Bihar and the Emergence of Vernacular Literary Traditions in Northern India <PRESS! Set chapter title>

Imre Bangha <PRESS! Set Author Name>

Being a Hindi teacher, I am often asked 'How old is Hindi literature?' Many scholars writing in the twentieth century suggested that Hindi literary tradition can look back to history of one and a half millennia. Some others suggest that it was created in Fort William College in the early years of the nineteenth century, a viewpoint indebted to colonialist learning (Safadi 2013: 38–42).[1] In this essay, I will argue that Bihar was not merely the birthplace of Maithili and Brajabuli literature, but also an active agent in the commencement of a continuous, yet ever-transforming Hindi literary tradition. First, I will address questions of methodology and, more importantly, terminology. Second, the article will follow up the earliest traces of vernacular texts in Maithili and Hindi.

Today, the dominant view of Hindi literature is still defined by the nationalist literary historians' quest for the aggrandizement of Hindi, both in time and space. Their view was crystallized in Ramchand Shukla's history of Hindi literature, first published in 1928, which credited Hindi with a thousand-year old history. According to Shukla, the *Ādikāl* (Initial era) of Hindi literature lasted from *c.*1000–1320 and included the diachronic borderland of Apabhramsha and the geographic borderlands of Maithili and Rajasthani. He grouped literary production into Apabhramsha and vernacular segments. The former included the literature of Jains and Buddhist Siddhas and Nāth yogis, the latter that of the *rāso* narratives from Rajasthan and independent stray poems, *muktak*s, by Amīr Ḵẖusraw (d.1325) and Vidyāpati. Subsequent literary histories both by Indian and Western authors have discarded every single element included into Shukla's *Ādikāl* as either not being Hindi or belonging to later periods (Gupta 1965: 68–79, esp. 68–70 and 75–6).[2]

Considering language development, the traditional view of Hindi prehistory is a linear one based on linguistic evolution:

Old Indo-Aryan (Sanskrit)

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Middle Indo-Aryan (Shauraseni Prakrit and Apabhramsha)

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New Indo-Aryan (Hindi)

As we will see, this development may not fully apply to the Hindi literary tradition. The search for the earliest extant Hindi literature was propelled by the pioneering efforts of Harihar Nivas Dvivedi, who in his *Madhyadeśīy Bhāṣā: Gvāliyarī* (1955) drew attention to hitherto unknown early works. Dvivedi concentrated on pointing out the richness of literary production in Gwalior, his hometown. Ganapati Chandra Gupta's *Hindī sāhitya kā vaijñānik itihās* (1965) searched for the origins in other directions and included a survey of Old Gujarati literature starting with Śālībhadrasūri's twelfth century *Bhārateśvar-bāhubalī-rās.* He considered Rajasthani to be a dialect of Hindi and argued that 'Gujaratis call their language Gujarati, but until the fifteenth century, Gujarati and Rajasthani were one language.'

Terminology <PRESS! Set A Level>

Before surveying the extant material, it is important to specify the terminology with which the question of the literary tradition of a language can be addressed. It is important to underline that there is no academic consensus on how to define a language *v.* a dialect. Colin P. Masica provides two criteria in the context of South Asia: comprehensibility and

possessing written literature (Masica 1991: 23; and Haugen 1966: 930).[3] To these I would like to add a third one: political recognition (Masica 1991: 23).[4] All three factors are problematic. Masica presents several problems with regards to his criteria (Masica 1999: 23–7). He asserts that attempts at translating incomprehensibility into grammatical terms appear to be unpractical. I will mention some of the most discernible problems here. There are many politically recognized languages that are, to a considerable extent, mutually comprehensible, just to quote a few examples from Europe: Danish-Norwegian-Swedish, Portuguese-Spanish, Czech-Slovak-Polish, etc. Furthermore, there are lects that are not mutually comprehensible, such as Mandarin and Cantonese, but are both politically recognized as dialects of Chinese. Moreover, comprehensibility varies depending on education and exposure (cf. 'passive bilingualism').

The criterion of having written literature is, again, problematic. Ancient Greek literature produced Attic, Aeolic, Doric, Ionic literary canons, but no one considers them to be different languages. The ancient Greek situation may present an interesting parallel to developments of second-millennium north India. Although associated with regions, the known dialects were not spoken but written varieties of Greek, each one used for specific literary genres (cf. Haugen 1966: 923). The importance of having written literature at certain times of Indian history can be glimpsed from Grierson's endeavours in the 1880s to collect and publish Bihari songs and other oral literary works aiming to provide some Bihari dialects with the prestige of written languages and establish a separate linguistic identity of Bihar (Grierson; quoted in Kumar 2013: 17–32).[5]

Political recognition is the most pragmatic and the most widely used criterion for major languages. Thus, the mutually intelligible, colloquial Hindi and Urdu as well as Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian are considered to be different languages. There are also ongoing debates along these lines: Is Moldovan, the language of the Republic of Moldova different

from Romanian?[6] In recent months, debates have been reignited about whether one of Afghanistan's official languages is Dari or Farsi, one designating the underlying difference from, the other identifying with the language of Iran.[7] Often language recognition goes along with the recognition of right to statehood. Indians with linguistic states and with an ever-growing Eighth Schedule of the Constitution need not be reminded of the political agitation that the recognition of a new language involves.

Moreover, regional dialects or patois occupy a different level of language use than literary languages do. Literary languages may spread over wider regions, while local patois associate or dissociate themselves with or from one or another. For example, this is how Suniti Kumar Chatterjee describes the establishment of language frontiers between Bengali and Assamese:

<PRESS! Begin block quote> The agreement between Assamese and Bengali is so close that the dialects of Bengali and Assamese may be described as belonging to the same group. Dialects are independent of literary speech: as such, East Bengal dialects, North Bengal dialects (with which Assamese is to be associated) and West Bengal dialects are not only independent of one another but also they are not, as it is popularly believed in Bengal, derived from literary Bengali, the "sadhu-bhāṣā", which is a composite speech on an early West Bengali basis. … Assamese dissociated itself from the other Bengali dialects when the speakers of these acknowledged the supremacy of a literary Bengali and thus accepted the bonds of the linguistic union. (Chatterji 1926: 108) <PRESS! End block quote>

