C. Tripathi, *The Idea of Rajasthan: Explorations in Regional Identity* in two volumes edited by Karine Schomer, Joan L. Erdman, Deryck O. Lodrick and Lloyd I. Rudolph and *Religious Process: The Making of a Regional Tradition* by Kunal Chakrabarti.[12] Of these the volumes on Rajasthan are particularly relevant for my work.

The editors and contributors of this significant study of Rajasthan approach the issue of its regional tradition in a manner different from Eschmann et al and Chakrabarti. While the contributors see Rajasthan's culture as holistic, they also acknowledge that an assemblage of disparate, localised traditions which are nevertheless uniquely Rajasthani went into the creation of this cohesive cultural unit. They have explored variables such as language, art, social institutions and ecological features across temporal boundaries to understand the cultural space called Rajasthan. Although one single central trope does not unite Rajasthan's culture, the role of the Rajputs, their history and political structure, appears as a dominant factor in defining its regional tradition and identity. A particularly relevant essay by Deryck Lodrick, called "Rajasthan as a Region: Myth or Reality?", explores the different elements that contributed in defining Rajasthan as a region distinct from any other. Lodrick speaks of 'instituted' and 'denoted' regions that are created by

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[12] Ancharlotte Eschmann, Hermann Kulke and G. Tripathi (ed.), *The Cult of Jagannatha and the Regional Tradition of Orissa,* Manohar, New Delhi, 1978, Joan L. Erdman, Deryck O. Lodrick and Lloyd I. Rudolph (eds.), *The Idea of Rajastan: Explorations in Regional Identity,* 2 Vols., Manohar, New Delhi, 2001, Kunal Chakrabarti, *Religious Process: The Making of a Regional Tradition,* OUP, New Delhi, 2001.

outsiders for the purpose of organising information, particularly of the administrative kind.[13] He distinguishes these from the concept of an 'experienced' region that is defined by the perceptions of those who inhabit it.[14] This concept of a region, according to Lodrick, "represents a people's shared reaction to their particular segment of space, or specific features associated with that space, that leads to an awareness of its distinctiveness."[15] The conception of Rajasthan, both as a denoted and experienced region, however appears to be influenced by the existence of a Rajput culture and polity. As an administrative unit, its boundaries were first laid in the sixteenth century by Akbar as the *subah* of Ajmer was established by grouping together the different Rajput provinces conquered by him.[16] The Rajput states also showed enough similarities in their internal organisation, especially in terms of the role of caste and kinship in maintaining power, to be considered a coherent political unit.[17] For Lodrick, the fact that the region's boundaries have remained more or less the same from the Mughal period, continuing through the British rule and even as present day Rajasthan, suggests that the Mughal conception was based on cultural and historical realities.[18] Thus although various elements went into the making of what can be termed as a unique Rajasthani culture, including the Rajasthani language or the specific combinations of castes, customs and religious practices, the contribution of

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13 Deryck O. Lodrick, "Rajasthan as a Region: Myth or Reality?", p. 3.

14 Ibid., p. 4.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., p. 9.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., pp. 9-12.

the Rajputs remains the dominant factor in defining the region for those outside of it, thanks to the patronage afforded by their courts to art, architecture, music, public works as well as literary traditions.[19] The people of Rajasthan, on the other hand, order subjective space according to criteria that include caste, former landlords, dialect, history, the physical environment and economic patterns.[20] Yet the association of Rajasthan with Rajput culture penetrates the subjective understanding of the region as well.[21] The Rajputs in Rajasthan thus also appear to have come to cherish the virtues of *kśatriya* valour and honour much more than their counterparts in other regions.[22] However, many layers appear to shape the Rajasthani people's perceptions of their subjective space as they identify with the greater region called Rajasthan as well as the local areas that they inhabit or with the community to which they belong. Thus in Rajasthan, the emergence of the regional identity is a complex process. It involves the combining of a number of historical, cultural and social forces over prolonged periods of time to define it as a distinctive cultural and political region, both from an outsiders' perspective as well as from the perspective of its own inhabitants.

As noted earlier, this dissertation is the study of three narratives from medieval Rajasthan, namely, the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* the *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt* and the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt.* While the study of these three medieval texts is admittedly not sufficient to reach any definitive conclusion

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19 Ibid., p. 21.
20 Ibid., p. 27.
21 Ibid., p. 30.
22 Ibid.

about the evolving regional tradition of Rajasthan, the frameworks suggested by the works discussed above will help open up the possibility of viewing the political history and the specific social formations in the region under study as 'processes' rather than sudden developments taking place at a particular point in time.

It would also be significant to mention here that in a recent article "The 'Marriage' of 'Hindu' and *'Turak':* Medieval Rajput Histories of Jalor"[23] , Ramya Sreenivasan raises some of the issues I am concerned with in a study of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* and the *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt.* My study, while sharing some of her concerns, will differ from it in the following ways:

In addition to the *Prabandha* and the *Khyāt,* I will also look at, the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* an eighteenth century re-telling of the story that can be located in an oral tradition of Rajasthan. Thus like Sreenivasan, I will be concerned with the different patronage contexts, but the temporal boundaries of my study will be wider. It will be my endeavour to highlight this temporal expanse and therefore not only to cull out the similarities that the texts display, but also the differences that are reflected between them. I will also focus on how in each case the particular historical moment shapes the manner in which the narrative is constructed. My specific approach to some of these broader questions will also differ from that of Sreenivasan's. For instance, I will lay greater stress than Sreenivasan on understanding the social category called Rajput and the manner in which these texts provide legitimacy to an emerging

[23] Ramya Sreenivasan, "Alauddin Khalji Remembered: Conquest, Gender and Community in Medieval Rajput Narratives," *Studies in History,* 2002, ns. 18.2, pp. 275-296.

regional elite and the texts' perceptions of an emerging 'Rajput' code of conduct or tradition. I will also study how these narratives that emerge from within the elite Rajput tradition perceive their Muslim enemies and stress that these were products of a social and political milieu that was continuously negotiating new kinds of relationships.

The Narratives

- ***Kānhaḍade Prabandha***

The *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* is a typical example of *prabandha-kāvya*, a biographical literary genre prevalent in western India from about the thirteenth century, which seemed to have drawn inspiration from the epic/Purāṇic tradition. Its creator, Padmanābha, was a Nāgar *brāhmaṇa* from Visalnagar, in Gujarat[24]. A number of poets, scholars and administrators belonged to this caste and were patronised by the courts of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Apart from the details about his caste however, Padmanābha provides us no other information about himself.

The prabandhas were often composed in the languages current in the region such as the early forms of Gujarati, Rajasthani or Hindi. The protagonists of these narratives were usually great warriors, religious leaders or generous merchants. One very rich tradition of such narratives comes from the Jains, especially the *Śvetāmbaras*, who promoted the composition of the biographies of prominent lay patrons of the religion, such as kings and merchants, as well as of the *āchāryas*. The *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* however

[24] Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha*, K.B. Vyas (ed.), Rājasthān Purātattva Mandir, Jaipur, 1953, IV.340, p. 231.

belongs to another tradition of prabandha narratives – one that was composed at the courts of the Rajput chieftains and often involved the encounter of a Rajput hero with a Muslim ruler. Narratives of this kind were frequently a mixture of history and fantasy. The language of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* has been classified as Old Gujarati or Old Western Rajasthani.[25]

Although prabandhas composed by *brāhmaṇa* poets are much less common compared to those by Jain composers, this particular narrative has come to be recognised by modern scholars of Gujarati and Rajasthani as a work of considerable significance within the medieval literary tradition of western India[26]. It has often been seen as the narrative that set the 'ideal' standards for future composers of prabandhas and rāsos, another biographical genre prevalent in western India. Further, since during the fifteenth century,

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[25]. This nomenclature has been assigned by the philologist, Dr. L.P. Tessitori, an Italian scholar who had never visited India. Tessitori studied a number of manuscripts from medieval western India, located at the Regia Bibliteca Nazionale Centrale at Florence. On the suggestion of George Grierson, he called the language used in the manuscripts "Old Western Rajasthani". This language has also been termed "Old Gujarati" by Grierson. According to Tessitori, this language contained all the elements that account for the origin of modern Gujarati as well as Marwari. He therefore recognised it as the common parent of both. He attributed its origins to Sauraseni Apabramca. In his research he found that until upto the fifteenth century at least, the only form of language that prevailed in the region covered by modern Gujarati and to a large extent Marwari, was "Old Western Rajasthani." Tessitori's is a technical work dealing with the intricacies of the grammar of this language. It was published between the years 1914 and 1916 in the *Indian Antiquary* Vols. XLIII, XLIV, XLV, under the title "Notes on the Grammar of the Old Western Rajasthani with Special Reference to Ápabhramça and to Gujarati and Marwari." On the basis of Tessitori's "Notes" and his own study of the text, M.C. Modi studied the intricacies of the "Old Western Rajasthani" used in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* which he believed was the most important text produced in medieval Gujarat. His study has been published in the Gujarati journal, *Buddhiprakāsh.* See, M.C. Modi, "Kānhaḍade Prabandha: Samikśā ane Purti" in *Buddhiprakāsh: Journal of the Gujarat Vernacular Society,* October to December 1938, January to March, 1939, July to September, 1939 and October to December, 1939.

[26] See for instance, M.C. Modi, "Kānhaḍade Prabandha, Samíkśā ane Purti", M.R. Majumdar, *Gujarātí Sāhiyaa nā Swarupo (Madhyakālína tathā Vartamāna),* Acharya Book Depot, Baroda, 1954, Umashakar Joshi, Ananatarya Rawal and Yashwant Shukla (eds.), *Gujarātí Sāhityano Itihās* , Vols 1 & 2 (Gujarati), Gujarātí Sāhitya Parishad, Ahmedabad, 1976, 1954 and Mansukhlal Jhaveri, *History of Gujarati Literature,* Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1978.

Jalor, a fort-town located in south eastern Rajasthan had close political association with Gujarat, scholars (historians as well as scholars of literature), from both Gujarat and Rajasthan claim the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* as being a part of their historical and literary tradition.

As noted before, the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* narrates the conflict between Alauddin Khalji and Kānhaḍade, the Chauhan ruler of Jalor. It is divided into four *khaṅḍas.* The narrative in these is composed in the *caupaí* and *pavādu* metres interspersed with *duhās* as well as short pieces that can be sung and for which in each case the poet has assigned the *rāga.* Scholars have located a number of manuscripts of the *Prabandha.* The text was first published in 1913, with a brief introduction and notes by the Gujarati Indologist, D.P. Derasari[27]. In 1953, a 'critical edition' of the text, compiled from ten manuscripts, was brought out by K. B. Vyas as part of the Rājasthān Purātana Granthamālā series. V. S. Bhatnagar used this version in his translation of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* which was published, with the parenthetical title –*'India's Greatest Patriotic Saga of Medieval Times,'* in 1991. The translation is accompanied by a somewhat Hindu-centric introduction, shades of which are visible in the translation as well. While the translation proves extremely useful for an initial understanding of the version of old Gujarati/western Rajasthani used by Padmanābha, it is unable to capture many of the nuances of the vernacular text as well as of the different poetic forms it presents. Bhatnagar very often fails to mention the different

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[27] V.S. Bhatnagar, *The Kānhaḍade Prabandha (India's Greatest Patriotic Saga of Medieval Times),* Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1991, Introduction, p. iii.

subsections of the *khaṅḍas* and their meters or the songs and their refrains. He also freely uses the word 'Rajput' in places where the poet has used terms like *'Rāut,' 'Rāi' or 'Rājavamsa'.* In fact, in the vernacular version of the text, the word 'Rajput' has been used only once. There are a number of such instances where the vernacular text uses terminology that is very different from the interpretations of the translator. For the purpose of this dissertation, therefore, I have made use of K. B. Vyas's edited volume. The English translation is mine.

Padmanābha begins his narrative by paying his respects to the gods. He then goes on to praise his patron's Sonigarā Chauhan lineage and Jalor *(Jālāhur).* This *khaṅḍa* sets the context of the enmity between Sultan Alauddin Khalji *(Alāvadína)* and the protagonist, Kānhaḍade, the master of the Jalor fort. Mādhava Muthā, the principal minister of Sāraṅgadeva, the Vaghela ruler of Gurjaradhāma, on being insulted by his king, sought revenge and pledged to bring the *turaks* into the region. He went to the court of Alauddin at Delhi, lamenting the end of the *khitrí dharma* in Gujarat and asking him to attack the kingdom. The Sultan was happy to comply. The expedition to Gujarat was to be led by Ulugh Khan *(Alukhān).* In order that he could enter the region with ease, a request was sent to Jalor seeking peaceful passage for the Turkic army. Kānhaḍade however refused to grant the request as letting a violent and destructive army enter his territories would be a violation of his *dharma.* The Turkic army was thus compelled to seek another avenue of entry. The poet now describes the conquest of Gujarat in detail. Ulugh Khan sacked the cities

of Gujarat, captured *brāhmaṇas,* women and children and looted the temple of Somanatha, capturing the idol therein. He ordered that the idol be taken to Delhi and crushed into lime. On his way back to Delhi, Ulugh Khan decided to avenge the insult that Kānhaḍade had brought upon the Sultan by not allowing entry to his army. He challenged the latter to war, taunting him with the captured idol. At dawn the two consorts of Śiva, Gaṅgā and Gaurī appeared before Kānhaḍade in a dream reminding him that it was their Lord who had granted him his kingdom. Today when He had been captured, it was Kānhaḍade's duty to rescue Him, just as Rāma had had Rudra freed in the past and Bali, the son of Virocana, had shown his utmost devotion to Śiva. Thus shaken out of his lethargy, notes the poet, Kānhaḍade vowed not to eat until he had defeated the *mlecchas* and freed Somanatha from them. He now gathered together members of thirty-six royal clans who launched night attacks on the Turkic camp. The latter were routed and defeated. The idol was recaptured and Kānhaḍade was lauded as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. He had brought immeasurable *puṇya* to himself and his clan. Five *liṅgas* were now carved out of the single one and sent to different places in the region – worshipping all five, we are told, would free a person from the cycle of birth and death forever.

The second *khaṅḍa* now commences with the celebrations of the victory in Jalor while Alauddin's army made its way back to Delhi in shame. Much sorrow was unleashed in the city as the news of the debacle spread. On hearing the news the Sultan felt humiliated and was furious. He now ordered

elaborate preparations to be made for a retaliatory attack on Jalor. The attack under the leadership of Nahar Malik and Bhoja, a great swordsman, ended in a miserable defeat of the two commanders at the hands of Kānhaḍade's nephew Sātal, the chief of Siwana, which was a fort close to Jalor. The Sultan now decided to capture Jalor himself, no matter how difficult the challenge might be. Siwana however was to be besieged first. A protracted battle with Sātal now followed. He successfully faced the Sultan's army which suffered several reverses. The Turkic army was reduced to a miserable condition; yet there appeared to be no end to the war in sight. Sātal then prayed to Asāpurídeví [28] asking her to put an end to these tribulations by destroying the a*suras* (the Khalji army). The goddess appeared before her devotee in person and took him to the enemy camp. Here he saw the face of Śiva in the person of the sleeping Sultana. Sātal realised that since Rudra had taken the form of the Sultan, it would be impossible and also inappropriate to kill him. As a proof of his visit however he picked up the Sultan's war club. However, he was unable to give up his 'warrior's duty' and thus decided to continue the fight despite the knowledge of its inevitable conclusion. In the meanwhile, the Sultan's army resorted to treachery in order to end the battle. A dead cow was thrown into the only source of water in the fort, thereby rendering it totally impure and unworthy of consumption. It was clear to all that the end was now near. Sātal's queens (and other women in the fort) entered the fires of *jauhar (jamahar)* while the men continued to fight. Sātal sent the war club to the

[28] Asāpurídeví, who is referred to by Tod as Asapurnā, was worshipped by all Rajputs and was the tutelary deity of the Chauhans. See James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* Vol. II, Low Priced Publications, New Delhi, 1993 (first pub. 1829), p. 682.

Sultan as an indicator of the fact that he had actually spared his life despite having an opportunity to kill him. Pleased, the Sultan offered Sātal the governorship of Gujarat, promising to spare his life provided he visits him. Sātal refused on the grounds that such an act would bring dishonour and disgrace upon the Chauhan *kula.* A confrontation was inevitable. Sātal died fighting. The Sultan also praised his courage and bravery. The poet notes that both sides had fought equally well and compares the battle to that between Rāma and Rāvaṇa or the eternal war between the gods and the demons *(devas* and *asuras).* The conquest of Siwana had taken seven years.

Filled with pride about his victory over Siwana, the Sultan proceeded to Jalor in the third *khaṅda.* He sent his envoys to Kānhaḍade in order to convince him that fighting one as formidable as he was futile and threatened to attack Jalor. Kānhaḍade, like his nephew in the previous *khaṅda,* refused to offer allegiance to Alauddin. He scoffed at the Sultan for having taken seven years to conquer Siwana and challenged him to attack the fort with his full force. The Turkic army now marched to Jalor, destroying several towns en route. Kānhaḍade once again summoned the thirty-six royal clans (although only twelve are actually named) to fight the *mlecchas.* Several battles followed with both sides facing reverses and succeeding alternately. At this point a certain Sitai[29] told the Sultan that Kānhaḍade was the tenth incarnation *(avatārī)* of Viṣṇu and thus the entry of his armies into Jalor would surely spell destruction. Alauddin disregarded this prophecy. However his daughter, Pirojā,

[29] Bhatnagar identifies Sitai as Alauddin's daughter Pirojā. However there is no indication of this being the case in the vernacular text, which provides no identification for Sitai. In the latter, they appear to be two different people.

now expressed a desire to marry Kānhaḍade's son Viramade. The Sultan was highly dismissive of this prospect pointing out the impossibility of a marriage between a 'Hindu' and a *turak,* offering instead to marry her to any *turak* of her choice. Undeterred, Pirojā praised the virtues of the 'Hindus' asserting that she would rather remain unmarried than marry a *turak.* She would marry Viramade or else end her life. Alauddin was left with no alternative but to send a message to Kānhaḍade suggesting that the hostilities should end with the marriage of their respective children. He offered the latter the province of Gujarat in return for accepting the alliance. Viramade however spurned the offer as being shameful for the entire Chauhan *kula,* which was as pure as the unblemished full moon. He viewed the offer as an attempt by the Sultan to make inroads into their territory. Violent hostilities now followed with the Turkic army facing major reverses in which the Sultan's other daughter (presumably) and son-in-law were also captured. Pirojā offered to obtain their release by going to Jalor and meeting Viramade. She would then tell him what he did not know – that her relationship with him had spanned several of their previous births. In Jalor, however, Viramade once again rejected her and vowed never to look at her face. Instead she was allowed a tour of the fort and was able to obtain the release of the prisoners along with horses and elephants that had been captured during the Somanatha battle. She also asked the Rajputs to promise that they would not launch night attacks on her father's army. In return she promised that the Turkic army would refrain from violating the sanctity of temples, breaking idols, harming *brāhmaṇas* and cows. The *khaṅḍa* ends with

a section titled *bhadaoli* in which Padmanābha gives an elaborate description, in prose, of the grandeur and prosperity of the Jalor fort as viewed by Pirojā on her tour around it.

The final *khaṅḍa* opens with Pirojā describing in glorious terms to her father, what she had seen at Jalor. The Sultan was now concerned about his ability to capture a fort as formidable and prosperous as this. Piroja however assured him of its fall in eight years, a prediction that she had made at an earlier occasion. Alauddin now marched towards Jalor with an enormous army. On reaching the outskirts of Jalor, he once again asked Kānhaḍade to peacefully accept his suzerainty but the latter refused. Hostilities followed and continued for several years. Having faced multiple reverses the Muslims now began to weaken in their resolve and contemplated retreat. But Kānhaḍade became concerned that if the Sultan's army left, his desire to fight and earn glory would not be fulfilled. He thus ordered his brother, Māldeo, who was commanding the army, to retreat so that the enemy could advance towards Jalor. Now only eight days remained for the end of the eight-year period predicted by Pirojā. Alauddin's forces managed to gain entry into the fort with the help of one of Kānhaḍade's own officials. Kānhaḍade heard of this act of treachery and realised that his (Kānhaḍade's) end was inevitable. At night the fort appeared to him in person - in the form of a *brāhmaṇa* - and reassured him that his descendents would regain the fort some day. He was given this reassurance by other divinities as well. However, instead of fleeing to safety, the residents of the fort chose to remain close to their chief. The women of

Kānhaḍade's household committed *jauhar.* In fact, claims Pādmanabha, a *jauhar* fire was lit in every home as the common people, including the *śudras,* chose to die along with Kānhaḍade. The spectacle of the *jauhar* was so formidable that all the gods and goddesses came to witness it. Kānhaḍade and Viramade died fighting.

The *Prabandha* now comes to its astonishing finale. Viramade's disembodied head was carried in a basket decorated with flowers to Delhi and presented before the princess. But the head turned away from her, thus keeping to the warrior's word even in death. Pirojā immolated the head and drowned herself in the Yamuna. We are told that the couple was united in heaven. The *Prabandha* ends with the poet describing the various benefits or *puṇya* that one would incur by listening to or reciting this account.

- ***Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt***

The *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt* was composed between 1648 and 1660 by Nainsí, who was the son of Jaimal, who belonged to the Oswāl Jain caste. He was the *diwan* in the court of Jaisingh, the Rathor Rājā of Jodhpur. A *khyāt* normally is a clan history including lists of names of rulers and their descendents, and descriptive stories about important events relating to the history of the clan or lineage. It is a kind of overarching genre which may include different types of compositions like *vāt, vārtā, hakikat, prastāv, pidhi (vamasāvali)* and so on.[30] The *Nainsí rí Khyāt* narrates the history of several of the royal families of Rajasthan as well of the kingdoms of Gujarat,

[30] Bhupatiram Badriprasadot, *Sankśipta Rājasthāni Sāhityik aur Sānskrtik Kosh* (Marwari), Rajasthan Granthaghar, Jodhpur, 2004, p. 51.

Bundelkhand and Malwa. Nainsí used both oral and written sources to describe the stories of the different Rajput houses, particularly those of the Rathors of Jodhpur. The story of the Sonigarā Chauhans of Jalor who, during this time, had accepted the overlordship of the Rathors, is told by Nainsí under the title *Vāt Cahuhāṇa Songarānrí Rāv Lākhaṇotarārí (The Story of the Sonigarā Chauhan Lineage of Rāv Lānkahaṇshingh).* It is this episode that is the focus of this dissertation and has been narrated here. I have made use of the text edited by Badriprasad Sakaria.[31] The English translation is mine. This particular episode is divided into five parts.