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Although some of his statements may be dated, the idea that in a language area, it is the literary language that eventually creates bonds and boundaries, is useful for the study of the emergence and spread of vernaculars. The inadequacy of the above criteria, however, to

distinguish languages becomes even more prominent when one addresses historical development. Why is the literature of Anglo-Saxon, a language with grammatical gender and cases, incomprehensible to a modern English-speaking part of the English literary canon? While the oscillation of dates attributed to the age of Hindi literature, i.e. between 1500 and 200 years, at first sight appears to be extreme, one should not forget that with the reduction in education of the classical vernacular heritage, most modern Indian vernaculars face the problem of their classical literature becoming less and less comprehensible. Students of Tamil complain that, forced into one rubric, they have to learn three languages: Saṅgam, Modern High, and Colloquial Tamil. Similarly, Bengali teachers complain that their students have more and more difficulty in reading classical Bengali or Sadhu Bhasha texts. Yet any Bengali would duly be offended to propose that their language 'in its present form, is the language that is born' in Tagore's times. Literary languages keep changing over time and two distinct patterns can be observed in their development. One is continuous updating of the literary language to keep it comprehensible and close to the spoken varieties. The development of many European languages from early modernity to contemporary times follow this line. The second is the introduction of a more practical variety over an obsolete high literary language (cf. Masica 1991: 6–7). A spectacular example in Europe is that of Greek: Demotic Greek replaced the archaic Katharevusa Greek as the language of administration and education as late as 1976. The development of Bengali and Telugu show similar cases. In the first half of the twentieth century, Chalit Bhasha, the spoken idiom of Calcutta, replaced the archaic Sadhu Bhasha, just as modern Telugu replaced its classical form.

In these cases, it may be useful not to address the question through the language-dialect binary but to turn to the sociolinguistic idea of diglossia between a 'low language' and a 'high language' distinguished on the basis of function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition,

standardization, etc.[8] Thus, the high language used in formal situations and usually acquired second to the low language, is standardized and prided with prestige and literary heritage. However, this needs to be qualified further inasmuch as there is a division between the spoken everyday-language (dialect) and the 'literary' variety or the literary idiom. The literary idiom does not necessarily presuppose literacy. For example, the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills have the following distinctions in their oral literature (orature):

> <PRESS! Begin block quote> Spoken Toda, sung Toda (not automatically comprehensible to someone knowing spoken Toda), and trance-language Toda... The central position of Toda songs in Toda culture has been documented thoroughly by Emeneau (1964, 1974); the body of songs is their only form of literature, and can be seen to be in a kind of diglossic relationship to spoken Toda (Schiffman 1996: 216 n6). <PRESS! End block quote>

Sociolinguists also point out that 'occasionally L[ow] varieties gain domains and displace the H[igh] variety' (Ibid.). Hindi's pattern fits into this. An idiom used as a practical *lingua franca*, supplanted the literary language Brajbhasha, which was perceived to be obsolete and impractical by nineteenth-century reformists (Bart Jaski 2011; Bhatia 1983: 161 n22; and Yule and Burnell 1968: 417).[9] The widespread early use of Khari Boli as part of an early "three language formula", at least by the seventeenth century, can be glimpsed from the words of the Capuchin missionary François-Marie de Tours, who in his 1704 grammar, described Khari Boli in the Nagari script. He wrote:

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> <PRESS! Begin block quote> The use of this Indian, or Moghulian, language, in all its details, may be a most easy and indispensable practicability, supplying a method that

may lead the missionaries in their undertakings of missions, help the merchants in their practising of business and always accompany wayfarers when following the roads, traversing and wandering through [different] regions. It seems suitable to leave aside the Brahmanic [i.e. Sanskrit] and the vernacular [languages] and to keep to the Indian or the Moghulian and study and engage in discourse according to its rules and laws. (Gren-Eklund) <PRESS! End block quote>

It is also important to underline that the new, nineteenth-century literary idiom, based on Khari Boli, was not fully a low language but had two centuries of literature behind it (Sharma 1975: 302–16; and Bangha 2010: 22–83). Both the practical and the literary Khari Boli in the Nagari Script used a high number of Persio-Arabic words. Yet, it resembled the low language as much as Nagari Khaṛi Boli literature lacked prestige as it constituted a minor, experimental part of its authors' oeuvre and that its grammars were composed by foreigners (cf. Ferguson 1995: 332). In all these low-to-high status shifts the agents were diglossic, able to mediate a transition that, admittedly or not, preserved the continuity with the earlier high language. For example, Tagore composed both in Sadhu Bhasha and Chalit Bhasha and Bharatendu Harishchandra composed in Khari Boli and Braj (and even Urdu). One can observe a similar case with Tulsīdās, from earlier times, who after completing his *Rāmčarit-mānas*, shifted from Avadhi to the upcoming Brajbhasha.

The uncertainty about the dating the origin of Hindi literature is intimately linked, on the one hand, to the contested status that Hindi played on the cultural and political scene of twentieth-century India and, on the other hand, to the lack of clarity in terminology, especially in what can be considered a language and in what literary tradition is. The term language itself is ambiguous. According to the linguist Einar Haugen, 'in a descriptive, synchronic sense "language" can refer either to a *single* linguistic norm, or to a *group* of

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related norms' (Haugen 1966: 923). Applying this to the South Asian context, one can observe that Urdu fashioned itself primarily through the first meaning, while Hindi through the second.

In order to avoid the compartmentalization of language and dialect, I will use the term literary idiom for the various streams that are nowadays considered to be early literary dialects of Hindi, such as Braj and Avadhi. As far as literary tradition is concerned, there is an academic consensus that traditions are cultural constructs by communities and are prone to be contested, both from within and outside the communities that identify with them. In defining what constitutes a tradition, my criterion will be connectedness which manifests itself in communication through circulation, the sharing of a literary arsenal that includes shared linguistic and prosodic forms, and permeability within the literary idioms that constitute the tradition.

Hindi, as an umbrella term for a range of spoken dialects and literary idioms, owes its present scope of meaning to colonial and, even more, to nationalist scholarship. This is, however, not due to the lack of a continuously evolving literary tradition, but rather to the fact that the epistemology of 'language' has changed over the times.