1. Vāt Cahuhāṇa Songarānrí Rāv Lākhaṇotarārí (The Story of the Sonigarā Chauhan Lineage of Rāv Lānkahaṇshingh)

Nainsí begins with a fairly detailed genealogy of the Sonigarā Chauhans of Jalor. He gives the names and tells a small story about some of the ancestors and descendents of Kānhaḍade. For instance, he tells the story of the lineage having divine links with regard to one of the ancestors of Kānhadade called Āsrāv or Asal. Āsrāv built Āsalkot and also a tank named Āsal Samudra in order that his mother might acquire religious merit. Once, when he was hunting near Nadol, a *devi* tried to frighten him. But he was not afraid and in fact shot an arrow at her. This pleased the *devi.* She appeared in person and offered him whatever he desired. On seeing her beauty, he wanted to marry her. Since she was bound by her boon, the *devi* agreed. She made him promise, however, that the fact that she was a *devi* should never be

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[31] Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* Badriprasad Sakariya (ed) , 4 Vols., 1984 (first pub. 1960), Vol. 1, p. 213.

revealed. If that happened, she would leave[32]. Nothing more is said about this incident and the genealogy continues as before. (The *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt* tells a more elaborate version of this story but there the protagonist is Kānhaḍade himself). Short descriptions like the one above are provided for several of the ancestors and descendants of Kānhaḍade, including Akhairāja, the supposed patron of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha.*

2. *Vāt Songarāṅrí (The Story of the Sonigarās)*[33]

Here Nainsí notes that there are twenty-four branches of the Chauhans. One among these was the branch of the Sonigarās, the masters of Jalor. They killed the Pawars and acquired Jalor. Rāval Kānhaḍade, who was the son of Sāmantasingh, became a powerful king. He was also regarded as an incarnation of *Śrí Thākurjí Gokulnāthají.* The emperor Alauddin *(Alāvadi Pātsāha)* attacked Gujarat and imprisoned a large number of people there. He also captured the *jyotirliṅga* at Somanatha, wrapped it in wet leather and began to drag it towards Delhi in a cart. The powers of Somanatha were such, however, that the cart with the *liṅga* would not budge. The emperor was determined and so he attached five hundred bullocks to the cart and tried to get them to drag the *liṅga.* The *liṅga* continued to resist by emanating fire. But Alauddin countered that by getting five hundred water carriers to pour water on it. As the bullocks perished in the fire, the emperor kept attaching more and more of them to the cart. Indeed, the ways *(karāmat)* of *Mahādeva* are great,

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[32] Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* Vol 1., tr. Badriprasad Sakaria, Rājasthān Prāchyavidya Pratishthān, Jodhpur, 1960, pp. 202-203.

[33] Ibid., pp. 212-213.

notes the author, but the *dānavas* were determined to outshine the *devas*. Thus the cart moved a distance of about one *kos* a day with a lot of difficulty. The emperor now set up camp at Sakarana, a village of Jalor. Rāo Kānhaḍade had heard about the troubles *(āpatti)* of *Mahādeva* by now.

3. *Vāt Singhāvalokini (The Story of the Singhāvalokan or of a Past Occurrence Related to this Event)*[34]

There was once a *brāhmaṇa* who collected water from all the *ghats* of the Ganga and offered it to *Mahādevají* at Somanatha every year. He had done this six times. During his seventh trip he reached a village one evening and decided to spend the night there. Just like an ordinary traveller he took shelter in the outer veranda of one of the village homes. The man of the house worked as a farm labourer away from the village. His wife had taken a lover while he was gone. She would visit the latter every night. That day, however, the husband also returned home from his place of work. Consequently the woman was able to meet her lover only much later in the night. The lover now began to sulk and did not let her come near him. She told him that she had been delayed due to her husband's arrival. He retorted that if she loved her husband so much, she should go back to him. The woman pleaded that she be allowed to come near him. However, the lover said that he would only let her enter his house if she proved her love for him by cutting off her husband's head and bringing it to him. She responded that if he would give her a weapon she would indeed do so. The man gave her a large knife. She

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[34] Ibid., pp. 213-216.

immediately cut off the sleeping husband's head and brought it to her lover. But the latter now shunned her for having committed such a hideous act and threw her out of his house.

The woman now returned home and sprinkled blood where the *brāhmaṇa* was sleeping. She hid the knife among his things. She also splattered blood all over his clothes. Then she began to wail about how some thieves had murdered her husband. Everyone from the village gathered including the royal soldiers. On conducting a search, the king's men found the weapon on the *brāhmaṇa's* person along with the drops of blood. They arrested him immediately and took him to the court. There, without questioning him even once, the king decided that both his hands would be chopped off by way of punishment.

The now handless *brāhmaṇa* moved towards Somanatha along with his water vessel (*kāvad)* after the wounds had healed. He was furious with *Mahādevají* who, despite all his devotion and service, had done nothing to save him. He decided that he would approach Somanatha under the pretext of offering the water but once he was in the temple he would break the *liṅga* with a stone.[35] When he came close to the temple, Lord Somanatha told the priest that a certain angry *brāhmaṇa* was approaching the temple and that he should not be permitted entry. The priest did as he had been instructed. But the furious *brāhmaṇa* ordered him to ask the lord for an explanation for his

[35] The text does not clarify how the *brāhmaṇa* would break the *liṅga* without his hands.

wretched fate despite his deep devotion. *Mahādevjí,* in response sent a message though the priest telling him a story about his last birth.

In his previous birth, the *brāhmaṇa* had been a Rajput. The man who had been killed by his wife had also been a Rajput and the two men had been friends. One day, the two friends killed a goat. The *brāhmaṇa* at that time had held the ears of the animal with his two hands while the friend had cut its head off. The goat was reborn as the woman and the friend as her husband. By killing him she had claimed her revenge. Thus his head was severed and the *brāhmaṇa's* hands were cut as he had used these to hold the goat with its ears. *Mahādevjí* thus claimed that the fate of his devotee was no fault of his (i.e. *Mahādevjí's).*

Despite having been told the truth about his fate, the *brāhmaṇa* remained angry with Somanatha. He now went to Kāśi. There he bathed in the Ganga and proceeded to perform the *karvat* or saw sacrifice.[36] The man who was conducting the sacrifice asked him to make a wish. The *brāhmaṇa* wished that he be reborn with powers to carry away the *liṅga* of Somanatha in a roll of wet leather. On hearing this the people standing around chided him for making such a terrible wish. They suggested that he reconsider what he might desire for his next birth. So the *brāhmaṇa* modified his wish. He now wished that from one part of his body a man be born who would capture Somanatha in the aforesaid manner. The man born from the other half would free the god from

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[36] This sacrifice was performed at Kāśi where an ancient saw existed at a certain place. A person who went and got himself/herself sacrificed under this saw was always granted his or her last wish in their next birth. See Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* p. 64.

his captivity. Thus Alauddin was born from one half and Rāo Kānhaḍade Sonigarā was born of the other.

4. Vāt (Story)[37]

Alauddin set up camp at Sakarna, six *kos* from Jalor. Kānhaḍade heard of this and sent four Rajputs along with Khāndhal Aleca (a trusted servant?). He told them to convey to the emperor that he was displeased by the latter's capture of so many *'hindusthanis'* and setting up camp so close to Jalor, in a village that was under his control. Did he not consider him a Rajput? The procession now moved towards the emperor's camp where they first met Sihpatala, Alauddin's nephew, and also his chief minister *(pradhāna).* They gave him the message that Kānhaḍade had sent. The nephew retorted that the emperor had done them no harm. Besides, he was a great man who did as he pleased. It was not appropriate for Kānhaḍade to send him such a message. But Khāndhal insisted that the message be passed on.

Sihpatala convinced the emperor to grant Kānhaḍade's envoy an audience. He warned the emperor that Khāndal and his men were ignorant and accustomed to paying their respects only to Kānhaḍade. He asserted that he would only allow them in if the emperor forgave them for any disrespectful behaviour on their part. Alauddin agreed and the Rajputs were let in. The emperor reiterated to them that it was his right as the Sultan to conquer any fort that happened to be on his route and he was, therefore, entitled to Jalor.

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[37] Ibid., pp. 216-223.

Just then a kite flew over the emperor's head. He shot an arrow at it and the bird began to descend to the ground. He ordered his bowmen to see to it that the bird did not fall to the ground. They shot a volley of arrows at it such that it would remain in the sky. Khāndhal thought that this display was being conducted in order to frighten him. So he used his sword to cut a powerful buffalo whose horns reached up to its tail into two halves. The kite, who also fell to the ground now, was washed away by the flowing blood of the buffalo. Khandhāl read a good omen in this – the emperor's army would also get washed away by their army just as the kite had been washed away. Seeing this the bowmen turned their arrows towards him. But Sihpatala intervened and reminded the emperor of his promise to forgive any act of disrespect on the Rajputs' part. As a result the men were ordered to put away their arrows. Now, on his way out, Khāndhal came to the place where *Mahādevjí* was bound to the cart. The sight of the captured idol prompted him to pledge that he would go without food until the time that the *Mahādevjí* had been freed.

Meanwhile, in the emperor's court there were two *umraos* called Mahmudshah and Mirghabhru. These men had incurred the displeasure of Alauddin's harem. In addition they had been severely insulted by being made to carry shoes and having their brother imprisoned. Thus despite being masters of a cavalry of twenty five thousand, they were deeply distressed by the treatment meted out to them by the Sultan. When they heard what had transpired between Khāndhal and the emperor they met the former and

pledged their support to him. An attack was launched on the following night in which emperor lost many of his men. He slipped away and his army fled. It is said that Kānhaḍade's army chased Alauddin's men and killed them as they attempted to flee. After destroying the emperor's army Kānhaḍade returned to the idol of Somanatha. He easily lifted it with his hand and it was installed in a temple built in Sakarana itself. According the author Kānhaḍade had thus kept the dignity of Hindusthān.

Mahmudsah and Mirghabharu remained in Kānhaḍade's service. They were given land *(thākurí)* for their maintenance. But these men had lived under a *pātasāh's* rule and continued therefore to kill cows. This was unacceptable to the Hindus. Thus the Rāwal Kānhaḍade was very keen to find a way to get rid of them. It was suggested that the two men should be asked to hand over the two courtesans *(vaisyas)* owned by them, named Dharu and Varu, to Kānhaḍade. It was felt that they would definitely not agree to surrender them and would therefore leave the kingdom on their own. Thus two men were dispatched to ask for the courtesans. Mahmudsah and Mirghabharu realised the intention that lay behind this demand. Thus they left Jalor and moved to the court of Hammira Chauhan. Hammira gave them a lot of honour and respect and it was for this reason that Alauddin subsequently attacked Hammira.

Nainsí continues the narrative by speaking about a wrestler named Panju Pāyak who had been in the service of the emperor for a long time. There was no one who could defeat him and all the wrestlers who were in the

service of the emperor had lost to him. The emperor once asked Panju if there was any wrestler who could match up to him. The latter mentioned the name of Viramade, the son of Kānhaḍade, who had once been his student. The emperor began to correspond with Kānhadaḍe and asked him to send his son to Delhi as soon as possible. Kānhadaḍe now conferred with his ministers who felt that the Chauhans had incurred the wrath of the emperor. They agreed that the emperor of Delhi was like god himself. He had the powers to do anything. If he was willing to forgive them, they should indeed send Viramade at the earliest. Elaborate arrangements were made and Viramade reached the Delhi court.

In Delhi he paid his respects to the emperor. The latter was very pleased to see him. After five or ten days he sent a message to Viramade that he wanted him to have a wrestling match with Panju. Viramade said that he was not a professional wrestler but if a private place was arranged, he and Panju could have a competition there. Such a place was prepared and the emperor as well as the other residents of the palace came to watch the display. For the first two or three rounds the two remained on par. However, Viramade eventually won the competition by virtue of a technique learnt from another wrestler. The emperor was pleased and so were the others from the palace. One of the daughters of the emperor, who was still unmarried, was very impressed with Viramade. She now took a vow that she would neither eat nor drink unless she was married to him. Everyone tried to explain to her that Viramade was a Hindu and she was a *turak;* an alliance of the kind she

wanted was impossible. Even the emperor dismissed the idea. But for three days the girl did not eat and the emperor was now compelled to send word to Viramade proposing marriage. Viramade was very reluctant to accept the suggestion but the emperor was insistent. Viramade realised that he did not have a choice; so he thought of a ploy. He agreed to the wedding but said that he would have to go to Jalor to make the appropriate arrangements. He would return to Delhi with the marriage procession (*bārāt).* The emperor however suspected that if he went to Jalor Viramade would probably not return. So he asked him to leave one of his men behind as a guarantor. Vanveer's son Rāṇā was now left behind in Delhi while the rest of Viramade's party returned to Jalor.

On reaching Jalor, he told Kānhadaḍe what had transpired in Delhi. The latter realised that the situation had gone out of hand and ordered for arrangements to be made to strengthen the fort. In Delhi, the emperor would call Rāṇā every few days and ask about Viramade. Rāṇā reassured him, as per his master's instructions, that Viramade would surely come after the necessary arrangements were made. Many months passed in this manner. The emperor now sent his men to Jalor. They met Kānhaḍade. He was very nice to the emperor's men but he was obviously making no arrangements for a wedding. They also saw that fort was being strengthened. The men returned and reported the situation to Alauddin. He was very angry and sent Taga Kotwal to arrest Rāṇā. But Rāṇā skilfully killed Taga and managed to escape.

5. Vāt[38]

Rāṇā reached Jalor safely. Then the emperor sent Mudfarkahan and Daudkhan with five lakh troops to capture him. It is said that the battle lasted for twelve years. It is also said that two *dahiyā* Rajputs were hanged by Kānhadaḍe for the crime of committing murder. When they were hung by the rope, wind turned their bodies around to face the fort. This made Kānhaḍade laugh and remark that this looked like the *dahiayās* were wanting to capture the fort. A kinsman of the *dahiyās* was present and statement offended him. He then told the *turaks* all the secrets of the fort. The fort was thus besieged.

Kānhaḍade now vanished. Prince Viramade died along with several of his companions. The *turaks* cut off his head and sent it to Delhi. When the emperor's daughter placed the head on a large plate (*thālí)* and began to circumambulate the holy fire in order to marry it, the head turned away from her. It turned back to face her only when she told him that they had been lovers in their previous birth. It said that after going through the marriage rites, the princess committed *sati.*

Nainsí also provides a list of all those who died in the battle and those who committed *jauhar.*

He ends the narrative by saying that this was the *Khyāt vārta* of the Sonigarā masters of Jalor and pays his respects to *Śrí Raghunāthají.*

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[38] Ibid., pp. 223-225.

➢ ***Viramade Sonigarā Rí Vāt***

The *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt* belongs to the *vāt* tradition of Rajasthan, a popular oral tradition in which the storytellers go from village to village telling the tale. The duration of the performance may range from an hour to the whole night depending on the enthusiasm of the listeners and the creativity of the performer/storyteller. A few written versions of the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt* exist in different libraries and *bhandāras* all over Rajasthan, but the author of the tale remains anonymous. This is probably because it belongs to a folk genre and each storyteller has the liberty to add to or subtract from the tale while the core story remains intact. The version available to me is one that was published in 1981 and seems to have been put to writing around 1740 AD. It has been edited and translated into Hindi by Mahaveersingh Gahlot and Purshottamlal Manoria under the title, *A Muslim Princess Becomes Sati (A Historical Romance of Hindu-Muslim Unity)*[39]. I have used my own translation of the Marwari text for the present dissertation.

A *vāt* or *bāt* is a specialised form of a Dingal prose narrative and is derived from the Sanskrit word *vārtā,* meaning 'account, tiding or word.'[40] It is "essentially an 'inspirational biographical narrative' which deals either with the life history of an important individual, such as a leader of a particular Rajput

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[39] Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt, Mahavirsingh Gahlot and Purishottamlal Menaria (ed. and trs.),* Shrí Mahavir Shodha Sansthan, Jalor, 1981.

[40] Norman P. Ziegler, "Marwari Historical Chronicles: Sources for the Social and Cultural History of Rajasthan," *Indian Economic and Social History Review,* 1976, Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 221.

clan (*kula),* or with particular episodes in his life, which are seen to be significant."[41]

The *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt* is a retelling of the story of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* but in this case it is Viramade, and not his father Kānhaḍade, who is the protagonist.

The story begins by informing us that Kānhaḍade, the elder son of Banbír Chauhan, was the ruler of Jalor fort, also known as Suvarṇagirí. Once, when he was on a hunting expedition, he, along with his loyal servant named Bijio got separated from the main group. The two decided to spend the night in a temple in the forest. In the temple Kānhaḍade spotted a beautiful statue of a woman made of stone. He was enamoured by the beautiful statue and was staring at it when suddenly it came to life in the form of an attractive maiden. She identified herself as an *apsarā* and expressed a wish to marry him. However, she made him promise that he would never reveal this fact to anyone or else she would return to her former abode. Next day Kānhaḍade took the *apsarā* to the house of a certain Somasinh Sańkhalā in a nearby village where the two were married.

Kānhaḍade and the *apsarā* spent two years at Jalor in marital bliss during which she gave birth to a boy named Viramade. His previous wife also gave birth to a girl child named Viramati. One day, when Viramade was seven, he was playing with the other children in the fort. Suddenly an elephant that had been let loose charged towards them. Just as it was about to capture

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[41] Ibid.

Viramade, his mother, the *apsarā,* who had been watching from the *jarokhā* of her palace, extended her hands from the window and saved her son. Everyone in the fort saw this miraculous sight and became convinced that the queen was not human. Kānhaḍade's younger brother Rānigdeva insisted that the *apsarā* tell him the truth about herself. She revealed herself as the *apsarā* Rambhā but told her husband that now that this fact was known to all, she must return to where she had come from. She promised that, henceforth, she would always remain hidden in the shadow of her son in order to protect him.

As Viramade grew older, he began to train as a warrior and swordsman with Panju Pāyak. They developed deep affection for each other. People began to say that they were like two bodies and one soul.

One day the ruler of Jaisalmer, Rāo Lākhaṇsingh was sitting at his window when a bird flew in. It told the Rāo that in the next few days Kānhaḍade of Suvarṇagiri was going to be poisoned. Lākhaṇsingh immediately sent a messenger on a camel with a letter warning Kānhaḍade about the imminent danger. The messenger reached Kānhaḍade's court a few days later. Just as Kānhaḍade was reading the letter, a servant brought some milk and sugar. Alerted by the recent message, the suspicious chieftain now fed the milk and sugar to a dog. The dog died on the spot. The messenger was generously rewarded and was sent back to Jaisalmer with valuable gifts for Lākhaṇsingh. Thus very good relations were established between the Rāo and the Jalor house.

After a few days, Kānhaḍade decided that since he was so grateful to Lākhaṇsingh, he should show his appreciation by giving Viramati to him in marriage. Thus he sent a procession of fifteen horses, two coconuts made of gold and silver, some ministers and other reliable men in a procession to Jaisalmer in order to make the offer. However, surprisingly, Lākhaṇsingh was not happy with this offer and wished to send the procession back. But his principal queen[42] advised him against this. Instead, she said that he should accept the offer and when he reached Suvarṇagiri, he should constantly praise her (the queen's) lineage and the way her relatives had prepared for their marriage. She also forbade him from eating anything there.

Thus, when he reached Jalor, Lākhaṇsingh behaved exactly the way his wife had asked him. Seeing his behaviour, Viramade understood that they had made a mistake in choosing this man for his sister. The bride also felt humiliated and swore that even after the wedding she would not allow the marriage to be consummated. The next day, after the wedding, the bridegroom was ready to leave despite the insistence of the bride's family that he stay on for a few days. Viramade was very offended by this. He told his father not to send the bride along with him, but the latter decided to follow the accepted tradition.

The marriage procession thus began to move towards Jaisalmer. Rājadia, a trusted servant, was sent with Viramati. When they stopped for lunch at some distance from Jalor, the princess asked her maid to bring her

[42] According to the text, this queen belonged to the *Soḍā* lineage. She was very fat and ugly but we are told that the Rāo was totally under her control. See Anonymous, *Sonigarā rī Vāt,* p. 25.

some water from the nearby pond. The water was saffron coloured and oily. The servant informed her mistress that some chieftain (*siradāra)* and his men were bathing at the pond and it was the oil and saffron from their bath that had entered the water. On making enquiries it was found that the chieftain was the brave Nimbā of the Rathod lineage. The princess sent him a message saying that she was the daughter of Sonigarā Kānhaḍade recently married to Lākhaṇsingh. If he (Nimbā) were willing to keep her she would be happy to come to his home. Nimbā thus abducted Viramati. The men in her procession with Rājadia as their head put up a fight but their leader was slain and Nimbā took the princess.

When Viramati's family at Jalor heard of this event they were pleased at the valour Nimbā had shown. They were relieved that the princess had not gone to Jaisalmer and accepted the Rathors as their in-laws.

When news of the abduction reached Lākhaṇsingh, he ordered the ironsmiths to make a spear so long that he could kill Nimbā from his own palace. All the ironsmiths were troubled by this impossible demand. Then a daughter of one of the ironsmiths told her father that they should go to the Rāo and collect the amount of money that would be required to produce such a spear. She assured him that she would take care of the rest. After six months, when the Rāo asked for the spear, the girl went to him and reminded him that he was an old man while Nimbā was a youth. If he saw the spear coming towards him he would surely snatch it away and attack the Rāo instead. The Rāo was very pleased with the ironsmith's clever daughter. He now gave the

ironsmiths some more money to destroy the spear and gave up the idea of revenge. Thus he lost Viramati for good. [43]

Ten years now passed after the abduction. Viramati was happy in her home and kept in touch with her brother through letters. On the occasion of their younger sister's wedding Viramade invited her to Jalor. He also sent a special invitation to her husband, Nimbā. Nimbā was very pleased with the invitation but agreed to come only on the condition that Viramade's friend Panju Pāyak would come to fetch him. Panju agreed to go but made Viramade reassure him that there was no treachery involved despite the abduction and the relationship between him and Nimbā were indeed cordial.

When Nimbā arrived in Jalor, Viramade treated him with honour and camaraderie. But Bijadia, the son of Rājadia, who Nimbā had killed during the abduction, wanted revenge (*vair)* for his father's death. He asked for Viramade's help but the latter expressed his inability to do so on account of his promise to Panju. However, he granted him permission to take revenge for his father's death if he so wished. The next day, when Nimbā was having a meal with his men, Bijadia took advantage of Viramade's absence and attacked him. Nimbā died; but only after he himself had slain Bijadia in half. The warriors who had accompanied Nimbā were also killed by Bijadia's men as all their weapons had been sent for sharpening.[44] When Panju heard the news of

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[43] The Rāo's disappointment at losing Viramati appears to be a bit of a contradiction as we are earlier told that he was not happy about the match in the first place. Inconsistencies of this kind are often a feature of oral narratives which tend to be fluid in nature and modified according to the story-teller's discretion.

[44] It is interesting to note that Viramati does not commit *sati* after her husband's death and chooses to return to her martial home.

this treachery, he left Jalor and sought employment in Alauddin's court in Delhi. The emperor (*Pātasāh)* was very pleased with his excellent swordsmanship. One day he asked Panju if he knew of anybody in the kingdom (*pātasāhi)* who could equal him in his skill. Panju named Viramade of Jalor as one such person.

The emperor now invited Viramade to his court. The latter was distressed as he suspected that this was a trick planned by Panju. He realised however that before the power of the emperor his own powers were negligible. Therefore Viramade, along with his father and uncle proceeded to Delhi where they were provided with many comforts. One day the emperor asked Viramade to display his skill. A match was arranged between him and Panju. Panju came to the match with a razor blade secretly tied to his toes. The *apsarā* who had promised to always protect her son now warned him about this and asked him to do the same. Viramade won the battle by cutting open Panju's stomach with the razor in his toe while jumping to defend himself. The emperor saw this as an integral part of war games and was pleased with Viramade's achievement.

Viramade now began to pay his respects at Alauddin's court on a daily basis. One day he ordered a pair of shoes studded with all kinds of precious stones. Alauddin's daughter Sāha Begum's maid had also gone to order shoes for her mistress to the same cobbler. When she saw Viramade's shoes being made, she inquired about him. Later, on her mistress's behest, she also secretly went and saw him. She informed the princess that he was extremely

good looking, like *Gahaṇi Jalāl*,[45] and pointed him out to her when he came to the court. On seeing him a deep love flowered in her heart as she realised that he had been her husband in her last birth.

The text now recounts the story of their previous births. Once upon a time there lived a *sāhukār* in Kāśi Vārāṇasi. He had only one son who was married. One day the son was bathing with his wife attending to him when a storm suddenly broke out. The wife quickly ran into the house while the wet body of the *sāhukār's* son was covered with sand. He now realised that his wife was not concerned about his welfare. Enraged, he went to the place where they performed the *karavat* sacrifice in Kāśi. He got his body cut in half asking for the boon that in his next life half of his body should be born in the same house, while, the other half should be born as his wife, his true *ardhāngini.* Soon the *sāhukār* had another son. This boy was reunited with the other half of his body when he got married. One day another storm broke while he was bathing and his new wife protectively covered his body with her *sārí.* The *sāhukār's* son began to laugh. He explained to his wife that a similar situation had occurred in his previous birth and pointed to his widow who was sitting close by. On hearing this the widow rushed to perform the *karvat* sacrifice and wished to become the same man's wife in her next life. But when her body fell on the ground, her toe touched the bone of a cow. Thus she was re born as Sāha Begum in Alauddin's household. On hearing of her sacrifice, the *sāhukār's* son also sacrificed himself and asked to be born in the house of

[45] Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* p. 64. *Gahani Jalāl* is the hero of another folk epic called *Jālal-Bubnā.*

a famous king. He also wished that his previous widow should not suffer any more sorrow. He was thus born as Viramade in the house of Kānhaḍade and therefore the princess had fallen in love with him at first sight.

The princess now told her father about her affliction. She had already accepted Viramade as her husband in her mind. She requested Alauddin to conduct a *nikāh* between the two. The emperor reminded her that Viramade was a Hindu, but promised to do his best to bring them together. When Kānhaḍade came to the court the next time, the emperor honoured him and made the offer of marriage. Kānhaḍade replied diplomatically that Alauddin was the emperor almighty, while he was a mere Rajput, the master of his own principality. He should find a suitable match for her from among emperors such as those of Rome, Syria and other foreign lands. He (Kānhaḍade) was a mere servant. When the emperor insisted, Kānhaḍade told him to ask Viramade. It would all depend on his wish. Alauddin gave him several gifts and asked him to bring his son to the court the next day.

Kānhaḍade returned to his residence where he discussed the matter with his brother and Viramade. Viramade pointed out that if they did not accept the emperor's offer, he would kill them immediately. He assured his father that he would handle the situation suitably. Thus when Alauddin asked him the next day he paid his respects and told him that he was a Rajput and the head of his own household only. It would not be appropriate for the emperor's daughter to marry him. Yet if that was the emperor's wish he would willingly accept the offer. His only condition was that the wedding should be conducted

according to Hindu customs, that is, they would first have to go back to Jalor for two or three years and then return with the wedding procession from there. However, he also told the emperor that he was unable to accept the offer as he lacked the resources to go to Jalor and return to Delhi with all their relatives in a wedding procession.

On hearing this Alauddin organised a sum of twelve lakh rupees to be given to the Chauhans. He gave them a time limit of three years. Just as they were leaving, Sāha Begum advised her father to retain Rāṇigdeva in the court. After all, these people were Hindus and they could not be fully trusted. Pleased with this suggestion, Allauddin retained Rāṇigdeva along with Āsā Cāraṇ and Kānhaḍade's horse (which was of a divine lineage) in Delhi. Rāṇigdeva sent his brother and nephew off by asking them to rapidly strengthen the foundations of a fort with the money they had got from the emperor as well as the wealth in their treasury.[46] They would have to fight Alauddin soon.

In Delhi, Rāṇigdeva would visit Alauddin's court every few days. The latter would ask him the news from Jalor each time. After two or three months he reported that Viramade had run away from the fort. Search parties had been sent in all directions to look for him. After another three months, he reported the same news. Sāha Begum now told her father that since these

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[46] The Jalor treasury apparently contained a *'Sonāro Porso,'* literally a man of gold. Such a man was obtained, according to tradition by frying a man with the thirty-two virtues in boiling oil. This would turn him into gold. He was then stored in the royal treasury. Whenever wealth was needed a limb was cut off and later on that limb would grow back. See Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rī Vāt,* p. 64.

kāfirs had run away they should keep an eye on Rāṇigdev. He, she felt, knew the secret. The emperor now dispatched spies in all directions.

During this time, the emperor of Balakh had sent a huge buffalo to Alauddin. The horns of this animal were so huge that they reached its tail covering its back. The challenge was to kill the buffalo in one stroke. A competition was organised for this purpose, but nò one was able to kill the buffalo. Consequently the messengers from Balakh were rewarded and sent back to their own lands. On their way back the men reached Jalor, and came across Viramade. They told him that no one in Delhi was able to kill the buffalo in one stroke. They had thus concluded that Delhi was not ruled by an emperor but a mere landowning farmer (*patel)*. This enraged Viramade who killed the animal in a single stroke. The messengers were extremely impressed. They took the head of the animal to the Delhi court and described how Viramade had killed the buffalo as if it was a mere goat. Such a man, they said, ought to be in the emperor's court. Thus news about Viramade reached Delhi. Alauddin summoned Rāṇigdeva and told him about the incident. He was forgiven for having lied but was asked to summon Viramade as soon as possible. In the meanwhile, the emperor's spies had witnessed the construction of the fort at Jalor. Thus it was decided that Rāṇigdeva should be imprisoned. But he managed to escape on Bhinthadā, the divine horse. Alauddin sent a number of soldiers after him.

After he had travelled several miles south of Delhi, Rāṇigdeva came across an old woman in the forest. On asking her if she had heard any news,

she replied that Rāṇigdeva had escaped from Delhi and twenty-two parties of soldiers were after him. On hearing this Rāṇigdeva was very angry and chided the horse for getting there later than the news of their flight. Being of divine lineage the horse was deeply hurt. Its heart burst and it collapsed on the spot. When Rāṇigdeva was wondering how he would travel now the old woman revealed that she was in fact a divine being (witch?) who had been present at the time of his flight. She made him realise that he had chided the horse wrongly since she had got the news by her supernatural powers. She now took the form of a large black bird and flew him to Jalor in no time. On her return she built a *samādhi* for the horse and established a village in his name.

When Rāṇigdeva reached Jalor, he met his brother, Kānhaḍade and preparations for a confrontation with Alauddin were begun. Twelve years' advanced salaries were paid to all the soldiers. They pledged to be supportive of Kānhaḍade, as they had eaten his salt. The emperor, accompanied by his daughter, now marched towards Jalor along with a hundred thousand troops. His troops and canons surrounded the fort from all sides. The battle continued for a year but there was no sign of the fort falling. The emperor then decided to dig a secret trench to the fort. While five hundred men were busy digging, Kānhaḍade's wife Umāde was stringing some pearls. She felt the vibrations that were caused by the digging as the pearls shook in the plate. She informed her husband of this. The secret trench was now revealed. Viramade summoned two of his powerful warriors, Bāgh and Vānara who agreed to

guard the mouth of the trench provided they were given a continuous supply of swords to kill the enemy. They would not use any sword more than once.

At this time, the emperor was informed that the provisions in the Jalor fort were on the verge of exhaustion. Viramade also realised this, but, in order to fool the enemy, he got *khíra* made from the milk of a bitch who had recently delivered puppies. The *khíra* was applied to dry leaves and thrown towards the enemy camp. Alauddin thought that the *kāfirs* had enough provisions as they could enjoy the luxury of eating *khíra.* He asked his army to retreat and began moving towards Delhi. On the way they set up a camp a few miles from Jalor.

When this news reached the fort the Rajputs began to celebrate. There was much feasting and drinking. In an inebriated state Viramade taunted one of his men about his lineage. The offended Rajput now went to Alauddin's camp and informed him about the true state of affairs. A bitter battle now followed as the Delhi army marched back to Jalor. Women and children were also not spared. Kānhaḍade entered a temple and vanished.

Now Viramade cut open his stomach, took out his intestines and fed them to the vultures. He then packed in the rest of the flesh and tied it up with a waistband. He then embarked on a rampage, killing all the *turaks* that he could find. When the emperor was informed of this, he instructed his men not to fight Viramade till he had exhausted all his weapons. When this happened, the troops captured him and brought him before Alauddin. Viramade neither bowed to nor saluted him. He told the emperor that for a Rajput honour lay in

his *khatrí dhrama.* Further, he said that as a Hindu he worshipped cows and the *tulsi* plant, drank the *caṛṇāmrut* of *Śāligrāma* and held *brāhmaṇas* in high regard. The same mouth that uttered the name of *Śrí Rāma* could not recite the *mantra* of the *asuras*, the *kalmā.*

Alauddin now reminded him that he had agreed to give his daughter in marriage in the Hindu way. It was Viramade's behaviour that had forced him now into having the wedding as a *nikāh.* The emperor also reminded Viramade that the Master of the World is one, the two religions are only two different ways to reach Him. He instructed his servants to get Viramade ready for the wedding. But when they began to undress him they saw his split stomach. Viramade now breathed his last. On hearing this, the emperor was disappointed, but he praised the valour of the youth. Viramade had not succumbed till the end.

The princess now asked for the head her lover of seven previous births to be cut off. She would get married to the disembodied head. The head was now brought on a platter. But when the Begum appeared before it, it turned away. Addressing the head she said that when she had made the *karvat* sacrifice, she had asked to be born as his wife in all her next births. He, on the other hand, had asked for her never to be unhappy or hurt, and yet even now he was upset with her! She declared that she would marry the head and then become a *sati.* Hearing this, the head now turned to face her. Alauddin also agreed that she had been Viramade's wife for seven previous births and

therefore ordered a sandalwood pyre to be lit for her to perform *sati.* Thus at last the two came together and the emperor left for Delhi.

The Event

Let us now turn to the actual historical events that inspired the constructions of the three narratives, discussed above.

Alauddin Khalji had embarked on a policy of conquest of the southern parts of the subcontinent even prior to succeeding his uncle Jalaluddin Firuz Shah II (1290-1296), as the Sultan of Delhi in 1296. As the governor of Kara under the reign of Jalauddin, he had launched a successful campaign against the Yadavas of Deogiri in c.1294. After he came to power himself, he launched a series of campaigns and expanded the Sultanate rule to the neighbouring territories as well as to Gujarat, Rajasthan, parts of central India and the far south. None of the subsequent Sultanate rulers could match his conquests and consolidation of the conquered territories. It was soon after the disintegration of the Khalji rule that the subcontinent saw the crystallisation of several of the regional powers.

It was in c.1299 that Alauddin sent his brother Ulugh Khan and *wazir* Nusrat Khan to attack the Vāghelā kingdom of Gujarat. This appears to be the only Muslim attack on the city of Naharwala or Anhilwāra (modern Patan) since Mahmud of Gazni's sack of Somanatha in 1126 and Qutubuddin Aibak's raid in 1197.[47] The invaders met with some resistance at the hands of the Vāghelā king Karaṇadeva (mentioned in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha),* who

[47] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 195.

was eventually defeated. He fled south-east to Baglana in the Nasik region.[48] Somanatha and Anhilwāra Pāṭaṇ were both plundered during this attack. Nusrat Khan also plundered Khambhāt (modern Cambay) during this raid.[49] After this Alauddin's generals withdrew to Delhi, carrying with them an enormous booty. Their return was interrupted by an abortive mutiny on the part of some neo-Muslim Mongol commanders.[50] Some of these commanders seem to have been given shelter by Hammiradeva Chauhan of Ranthambhor. His kingdom was subsequently attacked by Alauddin's army in c. 1301 for this reason.[51] After this attack on Gujarat, Alauddin seems to have made no attempt to consolidate his hold over this region. He did not even appoint a governor of his choice. Thus Karaṇa was able to resume his rule in the region.

A second attack was launched on Gujarat in 1310, when Sachor in Kathiawad was also sacked along with Anhilwāra. During this attack Karaṇdeva fled to the Deccan. Alauddin now appointed Alp Khan as the first Muslim governor of Gujarat.[52] Padmnābha appears to be speaking about the first Khalji attack on Gujarat in the first *khaṅḍa* of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,*

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48 Ibid.

49 Ibid, See also S.C. Mishra, *Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat,* Asia Publishing House, London, 1963, p. 63.

50 Ibid.

51 M. S. Ahluwalia, *Muslim expansion in Rajasthan, (The Relations of Delhi Sultanate with Rajasthan 1206-1526),* New Delhi, 1978, p. 84. Ahluwalia uses Isami's *Futuh-us-Salatin,* to note that 'Kamzi' Mahammud Shah, 'Kabhru', 'Yaljak', and 'Barq', who were Mongols and had recently converted to Islam, were ready to assassinate Ulugh Khan when their demand for the share of booty form the Gujarat campaign was refused by him. Ulugh Khan in cooperation with Nusrat Khan attacked the rebels. Yaljak and Barq fled to Rāi Karaṇ, while Muhammad Shah and Khabru took refuge at Ranthambhor. Ahluwalia has identified the latter as Mahimasahi or Muhammad Shah and Gabharu respectively. These two are mentioned as the defectors from Alauddin's court, who helped Kānhaḍade in his rescue of Somanatha in Nainsi's version of the story. See also Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p.197.

52 Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 196.

in which the plunder of Somanatha is described. Later in the narrative Alauddin demands to see the *"Khan at Pāṭaṇ"*[53] before proceeding to attack Jalor himself. This indicates that the attack on Jalor under Alauddin's command perhaps took place after the second attack on Gujarat.

After the first attack on Gujarat, Alauddin seems to have focussed his attention on parts of Rajasthan. Ranthambhor and Chittor accepted his sovereignty between c.1301-1303. These campaigns find detailed mention in the Persian works of Barani, Isami and Amir Khusrau.[54] Jaisalmer also seems to have been attacked in the early decades of the fourteenth century.[55] According to Khusrau, the Delhi forces had been investing in Siwana for five or six years before it fell.[56] The story of its sack forms a significant part of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* narrative. The fort was finally taken in 1308 when Alauddin got personally involved in the campaign. Rājā Sātaldeo was killed and Siwana was renamed Khairabad. The fort was conferred to Malik Kamaluddin 'Gurg'. 'Gurg' has also been credited with the attack and subjugation of the fort of Jalor by Sirhindi[57] and Amir Khusrau.[58] While Barani only makes a passing allusion to both campaigns,[59] others like Amir Khusarau mention the conquest of Siwana, in some detail. The conquest of Jalor, which

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53 Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* II.78, p. 78.

54 See M.S. Ahluwalia, *Muslim Expansion in Rajasthan,* Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* S.C. Misra, *Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat,* S.A.A. Rizvi, *The Wonder that was India, Part-II,* Rupa and Co., New Delhi, 1999 (second edition).

55 M.S. Ahluwalia, *Muslim Expansion in Rajasthan,* pp. 106-107.

56 Amir Khusrau in Ibid, p.198.

57 Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p.198.

58 M.S. Ahluwalia, *Muslim Expansion in Rajasthan,* p. 108. Kamaluddin is mentioned both by Padmanābha and Nainsi in their narratives of the siege of Jalor.

59 Peter Jackson, *the Delhi Sultanate,* p.198.

took place in c. 1311, however, is barely mentioned by Khusrau and totally ignored by Isami.[60] Thus most contemporary historians have tended to rely heavily on the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* in order to reconstruct the details of Alauddin's Jalor campaign[61]. The reason for the omission of the Jalor campaign from the Persian accounts, and its detailed inclusion in the regional narratives, however, remains unexplored.

The Persian works that recount the details of many of these campaigns often describe them as campaigns in which the banner of Islam was established over the lands of the infidels. However, most of Alauddin's campaigns in Gujarat and Rajasthan seemed to have had the political and military purpose of securing communication lines against the Rajputs and safeguarding his empire against the repeated inroads of the Mongols.[62] They also extended the Sultanate's military reach in an unprecedented way as Muslim governors were established over territories that had hitherto paid only occasional tribute to Delhi. Yet the Muslim control over western and southern India appears to have been patchy. In Gujarat the substratum of the numerous Rajput kingdoms continued to exist even after the rule of the Gujarat Sultans was established in the fifteenth century. Similarly, Rajasthan never saw the establishment of an overarching imperial Muslim authority till the coming of the Mughals, and even under them the Rajput administrative and military autonomy was retained to a very large extent. Yet, as noted earlier, Alauddin's

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60 M.S. Ahluwalia, *Muslim Expansion in Rajasthan,* pp. 109-110.

61 See for example, K.M. Munshi, *Somanatha the Shrine Eternal,* Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1976 (first pub. 1951) and Dasharatha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, Books Treasure, Jaipur, 1992 (first pub. 1959).

62 See also S.C. Misra, *Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat,* p. 40.

campaigns seem to have had a deep impact on the areas that were affected by them and have formed the subject of a number of narratives composed in western India for several centuries that followed.

While Alauddin's attack on Jalor is the main theme of the three narratives, his capture of the idol of Somanatha also forms a significant part of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* and the *Muṇhot Ṇainsí rí Khyāt.* The episode however is omitted in the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* where such pan-regional motifs are submerged by more localised concerns of an oral narrative.

Right from the time of Mahmud of Gazni's plunder of the temple in 1026, the sack of Somanatha has been part of several Persian narratives describing the conquest of India by the Muslims. These narratives tended to dramatise the attack by elevating Somanatha to the status of the cultic centre of Hinduism and projecting Mahmud as the archetypal Islamic warrior bringing new lands into the Islamic fold.[63] These accounts dominated the historiographical perceptions about the destruction of Somanatha as the challenge to Hinduism by the forces of Islam. As Richard Davis has pointed out, this notion was perpetuated by the British historians, some of whom also sifted through a number of Persian sources and projected Somanatha as the temple that had faced a number of desecrations and reconstructions throughout the medieval period.[64] Some nationalist historians also began to accept and elaborate on this reconstruction of the history of Somanatha that was cast within a communal framework. Of these, the historical novels of K.M.

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[63] Richard H. Davis, *The Lives of Indian Images,* Motilal Banarasidas, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 93-99.

[64] Ibid., p. 209.

Munshi as well as his monograph titled *Somanatha: the Shrine Eternal,* first published in 1951 are prominent examples. Munshi's monograph traces the history of the temple from its mythological origins, goes on to the destructions and reconstructions during the medieval period and includes the report of the archaeological excavation of the site conducted by B.K. Thapar. His narrative associates these with the challenge to the pride of Gujarat. For Munshi the final end of the 'glory of Gurjardeśa' lies in Alauddin's destruction of the temple.[65] Through his novels and other historical writings Munshi took it upon himself to restore this lost glory and eventually spearheaded the movement towards the building of a new, grand temple at the site of Somanatha in the mid twentieth century.

More recently Richard Davis, and in a more detailed study, Romila Thapar have traced the history that surrounds the destruction of Somanatha.[66] Both these works explore a variety of sources to understand how the destruction of the temple by Mahmud of Gazni came to be etched in the memories of authors of narratives as well as inscriptions over several centuries and differed according to their specific historical contexts. For many of these authors, both Islamic and non-Islamic, the memory of the destruction proved useful to legitimise their own patrons or social groups. The two works also trace the modern history of the temple and its gradual development as a symbol of Hindu nationalism in the colonial and more contemporary times when it was chosen to be the starting point of the *rath yātrā* conducted by the

[65] K.M. Munshi, *Somanatha the Shrine Eternal,* pp. 53-57.

[66] See Richard Davis, *The Lives of Indian Images* and Romila Thapar, *Somanatha, The Many Voices of History,* Penguin Viking, New Delhi, 2004.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1990. The memory of the destruction of Somanatha thus appears to have had several uses in course of history.

Two of the three narratives studied in the present dissertation also make use of this memory. In both these, Somanatha's rescue appears to bestow significant prestige upon its rescuer, the Rajput chieftain of Jalor, Chauhan Kānhaḍade. In the medieval period, Somanatha, like many other important temples in India, came to be closely tied to the political order and its destruction and restoration became important tools for the assertion of political authority. Thus political need, rather than religion, seems to be the primary reason behind the inclusion of the Somanatha motif in the *Prabandha* and the *Khyāt.*

Scope of the Study

Alauddin Khalji attacked Gujarat in c.1299 and various parts of Rajasthan in the years immediately following this, including, as mentioned earlier, the Sonigarā Chauhan kingdom of Jalor along with the kingdom of Siwana.