Readers and listeners from early modern times have identified literary idioms in the Hindi belt (i.e. Madhyadeśa), such as Avadhi, Brajbhasha, Sant Bhasha and Khari Boli (used initially in Persian-mixed Rekhta compositions), through a bunch of dialectal markers. For example, Braj *kahaiṁ* '(we/they) say', *kahyau* 'said' vs. Avadhi *kahahiṁ, kahĕu* and Khari Boli *kahate (haiṁ)*, *kahā*, respectively. Moreover, tradition, more often than not, determined works along rough literary dialectal lines, as later compositions linguistically modelled themselves on successful earlier compositions in the same genre. Therefore, we have Sufi narratives in Avadhi, Krishna and Riti poetry in Brajbhasha, early Sant songs in Sant Bhasha, and Rekhta compositions in Khari Boli. Early modern authors were more interested in

aligning themselves with literary traditions earmarked by a literary idiom than in establishing linguistic identities in the modern sense of the term, which includes standardization by means of grammars and dictionaries. It is also important to underline here that these idioms lacked clear boundaries and are comparatively late constructions with relatively late referents.[11]

These traditions were mutually intelligible, shared their poetic forms and were often anthologized together.[12] Many authors easily moved between one tradition and another.[13] Moreover, the idiom of certain works may have been switched during transmission.[14] The fundamental function of language is communication and we can trace medieval and early modern communication primarily, though not exclusively, through manuscript circulation. Most works in Avadhi, Brajbhasha, Sant Bhasha and Khari Boli circulated in manuscript in, what is today known as the Hindi belt, and there is an abundance of such manuscripts from this region, including Bihar, as opposed to probably a few thousand from elsewhere. All this suggests that the grouping together of works in Avadhi, Brajbhasha, Sant Bhasha and Khari Boli Rekhta is not just a modern phenomenon; these traditions intensively fed into each other and can be perceived as forming a 'super-tradition', which, in a modern, heuristic term is called Old Hindi. (As we are going to see, an investigation into the earliest layers of vernacular compositions from these central regions shows that most of these idioms also form a linguistic and poetic continuum with the earlier Maru-Gurjar and Madhyadeśī works.)

A similar super-tradition called *Prāčya āryabhāṣā* has been proposed by Alibha Dakkhi in her book *Prāčya āryabhāṣā* that includes the territories of Bengal, Assam and Orissa (Dakshi 2014). However, Mithila should also be considered to belong to this super-tradition. Consequently, Bihar will reveal a double allegiance: to Madhyadeśī works in the West and to *Prāčya āryabhāṣā* to the north and the east, playing an integral role in the formative periods of both these traditions.

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When addressing the emergence of literary traditions through their earliest specimens, it is vital to avoid the pitfalls of early Hindi historiography that sometimes lacked philological rigour. The best approach is to consider only material that dates itself through internal or external evidence and has a reliable textual history. In this search, the scholar is helped by the fact that by now much of the rich Indian manuscript material has been surveyed and catalogued.

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A methodology considering exclusively the written word has recently been challenged by Francesca Orsini and Katherine Butler Schofield, arguing that oral literature should not be excluded from the investigation of the literary field (Orsini and Sheikh 2014: 13–14). As has been see in the case of Toda, the language of oral literature has already been elevated above the everyday speech and we can argue that orature forms and languages were shared with the later written world. This made transition into the written relatively easy for material which was initially sung, such as devotional *padas* or sententious distichs (*dohās*). The earliest specimens of oral literature are songs collected into anthologies or embedded into larger cosmopolitan literary pieces. The linguistically heterogeneous *Čaryāgīti* is also claimed to contain songs which can be labelled, in modern terms, as Hindi or Maithili. References to Hindavi singing can be found from the fourteenth century onwards. Couplets circulating orally were also quoted in Sufi *Malfuzats* since the mid-fourteenth century.

Before the Fourteenth Century <PRESS! Set A Level>

The *Čaryāgīti* and the *Dohā-kośas* <PRESS! Set B Level>

The *Čaryāgīti* is a collection of forty-seven (or fifty) Tantrik Buddhist Siddha songs from eastern India and several couplets dating from the eighth to the twelfth century. Its manuscript was discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century at the Nepal Royal Court Library by the Bengali scholar Harapasad Shastri (Shastri and Yogindranarayana 1916).[15]

The various *dohā-kośas*, such as of Sarahpā and Kānhapā, belong to the same Buddhist Siddha tradition as the *Čaryāgīti*. The oldest manuscript for Sarahpā's *Dohā-kośa* is estimated to date around the tenth–eleventh century. According to H.C. Bhayani, even this initial manuscript is three hundred years later than the time of composition of the *dohās*. The text in all manuscripts is highly corrupt and the original language has been modernized (Bhayani 1997: ix). Scholars with a pan-Indian perspective, such as R. Sankrityayan, Bhayani and, partially, S.K. Chatterji, agree that the language of the old Buddhist songs is Apabhramsha (Sankrityayan 1957: 'Bhūmikā' 9, 39; Bhayani 1997: 8).[16]

A recent linguistic study by Dakshi (p. 91), drawing attention to the composite nature of the language, concludes that in the *Čaryāgīti* 'along with a later form of Shauraseni Apabhramsha, the use of various local vernaculars can be observed.' The identification of its Apabhramsha with Shauraseni agrees with Chatterji's general idea about its use in the east:

> <PRESS! Begin block quote> In the East, the local patois does not seem to have been cultivated after the days of Aśoka; … It was a despised dialect—the speech of the lowest classes in the drama. Shauraseni was established for literary purposes in the Ardhamāgadhī and Māgadhī areas. Possibly Shauraseni was the polite language of the day when people employed a vernacular; and in the Apabhraṁśa period, eastern poets employed the Śaurasenī Apabhraṁśa to the exclusion of their local *patois*. This tradition of writing in Western Śaurasenī literary speech was continued in the East down to the middle and late NIA times, even after Eastern languages have come to their own. (Chatterji 1926: 91; 113–14) <PRESS! End block quote>

In spite of this consensus, there exists a rich literature which aims at demonstrating how the idiom of these Buddhist Siddhas can be the early forms of various modern languages (Dakshi

2011: 57–91).[17] As far as the literary tradition in Bihar is concerned, two different attempts have been made to link the *Čaryāgīti* and *Dohā-kośas* to it.

First, considering Apabhramsha to be part of Hindi, Ramchand Shukla cited several verses by Tantrik Buddhist Siddhas, apparently belonging to the eighth–twelfth century, in order to show their closeness to Hindi. One of his examples attributed to Sarahpā is:

jahi mana pavana na saṁčaraï, ravi-sasi nāṁha paveśa;
tahi baṭa čitta bisāma karu, sarahe kahia uveśa (Shukla 1972: 7; Cf. Shastri and Yogindranarayana 1916: 93, as quoted in Dakshi 2011: 75)

Bhayani has published a reconstructed version along Apabhramsha lines. His reconstruction and translation of the couple quoted above is given below:

jahĩ maṇu pavaṇu ṇa saṁčaraï, ravi-sasi nāhĩ pavesu;
tahĩ baḍha čitta bisāmu kuru, sarahẽ kahi uvaesu. (Bhayani 1977, verse 45)

Where the wind cannot go, where neither the Sun nor the moon can enter, there, O foolish mind, you rest—this instruction is imparted to you by Saraha (Bhayani 1977, verse 45).