The invasion of Alauddin appears to have had a deep impact upon the western Indian region as his campaigns form the subject of a number narratives composed there between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries,

including the *Hammiramahākāvyam,* the *Padmāvat,* the *Çitai Vārtā* and so on.[67]

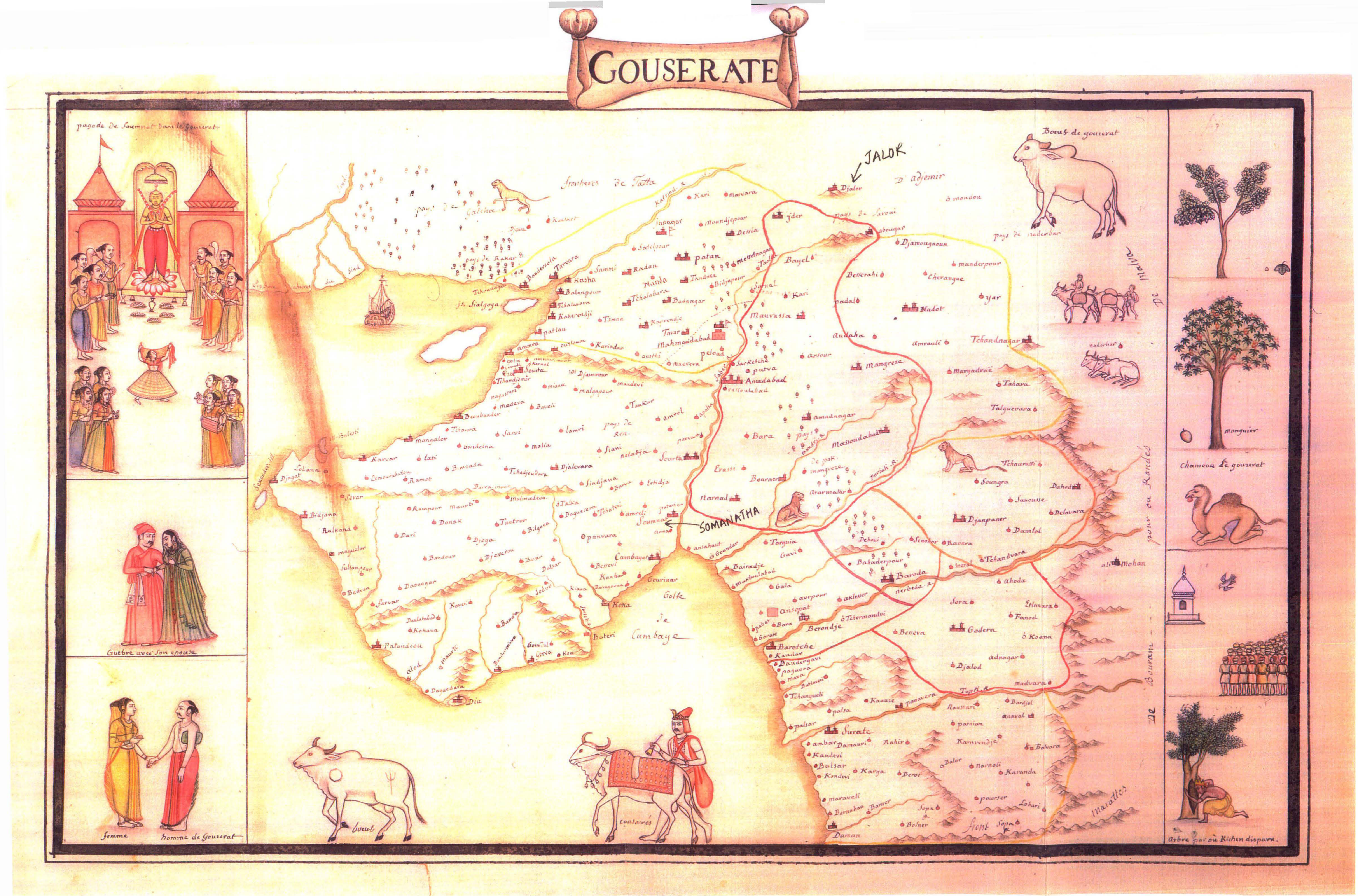
In this dissertation I will attempt to analyse three lesser known narratives that tell the story of Alauddin Khalji's campaign against Jalor, situated in south-eastern Rajasthan. The objective of the study is to analyse the event as represented in the narratives as well as to see how the memory of the event might have undergone changes over the four hundred years that the narratives cover. In doing so, it will be my endeavour to locate the narratives within their specific historical contexts and the literary genres to which they belong, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the larger historical processes. Thus dissertation is an attempt to understand how the different historical moments to which they belong can shape the same story in different ways. These differences allow us insights into the constitution of the historical moment.

Organisation of Chapters

- **Chapter 1. Understanding the Patronage Context:** This chapter will analyse the historical background of the event and its associations focusing more specifically on the history of Jalor and the patronage contexts of the three narratives. As the context shifts from the formal/courtly to the more open-ended oral one, the structure of the narrative also changes accordingly. These changes will be highlighted and analysed here.

[67] Ramya Sreenivasan, "Alauddin Khalji Remembered: Conquest, Gender and Community in Medieval Rajput Narratives", in *Studies in History,* 18,2, n.s., 2002, pp. 275-295.

- **Chapter 2. Representations of the Self: The Triumph of Rajput *dharma:*** In modern Rajasthan, the idea of 'the Rajputs' has come to symbolise and overwhelmingly influence on popular perceptions of its culture and traditions. This chapter will focus on an understanding of how narratives that emerge from within the Rajput literary tradition represent themselves, particularly vis a vis their contemporary historical situations. I will argue that even these narratives reflect the emergence and awareness of a common cultural tradition, culminating in the creation of a Rajput identity.
- **Chapter 3. Representations of the Enemy: Understanding the Rajput-Muslim Relationship:** The last chapter will discuss the manner in which the Rajput literary traditions perceive their Muslim enemies. The predominant historiographical view about this conflict has been that the wars between the two groups were dominated by religious difference. The three narratives in the present study, however, reveal the existence of a more complex relationship.



MAP DRAWN BY COL. JEAN-BAPTISTE-JOSEPH GENTIL, AGENT FOR THE FRENCH, COURT OF SHUJA-UD-DAULA AT FAIZABAD IN 1770

"MAPS OF MUGHAL INDIA" MANOHAR PUBLICATIONS, NEW DELHI 1988

CHAPTER – I

UNDERSTANDING THE PATRONAGE CONTEXT

The *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* was composed in 1455, nearly a hundred and fifty years after Alauddin Khalji's attacks on Gujarat (c.1299 and c. 1310) and Jalor (c. 1311). The *Muṇhot Nainsi rí Khyāt* and the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* composed in the mid seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively, are further removed from the event. In order to reconstruct the history of the period that the narratives span, a study of their immediate patronage contexts becomes important. Although they belong to three different genres, the *Prabandha,* the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt,* share the common feature of mixing history with mythology and fantasy. They cannot therefore be used as conventional sources of history to determine actual facts related to the event. They can however be used to understand the social history of the period and the place in which they were produced, which is the aim of the present study. What is significant therefore is to explore the manner in which the story is told: Which episodes are included or excluded? What could the obviously fantastic elements represent? In what ways are the different social groups in the narratives represented?

Questions such as these will be probed into in the course of this dissertation. The present chapter will begin this quest by moving away from the narratives' own claims of historical accuracy and focus on the patronage contexts in which each of these can be situated. It will attempt to understand how each of these contexts was similar or different from each other. It will also

attempt to understand how, if at all, the patronage contexts affected the manner in which the narratives were shaped and the memory of the event was reconstructed.

Historical Background

The early years of the thirteenth century had seen the beginnings of the establishment of the rule of the Delhi Sultans over northern India. Under Balban their rule over Delhi and its surrounding regions such as Avadh and Rohilkhand were consolidated. Alauddin Khalji engaged in major military campaigns, bringing parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Malwa under his sway. He was also able to successfully launch attacks on the ruling powers of the Deccan and the far south, which included the Kākatiyas of Warangal, the Hoysālas of Dvārasamudra and the Pāṇḍyas of Madurai. Tughlaq rule brought about consolidation and to a limited extent expansion (Firoz Tughlaq's campaigns against Bengal, Kangra, and Orissa, for instance) of the power of the Sultans. The sack of Delhi by Timur (1398) and the years that followed saw the gradual demise of the Tughlaq dynasty. The Sayyids and the Lodis ruled over Delhi in the subsequent years but, except under Alauddin Khalji, the Delhi Sultans had not been successful in asserting their hold over the conquered and annexed territories in the periphery such as Bengal or Gujarat. By the time of the reign of the last Sayyid Sultan, Alauddin Alam Shah, beleaguered by Mewati and Afghan chiefs, their territories had shrunk to a

small tract around Delhi[1]. Thus, in the wake of Timur's invasion and the turbulence that followed, a number of regional rulers were able to consolidate their position. These rulers, many of whom had earlier been a part of the nobility of the Delhi Sultanate, no longer recognized its overarching suzerainty. Many of them in fact came to rival it in prosperity, power and territory. Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan saw flourishing kingdoms at this time with the Sultanate of Gujarat surpassing the others in military success and material prosperity. Other kingdoms such as Bengal, Orissa, Gondwana and Jaunpur in the east were gaining in strength. In Rajasthan, the kingdoms of Mewar and Marwar were also emerging. Some of these attempted to march on Delhi as its control still signified the pinnacle of political power to some extent, but these attempts were at best half hearted and were soon given up. By the middle of the fifteenth century, the powerful Sultanates of Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan generally directed their imperial ambitions against each other and their immediate neighbours. Among these, the Gujarat rulers often vied for a position of equality with those of the Deccan, while the Sultanate of Malwa tended to remain subordinate to that of Gujarat.

By the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries however, almost every part of the subcontinent, save the extreme south, had come to accept the presence of Islamic rule. Different regional ruling groups fought and lost over generations and often came to negotiate a compromise acceptance of the

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[1] About the empire of the last Sayyid Sultan, Alauddin Alam Shah, a contemporary poet remarked, "The Empire of the Emperor of the World (Shah Alam) extended (only) from Delhi (a distance of ten miles) to Palam." (*Tarikh-I-Da'udi* and *Tarikh-I-Salatin-I-Afghana,* cited in K.S. Lal, *Twilight of the Sultanate,* Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1980, p.124).

imperial Muslim rule in return for continued dominance in their own local/regional domains. A gradual socialization into the Persian political culture and language had also begun to take place, as the rulers of Delhi emerged as significant employers of the writer and secretarial castes.[2] The Mughals, whose rule was established in the subcontinent by the mid sixteenth century, were benefactors of this process that helped them to create a centralized political system. The different regions thus came under their overarching political authority by the later half of the sixteenth century. However, while the Mughal authority was negotiated, accepted and sometimes rejected, the process of region formation continued. Many of the regional kingdoms like Gujarat continued to function as *subahs* under the new political order. Similarly, with the decline of the Mughal empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many of the older kingdoms that had been subsumed under the Mughal authority came into prominence and other new regional states also emerged. The process was thus a continuous one with smaller local regions also having to negotiate the claims over their territories by their regional and subcontinental level competitors. The history of the Chauhan kingdom of Jalor, in the four hundred year span that the narratives cover, appears to be one in which such negotiations were continuously taking place.

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[2] John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire,* Cambridge University Press, New Delhi (Indian Edition), 1995 (first pub.1993), p. 3. See also Philip B. Wagoner, "Sultan among the Hindu Kings': Dress, Titles, and the Islamization of Hindu Culture at Vijayanagara," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 1996, Vol. 55, part 4, pp. 852-879.

Jalor in History

Jalor, whose ancient name was Suvarṇagiri or Sonāgir - 'the golden mountain'- was one of the 'nine castles of Maru (Marusthali)'[3] or Marwar. The town was located on an important trade route linking northern India to Gujarat.[4] It thus emerged as a flourishing town on the frontiers of Gujarat and southern Rajasthan along with others on the same route like Anahilavada, Siddhapur, Nadol and Bali. It was traditionally the domain of one of the twenty-four branches of the Chauhan dynasty. This branch in fact adopted the title 'Sonigarā' as distinctive of their family/lineage and had ruled over the fort-town from at least the thirteenth century onwards.[5] Prior to its take over by the Chauhans, Jalor was under the Paramaras (Pawars/Panwars) who were responsible for the initial construction of the fort.[6] Alauddin appears to have attacked the fort in c. 1311, after his second campaign against Gujarat in c.1310. However, by the end of the fourteenth century, the Jalor fort seems to

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3 James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* Vol. III, Low Priced Publications, New Delhi, 1993 (first pub. 1829), p. 1260. This is also noted by Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* I.6, p. 2.

4 The chief commercial artery through which goods to and from Gujarat and its ports lay in what is called the "Palanpur gap" between the Aravalli outliers of Mahikantha and the Rann of Kutch. This route emanated from Anhilpura and passed through Siddhapur, Chandrāvatī, Naḍol, Jalor, Bali, Pali, etc. and ultimately reached Mathura and Kanauj via Ajmer and Naraina. See V.K. Jain, *Trade and Trades in Western India (AD 1000-1300),* Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1990. In the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* Alauddin Khalji's army had to take another route, perhaps through Chittor, since Kānhaḍade did not allow them passage through his domains. See Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* I.50, p. 10.

5 See also Dasharatha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties,* pp. 162-192.

6 James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* Vol. III, p. 1260, Lt. Nawabzada Taley Muhammad Khan, *Pālaṇpur Rājya no Itihās, part-I,* Laxmi Vilas Printing Press Company, Baroda, 1913, p.10 n.1. Nainsī also mentions this. see Nainsī , *Muṇhot Nainsī rī Khyāt,* Vol. 1, p. 213.

have been taken over by the Lohāṇi Afghans.[7] These Afghans had migrated to the region from Bihar towards the beginning of the fourteenth century under the leadership of a certain Malek Sherkhan who, while in "search of adventure or on a visit to Mecca"[8] passed through the region of Marwar and decided to settle in Jalor. They took up service with the Chauhan rulers. By c. 1392, when Zafar Khan, the first independent Sultan of Gujarat was the governor of the province, these Afghans had become powerful enough to overthrow the Chauhans and establish their rule over the fort. Being aware of his precarious position, the then Afghan chief Malek Khurram requested a confirmation of his title by Zafar Khan on behalf of the Tughlaq ruler of Delhi. The Governor secured a *firman* to this effect for him and a *thāṇā* or guardhouse was established at the Sonāgir fort.[9] In the period that followed the invasion of Timur, when the Sultanate of Gujarat asserted its sway over the region, the Afghans of Jalor became its feudatories.[10] By the mid fifteenth century, when the rule of the Sultanate was firmly established, the Lohāṇi Afghans came to be closely associated with its rulers.[11]

However, the hold of these Afghans over Jalor or the fort does not seem to have been complete even in the early period. From the late fourteenth century onwards, other players like the Rathors of Marwar seem to have entered the fray for the control over Jalor. In 1392 itself, the Rathor chief

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7 Lt. Nawabzada Taley Muhammad Khan, *Pālaṇpur Rājya,* pp 1-13, also cited by MS Commissariat, *History of Gujarat,* Vol. I, Longman, Green & Co. ltd., 1938, pp. 50-52.

8 M. S.Commissariat, *History of Gujarat,* Vol. I, p. 50.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 52.

11 Ibid., pp. 178-179.

devised a plot to annex Jalor to his dominions.[12] He invited Viśāldeo Chauhan to his capital at Mandor with an offer of marriage with his sister, but on arrival his unsuspecting guests were attacked and killed.[13] For some time, Popaṇbāi, the widow of Viśāldeo, carried on the government at Jalor with the help of the Afghan chief, Malek Khurram. But later disagreements arose between the Afghans and the Rajputs and the former were able to overthrow the Rajputs.[14] A 1532 inscription from Sirohi refers to the defeat of the Jalor Pathans by Rāo Akherāj of Sirohi.[15] According to Nainsí Akherāj in fact managed to imprison the Khan of Jalor on three occasions.[16] Nainsí recounts how in the late sixteenth century Malik Khan Pathan, the chief of Jalor, demanded and obtained four additional *parganās* from Rāo Surtan of Sirohi, for military assistance against a rival.[17] He also states that the fort was conquered in 1561 by Rāo Māldeo and later again by Kunwar Gajsingh Surajsimghot of Jodhpur in 1617.[18] Elsewhere he claims that between 1620 and 1626, the Mughal emperor granted Siwana and Jalor to Kunwar Gajsingh.[19] Nawabzada Taley Muhammad Khan in his account of the Palanpur state notes that the Lohāṇi Afghans moved to Palanpur from Jalor in about 1697 after which Jalor passed

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12 Ibid., p. 51.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Mahāmahopādhyaya Kavirāj Shyāmaladās, *Mevād kā Itihās,* 4 Vols., New Delhi, 1986 (first pub. 1944), 2.2, 1096., cited in Ramya Sreenivasan, "The 'Marriage' of 'Hindu' and *'Turak',* p. 88.

16 Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt*, Vol.III, p. 136,

17 Ibid., Vol. 1, p.134, cited in Ramya Sreenivasan, "The 'Marriage' of 'Hindu' and *'Turak',* p. 88.

18 Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* Vol. III, p. 28 and p. 136.

19 Nainsí, *Mārvār rā Parganām rí Vigat,* cited in Norman Ziegler, "Some Notes on Rājput Loyalties During the Mughal Period", in Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (eds.), *The Mughal State (1526-1750),* OUP, New Delhi, 2003 (first pub. 1998), p. 187.

into the hands of the Rathors and "still is under the Marwar State."[20] By this time the Sonigarās had also come to accept the overlordship of the Rathors. Further, during this period, the regions of Gujarat and Marwar also came under the sway of the Mughals until their takeover by the British.

These fragments of the history of Jalor that are available to us suggest that between the fourteenth and the mid seventeenth centuries, there were a number of contenders for territorial control even within small geographical areas in north-western India and that such negotiations were being conducted at various levels. Several itinerant, pastoralist groups like the Lohāṇi Afghans from Bihar in the case of Jalor, moved into Gujarat and Rajasthan and adopted a sedentary life. Many of these groups, (like the Chuḍāsamā and Jādedja branches of the Sammās of Sind for example who moved into Saurashtra and Kutch[21]) asserted territorial control and became prestigious Rajput clans of the region. As noted earlier, the emerging states of Marwar and Mewar as well as the powerful Sultanates of Malwa and Gujarat were also players in this contest for asserting territorial control. The Sonigarā Chauhans of Jalor were thus situated between two competing regional powers, Gujarat and Marwar, around the fourteenth century. At the same time, it also had to face other local level competitors. Jalor's post fourteenth century history thus seems to suggest that from this period onwards, it was subordinated to the more powerful players in the politics of the region. Further, like its regional and

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20 Lt. Nawabzada Taley Muhammad Khan, *Pālaṇpur Rājya...*, p. 12.

21 For an interesting account of the history of migration of such groups see Samira Sheikh, *State and Society in Gujarat, c. 1200-1500: The Making of a Region,* unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2004.

local level competitors, it was also faced with the often militarily stronger powers at Delhi throughout this period.

The Chauhan kingdom of Jalor is one example of the kind of localised state that B. D. Chattopadhyaya and Nandini Sinha Kapur discuss[22]. It is in fact interesting to note that while the Chauhans were an important clan in the early medieval period, and several 'heroes' like Pṛthvirāja and Hammira belonged to it, none of its branches seem to have emerged as significant regional powers in the post-thirteenth century period. However, both Pṛthvirāja and Hammira came to be the protagonists of several rāsos, prabandhas and mahākāvyas. There were many such lineages in Gujarat and Rajasthan who claimed Rajput status but did not manage to become full-fledged regional powers.

It is against this background of the history of Jalor, located within the wider history of medieval South Asia, that we must explore the patronage contexts of each of the narratives under study.

The Texts in their Patronage Contexts

- ***Kānhaḍade Prabandha***

The political scenario in mid fifteenth century western India, when Padmanābha composed the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* was thus rather volatile. His patron, the Chauhan ruler Akhairāja, who belonged to a lesser Rajput lineage, was in precarious position as his branch of the Chauhans was facing a threat, not only from the Afghans but also from other Rajput ruling houses,

[22] Both these works have already been discussed in the section on Historiography (pp. 4-7 above).

perhaps including the other branches of the Chauhans. Under such circumstances, Akhairāja would have been in need of a number of image-building and legitimating devices in order to assert his authority in a region where both his territories and the pre-eminence of his clan were under threat. Patronising of 'histories' of heroic ancestors to assert one's own superiority was a common practice among the medieval Rajputs. The *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* can be viewed as one such legitimising device that celebrated the patron's virtues by drawing on his heroic ancestry. In other words, Padmanābha told the story of Kānhaḍade in order to strengthen the position of Akhairāja, who was the former's fifth descendent.

Padmanābha thus projects the Chauhan lineage as well as that of Kānhaḍade as 'ideal'. He notes,

> *"Kānha was the ideal incarnation, (he) gave charities to (those well-versed in) the six darśanas.*
> *In his clan was born Viramadeo's son Meghala Deva, bringing much joy."*[23]
>
> *"There is much valour in the Sonigarā kula, (in which was) born Meghalade's son Aṃbārāja,*
> *Padmanābha speaks thus, Aṃbā's son was Khetasi."*[24]
>
> *"The son of the prosperous Khetasi was Akhairāja Sonigarā.*
> *He had the brāhmaṇas perform sacrifices and gave one and a quarter lakhs in charities."*[25]

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[23] Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha*, IV. 334, p. 230.
"Kānha taṇau uttam avatār, kaliyuga shatha daraśana dātāra,
Tiṇai vaṃśi Víramade nanda, Megaladevi díu āṇanda."
It is interesting note the pun that Padmanābha makes on the noun *'Kānha'*. It can be read as referring to Lord Krṣṇa or as Kānhaḍade who is his incarnation.

[24] Ibid, IV. 335.
"Sonigarā kuli sāhas ghaṇau, Aṃbarāja Megalade taṇau,
Padmanābha mati bolai isí, Aṃbā taṇau putra Khetsí."

[25] Ibid., IV.336.
" Laxamivanta Khetasi taṇau, Akhairāja Sonigiriu bhaṇau,
Brāhmaṇa taṇa karāvya jyāga, savā lākh jini dídhā tyāga."

Akhairāja is a descendent of this virtuous lineage. About the Chauhans of Jalor Padmanābha says:

> *"The fame of the (Chauhan) kula was already spread far and wide, a vaṃsa pristine and praiseworthy,*
> *Beautiful and pure like the rājahaṃsa (royal swans) are the Sonigarā Chauhāṇs."*[26]

The emphasis on the notion of 'virtue and purity of lineage' and their preservation are a recurring motif in Padmanābha's composition. Viramade, Kānhaḍade's son, unequivocally rejects the princess Pirojā's proposal of marriage, as this would tarnish his *kula* or lineage.

> *"...The Chahuāṇa kula is without blemish, like the full moon on purṇimā."*[27]
> *Today (by accepting the marriage proposal with a turak) I will not do anything that will bring shame to my ancestors of the solar lineage..."*[28]

Throughout the narrative and right until the end, Viramade, like his father, underscores the importance of maintaining this purity which is an essential feature of the Chauhan *kula.* Thus, even when his severed head is carried on a platter to the princess who wishes to marry him, it turns away from her. Marrying a *turak* would bring unprecedented shame to his blemish-free lineage.

For Padmnābha, Kānhaḍade is the ideal king who belongs to this noble lineage. In his kingdom, everyone is well provided for and protected. Justice is

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[26] Ibid., I.8, p. 2.
"Kula kirati āgai ghaṇí, vaṇśa viśuddha vakhāṇa,
Rājahaṃsa ralíyāmaṇā sonigarā chahuāṇa."

[27] Ibid., III.134, p.130.
"...chahuāṇanau kula nikalanka, jisyau punima tiṇau mayanka."

[28] Ibid., III.135.
"suraja taṇau vaṇsi huṅ āja, vaḍā puruṣaní nāṇu lāja..."

always done in his kingdom of Jalor, whose splendour is equal to those of Indra's court.[29] The poet also projects his protagonist as the protector of Gujarat, Bhinmal and Jalor, which are all represented as brahmanical utopias. Bhinmal for instance is described as:

> *"...(the abode of) forty-five thousand brāhmaṇas who were like the incarnations of the devas on this earth."*[30]
>
> *"They never tired of studying all the four Vedas along with their aṅgas,*
> *The conduct of these brāhmaṇas was flawless, here (in Bhinmal) all the eight grammars were used.*[31]
>
> *"How should one praise Bhinmal where the fourteen branches of knowledge and the eighteen Purāṇas were known,*
> *Ayurveda, music, astrology, piṅgal and various subjects were mastered."*[32]

Jalor itself is described as a land where,

> *"...brāhmaṇas who are dedicated to the study of the Vedas, Purāṇas and the Śāstras reside."*[33]
>
> *"Through their studies they cultivate good nature, humility and nobility..."*[34]

Kānhaḍade is the protector of such lands and thus earns the approval of Padmanābha, a *brāhmaṇa* himself, as a king who takes pride in upholding brahmanical privileges. Throughout the narrative Padmanābha interweaves

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29 Ibid, IV.27, p.167.