The language of both versions is transparent for readers acquainted with Brajbhasha although forms such as *pavesu* [Skt. *praveśa*, 'entry'], *baṭa/baḍha* ['foolish'] or *uveśa/uvaesu* [Skt. *upadeśa*] may not be instantly comprehensible. Sankrtityayan also published an 'Old Hindi' *čhāyā* version of the couplets. The *čhāyā* of this one is:

jãha mana pavana na saṁčarai, ravi-śaśi nāhĩ praveśa;

tahã mūḍha čitta biśrāma karu, saraha kaheu upadeśa. (Sankrityayan 1957, verse 49)

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The other attempt is to present the collection as an early form of Maithili. Apart from linguistic arguments, academics mention its connection to the Nalanda and Vikramaśīla universities. Scholars such as Jayakant Mishra *(History of Maithili Literature*, 1949) and Subhadra Jha *(The Formation of the Maithili Language*, 1958) consider the *Čaryāgīti* to be a sample of Proto or Old Maithili (Mishra 1949: 110).[18]

Although it is not a literary text, Dāmodara Paṇḍita's *Ukti-vyakti-prakaraṇa* from mid-twelfth century Benares should be mentioned here. It is a Sanskrit handbook illustrated by vernacular equivalents.[19] According to Bhayani, it 'contains substantial data from Old Maithili' (Bhayani 1996: xxviii). The Hindi scholar Mataprasad Gupta, however, presents the language as the Old Kosali sub-dialect of Avadhi (Gupta 1967: 60–72).[20]

The Rāula-vela of Roḍa<PRESS! Set B Level>

In all probability, the earliest known vernacular literary work in the western Hindi belt is the *Rāula-vela*, a poem preserved not in manuscript, but as a stone inscription from the twelfth century in Dhar, the capital of the Paramāras including king Bhoja (Gupta 1962; Bhayani 1996; McGregor 1984: 7–8; Singh 1964: 355–64). Bhayani has labelled its language as 'post-Apabhramsha', 'a New Indo-Aryan with a considerable admixture of Apabhraṁśa elements' (Bhayani 1996: vi, viii).[21] The title of the poem and the name of the poet is included at the end:

roḍeṁ rāula vela vakhā[ṇī]; [sa?]tahaṁ bhāsahaṁ jaïsījāṇī. (Bhayani 1996)

Roḍa has uttered this Rāula-vela, in seven (?) languages as he knew it.[22]

It is an unconventional inscription: it is composed in vernacular and does not mention its sponsor. Timothy Lenz suggests that the sponsor may have been king Bhoja or a subsequent Paramāra king (Lenz 1999: 200–1).

The text contains the head-to-toe descriptions of heroines from six regions sprinkled with grammatical shibboleths in their respective dialects. The regions are named in the text, though the first toponym is unavailable. They are (1) missing, (2) *Golla*, (3) *Kānoḍa*, (4) *Ṭakka*, (5) *Gaüḍa* and (6) *Mālava*. The identification of the toponyms with their respective dialects, however, is contested. Bhayani's list, based on pinning down the linguistic features, is as follows: Maithili (very tentatively), *Gollī* (Marathi), *Ṭellī (?Braj), Ṭākkī* (Panjabi), *Gauḍī* (Bengali) and *Mālvī* (Bhayani 1996: vi). Lenz, projecting the names on the political map of the times, identifies the first five regions with those surrounding the Paramāra kingdom and the sixth, its centre Malwa. Thus he arrives at (1) Presumably Gujarat (2) *Golla* (the Godavari river region), *Kānoḍa* (Kannauj), *Ṭakka* (South-East Panjab), *Gauḍa* (Eastern region) and of Mālvā (Lenz 1999:203–5; Singh 2006: 83–8). Shiv Prasad Singh working on the linguistic features further confirms Bhayani's identification of three shibboleths, namely (2) Marathi, (4) Panjabi, (5) Bengali (Singh 1964: 362–3).

The description of the *nāyikā* from the eastern region of Gauḍa uses the *-la* suffix to indicate the past tense:

ḍhavalara kāpaḍa oḍhiyala kaïse; muha sasi jonha pasārela jaïse. (Bhayani 1996, verse 27)

She wrapped around white clothes and the light of her face spread like that of the moon.

According to Singh, the use of the genitive in *-era* in another part of the Gauḍa section suggests Bengali influence (Ibid.: 363). However, presenting only one distinguishing feature is not convincing to make a clear case for identifying it as Bengali. The shibboleths in this

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section also include the *-ara* genitive marker. In his analysis of the grammatical markers, Bhayani is more cautious and identifies them with 'the characteristic traits of the Gauḍa region'. Apart from the past *-la*, the genitive *-era/-ara*, Bhayani notes some pronouns and words typical from this region as well as the genitive in *-(a)nhu* as Gauḍa shibboleths. The most interesting characteristic he mentions is the present third-person verbal endings in *-thi* (*bhāvaṁthi* in verse 60, *mvājhathi* and *mũjhathi* in verse 63). This ending is present in the *Čaryā* songs, the *Ukti-vyakti-prakaraṇa*, the *Varṇa-ratnākara*, in Vidyāpati's songs and his *Kīrtilatā*. Bhayani finds this feature so conspicuously Maithili that he suggests that the occurrence of the *-thi* in other sections is due to the text written down by a Maithili scribe (Bhayani 1996: xxiv). All the above suggests that what is labelled as Gauda in the inscription, refers to Maithili.

This work, composed in the form of the single-actor play *bhāṇa*, can be perceived as a variation of a popular genre of inscriptions, *praśasti*, inasmuch as it presents the beauty of heroines, possibly representing the *rājyalakṣmīs*, royal fortunes of neighbouring countries to be inferior to that of Malwa (Lenz 1999: 203–6). The enumeration of foreign princesses as inferior to the local one has a similar political significance in Sanskrit *kāvya* works, such as Gaṅgādhara's mid-fifteenth century *Māṇḍalīkanṛpačarita*, where a minister describes to the king the princesses that he can potentially choose from and finds all of them lacking in some virtue until he comes to the daughter of the Jhala chieftain (*Māṇḍalīkanṛpačarita* 4.8–19; quoted in Kapadia 2014: 238–9).[23] Notwithstanding its connections to Sanskrit plays and to the much later Hindi *rīti* tradition, the *Rāula-vela* stands out as a unique attempt with rather meagre (oral or cosmopolitan) links to subsequent vernacular traditions, which were upheld by manuscript culture, and operated in a single literary idiom or in some vernacular-Apabhramsha combination.[24] Since the inscription was unmoveable and remained in a place that lost its importance after the Paramāras, the *Rāula-vela* was excluded from the circulation

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of literature. Although we know of a wider *vela* tradition in manuscripts, the stone-bound *Rāula-vela* fits well into the category that Allison Busch calls non-consequential (Busch 2011: 208).

Maithili in the Fourteenth Century <PRESS! Set A Level>

A considerably rich Hindi and Maithili literary activity can be observed from the fourteenth century. Two distinct written streams fed into the literary scene of Bihar: first, Maithili, which connected this region to the east and north, and second, the little-known Maru-Gurjar, that connected it with the west of India till Rajasthan and Gujarat. Let us first discuss the two early works with substantial Maithili additions, Umāpati Upādhyāy's Sanskrit play, the *Parijātaharaṇa-nāṭakaṁ* that contains a rich treasury of Maithili songs and Jyotirīśvara poetic manual, the *Varṇa-ratnākara*, both composed around 1325.

Amīr K̲h̲usraw's list of the twelve regional languages of India distinguishes between 'Gaurī, and the languages of Bengal'. It is also probable that Gaurī is a reference to Maithili, which was to become a highly cultivated language in the fourteenth century.[25]

Umāpati Upādhyāy's *Pārijātaharaṇa-nāṭakaṁ* <PRESS! Set B Level>

Umāpati Upādhyāy's Sanskrit play with Maithili songs fits well into a tradition of Sanskrit-Maithili plays produced in eastern India best known through the plays of Vidyāpati (McGregor 1984: 30; Varma and Upadhyay 1963; Jha 1980). It contains twenty-one songs in Maithili along with nineteen Sanskrit shlokas and dialogues in Sanskrit and Prakrit. However, since Umāpati has long been a common name, dates proposed for the author vary between twelfth and eighteenth century, depending on which Umāpati he is identified with, and more importantly, which historical ruler is conceived to be his patron, whom he calls 'Hindupati śrī Hariharadeva, the uprooter of the forest of Muslims'.

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There have been attempts to identify Umāpati with Umāpatidhara Miśra, the court poet of Lakṣmaṇasena (1179–1205) of Bengal.[26] Chetnath Jha, an early editor of the work, proposed that the poet lived in the seventeenth century Makmani in Nepal.[27] Jayakanta Mishra proposes that he was one of the eighteenth-century Maithili poets who migrated to Bundelkhand at the court of Hindūpati of Garhas Maṇḍala (Mishra 1949: 306). However, the view of G.A. Grierson, another early editor, is also current. He argued that Umāpati's patron Harihardev was no other than Harisingh Dev of Tirhut (r.1305–25) (Grierson 2007). His wife, Maheśvarī Devī is also mentioned in the play (Mathur and Ojha 1970). Grierson's dating has also been accepted by Sukumar Sen, editors J.C. Mathur and D. Ojha who republished Grierson's text and other Hindi authors.[28]

According to Mishra, the *Pārijāta-haraṇa* 'is one of the best plays of the "regular type" [kīrtaṇīya dramas] … remarkable for its literary merits' with a well-constructed plot and well-developed characterization (Mishra 1949: 308). He argues that 'it is an advance on the rather slender plots in Nepal and even Mithila dramas of this period [i.e. the eighteenth century] … there is more sustained interest and far more compactness here than in any of those dramas.' (Ibid.: 309) Eventually, 'this play gained wide popularity and made kīrtaṇīya drama the fashion of the day' (Ibid.: 311).

The popularity of the work is shown by the fact that it is preserved in several manuscripts mostly from the Darbhanga district.[29] It has also seen at least four editions since 1893 (Upādhyāya 1893; Grierson 1917; Jha 1917; Upādhyāya 1984).[30] Grierson noted that his exemplar manuscript 'in appearance dated from about the fifteenth or sixteenth century' (Grierson 2007: 1).

The closeness of Umāpati's style to that of Vidyāpati, and the archaic feel of its language has also been pointed out by Umesh Mishra.[31] Mathur and Ojha quoted a song, which with the exception of its final signature, is shared between the two poets (Mathur and Ojha 1970:

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5). According to Mishra, similarities only show the high regard in which Umāpati held Vidyāpati and the archaic flavor of the language 'may have been consciously attempted by the poet' (ibid.: 5).

Considering the uncertainty surrounding the early dates of the poet, it may be better not to consider its Maithili songs within the corpus of earliest Maithili since no firm evidence can be extracted from them about the formation of a literary tradition.

The *Varṇa-ratnākara* <PRESS! Set B Level>

Jyotirīśvara's *Varṇa-ratnākara*, composed around 1325 in a highly Sanskritised Maithili is a poetic manual of the proper subjects of a poet's repertoire, or 'a sort of hackwriters' handbook' (Bender 1950: 304).[32] It is preserved in a single, stunningly old manuscript dating from 1507 and is available in two modern editions.[33] It belongs to the vernacular genre of *varṇakas*, collections of stereotyped literary descriptions (ready to be used by writers—something like prefabricated units) of cultural items, objects, events, such as the Old Gujarati/Maru Gurjar *Varṇaka-samuccaya* and *Sabhāśṛṅgāra* (Bhayani 1996: xxxv–vi). According to J. Mishra, the *Varṇa-ratnākara* exercised influence on later Maithili literature and especially on Vidyāpati (Mishra 1949: 128). The presence of Perso-Arabic words is of special interest here, but it should not be overestimated as such elements may have been included over centuries of transmission before the manuscript was copied. [34]

It is interesting to note how well the emergence of a poetic manual as the first preserved literary piece of Maithili parallels the development of Kannada where the poetic manual *Kavirājamārga* is the first vernacular text. Sheldon Pollock has examined the importance of the *Kavirājamārga* in detail (Pollock 2007: 338–57). According to Pollock:

<PRESS! Begin block quote>[The *Kavirājamārga*] is precisely an exercise in the localization of global poetics, a kind of experiment in literary self-fashioning that proceeds by charting sameness, without which there could not be *literature* as defined by the governing model [of Sanskrit], while striving to establish difference, without which cannot be *Kannada* literature. (Ibid.: 345) <PRESS! End block quote>

The *Varṇa-ratnākara*, just like the *Rāula-vela*, also stands out due to the medium it is preserved in. All known Hindi manuscripts are on paper. However, the *Rāula-vela* is a single stone inscription and the *Varṇa-ratnākara* is copied on palm-leaf. Hindi literary production is closely linked to the spread of paper in India. The oldest known paper manuscripts date from twelfth century.[35] However, the wide use of paper from the fourteenth century is closely linked to Muslims. According to J.P. Losty, 'It was the Middle Eastern type of paper made from shredded cloth rather than bark which began to undermine the pre-eminence of the traditional materials in northern India from the thirteenth century' (Losty 1982: 11; see, Orsini 2013: 3–102).

The Perso-Arbaic words for paper *(kāgaẕ)* and pen *(kalam)* in all major Indian languages spectacularly attest this (Kumar 2010; Orsini and Shaikh 2014: 17, 39). By the fifteenth century the widespread use of paper diffused to the Deccan (Eaton 2014: 121, 123).