30 Ibid, III.22, p.104
"...brāhmaṇa sahisa pañcatālīsa, pṛthví deva avataríya jaisa.."

31 Ibid., III.23
"bhaṇvā taṇau na āṇe kheda, aṅga sahita chhai chār veda,
brāhmaṇa taṇa bhalā ācaraṇa, jihaṅvartai āthai vyākaraṇa."

32 Ibid., III.24, p. 105.
"Bhinmāl nu kisyuṅ vakhāṇa, vidhyā chauda aḍhara purāṇa,
āyuraveda bharaha saṅgíta, jyotiṣa piṅgala viṣya viníta."

33 Ibid., IV.9, p.164
" Veda Purāṇa Śastra abhyasai, isyā vipra taṇi nayar í vasai."

34 Ibid., IV.10.
"Vidyā vād vinod apār, vinaya vivek lahai suvicāra..."

the account of Kānhaḍade's virtuous acts with lengthy explanations of the moral values attached to various brahmanical concepts such as *karma* and *puṇya.* This element of didactism that was an essential constituent of the prabandha genre, perhaps also served the function of providing brahmanical sanction to the patron Akhairāja's rule as well as of reminding him of his duties towards the brahmanical cause. He too, like his ancestor before him, could be an 'ideal king' by following the prescribed norm. The choice of prabandha as a genre for this narrative also indicates a quest for legitimacy as it was in wide use by the twelfth century in Gujarat and Rajasthan for the purpose of constructing lineages of ideal kings, incorporating both historical and mythical figures[35]. Following the conventions of the genre, the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* also draws from the didactic mythological Purānic tradition and attempts to establish the status of its royal patron and his ancestors and successors as perfect rulers.

Thus, apart from being a zealous protector of the *brāhmaṇas*, Kānhaḍade is also the rescuer of the Somanatha idol from captivity of the enemy, the *turaks.* The memory of the rescue of Somanatha is particularly significant in this regard as, even though by this time Vaisnavism had started becoming popular in Gujarat, Somanatha remained an important temple and pilgrimage site in this region. It was associated with several important ruling dynasties of Gujarat, at least until the early medieval period. It thus came to be linked with the assertion of sovereignty of many of these dynasties that

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[35] See Toshikazu Arai, "Jaina Kingship in the *Prabandhacintamaṇi*" in J.F. Richards (ed.) *Kingship and Authority in South Asia,* OUP, Delhi, 1998, pp.92-132.

patronised the deity and contributed to the wealth of the temple. As the rescuer of this important idol, and by implication, of Śiva himself, Kānhaḍade also establishes his sovereignty like many before him. In this role as the rescuer of Somanatha he is therefore also granted the status of being an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Thus not only do the prisoners that he rescues along with the idol recognise him as the *"avatāra of Kṛṣṇa"*[36] but the consorts of Śiva also remind him of his status as an incarnation of Viṣṇu who, just as he had done in the past, must now free Rudra from the demons. They note:

> *"Once on an earlier occasion, Rām had rescued Rudra from the daityas,*
> *On a second occasion, Bali, the son of Viroçana had displayed his exceptional devotion to him."*[37]
>
> *"On this third occasion, you come forward, O Kānhaḍadev,*
> *Do not delay, oh brave one, Gaṅgā and Gauri both speak thus."*[38]

In this virtuous act of rescuing Somanatha and protecting the *brāhmaṇas*, Kānhaḍade has the blessings of his family goddess *Aśāpuridevi*, along with the two consorts of Somanatha himself. He also has the ability to garner the military aid of the 'thirty-six royal clans' (several of whom are named by Padmanābha) at very short notice who are ardent supporters of the cause as members of various warrior lineages. The battles between them and the *turaks*

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[36] Ibid., I.223, p. 55.
"Kṛṣṇa taṇau avatāra."

[37] Ibid, I.120, p. 25.
"Ek vāra āgai daityathu Rāmai Rudra mukāvyu,
bíjí vāra Vali Vairochani bhagativiṣeśa jaṇāvyu."

[38] Ibid, I.121.
"Lijai mora trihuṅ udāṇe, jāṇai Kānhaḍadeu,
Ma ma kari jeḍa vír – im bolai Gaṅgā Gauri beu."

are described in great detail as epic/Purāṇic battles between the Chauhans as the gods/*devas* and Alauddin and his army as the evil demons/*asuras*.[39]

However, mere achievement of victory over the enemy is not a sufficient guarantee of political legitimacy. Kānhaḍade carves out five idols from the single one that he has rescued and establishes them in different parts of the region.[40] One of these is sent to Sorath (Saurashtra), presumably for reinstatement at the Somanatha temple. The other four are installed in the Marwar region viz. in Vagad, Lohsingh, Abu and Jalor. Thus, as Richard Davis points out, the aim of the reappropriation is only partly to restore Somanatha as an eternal sacred site.[41] Kānhaḍade appears to be more concerned with borrowing the prestige of Somanatha and gaining Śiva's manifest presence in order to reinforce the autonomy of his own kingdom[42]. The episode of the rescue of Somanatha in fact holds a place of great significance in the *Prabandha* as it becomes the main cause of the battle between Kānhaḍade, the ruler of a small local level kingdom, and Alauddin, the great Sultan of Delhi. As the descendent of the rescuer of the Somanatha idol, the patron Akhairāja's sovereignty and importance are also established through this episode. The virtues of Akahirāja are given fulsome praise as he, like his ancestor, is described as the benefactor of *brāhmaṇas* and promoter of the

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39 This representation of the two enemies will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

40 Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* , I.253-255, p. 62.

41 Richard H. Davis, *The Lives of Indian Images*, p.193.

42 Ibid.

brahmanical way of life. Akhairāja is thus the fitting successor of Kānhaḍade. Padmanābha says:

> *" Akhairāja is the ideal incarnation whose puṇya has no limits,*
> *Kānhaḍade's fame has been further illuminated by him (Akhairāja)."*[43]

This kind of drawing from the past was a common feature in several texts produced in the lesser Rajput houses that had to deal with intense territorial rivalries and frequent military conflicts in this period. Ramya Sreenivasan, in her essay on the narrative traditions that grew around Alauddin Khalji's conquests in central and western India,[44] notes that from the mid-fifteenth century onwards newer Rajput lineages consolidated their power and established their legitimacy by claiming genealogical (and thereby political) descent from those past lineages whose powers had been destroyed by Alauddin's campaigns. This was the period when the historical memory of his campaigns began to be transformed.[45] Alauddin's conquests in fact came to be the subject of a number of narratives that were produced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in western and central India. In most of these the protagonist who fights Alauddin is portrayed in exaggeratedly favourable terms and he loses to his enemy mainly due to external or supernatural causes over which he has no control rather than due to his own shortcomings. The use of the memory of these campaigns by the bards and court poets thus became a

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[43] Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha*, I.339, p. 231.
"Akhairāja uttam avatāra, jehṅā puṇya na lābhai pār,
Jiṇai kīrati Kānhaḍade tanī, Akhairāji ajuālī ghaṇī."

[44] Ramya Sreenivasan, "Alauddin Khalji Remembered, pp. 275-296.

[45] Ibid., p. 283.

convenient instrument by which the patrons' legitimacy could be reiterated in politically uncertain times.

- ***Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt***

Two hundred years after Padmanābha's composition, in c. 1648-1660, the Kāṇhaḍade story is re-told by Nainsí, but with some variations. When Nainsí composed his *Khyāt* in the mid seventeenth century under the patronage of the Rathor rulers of Marwar, the Sonigarās had accepted the overlordship of the former. Similarly, several of the Rathor chieftains had come to accept the service and the overlordship of the Mughals. Thus multiple layers of loyalties were at work here as a local level power owed its allegiance (like several others of its kind) to a greater, regional level Rajput ruling lineage, which in turn owed allegiance to the imperial authority at Delhi. The Rajputs were also bound by ties of loyalty to their own clansmen and branches of their own lineage.

By the seventeenth century, the assertion of legitimacy through the genealogical tradition had become a common practice among groups who came to be recognised as Rajputs. Nainsí's account also presents detailed genealogies of several ruling houses of Rajasthan and Gujarat (including the Sonigarās), in several *vāts* or tales about them. The list of the ancestors and successors of Kānhaḍade is extensive with a brief story accompanying an occasional name. Nainsí's list however lacks the emphasis on the purity of lineage that is articulated by Padmanābha in his work. The latter does not give an elaborate list of the ancestors of his patron, but the significance of the *kula*

and the preservation of its sanctity are almost an obsession with the fifteenth century court poet. Nainsí vaguely suggests Kānhaḍade's divine ancestry in a brief story that he recounts about Āsarāva (one of Kānhaḍade's distant anscestors) who meets a goddess while he is on a hunting trip. Struck by his bravery, the goddess agrees to marry him provided he maintains secrecy about her identity[46] (a more elaborate version of this story, with Kānhaḍade as the protagonist, is told in the *Viramade Sonigarā ri Vāt*). The children of this union continue the Sonigarā line. Nainsí mentions Kānhaḍade as an incarnation of Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) in a similar matter of fact way. In the genealogical list he notes,

> *"Sāvantasinh's (son) Kānhaḍade became the master (dhaṇi) of Jalor. (He) came to be known as the tenth Śāligrāma Gokalinātha. In samvat 1368 (he) vanished from the Jalor fort."*[47]

However, Kānhaḍade is once again mentioned as the incarnation of *"Gokalinātha Thākurji"*[48] at the beginning of the first *vāt,* which tells the story of

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46 Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí ri Khyāt,* vol. I, pp. 202-203. The story goes thus:
Āsarāva was a great Rajput (*vaḍo rājput huto).* He was hunting in Nāḍula (*Nādula sikāra ramato huto).* A *devi* tried to frighten him but he did not get scared and shot the arrow that he had drawn in order to kill the deer (*tiṇu devi bihāḍaṇa lāgi, su Āsarāva bihai nahin nai bāṇa hiraṇanu sāndhiyo huto so vāhyo).* Seeing this the *devi* became pleased and told Āsarāva – "I am pleased with you, ask for whatever you wish." (*tarai devi khusi hui nai Āsarāvanu kahaṇa lāgi – "tonu huṅ tuṭhi; tuṅ jāṇai su mańga.")*Then Āsarāva saw her beauty and thought, "it would be nice to have a wife like her." (*tarai Āsarāva deviro rupa dekhnai jāṇiyo, isḍi bair vhai to bhali.")* So he said to her, "you become my wife and live in my house." (*tarai devinu kahyo, "tuṅ māhre bair huya ghare rahi.")* The *devi* was bound by her word *(tarai vācha chhala āi).* She warned him, "I must tell you this before hand. If anyone recognises me, I will return." *(tarai kahyo, "atari vāt huṅ pahli kahuṅ chhuṅ, koi monu jānsi tarai huṅ pari jāisa."* Thus the *devi* came home (to Āsarāva) *(yuṅ kahinai devi gharai āi).* They say she bore four sons – Māṇakarāva, Mokal, Ālahaṇa and a fourth whose name is not mentioned *(tiṇare pet, kahai chai chyar betā huā - Māṇakarāva, Mokal, Ālahaṇa, ...huā).*

47 Ibid., p. 204.
"Rāv Kānhaḍade Savańtasiro, Jālor dhaṇi huvo. Dasamo salagaram gokalinātha kahāṇo. Saṃat 1368 Jālorarai gaḍharohai alop huvo."

48 Ibid., p. 213.

the rescue of Somanatha. Although this episode is not described as elaborately as in the *Prabandha,* it appears to hold a place of significance in Nainsí's account. The latter has chosen to repeat this particular story about the Sonigarās in a *Khyāt* that has been patronised by the Rathors. Evidently, the importance of the Somanatha idol and its rescue lingers even in the seventeenth century. Even though the rescue of Somanatha is not the primary cause of battle between Sultan Alauddin and Kānhaḍade in this narrative, the latter, according to Nainsí, has saved Lord Somanatha from *"his distress (kist)"*[49] and emerges as one who has saved the *"land of the Hindus from shame."* [50] It is understandable therefore that the author regards him as an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. Thus even under a new patronage context, prestige is drawn for the present patron from the memory of rescue of Somanatha.

In Nainsí's account however, the elaborate Purāṇic overtones of the earlier version are missing. While Padmanābha frequently casts the battles between the Chauhans and the *turaks* within the epical framework of the *deva-dānava* rivalry, Nainsí only makes one such comparison in brief. Rather, for him, the rivalry between Kānhaḍade and Alauddin is the kārmic retribution of a *brāhmaṇa* devotee of Somanatha, which has led to the two being born from two parts of his own body (see Narratives, pp. 24-27).[51] This story of the *brāhmaṇa* in fact appears to bear witness to Nainsí's oral sources as the tale

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., p. 216.
"Kānaḍadeji hindusthānri baḍí marjād rākhi."

[51] Ibid., pp. 213-216.

seems to have very local/village level overtones, as is reflected in the motif of the killing of the goat (see Narratives, p. 26).

Further, Kānhaḍade's victory over Somanatha and the political capital that accompanied it in the *Prabandha* seem to have been completely forgotten in his next encounter with Alauddin in the *Khyāt.* The latter totally disregards the fact that he has previously suffered a loss at the hands of the Chauhan chieftain. Similarly, the Chauhans, who had emerged as victors in the battle for Somanatha, now find the Sultan extremely formidable.[52] Nainsí also does not offer elaborate divine sanction to Kānhaḍade's rule. While in the *Prabandha* divinities such as Ganeśa, Kṛṣṇa and Bramhā along with the personified Jalor fort promise him that his descendents will rule the fort in the future[53]; no such promise is made in the *Khyāt.* The elaborate descriptions of Gujarat as the repository of brahmanical virtue and Kānhaḍade as its saviour are also predictably absent in an account authored by an Osvāl Jain, who may not have seen the need to promote these.

Despite similarities in the basic narrative, Nainsí's portrayal of Kānhaḍade story – his rescue of the Somanatha idol and his rivalry with Alauddin – takes on a very different form in his composition as compared with the *Prabandha.* Thus, against the background of Jalor's political history, the different authorial concerns are evident. Nainsí's patrons were the Rathor rulers of Marwar who were by now a significant ruling power in the region. They were also important regional feudatories of the Mughals, whose

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[52] Ibid., p. 220.

[53] Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* IV.195-199, pp. 202-203.

dominance was imposed throughout Rajasthan in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries. The assertion of their own histories and traditions through the production of texts like Nainsí's *Khyāt* during this period can thus be viewed as a means the regional elite used to adapt to the presence of the powerful imperial authority. The Kānhaḍade story is one of a whole range of such stories of a pantheon of Rajput heroes whose descendents continued to be prominent rulers themselves, or important feudatories of a major Rajput ruling lineage.[54] Nainsí tells numerous other tales of this kind in his *Khyāt* in order to enhance the prestige of his own patrons.

- ***Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt***

In the *Viramade Sonigarā ri Vāt,* the story takes on a far more localised form. The pan-regional motifs of Gujarat, Somanatha and even Siwana are absent as are the elaborate genealogical descriptions. The structure of the narrative is also different in that it is interspersed with short, sometimes seemingly disconnected episodes and the constant use of local idioms. A major part of the narrative is made up of such episodes. Thus, before Alauddin and his army come into the picture, we are told the elaborate story of how Rāo Lākhaṇsingh of Jaisalmer is warned by a bird about Kānhaḍade being poisoned by one of his own (Kānhaḍade's) men (see Narratives, p.35).[55] The tales of Nimbā's abduction of Viramati (see Narrative, pp. 36-39) [56] and that of

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[54] See also Ramya Sreenivasan, "The 'Marriage..." p. 99

[55] Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* p. 23.

[56] Ibid., p. 29 and p. 31.

the ironsmith's clever daughter (see Narratives, pp. 37-38)[57] also reinforce the local flavour of the narrative as do references such as the princess' maid's description of Viramade being as good looking as *Gahani Jalāl,* the hero of another folk epic from the region. Here the key protagonist is Viramade, Kānhaḍade's son. Like so many local heroes of Rajasthan, he is born of a divine being, the *apsarā Rambhā,* [58] but here even a passing reference to the protagonist being an incarnation of a Purāṇic divinity is absent. The narrative is reflective of a much more localised political interest, telling the tale of the relationships between different lineages and clans within the region. Thus Viramade notes, while agreeing with his father's decision to give Viramati's hand in marriage to Rāo Lākhansingh of Jaisalmer, that indeed *"all gaḍhapatis (masters of forts) are related (to one another)."*[59] Similarly, the idea of *vair* or revenge for the blood of one's own kin, which was an important feature of local Rajput politics, is reflected in the episode of Bijadia, Viramade's servant, avenging his father's death by killing Nimbā and his entire clan (see Narratives p.38).[60] On the other hand, the basic narrative itself reflects several similarities with the *Khyāt,* which in turn draws greatly upon the *Prabandha,* apart from some oral sources. The Kānhaḍade story thus seems to have had

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57 Ibid., p. 31 and p. 33.

58 Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rī Vāt,* p.21.
The story of Kānhaḍade' marriage with the incarnation of Rambhā is similar to the story of Āsrāv, Kānhaḍade's ancestor's marriage with the goddess, told in Nainsī's account (see Narratives, pp. 22-23).

59 Ibid., p. 25.
"Gaḍhapatī sagā chhai"

60. Ibid., p. 35 and p. 37.

several levels of transmission with constant exchanges taking place between the oral and the written versions.

As has already been noted, the vāt genre of Rajasthan was an oral story-telling tradition characterised by a lot of fluidity. Entertaining an audience, especially at the village level, appears to be the primary aim of the storyteller, who was often an itinerant bard. He was at the liberty to add or subtract from the narrative as he wished. Each vāt therefore had several authors who created their own narrative depending upon their particular situations. One such version of the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt*, which was put to writing sometime towards the end of the eighteenth century, is what I have used for this study. Mahavirsingh Guhlot, who has written a 'personal note' for this version, in fact recalls that he himself had heard an extremely entertaining version of the tale in the late nineteen forties in the Jalor fort itself.[61] The writer of the preface, Omkarsingh, a retired I.A.S. officer, also recalls that he had often heard the story as a child, told by a popular bard who visited his village every few years.[62] Internal evidence from the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* also reflects that it was told to a wide audience, perhaps within the Jalor fort. Thus while describing a daily scene at Kānhaḍade's court, Padmanābha says:

> *"In the mańḍapa the king holds festal celebrations, (where) the courtesans dance gracefully to the beat,*
> *Those who are well-versed in the musical arts sing prabandha-gita."*[63]

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61 Ibid., *Apni Bāt.*

62 Ibid., Preface.

63 Padmanābha, *Kānhadade Prabandha*,IV.55, p. 173.
"Mańaḍapi muhal díi bhupāl, nācai pātra ugtai tāla,
Jāṇai jeha bharahasańgíta, pāḍaprbańdha te gāi gíta."

Several other occasions are also mentioned in the text when, even during the time of war, public performances including singing and dancing were a part of life in the forts of Rajasthan. The early part of Rajput ascendancy coincided with a large-scale building of fortresses.[64] These not only served defence purposes but also had a wide variety of people from different occupational groups residing in and around them. Chattopadhyaya links the control over these fortresses with the control over their rural surroundings and thus a part of the process by which the ruling clans were trying to consolidate their positions.[65] Tod has prepared a list of a whole range of occupations for the 3,017 families that resided in the fort of Jalor at the time of his survey in the nineteenth century.[66] In his description of Jalor, Padmanābha mentions the thirty-six *rājavamsas, vāṇiyās* trading in different commodities, foreign merchants, craftsmen, religious men (*yatis, jogis)* as well as *bhātas* and *cāraṇas* – people of "*eighteen varṇas*"[67] - who lived in or visited the town and the fort frequently. That the narrative was meant for public rendition is also supported by the fact that it is replete with didactic verses where the poet promises that listening to and reciting the deeds of Kānhaḍade would bring a person a number of merits or *phala,* that would lead to ultimate joy of seeing

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64 B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "The Origin of the Rajputs: the Political, Economic and Social Processes in Early Medieval Rajasthan", in *The Making...*, p.76.

65 Ibid.

66 Tod, James, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* vol. III, p. 1268.

67 Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha*, IV.9-58, pp. 164-174.

Lord Nārayaṇa with one's own eyes,[68] among several other benefits. The transmission contexts of the two narratives thus appear to be similar.

However, unlike the patron of the *Prabandha,* who was a Rajput chieftain, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* did not have a formal patron. It also, as we have already noted, did not have one single author. Its patrons were the local audiences who had by this period assimilated a certain notion of 'Rajput valour and heroism'. Thus while it perhaps originated from the more formal narratives of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* and the *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt* , it eventually came to serve the needs of *this* patron, that is, an entertainment-seeking audience. It is this patronage context that shapes the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt* version of the Kānhadade story.

Conclusion

Thus even as the three narratives tell the story of the Jalor chieftain Kānhaḍade's battle with Alauddin Khalji, the manner in which it is told in each case is different. Each of the narratives belong to different patronage contexts and different genres. The *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* is set within a formal courtly patronage context, where its patron Akhairāja was faced with a rather volatile political scenario as he was caught between the rise of two significant regional powers, that of Gujarat and Marwar, while facing competition from other local Rajput groups. His court poet Padmanābha's quest therefore appears to be to secure his patron's sovereign position in his traditionally held domains.

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[68] Ibid. IV.349, p. 233
"je phala Nārāyaṇa díthai..."

Nainsí's account shares several similarities with the *Prabandha.* Yet, for Nainsí, Kānhaḍade is one among a variety of Rajput chieftains, whose association with his own patrons, the Rathors, helped to enhance their prestige in the wake of the assertion Mughal dominance in the region. On the other hand, in the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt* the concern with establishing a patron's authority over a particular geographical space by drawing on the past is completely absent as this oral narrative is shaped by those who told the tale to village audiences. While authorial concerns thus seem to be changing, what remains constant over the three narratives however is the depiction of a rather dynamic tension in the Rajput-Muslim relationship, even though its representation differs in each individual case. Before moving on to a detailed analysis of this tension, it is important to emphasise that the period between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries was one of considerable internal conflict in the regions now known as Gujarat and Rajasthan. During this time emerging Rajput lineages were struggling to compete (and sometimes even survive) with the rise of the powerful regional sultanates. They were subsequently faced with the imposition of Mughal dominance throughout the area. The composition of narratives like the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* the *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt* or the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* apparently telling the same story in modified forms over a span of four hundred years, then are expressions of many of the concerns that may have been a part of the continuing process of state formation and other political developments specific to the region over several centuries.