Madhyadeśī Literature in the Fourteenth Century <PRESS! Set A Level>

Madhayadeśī is an extended form of Maru-Gurjar literature used in west Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Maru-Gurjar literary tradition is claimed by both Hindi and Gujarati, (more precisely by Rajasthani and Gujarati). In Gujarat it is known as Old Gujarati and in Rajasthan it has earlier been called Old Western Rajasthani and later Gurjar Jain. This literature comprises of Jain narratives and *stavans* composed initially in Gujarat, yet with rich

circulation in Rajasthan and beyond. They often mix vernacular and Apabhramsha features. I have surveyed elsewhere (Bangha 2018) that the following narratives in the *čaupāī* metre from Madhayadeśa of the mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries, have been fully or partially preserved:

<PRESS! Begin block quote> Sadhāru: *Pradyumna-čarit* (1354, Erach, near Jhansi)

Viddhaṇū: *Jñānpañčamī* (or *Siyapañčamī*) *čaupāī* (1366, Rajgir, Bihar)

Malānā Dāūd: *Čāndāyan* (1377–80, Dalmau, UP)

Jākhū Maniyār: (Jāṁkho Maṇihār): *Haričandpurāṇ*(1396)

Lakhansenī: *Haričarit (Virāṭparv)* (1424, Jaunpur-Chausa, UP)

Viṣṇudās: *Pāṇḍavčarit* (1435), *Rāmāyan* (1442) (Gwalior) <PRESS! End block quote>

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The *čaupāī* form is their most conspicuously shared feature. However, as far as the earliest forms of their language template can be reconstructed, there is a close linguistic affinity between them and in their early forms, to the extent that they would have been perceived to belong to the same literary idiom. The only possible exception may be the *Čāndāyan*, which in its published form occupies a space somewhere between Madhyadeśī of the above two earliest Jain narratives and the Avadhi of the sixteenth century Sufi romances. The above records show that Maru-Gurjar was initially used by Jains with cosmopolitan networks, and therefore, their literary idiom was understood by Jains from Bihar to Gujarat. However, their activity provided an example to later Muslim and Hindu poets, who were not interested in maintaining comprehensibility with such a wide region but in reinforcing local identities. While on the one hand these works belong to the 'cosmopolitan vernacular' literary idiom of Maru-Gurjar, that in its geographic extent, largely overlaps with that of Shauraseni

Apabhramsha, on the other, in their localization, they can be considered to belong to a fledgling literary tradition in Madhayadeśa.

Beyond the shared literary forms, an important aspect of these works is their sense of localization. Many of them often mention the place of composition and present localized linguistic features. While it is difficult to tell whether these localized features were present at the time of their composition or appeared at some later point in their transmission, a few lines of praise for their place of creation is organically embedded into these poems. This is how Sadhāru presents Erach in the *Pradyumna-čarit* (Kashlival and Nyaytirtha 1960, verses 695–6):

eračha nagara vasante jāni, suṇiu čarita mai račiu purāṇu (verse 695)
sāvaya loyā vasahi pura māhi, daha lakṣaṇa te dharma karāi.
dasarisa mānaï dutiyā bheu, jhāvahi čitahaṁ jiṇesaru deu. (verse 696)
You should know that I heard the story and composed this Purana while living in the town of Erach. Jains dwell in that city, who observe their religion with the ten characteristics. Apart from discussing philosophy, they don't have any other work.[36] They meditate upon the Jina in their minds.

The transmission may have changed the language of both the *Čāndāyan* and the *Pāṇḍav-čarit*, and some parts of the original context of their composition may have been discarded, as in the Viṣṇudās' *Pāṇḍav-čarit*, whereas the original Tomar context is preserved in only one source and discarded from all other available manuscripts (Bangha, work in progress). However, there is no reason to believe that the passages that preserve a mention of their place of composition have undergone substantial reworking. This is how Dāūd talks of Dalmau:

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dalmau nayaru basai navaraṅgā; upari koṭu talai bahai gaṅgā.

dharamī logu basahi bhagavantā; gunagāhakā nāgara jasavantā.

malika bayāṁ putu udha rana dhīru; malika mumārakhu tahā mīru. (Gupta 1967, verse 17)

The town of Dalmau is recently embellished; it has a fort above it and below flows the Ganges.

Pious, godly people live in that town, who are famous and refined connoisseurs.

Its lord is Malik Mubārak, the son of Malik Bayāṁ, who is a warrior firm in battle.

Viṣṇudās locates his poem within the Tomar court of Gwalior and mentions the place within the praise for its ruler.

pāṇḍu-baṁsa tauvara dhuradhīru; ḍauṁgara siṅghu rāu bara bīrū.

gaḍha gopāčala bairini sālū; haya-gaya-nara-pati ṭoḍaramālū. (Dvivedi 1973, verse 36)

The king is Ḍuṅgar Singh, a Tomar from the lineage of Pāṇḍu, who is a firm, great warrior. His fort of Gwalior is a thorn in the eyes of the enemies; the lord of its horses, elephants and people is its ornament.

A particularly difficult aspect of the study of early material is that if a work was successful its language was modernized over the centuries. Most narratives from Madhyadeśa have been reworked to later, more localized idioms. Malānā Dāūd's *Čandāyan* in its only Nagari manuscript, produced in seventeenth century Fatehpur, Shekhavati, was vocalized as Brajbhasha, the literary language of the times, as is present from the variant readings of M.P. Gupta's critical edition. Gupta, however, presented his main text with Avadhi vocalization. Viṣṇudās' *Pāṇḍavčarit* (1435) and *Rāmāyan* (1442) are preserved in later manuscripts that modernized their language. The same may be true about Jākhū Maniyār's *Haričandpurāṇ*

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(1396). It is now impossible to reconstruct the original linguistic form of any of the above works. Fortunately, the modernization of Viṣṇudās was not thorough enough to suppress all archaisms, which are Maru-Gurjar forms. We are even more fortunate in case of Sadhāru's *Pradyumna-čarit* (1354). The earliest manuscript preserved much of its archaic Maru-Gurjar language, while the other manuscripts present texts modernized to smaller or larger extents into Brajbhasha. Viddhaṇū's *Siyapañčamī-čaupāī* is preserved in a single manuscript that shows a minimum amount of modernization (or localization).[37]

Viddhaṇū's *Siyapañcamī-čaupāī* <PRESS! Set B Level>

Viddhaṇū's *Siyapañčamī* or *Jñānpañčamī čaupāī* (1366) is one of the earliest dateable vernacular works east of Rajasthan, which has not yet been discussed by non-Jain Hindi literary historians. It is a composition of 548 stanzas about the importance of fasting on the day of *Jñānpañčamī* or *Śrutpañčamī* (*Siyapañčamī*), the fifth day of the month of *Kārtik* or *Jyeṣṭha* on which Jains worship the knowledge contained in the books and the physical manuscripts themselves (Cort 1989: 198–203). According to C. Chojnacki, the Śvetāmbaras call the feast *Jñānapañčamī* and celebrate it on the fifth of the bright fortnight of *Kārtik* (October/November); for the Digambaras it is *Śrutapañčamī*, celebrated on the fifth of the bright fortnight of *Jyeṣṭha* (May/June) (Chojnacki 2000: 117).

Viddhaṇū was the son of Ṭhakkar Mālhe, and a disciple of Jinodaysūri (1318–75). Jinodaysūri, whose works consist of Apabhramsha, Prakrit and Rajasthani compositions,[38] lived a peripatetic life, travelling Palanpur (North Gujarat), Jaisalmer, Khambat and Patan (Desai and Kothari 1986: 34–5). Viddhaṇū, on the other hand, engaged with the Jains in the remote area of Bihar. An inscription of thirty-eight shlokas in the Pārśvanāth temple of Rājagṛha (Rajgir, Bihar) dating from 1355 states that it was made by the Jain *śrāvak* scholar, Vīdhā, son of Ṭhakkar Mālhe.[39] The little that is known about Viddhaṇū's life and the

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circulation of his work illustrates the link between *Madhyadeśī* and Maru-Gurjar, and the emergence of literary works and movement of ideas.

The only manuscript of Viddhaṇū's work, called *Siyapañčamī* in the text and *Ṇānapañčamī* in the final colophon, is preserved in Patan, Gujarat.[40] The cataloguer Punyavijay conjectures that the manuscript was produced in the sixteenth century of the Vikram Era. So far, only its first six and final five stanzas have been published (with some inaccuracies) (Desai and Kothari 1986: 36).

While the Gujarati cataloguers and lexicographers designated its language as Apabhramsha (Punyavijay 1972: 151) or Rajasthani (Vinaysagar 2006: 80), Hindi scholars interested in its linguistic features found it closer to Hindi. Premsagar Jain took it as an Old Hindi work and noted that already Nathuraman Premi drew attention to the fact that this work is more Hindi than Gujarati when compared to the works of the Maru-Gurjar tradition (Jain 1964: 47). The sample text below shows that the Maru-Gurjar of the poem is indeed close to Brajbhāṣā and Avadhi:

ṭhakkura mālhe pūtu viddhaṇu pabhaṇaïṁ suddhamae;

haraṣiṁhiṁ lāgaü čītu čaüdaha saï tevīsamae;

siya bhādava igyāri guruvāvāsaru ihu upanaü;

nayara vihara majhāri, paṁčamī phūlu imva gāiyaü.[41] (Viddhaṇū [1366], verse 546)

Viddhaṇū, Son of Ṭhākur Mālhe tells correctly.

He felt happy in his mind in fourteen twenty-three.

This work was completed on Thursday, the eleventh of Bhādrapada (śukla?)[42]

Thus he sang the flowers of the 'Pañcamī' in the town of Vihāra.

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This work is a Madhyadeśī Maru-Gurjar version of the story of the merchant Bhaviṣyadatta present in various Apabhramsha renderings and linked to the festival of Jñānapañčamī. The main narrative occupies about two thirds of the poem, followed by three embedded stories (*antarkathās*). The first one presents the previous life of some supporting characters, the second that of the main characters and the last one of their later rebirth, in which the three protagonists attain the ultimate bliss, *kevalajñāna*. The main tale of the adventures of Bhaviṣyadatta appears as early as *c.*942 in the most ancient Śvetāmbara text, the *Jñānapañčamī-kathā* of Maheśvara, where it is one of the ten stories, in which each of the heroes attain different benefits from the observance of the *Jñānapañčamī* vow (Chojnacki 2000: 118). Chojnacki presents two groups of texts on this observance. The first contains the story of Bhaviṣyadatta; its earliest example is the Digambara Dhanapāla's *Bhavisa(ya)tta-kahā* in Apabhramsha (?tenth/fourteenth century).[43] However, from the fifteenth century onwards it was taken up in the Sanskrit works of both Digambara and Śvetāmbara authors. Another group of texts with the story of Varadatta and Guṇamañjarī was produced by Śvetāmbaras from the sixteenth century onwards (Chojnacki 2000: 118).

The main story of Bhaviṣyadatta goes as follows: At the time of the eighth Tīrthaṅkara, Čandraprabha, a rich merchant called Dhanapati lived in the city of Hastināpura. He married Kamalaśrī and they had a son called Bhaviṣyadatta. When Bhaviṣyadatta finished his schooling, Dhanapati was angered by Kamalaśrī's welcome to an ascetic and abandoned her. Dhanapati then married Sarūpā and their son was Bandhudatta. The rivalry of the wives is carried on by the sons. Bandhudatta abandons his half-brother twice on an island but all this turns out as good fortune for Bhaviṣyadatta because Kamalśrī at home observes the Śrutapañčamī fast. After the first abandonment, Bhaviṣyadatta finds a wife, Bhaviṣyānurūpā, and riches on the island, and after the second one, a semi-divine being takes Bhaviṣyadatta home in a heavenly chariot where he is reunited with his mother. Eventually the king

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administers justice and Bhaviṣyānurūpā is returned to him from Bandhudatta, who had kidnapped her. The king also offers his daughter in marriage (an early literary instance of inter-caste marriage) and Bhaviṣyadatta eventually becomes a king. To illustrate the flow of narration, I quote below the story of the first abandonment (Viddhaṇū, [1366], verses 60–133):

<PRESS! Begin block quote>When grown up, the two boys decide to undertake a sea journey together. They set off with other merchants and arrive at an island, where they leave Bhaviṣyadatta behind. Bhaviṣyadatta, abandoned, laments his fate and then starts to explore the island. He arrives in the town of Tilakapurī, which has no inhabitants. He enters into a Jain temple, where he sings a hymn and then falls asleep. While he is asleep, we hear the conversation of some divine beings with the Kevalajñānī Yaśodhara discussing Bhaviṣyadatta's fate. A Yakṣa goes to the temple and writes on the spot 'Go and marry Bhaviṣyānanda!' When Bhaviṣyadatta awakens, he reads the writing and goes to the house of Bhaviṣyānanda. She tells the story how a demon has killed the king and all the inhabitants of the city but spared her. While they spend a few days together, the menacing demon Aśanivega appears inquiring about who has entered the city. Bhaviṣyadatta faces him and when he reveals his identity, Aśanivega realises that Bhaviṣyadatta is none other than Dhanamitra, his friend from a previous birth. He performs the marriage rite for the couple and then offers them rich gifts. He also tells Bhaviṣyadatta that he would appear whenever invoked in the mind. The couple lives on happily on the island for twelve years. This good fortune is because Kamalśrī observes the Jñāna-pañčamī fast. This episode is followed by a long passage praising the performance of the fast (Ibid.: verses 134–55). <PRESS! End block quote>

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Below, I quote the description of how Bhaviṣyadatta meets his future wife Bhavisyānurūpā (Bhaviṣyānanda) (Ibid.: verses 107–114):

<PRESS! Begin block quote>*sagrahaṁ jākhū pahūṁtaü āi, bhavisadattu nīṁdahaṁ bhari jāi;*

khaḍī lihete ākhara ṭhāiṁ, bhavisāṇaṁda viāahu jāi. (verse 107)

The liberated Yakśa arrived there. Bhaviṣyadatta was still asleep.