CHAPTER – II

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE SELF: THE TRIUMPH OF RAJPUT *DHARMA*

As has been already noted, the region of Rajasthan saw considerable internal conflict and external change in the political and military realm during the temporal span covered by the composition of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* the *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* and the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* that is, from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. This period simultaneously witnessed the continuation of an ongoing socio-political process that seems to have been at work in the subcontinent in varying degrees from the seventh-eighth centuries onwards. This was the process in which caste formation converged with the political processes of state formation as diverse groups came to seek *kśatriya* status and therefore a place in the larger *varṇa* hierarchy.[1] In the region comprising Sind, Rajasthan, Gujarat and central India, this process took the form of 'Rajputisation'. Here, social groups that generically came to be known as Rajputs, acquired a certain homogeneity of characteristics that came to define their common identity. These characteristics can be loosely termed as the Rajput tradition or *dharma,* that is, an ideal code of conduct. In the Mughal period, and subsequently in the work of the colonial administrator historians, this homogeneity was given a more definitive articulation. This articulation has in fact dominated the popularly held notions about the Rajputs even in contemporary times. These characteristics however were never entirely fixed

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1 See B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Origin of the Rajputs", pp. 57- 88.

and the identity of the Rajputs and the values and ethics that it came to embody were continuously in the process of formulation and rearticulation. More significantly, these values would adjust to regional and imperial hierarchies in periods when political authority was in a flux.

In this context it is necessary to understand how these groups perceived themselves in the literature that they patronised or in narratives that belong to the different genres within the Rajput tradition. This chapter will therefore seek to address issues regarding the narratives' perceptions about the different aspects of Rajput *dharma.* In other words, how did the Rajputs perceive themselves? How did they assert their identity in a period when they were also forced to negotiate the imperial authority of Delhi and other competitors in a struggle to maintain control over their own traditional domains? How did these groups perceive themselves vis a vis the superior political powers? The chapter will conclude that while the narratives emphasise the different aspects of an ideal ethos of Rajputhood or Rajput *dharma,* a certain fluidity is also reflected in its depiction. At one level is revealed a normative standard of the *dharma* which, at another level, was open to changes and adjustments, depending not only upon the particular historical context but also upon the audiences/patrons for which the narratives may have been composed.

The Making of the Rajputs

Despite the fact that the Rajputs do not constitute the majority of Rajasthan's population, their history and traditions have contributed very

significantly to the popular perceptions about Rajasthan even today[2]. Other parts of the subcontinent, such as Gujarat and central India, have also had long histories of Rajput dominance. Yet it is the Rajput clans of Rajasthan, associated with traditions of valour and chivalry, that have come to define the character of the region as well as the essence of Rajputhood.

In a seminal essay, based on a study of inscriptions from Rajasthan from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries, B.D. Chattopadhyaya suggests that the emergence of the Rajputs must be viewed as "...a political process in which disparate groups seeking political power conformed to such norms as permeated the contemporary political ideology."[3] He relates the origin of the Rajputs in this period to the pan-Indian phenomenon of diverse social groups forming dynasties by linking themselves to mythical *kśatriya* lineages in order to gain legitimation[4]. He also relates the process, which was essentially one of social mobility, to local level caste formation that also came to include groups such as the Medas and the Huṇas, into the larger *vaṃa* hierarchy. These groups that claimed Rajput status then came to form sub-clans claiming affinity with the major clans of Rajasthan. Yet, an element of localism was evident in the fact that many of these sub-clans derived their names from the locality to which they belonged, like the *Pipāḍiā Guhilas* or the *Sonigarā Cahamānas* (Chauhans), who were from Pippalapāda and Suvarṇagiri (Jalor)

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2 See Deryck O. Lodrick, "Rajasthan as a Region", pp. 1- 43.

3 B.D. Chattopadhyaya, 'The Origin of the Rajputs", p. 88.

4 Ibid.

respectively.[5] Thus these sub-clans were not necessarily formed due to the segmentation of major clans but due to the absorption of new clans as junior or minor branches of these.[6] Alliances, particularly through marriage, came to be a major tool for this absorption as these were supposed to have been conducted only between those groups that had come to constitute the Rajput category. These alliances served the twin functions of granting legitimacy to groups like the Huṇas who had acquired substantial political power as well as of establishing a strong network of political relations between the Rajputs themselves.[7] In fact, marriage alliances came to play a vital role in Rajput polity in the later period, especially vis a vis their relations with the Mughals. Marriage of Rajput women with the Mughal princes not only improved their (the Rajput rulers') relations with the powers at Delhi, it also strengthened their positions in their own inter-clan rivalries.

Another aspect related to the emergence of the Rajputs that became an essential part of their polity in the subsequent period was the emphasis on descent. By the end of the thirteenth century, there was a change in the connotation of the term *rājaputra* which had hitherto referred to 'son of king'. It gradually came to "denote descent group rather than a necessarily politically exalted status".[8] Textual sources from the early medieval period also seem to suggest that descent was the most important factor in the identification of the

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5 ibid., pp. 87-88.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., pp. 78-79.

8 Ibid., pp. 79-80.

rājaputra.[9] In this regard the fabrication of linkages with the formulaic 'thirty-six royal clans', the association with the mythical dynasties of the sun and the moon and other Purāṇic elements, assumed significance as the emerging Rajput groups claimed their descent from these. Thus from the early medieval period onwards, descent, real or invented, became the primary identifier of the Rajput status.

This emphasis on descent became an essential defining factor for the Rajputs in the subsequent years as well, as several of these groups came to acquire unprecedented political power at the local or regional level. The patronage of genealogies and other kinds of literature created by the bards, *cāraṇas* etc. as well as poetic works with some classical bent produced by the *brāhmaṇa* or Jain poets in the courts, further contributed to this process. These also led to the gradual formulation of what can be loosely termed as an essential Rajput tradition, *dharma* or Rajputhood. Along with descent, values like valour and chivalry, loyalty to one's clan and to one's master, keeping one's word, and preference for death over dishonour emerged as the keystones of this *dharma.* The imposition of Mughal dominance from the sixteenth century onwards over major parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat, and the emphasis that the Mughals themselves placed on genealogy, added to this definition. It got further crystallised in the works of the British and subsequently the nationalist historians who began to project the Rajputs as brave Hindu warriors who fought against the forces of Islam. In fact such histories often

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[9] Ibid., p. 80.

saw the emergence of the Rajputs as a sudden phenomenon that took place in response to the Muslim invasions. Such perceptions however glossed over the complexities that were present in the Rajput relations with the rulers at Delhi. They also tended to ignore the complexities that existed in the emergence and development of what came to be known as the Rajput tradition or *dharma.* It is important therefore, to keep in mind that the development of what constituted the essentials of the Rajput *dharma* was a gradual process that continued and underwent changes over several centuries. A study of the *Prabandha,* the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt* reveals the dynamic and processual aspects of this concept.

The Narratives and the Rajput *Dharma*

How then are the different aspects of the Rajput *dharma* reflected in the narratives under study? In many ways the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* stands out as normative text in this regard, compared to the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt.* Following the conventions of the genre, the narrative draws greatly from the didactic-mythological Purāṇic tradition and is concerned with establishing the normative ideal for its royal patron who was a Rajput belonging to a sub-clan of the Chauhans. The fact that the text appears to have been used for public recitation in and around the Jalor fort would also have contributed to the promotion of this ideal. In the wake of Padmanābha's patron Akhairāja's precarious political predicament in the fifteenth century, promoting him and his ancestors as the upholders of the Rajput ideal would have been a useful tool for securing his authority in his traditionally held domains. Thus, Padmanābha

emphasises the purity of the Chauhan lineage. He also repeatedly describes the virtues of the *khitri-dharma* and those of the brave warriors of the "thirty-six royal clans" on more than one occasion. In the first *khaṅḍa* of the narrative, for instance, he dedicates over a hundred lines in a literary style used only twice in the entire narrative called *bhaḍāulí,* to describe their horses, weapons and virtues, both physical and moral.

> *"...A variety of khitris rode these horses. Over twenty-five (years old). Within fifty years of age. Able to hit the smallest target. Bravest of the brave. Moustaches reaching upto their ears. Beards touching their navels. Honest, sincere, valiant. Having pure thoughts. (Men) of few words... Moving like the wind. Spreading their fame. Brothers to women (who were not their wives/paranārí). Calm and steadfast in battle. Never attacking without informing (the opponent). Succumbing to death only after killing the enemy. Always accomplishing tasks for their masters. Able to use thirty-six kinds of weapons. Saluting the bodies of those fallen in battle. Such rāuts were moving ahead..."*[10]

Thus valour and fortitude appear to be the most significant virtues held by these warriors. They will fight the enemy even though their loss is inevitable as it is not only their kingdom but also honour that is at stake. Thus Sātal is initially hesitant to fight the Sultan once he has seen the latter as an incarnation of Lord Śiva.

> *"The Sultan has appeared as Rudra, how can one strike a blow at him,*
> *Thinking thus Sātal began to retrace his steps."*[11]

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[10] Padmnābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* I. *bhaḍāulí.* 84-104.
"Tehe ghoḍe kisya kisya khitrí chaḍíyā. Pańchavísa varas uphara. Pańchās varas māhi. laghusańdhāníka. Vírādhívíra. Ākaraṇat muńccha. Nābhipramāṇa kuńcha. Udāra jhujhāra. haíi suvichāra. thoduń bolai...pavansiuń chālai. Kírati vistarai. Paranārisahodara. Sańgrāmi sadhara. Bolāví mārai. Mār í marai. Āpaṇa swami taṇau kāj karai. Chhatr ísai dańdāyuddha dharai. Hathiyār vāvarai. Paḍyanai śaba bhaṇí namaskara karai. Tehe rāute chalate huńte".
padyānai shaba bhaṇI namaskāra

[11] Ibid., II.136, p. 91.
"Rudra rupa suratāṇa avatariu, kim ghālíjai ghāu,
hiyai vāt vimāsí Sāńtali pāchhau dídhau pāu."

Yet, says Padmanābha,

> *"...despite knowing the true form (of Śiva), (Sātal) was not prepared to give up his honour/māṇa."*[12]

Similarly, in the final battle between the Rajput armies and the *turaks,* Kānhaḍade is distressed by the possibility that his forces may manage to push back the enemy, in which case he will not have the honour of fighting them himself[13]. He therefore asks his troops commanded by his bother Māldeo to withdraw from their positions and allow the *turaks* to move in towards Jalor[14]. Even when various divinities inform him that his loss in the battle against Alauddin is imminent, Kānhaḍade chooses to fight until death, as does his son Viramade. The women of Kānhaḍade's household also choose to commit *jauhar,* a significant feature of the emerging Rajput tradition, rather than face dishonour at the hands of the enemy.

Further, after his father's death and before falling in battle himself,

> *"Viramadeva, for the honour of the vamśa, ruled for three and a half days..."*[15]

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12 Ibid., II.138.
"...sakal sarupa jāṇíu Sāńtali, tuhi na muńkai māṇa."

13 Ibid., IV. 178, p. 199.
"Rāula bhaṇai Mālde prāṇai jau thāṇau chhaṅdavai,
Koḍa āpaṇu kim pahuchisyai, vali katak nahí āvai.

14 Ibid., IV.179.
"Síkha mokalí rāvala Kānhai, bhahaḍmeruń thāṇauń,
Mānyau bola Mālde rāi, jai drauḍiuń turakāṇuń."

15 Ibid., IV.298.
"Viramadeva vańsa dhaṇa kāja, ahutha díhāḍā kídhauń rāja..."

Throughout the narrative he and his father have chosen the honour of their clan over the various offers of territory and peace made by Alauddin in lieu of submission to him.

Death is preferred over dishonour in the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt* as well. Nainsí does not give elaborate details of the battle between the Sonigarās and Alauddin's army except that it was fought for twelve years and that the fort was finally betrayed by one of Kānhaḍade's men, a *dahiyā rājaput.* Kānhaḍade vanishes into a temple[16]. Viramade, however, fights the enemy until death, thus saving his honour.[17] The Viramade of the *Vāt* chooses a more dramatic end for himself. He

> *"...cut his own stomach with a knife. He fed the pieces of flesh to the vultures and packed the intestines and other innards back into the stomach over which he tied his waistband and weapons."*[18]

He then goes on an uncontrollable killing spree. On hearing of his actions Alauddin orders his men to capture him alive only after he has exhausted all his weapons. Prior to this he has destroyed all his wealth and has had his entire household beheaded. Thus by choosing to disembowel himself and end his family line before being captured, Viramade avoids the humiliation of defeat.

Thus valour, martyrdom and preservation of one's honour while faced with a threat to one's patrimonial territories emerge as significant constituents

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[16] In both the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt,* Kānhaḍade vanishes rather than dying in battle. It is Viramade who always fights until the end. It is unclear if this is because Kānhaḍade is considered a divine incarnation.

[17] Nainsí, *Muṇhata Nainsí rí Khyāt,* vol. 1, pp. 223-224.

[18] Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* p. 59.
"Tarai Viramade peta āparo parnalyo katarí suń. su bukaḍā kāḍhi bārai grijāń nai didhā aur āńtāń ujha bhelā kari petí saiṭhí bāńdhi upari hathiyāra bańdhya."

of the Rajput *dharma,* especially in periods of strife, when was a need to assert one's own values and identities. Thus, with the death of the hero, the narratives establish the superiority of the Rajput tradition even as the actual kingdom is destroyed.

A true Rajput also always keeps his word, a fact that is endorsed by the Alauddin of the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* as well. In the final eight-year long battle between him and the Chauhans, Alauddin is determined to win. He therefore forbids his troops to turn back from the warfront under any circumstances until all the 'Hindus' have been killed.[19] He reassures them,

> *"Kānha will never break his word, he will not launch an attack at night."*[20]

In the very next line Padmanābha asserts the point in a *duhā:*

> *"Says paṅḍita Padmanābha, even if the pole star becomes unsteady,*
> *A person who is noble never breaks a pledge."* [21]

In contrast, the enemy is always deceitful and attempts to win battles by treacherous means. Thus, the battle with Sātal is won by flinging a dead cow into the only source of water in the Siwana fort.[22] Similarly, the final battle against Jalor is won by promising one of Kānhaḍade's charioteers, named Víkau or Vikamasí, the fort after it had been conquered. [23] The traitors' ultimate fate is death. Thus, Mādhava, who had caused the catastrophe of

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19 Padmnābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* IV.109-111, p. 185.

20 Ibid., IV.112.
"Vachana Kānha navi lopai sahí, rātívāhi āvasai nahí."

21 Ibid.IV.113.
"Padmanābha paṅḍita bhaṇai, jau dru chaṅchal hoi,
Sajjan je aṅgíkarai, vachana na chukara toi."

22 Ibid. II.139-141, p. 92.

23 Ibid.IV.181-184, p. 200.

bringing Alauddin to Gujarat, was killed by the *rāuts* who fought till the end in the defence of their lands.[24] Similarly, Vikamasi was struck and killed by his own wife, Hirādeví, for betraying the very master under whom he had enjoyed power and comforts[25].

This is the case in the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt* as well. In both these, Alauddin's army wins the final battle because one of the men of the Chauhan camp, a *dahiyā rājput,* in order to settle a past score (*vair)* with his masters, reveals the secrets of the fort to the enemy. However, unlike the Rajputs of the *Prabandha,* the Rajputs of these narratives also resort to deceit like their enemies in order to achieve victory. Thus Kānhaḍade's men in the *Khyāt* readily ally with Alauddin's disgruntled *umraos,* Mamusāh and Mírgābharu, for the rescue of Somanatha (see Narratives, pp. 28-29).[26] Similarly, after promising Alauddin that he will return with the marriage procession to wed his daughter, Viramade goes back to Jalor and makes elaborate preparations for war. Also, unlike the *Prabandha,* Alauddin does not implicitly trust the Rajputs' word and is suspicious of their motives:

> *"(Once you go back) you may never return. You must leave behind a guarantor* to *ensure that you do."*[27]

In the *Vāt,* Viramade and his family resort to a similar plan of deception. He promises to marry the princess, Sāha Begum, provided the Sultan agrees

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[24] Ibid. I.90, p.18.
"...anarath taṇau mula je huńtau Mādhava Muhatau māryau."

[25] Ibid., IV.201-204.

[26] Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* pp. 218-219.

[27] Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* p. 222.
"Tu uthai jai baitha rahai. Nahiń āvai to teri bāt rā ol de jā."

to the ceremony being conducted according to Hindu customs.[28] However, these ceremonies require a lot of time and resources which he claims he lacks. Consequently, Alauddin arranges a sum of twelve lakh rupees for him and gives him a deadline of three years to return with the marriage procession or *jān*.[29] It is the princess who points out to her father that *"He is a Hindu – he may or may not return."*[30] She therefore advises him to ask Viramade to leave his uncle, Rāṇagde, as a guarantor in the Delhi court. Her fears are not unfounded, as on his return to Jalor, Viramade goes into hiding. On being discovered, he and his father Kānhaḍade begin to make arrangements to strengthen the fort with resources obtained from the Sultan. Similarly, during the course of the twelve year long battle, when the provisions in the fort have been exhausted, the Chauhans resort to another charade:

> *"Viramade was informed that the provisions in the fort had run out. So they used the milk of Viramade's pet bitch, who had recently delivered puppies, to prepare khíra. The khíra was then applied to dry leaves and thrown towards the enemy camp. The pātsāha saw this and said, "This kāfir is enjoying khíra in his fort! They have enough provisions for several years to come." The pātsāha started to march back (towards Delhi)."*[31]

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28 Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt*, p. 43.
"Piṇa paraṇasyaṅ mhāṅrí hiṅdu rí rāh."

29 Ibid., p. 45.
"Iso suṇnai pātisāha 12 lākh rupíyā dirāyā. tín varasarí síkha dídhí."

30 Ibid.,
"Hiṅdu hai āvai kai nāvai."

31 Ibid., p. 57.
" Ā khabar Viramadejíne huí. Tarai Viramaderí kutarí vyāyí thí tikāṅrao dudha laine khíra karāí. Tike pātalārai khíra lagāynai, lahaskar dísi nākhí. Tirai pātasāha dekhnai kahyo. Mera beta kāfar ajaisai to gaḍh meiṅ khíra khāvai chhāi. Sāmān bohat varasake hai. Pātasāha pāccho kuch kídho."

Here the value judgements scornful of deceit and breaking one's word are glossed over unlike in the *Prabandha.* These are justified, even for a Rajput, in order to maintain one's honour and to retain control over one's territories in the wake of a threat from superior forces.

Staunch lovalty to the one's master is another aspect of the Rajput *dharma* that the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* underscores. When Kānhaḍade's men are sent to Ulugh Khan's camp to survey his army, they openly refuse to pay homage to him, asserting that,

"....except Kānhaḍade, we refuse to bow down before anyone."[32]

Ulugh Khan is not offended by this defiance and in fact allows the men to take a look at his army. He even offers a reward to Lākhaṇa, Kānhaḍade's *pradhān,* for the display of bravery that he makes before him and his men. Such a gift is also unacceptable to Lākhaṇa as this too would bring shame to his master.[33] Kānhaḍade is also projected by Padmnābha as a ruler who commands the allegiances of several other clans. According to him, the *rāuts* of the Solanki, Vāghelā, Rāthor, Cāvaḍā and Huṇa, as well as the Yādava, Parmāra and Guhila clans are loyal to Kānhaḍade as he has granted them territories *(grās).*[34] The latter is able to draw upon this loyalty on a very short notice in times of need such as in the rescue of Somanatha and later in his battle with Alauddin. Similarly, in the *Khyāt,* when Kānhaḍade's men visit Alauddin's camp before the rescue of Somanatha, the latter's general warns

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[32] Padmanābha, Kānhaḍade Prabandha, I.140, p. 29.
"....Kānhaḍade tālī, avara na karuṅ praṇām..."

[33] Ibid, I.150, p. 31.

[34] Ibid., IV.43-15, p. 171.

Alauddin that they may get violent if forced to bow down before any person other than their master.[35] Despite this staunch emphasis on loyalty, the traitor who deceives the Sonigarās in all three narratives, emerges from within their own ranks. Further, the incident in the *Vāt* where Viramade feels insulted when the men from Balakh refer to Alauddin as a "*mere land owning farmer*",[36] in fact alters this notion of loyalty to the master to some extent. Hitherto in the narrative he and his father have been totally against Alauddin. They have tried every method to get away from his demand for Viramade's hand in marriage. Yet, when an outsider insults the emperor to whom allegiance is owed, Viramade is offended and is driven to correct it at the risk of his own safety.

Thus we see that in all the three narratives the Rajput tradition prevails. It is that which is at stake and that which is preserved with the death of the hero, even as the kingdom falls to the hands of the enemy. Yet several changes are also visible as we move from the *Prabandha* to the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt.* The *Prabandha,* appears to be the chief source from which the other two narratives draw their accounts of the siege of Jalor,[37] perhaps in addition to the informal networks of oral transmission. Thus while many traces of the normative standards set by the *Prabandha,* which belongs to a classical genre are visible in the subsequent narratives, they also reveal the contradictions that are the indicators of another kind of more fluid reality. The *Vāt* in particular represents the Rajput *dharma* as more open-ended, with norms that can

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35 Nainsí, Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt, p. 217.

36 *Anonymous, Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* p.47, p. 49.

37 Ramya Sreenivasan, "The Marriage... ", p.106.

sometimes be broken or changed in order to suit the exigencies of the situation. The Rajput *dharma* was thus not something that was always rigid but was a dynamic code of behaviour that could be modified according to the needs of a specific historical moment as well as within the conventions of a particular genre of literature.

Alauddin's Daughter: Gender as a Trope in the Victory of the Rajput Tradition

It is interesting to note that in all the three narratives it is Alauddin's daughter, who is called Pirojā in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* who becomes a trope of the victory of the so-called Rajput *dharma* over that of the conquering Muslims.

This projection of Alauddin's daughter can be read in relation to the role that marriage came to play within the wider development of the Rajput tradition and polity, right from the early medieval period onwards. Matrimonial alliances came to serve several political functions among the different Rajput groups as well as in their relations with other competitors, and later, on a large scale, with the Mughals. It can be noted, as Kumkum Sangari does, that the political history of the Mewar region was one of ceaseless competitive warfare, which reinforced the mutual dependence between ruler and clan and ruler and other dependent chieftains.[38] In this system the notion of *kula* acquired a certain urgency from the need for affirming lineage cohesion, genealogical status and

[38] Kumkum Sangari, "Mirabai and the Spiritual Economy of Bhakti", in *Economic and Political Weekly,* July 7, 1990, p. 1466. See also Ramya Sreenivasan, *Gender, Literature, History: The Transition of the Padmini Story,* PhD Thesis, Centre for Linguistics and English, JNU, New Delhi, 2002, p.127.

familial solidarity based on kinship - some of the coordinates of military success. However, the conquest of neighbouring territories provided the king and the state with an economic and political advantage over kinsmen and made relations between them tense and unstable.[39] In this situation, political alliances cemented through marriage gradually came to play a distinctive role.[40] The network of exogamous marriages that thus grew, came to define the status of the rulers/ruling family vis a vis other clans, as well as helped to negotiate the balance of power within their own clans as they brought in external support. In a region where the political elite was fraught with internal competition, this system of matrimonial alliances played a vital role in forging ties which proved useful in consolidating their power.

Thus, as the exogamous marriage came to define the different intra – clan and extra - clan relationships for the Rajputs, they came to be intertwined with the "system of gaining land, influence, power, honour, status and alliance."[41] In this system, women, though indispensable, were construed as little more than pawns.[42] This function was further extended as marriage also came to serve as a means of acceptance of political superiority among the Rajputs as well as in their relations with the different Sultanates and the Mughals. Here too, women came to be offered as "tokens of submission"[43] rather than in their own right. Hence, as Ramya Sreenivasan points out, "the

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39 Kumkum Sangari, "Mirabai...", p.1466.

40 Ramya Sreenivasan, *Gender, Literature, History...*", p. 127.

41 Kumkim Sangari, "Mirabai...", p.1466.

42 Ibid.

43 Ramya Sreenivasan, *Gender, Literature, History...*", p.130.

patriarchal regulation of Rajput women was a matter of urgent concern to the ruling elite and the state itself. This was articulated ideologically in the code of Rajput 'honour.'"[44] Sreenivasan notes that the terms for the family, *vamśa* and *kula,* both of which suggest an emphasis on lineage are significant in a number of ways. "One, lineage determined relative access to resources within the family itself. This was because membership in the natal clan continued to impinge upon the status of the queens (and hence their progeny) in the marital household. Two, the emphasis on lineage foregrounded the kinship network, vital in mobilizing the widest possible political and military support for the ruler. Given that it was thus one of the fundamental units of Rajput polity, the idea of the *kula* was always invoked in terms of upholding its honour. This honour was the key concept in mobilizing the network of alliances underpinning the Rajput states. It was defined in terms of the fulfilment of obligation to spouses, immediate family, lineage and state."[45] For Rajput women honour was finally vested in their 'chastity'.[46] "This demanded sexual abstinence from the unmarried and monogamous fidelity to their husbands from the married women."[47] The term used for this in medieval Rajput literature was *sati* or *sati-dharma,* as is the case in the *Prabandha,* the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt* as well. The woman who followed this *sati-dharma,* eventually giving up her life at her husband's funeral pyre, was the ideal Rajput woman. In economic terms, this meant that she forfeited all her rights over land and property.

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44 Ibid., p.129.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.

The representations of the Sultan's daughter in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* as well the other two narratives can be viewed against this background. The women in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* attest to the fact that they are helpless without their husbands or 'lords'. This includes Gaṅgā and Gauri, the consorts of Śiva, who sing to Kānhaḍade that without their 'lord' their *"bodies burn like those of fish in shallow waters."*[48] Pirojā herself describes the ideal women of Kānhaḍade's household in her description of the Jalor fort:

> *"All of them belong to excellent kulas and are beautiful, they adorn themselves with ornaments of precious stones and pearls,*
> *As is the way of the great royal houses, they constantly have the rāi in their thoughts."*[49]

Thus, when the warriors Sātal, and later Kānhaḍade and Viramade, are about to lose their lives in battle, the women also chose to commit *jauhar.* Padmanābha is full of praise for them and describes the sight of *jauhar* as one of immeasurable pathos and sorrow. In the final battle, not only the queens but all the other women of the fort also commit *jauhar* as their lord and his followers (including the *śudra* men) confront Alauddin's army. The poet claims that:

> *"Fifteen hundred and eighty four jauhars took place in the Jalor fort ..."*[50]
>
> *The smoke created by these fires reached even the heavens or suraloka. Thus all the gods including Indra, Surya, Cańdra, the sixty-*

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48 Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* I.123, p. 25.
"...uchhai níri jim māchhalí tim viraha dahai amaha aṅga."

49 Ibid., IV.53, p.173.
"Savi sukulíṇí rupi apār, māṇika motí nā sṛṅgāra,
Vaḍai rālguni ehavi ríti, híii savi rāi nai ciṅti."

50 Ibid, IV.243, p. 212.
"Oaṅarsai caurāsi jamahar gaḍh Jālor nivesi..."

four joginis, the goddess Bhārati, Hari, Śakti Simhavāhini, the Saptarisis, Bramha, the Dikpālas, Rudra and also Mahisasuara and the "thirty-three crores suras" all thronged to witness this sight."[51]

The women follow their men in preserving the 'honour' of their clan and thus upheld the Rajput tradition.

But the greatest upholder of Rajput values and the ideal of Rajput womanhood is Pirojā herself. In the *Kānhadade Prabandha* this aspect is most emphatically highlighted as Pirojā ceaselessly voices the virtues of the 'Hindu' and 'Rajput' traditions. She claims that she prefers to remain unmarried rather than be forced to marry a *turak*.[52] She also claims that she and Viramade have been married in six births prior to this one.[53] In all these, both she and her lover, are born to kings that can be located within the general category of Rajput rulers. First, she was born as Surjanade, the daughter of Jaicańda, while Viramade was Sińgharāja, the son of Bāpal.[54] She seems to have lived in *Ańtaravedha* during this time and being proud of her *sati-dharma* had eventually entered the funeral pyre in that very country.[55] In their second birth, he was Kelhaṇa, the son of the ruler of Kāśi, while she was Kuńtāde, the daughter of Ajaipāla.[56] The third time, Viramade was born to Vāsudeva and she was born as princess Mayaṇā, the daughter of Mahańgarāi.[57] In her fourth birth, she was born as princess Sarupade, the daughter of Yogāde, while

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51 Ibid., IV. 245-249., p. 213.

52 Ibid., III.126, p.128.
"...turak koi var navi sańsahuń, vari huń tāt kuńārī rahuń."

53 Ibid., III.193, p.144.

54 Ibid., III.195, p.144.

55 Ibid., III.196.

56 Ibid., III.197, p.145.

57 Ibid., III.198, 199.

Viramade was Mahipāla, the son of Māṇikarāi. In the fifth birth, he was born as Devarāja to Pṛthvīrāja and she was Jaitala's daughter, princess Sahiju.[58] In the sixth birth, he was born as Pṛthvīrāja and she was born as princess Padmāvati in the house of Pālhaṇa.[59] In this birth Viramade was killed at the banks of the Ghaggar at the hands of *"Sahāvadín Suratāṇa."*[60] However it was in this birth that she violated her *sati-dharma* and committed two sins. Pirojā describes her sins thus,

> *"In that incarnation (I) committed sins, (I) had a pregnant cow killed (and) performed magic on the foetus, which distorted the rāi's mind."*[61]
> *"The rāi was mesmerised and gave up all shame, (he) had the pradhanas murdered and usurped the kingdom..."*[62]

However, by following the *sati-dharma* she ensured his salvation. She also ensured unparalleled *puṇya* for herself by entering the funeral pyre at Ayodhya. She was rewarded for this act by being born in a *"great lineage"* but had to pay for her sins by being born as a *"turak"* [63] in Alauddin's household. Pirojā promises to maintain her *sati-dharma* in her present life too as she predicts her lover's death and her own on his pyre at the end of the battle between Alauddin and Kānhaḍade.[64] Thus despite being the enemy's daughter, she is easily appropriated into the Rajput tradition.

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58 Ibid., III.200.

59 Ibid., III.201, p.146.

60 Ibid., III.203.

61 Ibid., II.202.
"Tini avatarí pāp ādhariuṅ, gāi viṇāsí kāmaṇ kariu,"
Sādhiu mantra garbhi gāinai, citti vikār huu rāibai."

62 Ibid., III.203.
"Rāi vasi kídhau lopí lāj, haṇyā pradhān nígamyu rāj.."

63 Ibid. III.204 –205, pp. 146-147.

64 Ibid., III.208., p. 147.

However, this appropriation remains incomplete in the fifteenth century narrative in which Viramade's disembodied head refuses to turn and look at her as he must keep his 'warrior's word' of never looking at her face again.[65] As noted earlier, one of the political functions of marriage was to establish the superiority of the party to which the daughter was given. While the Rajputs normally gave their daughters in marriage to the different imperial Muslim powers that came to rule Delhi, the reverse practice was not known.[66] However, this norm is inverted in the *Kāṇhaḍade Prabandha.* Here Pirojā's repeated rejection by her lover of several past births once again works to mark the superiority of the Rajputs over the conquering enemies. The otherwise formidable Alauddin subordinates himself to them by asking for Viramade's hand in marriage for his daughter. Further, Viramade articulates the poem's awareness of the politics of such marriages. The rejection is based on the assumption that the proposal of marriage is a ruse to take over their lands.[67]

Given the historical context of this narrative and the nature of the genre, it can be suggested that Padmnābha had the luxury to portray the rejection of the supposedly more powerful enemies. In the wake of Mughal dominance in the region however, the authors of the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt* , were perhaps not in a position to take the same liberties and thus told the story a little differently.

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65 Ibid., IV.321,322, pp. 227-228.

66 Dirk Kolff's study of the Rajputs of central and western India, however, shows that the practice of taking Muslim girls into Rajput houses was prevalent in medieval Malwa. See Dirk Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput, Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 96.

67 Padmanābha, *Kāṇhaḍade Prabandha,* III.132, p.130. See also Ramya Sreenivasan, "Alauddin Khalji Remembered...", p. 293.

In the *Khyāt,* Pirojā remains nameless and does not elaborate on the Rajput links of her past births. In fact the link with the previous birth is only mentioned briefly towards the end. The story goes thus:

> *"Then the turaks severed Viramade's head and took it to Dilli. Then, when the daughter of the pātsāhaji placed the head on a thali and began to marry it, the head that was facing her turned away. Then the sahjādi told the story of the past births. Then the head that had turned away turned back towards her. They say that the sahjādi completed the circumambulations and followed her husband and became sati."*[68]

Thus in this case, despite the initial rejection, Viramade accepts her as his wife. By asking for his hand in marriage for his daughter, the Sultan had indeed subordinated himself to the Rajputs who initially refused the match. The former however is quick in asserting his military superiority once the proposal is rejected. The Jalor fort is destroyed at the hands of Alauddin's army but the final victory lies with the Rajputs as he loses his daughter to their fold.

As in the *Khyāt,* the *Vāt* contains no reference to the Rajput links of the princess or to Viramade's past births. It does however give a rather complex account of their past lives as the son and daughter-in-law of a *sahukār* (see Narratives, pp. 40-41). However, in the end Viramade's head still refuses to turn towards Sāha Begum even after she has reminded him of his promise of the eariier birth.[69] It is only when she asserts that she will marry the head and

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[68] Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* p. 224.
"Pacchai turakaṅ Viramadero mātho vāḍíyo, nai dillí le gaya. Pacchai vā pātasāhajírí betí Viramadero mātho thālí māhai ghātnai parṇjaṇa lāgí, so mātho savoṅ huto su phinai aputho huo. Tarai sāhajādpuravajanamrí vāt kahí, tarai mātho aputho huto su phirnai savalo huo."

[69] Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt,* p. 63.

then commit *sati* that it turns towards her.[70] By becoming a *sati* the princess washes away her previous shortcomings as a wife and proves herself to be the ideal Rajput wife, thus giving up her political superiority as the powerful Sultan's daughter.

Thus, in all the three cases, the proposal of marriage serves a number of functions in the narratives. At the most obvious level, it challenges the Rajput tradition, as the marriage between a Hindu and a *turak*, at least in theory, is impossible. Given the political significance of marriage within Rajput polity, it also represents a challenge to their traditionally held territories. These patrimonial domains must be protected at any cost. A submission to the authority at Delhi is acceptable only if these domains are not interfered with. At another level, the princess's love for Viramade and her desire to marry him despite the obvious impropriety of the prospect helps to emphasise the superiority of the Rajput *dharma* and assert the Rajput identity in the wake of the many levels of challenges that were being faced by these groups in the region.

Conclusion

Honour, valour, loyalty and the emphasis on lineage and descent thus remain the keystones of what constituted the Rajput *dharma* over the three narratives, even if in varying degrees. Another significant aspect of this *dharma* appears to be the patriarchal system in which women are honoured and protected at one level but also serve as instruments in perpetuating the

[70] Ibid.

values that are considered important within the tradition. The manner in which these aspects of the Rajput tradition are depicted are somewhat different in each case since the genres are different as are the historical moments of their composition. Yet, what is also noticed is a common strand that runs through the constituents of this *dharma.*

From the fourteenth century onwards, western India faced the new challenge of the imperial Muslim powers in Delhi. In the initial stages the attacks from Delhi were little more than raids to acquire a portion of the wealth of the region. Subsequently, Sultans like Alauddin Khalji posted their generals in these parts. Yet, it was only with the coming of the Mughals in the mid sixteenth century that the region was incorporated into the wider polity of Delhi. The Rajputs remained a significant part of this polity even after the disintegration of the Mughal empire in the eighteenth century and the rise of the Marathas in north Indian politics. Thus from the fourteenth century, the Rajput groups remained in a state of internal strife and social flux. In addition, they had to negotiate the imperial authority at Delhi. These negotiations were complex and involved both opposition to and adjustments with the new political order. Narratives such as the *Prabandha,* the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt* served the function of asserting the Rajput identity in such uncertain times. Texts of this kind were produced as much for internal consumption as for external use. They were thus concerned not only with ancestry and genealogy but also with the maintenance of a certain social order and with the control over local territory that were being challenged during this period. It was

important to re-interpret and to re-emphasise certain basic values, rights and ideals that seemed to be changing in the wake of such challenges. The *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* the *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt* and the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt's* assertion of the Rajput tradition or *dharma* can thus be viewed as adaptive responses of a regional elite to the conquest and domination by a powerful imperial authority.

CHAPTER – III

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ENEMY: UNDERSTANDING THE RAJPUT- MUSLIM RELATIONSHIP

If the upholding of the Rajput *dharma* and the perceptions of the Rajputs about themselves can be viewed as an adaptive response of a political elite to the contingencies of their specific historical situation, can the same be said about the texts' representations of the Muslim enemy? Do these texts, which emerge from within the Rajput tradition, view their enemies in unilinear oppositional terms or are they perceived in a more nuanced, multidimensional manner? Are they the works of poets/authors who came to expand their worldview by including the different elements that existed in society through literary compositions or should these be classified as 'epics of resistance' by the Hindu Rajputs against the Muslim invaders? Further, do these perceptions of the enemy remain the same over the four centuries that the texts span or do they undergo any transformations?

This chapter will attempt to answer these questions by analysing in detail the manner in which the enemy is represented in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* the *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt* and the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt.* It will explore, how the Rajput-Muslim relationship is perceived in the literary representations and will conclude that the representations of the Muslims as well as the Rajputs' relationship with them should be understood within the complexities of the specific historical moment of the text and the features of

the genres rather than as a simplified religious war. The aim here is not to gloss over the realities of religious differences but to gain an understanding of the nature of pre-colonial social and religious identities and the complexities that they present.

Who is the Enemy?

The Muslims, in all three narratives under study, are not represented in the simple role of an enemy. Alauddin and his army are indeed enemies of Kānhaḍade, but that is not the only manner in which they are represented. The two groups interact at various levels which involve complex layers of rejection as well as appropriation.

Superficially it would be easy to characterise the representations of the Rajput relationship with the Muslims in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* and its re-tellings as one in which the two groups are fighting a religious war, as has often been done by several modern historians. There appears to be, particularly in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha*, a conscious 'othering', an awareness that the enemy's ways are quite different from those of the Rajputs. The *Prabandha* uses the term 'Hindu' to represent the Rajputs on several occasions.[1] The text, as noted earlier, is also replete with praise for what can be termed as brahmanical Hinduism and criticism for those who brought harm to it. Mādhava's act of bringing the *turaks* into Gujarat, for instance, is described thus:

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[1] The basis of this observation is K.B. Vyas's critical edition of the text, not an original manuscript.

"Mādhava Mahutā has committed a great sin (adharma), (his) previous karma has not been forsaken,
Where the Sāligrāma is worshipped, where the name of Harí is recited."[2]

"In the land where yajnas are performed, brāhmaṇas are given charities,
Where the tulsi and the pípal trees are worshipped, where the dharma of the Vedas and Purāṇas is followed."[3]

"In the land where everyone goes to pilgrimages, the Smṛti, Purāṇas and cows are respected.
News of the infamy spread all over the nine khāńdas, Mādhava had brought in the mlecchas..."[4]

Alauddin, in the *Prabandha*, also makes a distinction between the Chauhans as *'hidu'* or *'hińdu'* and himself as *'turak'* when trying to dissuade his daughter from marrying Viramade.[5] The Alauddin of the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt* also makes the same distinction. In fact, in the later narratives, he and his daughter also express doubts about the trustworthiness of the 'Hindus' or *'kāfirs'*. Further, in order to buy time to return to the Jalor fort and make preparations for battle, Viramade makes a condition before the Sultan that the wedding ceremony should be conducted according to the *"Hińdu way."*[6] It should not be a *nikāh*. More significantly, in the *Prabandha* and the *Vāt*, the

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2 Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha*, I.15, p. 3.
"Mādhava Muhtai karyau adharma, navi chhutíyai agilań karma,
Jihāń pujijyai sāligrāma, jihāń japijyayi hainauń nāma."

3 Ibid., I.16, p. 4.
"Jiṇi desai karāyay jyāg, jihāń vipranai díjyai tyāga,
Jihāń tulasí pipal pujay, veda purāṇa dharma bujhíyai."

4 Ibid., I.17.
"Jiṇi desai sahu tírathi jāi, smrti purāṇa māníyai gāya,
Nava khańde apakírati huí, Mādhaví mlecchа āṇyā sahí."

5 Ibid., III.123, p.127.

6 Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt*, p. 43.
" ...paraṇsyāń māhrí hińdu rí rāha."

princess's punishment for her sins or misfortunes in her previous births is to be reborn as a *turak.* Thus in the *Prabandha* she is born in a royal household for following her *sati-dharma* but, as a *turak* for resorting to devious religious practices and killing a cow.[7] In the *Vāt,* she suffers this punishment because while sacrificing herself in Kāśi, her toe happens to touch the bone of a cow.[8] In the *Prabandha,* on account of her pervious sins and for being a *turak,* she is unable to gain her lover's acceptance despite being loyal to him in her present birth. Here she does not commit *sati* but ends her life by jumping into the Yamuna after his death. In the later narratives, however, she actually commits the typically Hindu act of *sati,* after marrying Viramade's disembodied head by circumabulating the pyre. She now becomes worthy of his acceptance and his head turning towards her is an indication of this.

Examples such these give the impression of there being a clear sense of 'self' that is defined in terms of a religious identity and may suggest that the narratives are essentially ones that pin the Hindus against the Muslims. However, other, more numerous, representations of the Muslims in the three narratives qualify this impression. For instance, while the texts often use the term 'Hindu' to represent the Rajputs, the Persian term for Muslims, 'Musalaman', never occurs in the texts, despite the fact that by the time of the composition of the *Prabandha* the term was well known[9]. In fact the narratives almost always refer to Alauddin and the other Muslim characters by their

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7 Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* III.203-204, p.146.

8 Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā ri Vāt,* p. 41.

9 See also B.D, Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other? Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims (Eighth to Fourteenth Century),* Manohar, New Delhi, 1998, p. 29.

personal names. Alternatively Alauddin is referred to as the *'suratāṇa'* or as the *'pātasāhā'.*

Further support for the assertion that religion was not the most significant form of 'othering' in these texts lies in the fact that apart from their names, the term used for the Muslims is *mleccha.* The use of this term is most frequent in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* which has very often been seen by scholars of the history of Gujarat and Rajasthan as a narrative about the courage and valour of the Rajputs against the evil forces of Islam. As in the Sanskrit sources of an earlier period, the *brāhmaṇa* poet of the *Prabandha* also refers to the Muslims in his tale as *mlecchas* – a term that was used for those who could not speak Sanskrit correctly during the Vedic times. As Romila Thapar points out, "language was often a social marker in ancient societies. The use of Sanskrit was largely confined to the upper castes, and gradually the word *mlechha* began to have a social connotation and referred to those outside the pale of *varna* society"[10]. Later in the epic/Purānic tradition, this term, along with the terms *Yavana* and *Śaka,* came to be used for those groups of people who entered the subcontinent from the north–west and central Asia and gained considerable amount of political ascendancy. The term also came to connote a lack of culture and civilisation and was used for the indigenous tribes, apart from the foreigners. In general these groups were recognised as those who challenged or did not adhere to brahmanical norms. In the medieval period, these terms were revived to designate Muslims, along

[10] Romila Thapar, "The Tyranny of Labels," *Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History,* OUP, New Delhi, 2000, p. 1002.

with the characterisation of barbarian.[11] The Muslims could thus be equated with the foreigners and tribal people for their common disregard for brahmanism.[12] The emergence of the Rajputs, as has already been noted, was closely linked with seeking legitimation from the *brāhmaṇas.* The latter in turn drew support for their social and ritual privileges from the Rajputs. By using already existing terms to designate the Muslims, Padmanābha appears to be articulating an anxiety regarding the toppling of the brahmanical order at their hands. The defeat of the Rajputs would mean a complete destruction of this order. Large portions of the narrative are dedicated to the description of brahmanical values such as performance of good *karma* in order to acquire *puṇya* and the benefits of making sacrifices and giving charities to *brāhmaṇas.* These suggest that the poet is perhaps trying to garner stronger support for the maintenance of brahmanical privileges, which were being threatened.

While the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt* were not composed by *brāhmaṇa* poets, they also make occasional use of the term *mleccha* to represent the Muslims. However, they also use the term *turak* (*'turakaṇī'* for women) more frequently to identify the Muslims. This term has ethnic and geographical connotations, rather than religious ones.[13]

Similarly there appears to be no real concern for specific Islamic beliefs and practices, except for the one instance in the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* when

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[11] Cynthia Talbot, "Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-Colonial India," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History, 1995*, 37, 4, p. 698.

[12] Ibid., p.699.

[13] B.D. Chattopadhyaya in his study of inscriptions from the eighth to fourteenth century from different parts of the subcontinent also finds similar representations of the Muslims in ethnic or geographically specific terms like *Tājika, Turuṣka, Pārasíka* and so on. See B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other?*, p. 30.

Kānhaḍade invites the Sultan to attack Jalor after the latter's conquest of Siwana and taunts his envoys by asking them to inform the Sultan,

> *"... that if he does not invade Jālāhur with all his force, he will be considered to have eaten pork."*[14]

The consumption of beef and the killing of cows are mentioned repeatedly in all three narratives as trait of the *turaks.* However, as we shall discuss later, this is part of the behaviour expected of all groups lying outside the pale of caste society and, particularly in the *Prabandha,* works as a stock motif. Traces of this are also visible in the other two narratives that are not composed by *brāhmaṇa* poets where it is the Muslims who are associated with the consumption of beef. This, however, does not prevent Kānhaḍade from accepting the military support offered to him by two of Alauddin's *umraos,* Mamusaha and Mir Gabharu,[15] in Nainsí's work. These officers were disillusioned with their service at Alauddin's court (see Narratives, pp. 28-29).[16] They offered their force of twenty-five thousand horses to Kānhaḍade to recapture the Somanatha idol and took up service with him after the battle has been won. It is only later that Kānhaḍade objected to their habit of killing cows. Nainsí notes,

> *"They were given a good livelihood. But these men who had lived in the pātasāhí often killed cows; this did not suit the Hińdus."*[17]

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[14] Padmanabha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* III.12, p.102.
"...jau gaḍhi nāvai karíya parāṇa, tu suyara bhakśa karai suratāṇa."

[15] Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* p. 218.

[16] Ibid., p. 219.

[17] Ibid.
"Thakurāí sāru ghaṇo rojagāra diyo. Píṇa pātasāhírā rehaṇāra su gāyāṅ mārai,, su hińdavāṅrai khatavai nahiṅ."

However, after Kānhaḍade got rid of them by way of a charade, these men joined the services of another Rajput, Hammiradeva, who was also well-known for his battles against the Muslims. Nainsí informs us that they were given a lot of honour at his court. It was due to this that Alauddin later attacked and killed Hammira.[18] In fact, in the *Vāt*, it is Alauddin who appears to be more liberal and open-minded about the differences between the two religions. Before his death, the protagonist of this account, Viramade, makes a distinction between his own religious practices and those of Alauddin's, by saying,

> *"The pride of the Rajputs is Hińdu ṣatri (*Sanskrit: *kśatíya) dharma. (It is about) the worship of cows and faith in the tulasi plat as well as the consumption of the caraṇāmṛt of the Śāligrāma. We lead our lives according to the six darśanas prescribed by brāhmaṇas and the same mouth that recites the name of Rāma cannot recite the asura-mantra of the kalmā."*[19]

As a response to this, Alauddin reminds Viramade that it was he who had agreed to the marriage ceremony being conducted according to Hindu rites. It is Viramade's own defiance that had caused his defeat and forced him (Alauddin) to perform the Muslim rites. However, Alauddin claims that the two methods (by implication religions) are merely two different ways to reach the same god.[20]

In the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* and the *Khyāt,* the destruction of Somanatha forms a significant part of the narratives. Yet, the act of

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18 Ibid., p. 220.

19 Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā ri Vāt,* p. 61.
"Rājputro vata Hińdu ṣatri dharma.chhai. Gau pujań. Tulachhi mānā. Śrisāligaraṅmjíro çaraṇamṛt lyań. Brāmaṇa ṣatadarasaṇarai ādhína rahā nai jiṇa muṣsuń śrirāma rāma japyo tiṇa muṣsuń asuara mantra kalamau kahiṇí nāvai."

20 Ibid.
"Sāhiba eka hai, rāha do kíyā hai."

iconoclasm itself receives no criticism at all. Indeed, Kānhaḍade is hailed as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa and the *"saviour of hindustan's pride"*. Yet, as we have already noted, in the *Prabandha* he divides the idol of Somanatha and establishes temples in different parts of the kingdom, rather than restoring it in one piece to its original location. He is thus clearly making a claim to sovereignty rather than merely defending the religion.

Another image of Alauddin is that of the formidable ruler with imperial ambitions. In the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* these ambitions are overt and are clearly enumerated. Alauddin is pleased to accept Mādhava's invitation to attack Gujarat.[21] The imperial army ravages the land and usurps its resources under the leadership of Ulugh Khan, the commander chosen by Alauddin for this expedition. However, this war that had initially been fought with the intention of capturing Gujarat, now acquires another motive, that is, the subjugation of Kānhaḍade, who had challenged the Sultan's authority by not allowing the imperial army to pass through his territories. In order to assert this authority, the victorious Khan challenged the ruler of Jalor by boasting about his recent victory and threatening to pass through his territories, carrying the captured idol of Somanatha with him to Delhi. The beginning of the tension between the imperial and the regional power becomes obvious when Kānhaḍade's messengers, who are sent to accept the challenge, announce that their master's *salām* is reserved only for the highest of the Lords.[22] Bowing his head to any other master is unacceptable. They note,

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[21] Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha*, I.27, p. 6.

[22] Ibid., I.142, p. 30.

" Even if the entire world turns cold or the sun rises in the west,
Kānhaḍade will not bow his head before anyone except Nārāyaṇa.[23]

After Ulugh Khan and later his successor Nahar Malik lose to the Chauhan warriors, Alauddin decides to fight Kānhaḍade in person as these losses appear to have shaken his status as a mighty emperor and conqueror. Thus, notes Padmanābha,

"Curling his moustache the pātasāha spoke these harsh words,
Anyone who does not accept my suzerainty must, most certainly, lose his kingdom."[24]

Alauddin goes on to enumerate the kingdoms that have come under his sway in all four directions as he is infuriated by the Chauhans' ability to repeatedly defeat his troops. These include parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Orissa, Bengal, Kashmir as well as various parts of South India, including Devagiri whose *rāuta* had given him his daughter as well as places like *Jalańdhar, Khurāsāṇa* and *Mulatāṇa.*[25] He claims that he has also made contact with countries like *Cíṇa*[26] and received gifts of elephants from the *rājā* of *Sińghaladípa*[27]. In a similar vein of asserting his imperial authority Alauddin also offers the governorship of Gujarat to Sātal in return for the latter's obeisance[28]. Sātal however spurns the offer as one that would bring dishonour upon the

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[23] Ibid., I.143
"Jau vaisvānara tāḍhau thāi, paścima ugai dísa,
Nārāyaṇa ṭalatau Kānhaḍade kahi na nāmai sísa."

[24] Ibid., II.62, p. 75.
"Pātisāha mucchai vala ghālí visama bolyā bol,
Je ko māhrí āṇa na mānai, cukai thāma niṭol."

[25] Ibid., II.63-71, pp. 75-76.

[26] Ibid., II.69, p. 76.

[27] Ibid., II.72, p. 77.

[28] Ibid., II.160, p. 97.

Chauhan lineage[29]. A number of such offers of peace in return for the acceptance of his overlordship are refused by the Chauhans, who are projected as the valorous defenders of their great lineage in the *Prabandha.* The legacy of the Rajput tradition gives them the strength and courage to challenge a militarily superior power in defending their own territories.

The Kānhaḍade of the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt,* however, does not have this luxury of openly challenging Alauddin. In the *Khyāt* Kānhaḍade challenges the Sultan's capture of the Somanatha idol as he drags it through his territories. Alauddin says,

> *"He had originally planned to pass through Jālor without besieging the fort, but now that Kānhaḍade had challenged him, he would not leave without capturing it. Anyway it was his right as the pātaśāha to take the fort."*[30]

His imperialist intentions are thus made clear. Kānhaḍade wins this battle only because of a certain kārmic advantage. In his next encounter with the Sultan, when his son Viramade is summoned to Delhi for a wrestling match, Kānhaḍade has no choice but to accept that

> *"The Lord of Delhi is god himself. He is the benefactor of all and can do what he pleases. He is the protector of our lives. If he has kindly asked for Viramade to come then we must send him."*[31]

Challenging him is not considered wise. Kānhaḍade, along with his brother and son, visits the imperial court at Delhi. Viramade even participates in the

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[29] Ibid, II.161.

[30] Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* pp. 217-218.
"Tarai pātsāha kahaṇa lāgo-Kāṅaḍade to māhṅu saṅmo dākar dikhāvai chhai, nai pātasāhaṅu talāk chhai ju víca gaḍha mela, vigar liyāṅ yuṅhí āgho na jāya; su huṅ jāto huto su Kāṅaḍade ai vāt kahādai chhai to huṅvigar Jalor liyāṅ hamai āgho na jāuṅ, monuṅ talāk chhai."

[31] Ibid., p. 220.
"Dillíśvar íśvara chhai, ai ārambharāma chhai, karaṇa matai su karai. Āglo āpānu khun bagasai chhai, mayā kara Viramadejiṅu pātasāhji tedai chhai to mela dojai."

wrestling match in order to keep the emperor happy. It is only when the latter requests Viramade's hand in marriage for his daughter, thereby posing a threat to the Rajputs' territories, that the relationship deteriorates. As Nainsí notes, *"Kānhadadejí now saw that things had gone out of control."*[32] Despite having successfully combated him on a previous occasion, the Chauhans of Nainsí's text are wary of his superiority.

It is the same with the *Viramade Sonigarā ri Vāt.* Here too the Chauhans are at pains to dissuade the emperor about the marriage between his daughter and Viramade before they go on to make elaborate preparations to protect their own, local territories. Kānhaḍade points out to Alauddin,

> *"I am merely the head of a small household, a rājput. The pātisāha's equals are the emperor's of Rome, Sum and other foreign lands. I merely serve you."*[33]

He thus highlights Alauddin's unquestionable superiority over the Rajputs. An intrusion into their local kingdoms by this superior power, however, is absolutely unacceptable. Thus, unlike in the *Prabandha*, the cause of the conflict in these two cases is the proposal for marriage and, by implication, interference in the local power structure. The major concern in all three narratives is clearly political and not religious.

However while Alauddin is projected as the superior imperial power, the narratives also portray him in an image that turns the imperial versus regional on its head. In the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* Kānhaḍade's nephew Sātal sees

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[32] Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* p. 222.
"Kānhaḍadeji dítho, vāt vigaḍi."

[33] Anonymous, *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt*, p. 43.
"Huń pādaríyao ghararau dhaṇí rājput cchuń Pātisahāṅrā sagāval karo Rome Sum Vilayatrā dhaṇí chhai. Huń tao bańdagi karuńchhuń."

Alauddin as an incarnation of Śiva when he asks the family goddess Āsāpurideví to help him put an end to the tumultuous war between the Chauhans and the *turaks*. The goddess herself takes Sātal to the Khalji camp where he views in the person of the sleeping Sultan Śiva in full splendour. The poet describes the sight thus,

> *"(He) saw three eyes, five faces, the unending long, matted tresses,*
> *(he) saw the garland of skulls, the bowl for alms, (he) saw the vast forehead."*[34]

> *"(He) saw Gańgā in the crown of the matted locks, the body covered with the dust of ashes,*
> *(he) saw the seat of tiger-skin, (he) also saw the trident."*[35]

Once the 'truth' about the Sultan has been revealed to him, Sātal can no longer kill him. Yet, as noted earlier, he puts up a strong fight in accordance with his duties as a warrior. However, during his visit to the enemy camp, Sātal has had the presence of mind to pick up one of the Sultan's weapons, which he can show him as the proof of his visit and of the fact that he spared him when he had the opportunity to kill him.[36] The Sultan, who is not at all alarmed by this mysterious occurrence, offers Sātal the overlordship of Gujarat instead, in return for accepting his suzerainty.[37] Later in the text, Alauddin is also rather concerned about his own 'previous birth' and asks his daughter Pirojā, who by now has proved to be an expert consultant on these matters,

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34 Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha,* II.133, p. 90
"Díthāń nayaṇ triṇi mukha pāńcai, kapila jatā suvisāla,
Ruńmāla díthí kari tumbā, díthau bramhakapāl."

35 Ibid, II.134
"Jatamugat māńhi gaṇgā díthí, ańgi bhasamía dhula,
Vaghachamba pāńguraṇe díthāń, díthauń valí trisula."

36 Ibid, II.137, p.91, II.159, p. 96.

37 Ibid., II.160.

about it.[38] Once again he is not particularly alarmed by the fact that he had been an *asura* in his previous birth while Kānhaḍade was a *deva.*[39] Pirojā provides a brief explanation of the two being born in their respective births, connecting it with events from the epic/Purāṇic mythology.[40] He now wishes to know when he himself will receive deliverance from his life as a *daitya.* She reassures him,

> *"....you were a devotee of iśvar (previously)."*[41]
> *"In your next life you will be given a place among the gaṇas of Śiva..."*[42]

She also advises him to return to Delhi and resume the battle with Kānhaḍade at a later date or else he will face his end immediately. Instead she asks him to,

> *"...enshrine the memory of Kānha in your heart, (which will) end the sins and prevent rebirth."*[43]

Later, the Sultan receives a confirmation of these predictions in a dream in which he sees Lord Kṛṣṇa in his full splendour.

Further, the *Prabandha* casts the battle between the Chauhans and the *turaks* within the epic/Purāṇic framework of *Kaliyuga* and the great battles between the *devas* and the *asuras* or *daityas/dānavas* which, according to

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38 Ibid., III. 212, p.148.

39 Ibid, III.213.

40 Ibid., III. 214-217, pp.149-150.

41 Ibid., III.219, p.150.
"...tumhe bhagat chhau iśvar taṇau."

42 Ibid., III.220.
"Eha janam puthai suratāṇa, śivagaṇa māhi pāmasau thāṇa..."

43 Ibid., III.222, p.151.
"Haíi Kānha sāmbharai sahí, chhutai pāpa avatarai nahi."
Once again there is a pun on the noun *'Kānha'*, which can be understood as Kānhaḍade or as Lord Krsna.

these mythological texts have taken place since time immemorial. The Muslim armies are repeatedly described as the *asuras* representing the forces of evil that cause destruction especially of *brāhmaṇas,* women and cows. As already discussed, Alauddin himself is described as having taken birth as an *asura.* The final battle between Sātal and him is described thus,

> *"The clash of iron was incredible, the rāuts plied their weapons with expert skill,*
> *(It was) just like the war between Rāvaṇa and Rāma, just like the struggle between the devas and asuras."*[44]

Various such instances of comparison are present throughout the narrative. In fact one of the battles between Kānhaḍade and Alauddin is also described as the epical battle that had taken place between the forces of good and evil *"at Kurukśetra in the earlier times."*[45]

Thus, by casting the battle between the two groups within this well known epic/Purāṇic framework, Padmanābha's narrative adds an element of complexity in the representation of the enemy. The manner in which the destruction caused by Alauddin's army is described appears to be "formulaic,"[46] representing the actions of any group that may have been hostile to brahmanical norms. Such descriptions were frequently used in the Purānic narratives to describe groups like the Buddhists and the invaders from the northwest who threatened caste hierarchy and therefore the pre-eminence of

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[44] Ibid., II. 165, p. 98.
"Udyaṅ loha na lābhai pāra, rāuta bhala karai hathiyar,
Jisyuṅ yuddha Rāvaṇa nai Rāma, jisyuṅ deva asura saṅgrāma."

[45] Ibid., III.259, p. 215.
"...Āgai Kurukśetra ghau jisyā, hiṅdu turak bhiḍai raṇi tisyā."

[46] Cynthia Talbot, "Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self", p. 698.

the *brāhmaṇas.*[47] Further in the context of brahmanical mythology, the *devas* and the *asuras* are constantly at loggerheads, but they often complement one another and, more significantly, are descendents of the same lineage. Thus while the enmity is portrayed as one between two distinct religious groups or between the unequal forces of the imperial versus the regional powers, the same players are implicitly projected by Padmanābha as equal and consubstantial. By locating the Muslims within this familiar brahmanical framework and within the discourse of *karma* and rebirth, he manages to incorporate and to an extent integrate the 'Other'. A similar inclusiveness can be gleaned from the term *'Aspatirāi' (*Sanskrit *Aśvapati)* or the 'Lord of Horses' used for Alauddin. Cynthia Talbot finds a similar representation of the ruler of Delhi in her study of Sanskrit inscriptions from medieval Andhra.[48] She concludes that the use of this term in the literature of this period to identify the Turkic rulers was a portrayal of them as one of multiple – not binary – competing groups like the *Gajapatis/* 'Lords of the Elephant Corps' in Orissa or *Narapati/*'Lords of Men' in Andhra.[49] B.D. Chattopadhyaya, in a study of inscriptions and literary texts from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries in different parts of the subcontinent, also finds that Muslim rulers are often represented as one of many claimants in situations of intense and constant

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47 Ibid., pp. 698-697.

48 Ibid. p. 708.

49 ibid.

competition.[50] Further, in portraying the Sultan as Śiva, an explanation is also found for the defeat of the *devas*/good at the hands of the *asuras*/evil.

Like the *Prabandha,* Nainsí's *Khyāt* also turns the imperial-regional conflict around by portraying it as the age-old *deva-asura* struggle and Kānhaḍade as an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa.[51] However, unlike the *Prabandha* where this comparison is most frequently used, the *Khyāt* finds an even more striking resolution for it. Here the two enemies, Alauddin and Kānhaḍade, are born from the two halves of the same *brāhmaṇa's* body. The *brāhmaṇa* had been a devotee of Somanatha but had become disgruntled with his Lord when his arms were amputated as a result of being falsely charged of murder. This, he was told by Somanatha, was the result of a sin committed in his past birth when he had been an accomplice in killing a goat. The disillusioned *brāhmaṇa,* however, went on to perform the *karvat* sacrifice at Kāśí. With a view to avenge Somanatha for failing to protect him despite his intense devotion, the *brāhmaṇa* wished that one half of his body be reborn as a person who would uproot the *liṅga* of Somanatha and bind it in wet leather, while the other half be reborn as the person who would rescue it. Alauddin and Kānhaḍade, according to Nainsí, were born in this manner.[52] (see Narratives, pp. 24-27)

The *Viramade Sonigarā ri Vāt* differs from these two formally patronised narratives in its depiction of the battle between Alauddin and Kānhaḍade. The

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[50] B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other?* p. 58. Even in the socio-religious sphere Chattopadhyaya finds that the Muslims are represented as one of many ideological components that existed within different local contexts and historical situations.

[51] Nainsí, *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt,* p. 213.

[52] Ibid.. p. 216.

pan-regional motif of Somanatha is absent in this narrative that tends to have more localised concerns. However, the complex account of Viramade and Sāha Begum's previous births (see Narratives pp. 40-41), once again projects them as equals, belonging to the same caste and household. As in the case of the *brāhmaṇa* of the *Khyāt,* a resolution is once again sought in a kārmic link.

The differences between the Other and the Self are thus blurred. On the one hand this Other as the enemy must be fought and opposed unto the very end, but on the other, the same Other is appropriated into the cycle of previous births, incarnations and the *deva-asura* strife, all of which are familiar tropes of brahmanical Hinduism. Like her father, the princess is also rejected, and yet she is appropriated into the Rajput discourse by virtue of her previous births and for being a dutiful wife. The enmity is therefore not projected in simple binary terms. The enemy belongs to the same socio-political plane as the Rajput protagonist but represents, perhaps, a different set of ideals. The Rajputs and the Muslims are thus actors in a conflict that transcends the historical moment and the span of their mortal lives. This conflict is attributed to supernatural causes and has the potential of being ultimately resolved.[53]

Conclusion

The representation of the enemy are thus multiple in the *Prabandha,* the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt.* In the fifteenth century, when the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* was composed, Jalor was still negotiating its position between the

[53] See also Alan W. Entwistle, "Representations of Alauddin Khalji", in Alan W. Entwistle, and Carol Salomon (eds.), *Studies in Early Indo-Aryan Languages, Literature and Culture,* Manohar, New Delhi, 1999, p. 122.

two emerging powers of Gujarat and Marwar and other local level players such as the Lohāni Afghans. While this position may have been a precarious one, it is possible that in this period the Sonigarā Chauhans were still a power of some repute in the Jalor region and were perhaps able to challenge at least the local level competitors. Padmanābha, by projecting his patron Akhairāja's ancestor as one who held out against the imperial forces, was thus establishing his moral authority in the region and perhaps reminding him of his own strength in politically challenging times. Kānhaḍade of the *Prabandha* is thus a confident ruler who will put his life at stake to save his territories and honour from the powerful Khalji army of Delhi. Even divine forces such as the consorts of Lord Śiva as well as his family deity, the goddess Āsāpurídeví, are supportive of his actions. Thus the most significant feature of Padmanābha's work appears to be a quest for legitimacy. This is sought at various levels. The poet uses the prabandha genre, which, with its obvious borrowings from the epic/Purāṇic tradition, was already in use for this purpose. The memory of previous acts of bravery along with the rich symbolism of the *deva-asura* strife and other mythological references are also drawn upon to establish the present patron's ancestry as a brave and virtuous one. The emphasis on brahmanical values and the protagonist's zeal to protect them appear to give sanction to the values themselves as well as to their protector.

By the mid sixteenth century however, Mughal authority had been established all over the region. While many of the Rajput kingdoms fought this authority in the battlefield, by 1570 Akbar had succeeded in incorporating

many of the prominent Rajput chiefs into his service. He further cemented the alliances through marriage with the daughters of these ruling houses. Thus the negotiations of the regional/local elite with this new structure of authority was marked by a complex combination of acceptance and cooperation, as well as defiance and a struggle to maintain their own control over traditionally held territories. The departures in the *Khyāt* and the *Vāt* are revealing in this regard. Here attempts at assimilation and incorporation are suggestive of a complex, underlying struggle to maintain control. Thus what is revealed in the study of the three medieval narratives of Kānhaḍade is not necessarily a unilinear conflict between two religious groups, but different levels of negotiating power, seeking legitimacy and asserting identities.

EPILOGUE: *WHAT MAKES THE HEAD TURN?*

As has already been noted, the three narratives of Kānhaḍade represent three strands in the Rajput literary tradition. While the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* and *Muṇhot Nainsí rí Khyāt* are formally patronised narratives produced in Rajput courts in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively, the *Viramade Sonigarā rí Vāt* belongs to an oral storytelling genre that evolved in the medieval period and came to be associated with stories of real or fictitious Rajput heroes.

Rajput history and cultural traditions including the *kśatriya* values of valour and honour have come to be a significant factor in defining the regional tradition of Rajasthan. This is despite the fact that the Rajputs do not form the majority of Rajasthan's population. It is this significance of Rajput culture that makes the study of the narratives that emerge from within it important for the reconstruction of the history of the region.

This study has therefore attempted to understand the nature of the Rajput tradition and the complexities that it encompasses by locating the three narratives within their specific historical contexts. By doing so it has been possible to address, at least at the preliminary level, questions related to the history of the region. Thus a study of the patronage contexts illuminates how the three narratives of Kānhaḍade are shaped differently from one another, depending upon the political and social exigencies of the patron.

Through this study we have also attempted to explore the fluid nature of what can be termed as the Rajput *dharma.* Popular perception has fixed valour, honour, chivalry and a high moral code as the defining characteristics of the Rajputs. The present study, however, reveals that these characteristics were being continuously re-defined and re-asserted in the wake of the contemporary political situation that involved the emergence of the Rajput states from the early medieval period onwards and their confrontation with the Muslim authorities in Delhi.

The history of the Rajputs along with their sense of honour has also been associated with consistent armed resistance to Muslim armies including those of Mahmud of Gazni, the Delhi Sultans, and the Mughals. This resistance has often been cast in the framework of a unidimensional religious war. This study of the three narratives that cover a four hundred year span however reveals that religion was just one factor in the Rajput-Muslim confrontation during the medieval period. The assertion of control over their patrimonial lands that were facing a threat from the superior powers in Delhi remained the major cause of the Rajput conflict with the Muslims. The relationship was thus a complex one that was as much defined by resistance as it was by negotiation and often submission.

Thus what makes the Rajput hero Viramade's head turn towards (or away from) the Muslim princess in each narrative is determined by these various factors like the patronage context and the political exigencies of the time, rather than merely by the fact that the two belonged to different religions.

The other variations in the narratives, such as the memory of the destruction of Somanatha, must also be viewed in this light. Narratives such as these often remembered, concocted or omitted events in accordance with their historical situations and the need to establish the legitimacy of particular social groups.

This dissertation is a preliminary effort towards a larger study of the regional language narrative traditions from medieval western India. A study of these traditions can help to illuminate the multiplicity of historical processes and cultural practices that constituted the dynamic nature of regional histories in this period. At this stage it is hoped that the present study has succeeded in raising some questions in this direction.

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