On the spot he wrote: 'Go and marry Bhaviṣyānanda!'

bhavisadatta jāgiu taṁkhaṇī, e ākharaitu lihiyā kiṇī;

loyaṇa maṁḍita vāčaï sāri; vyāhahu bhavisāṇanda kumāri (verse 108)

Bhaviṣyadatta immediately awoke. 'Who wrote this message?'

He opens his eyes and reads it 'Marry the noble girl Bhaviṣyānanda.'

bhavisadatta čāliu taṁkhaṇī, sīha pavari uttara disa bhaṇī;

bhavisānaṁda ughāḍaï vāra, daïahaṁ nimmiu tumha bhatāra. (verse 109)

Bhaviṣyadatta set out immediately towards the lion-gate at the north.

'O Bhaviṣyānanda open the door! Fate has allotted me as your husband.'

čamakī tīya manahaṁ mahaṁ haṁsiu, mohi nāüṁ iṇi jāṇiu kisaü;

vāḍu ughāraï manu tharaharaï, kavaṇu ehu jo mu{hu} kahuṁ varaï. (verse 110)

The woman was amazed in her mind and smiled: 'How does he know my name?'

She is excited in her mind as she opens the door, 'Who is that man who is marrying me?'

sura [nana] gaṇa gaṁdhavvu na hoi, iṁdu, čandu, goviṁdu na koi;

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ehu naru keṁva pahūtaü āi, daïā čavaṇu pūṁčhiu satubhāi. (verse 111)

'He is neither a god, nor gaṇa or gandharava; he is neither Indra nor the Moon or Krishna.

How has this man arrived here? O God, I am asking this honestly.

bhavisadatti maṇi bhayaü ačaṁbhu, tāsu kīru tīlotama raṁbhu;

sura nara kinnari ehā vara nāri, čiṁtaï so naru manahaṁ [maṁ]jhāri. (verse 112)

Bhaviṣyadatta was amazed, 'Is she Tilottamā or Rambhā?

Is this beautiful woman human, divine or semi-divine?' He is preplexed in his mind.

sīṁhāsaṇi te āsaṇu dinnu, sītalu nīru āčavaṇu kinhu.

kiyaü gharahaṁ taṇaü vyavahāru, nhāṇu ava{dda}ṇu aru jivaṇāru. (verse 113)

She seated him on a throne and gave him cool water to drink.

She received him as if he was at home: with bath, attention and food.

sukha sejā tasu dīni samvāri, pūṁčhaï lāgi sāmbara nāri.

kavaṇa desa kiṇi āya kāji, kavaṇa bāpu basahi kiṇi rāji. (verse 114)

She deftly prepared him a comfortable bed and then the excellent women asked him:

'Where are you from? For what purpose have you come? Who is your father? In what kingdom do you live?' <PRESS! End block quote>

The story is a beautiful example of early vernacular activity in Bihar which links this region to the west, Madhyadeśa, Rajasthan and Gujarat through its language and tradition.

The Shared Features of Madhyadeśī Narratives <PRESS! Set A Level>

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Apart from the literary idiom and the *čaupāī* metre, these works have a high proportion of shared elements. This is primarily because they all draw on the wide arsenal of Sanskrit and Apabharamsha *mahākāvya*. Classical Sanskrit *mahākāvya* contains descriptions of cities, seas, mountains, moonrise and sunrise, and 'accounts of merrymaking in gardens, of bathing parties, drinking bouts, and love-making. It should tell the sorrow of separated lovers and should describe a wedding and the birth of a son. It should describe a king's council, an embassy, the marching forth of an army, a battle, and the victory of a hero' (Ingalls 1945: 33–5). None of the vernacular narratives contain all of these, but the relatively high number of shared features of the first three works, *Pradyumna-čarit*, *Siyapañčamī-čaupāī*, and *Čāndāyan*, compared to the wide range of *mahākāvya* components, suggest that these works were aware of their vernacular predecessors and were in the early phase of forming a tradition.

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Parallels include an idealized city description *(nagara-varṇana)*, which is one of the *kāvya* requirements, built in at the very beginning of all three. Further, they all contain journeys. However, contrary to the *mahākāvya* heroes, the main character of two stories is not a prince of noble origin, but a merchant in the *Siyapañčamī*, and in *Čāndāyan*, a soldier whose family is sinking. The two co-wives' rivalry plays a significant role in each story. The fact that the name of the enemy king in the *Pradyumna-čarit* and the *Čāndāyan* is Rūpcand may just be a coincidence. The first two stories share even closer similarities: the first wives fall in disgrace as a consequence of a visit by a holy man, the rivalry of the co-wives is played out primarily among their children, the heroes are absent from their families for twelve years, they face demons who become benevolent and give them boons, and they accumulate spiritual powers (*siddhis*) or material wealth during their stay in a foreign land (in contrast, the foreign journey of the heroes in the *Čāndāyan* is not so fortunate). On their return, both heroes have to assert themselves within the local world again. The emphasis

placed on the education of children cannot be missed. The teaching of the warrior Pradyumna is described below (Kashlival and Chainsukhdas 1960, verses 137–8):

<PRESS! Begin block quote> *phuṇi so paḍhaṇa ujhāvali gayaü; likhiyu paḍhitu savu vujhiyi liyaü.*

lakṣaṇa čhandu tarku vahu suṇiü; nāṭaka rāu bharatha savu muṇiü. (verse 137)

dhanu ṣavaṇa ko vūjhiu jāṇu; siṅgha jūjha kau jāṇiu jāṇa.

laḍaṇu paḍaṇu nikāsu païsārū; savu jāṇa praduvanu kumvāru. (verse 138)

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Then he went to study with a teacher. He has understood everything about reading and writing.

He has studied the definitions, metrical forms and argumentation and all the Nāṭyaśāstra of the noble Bharatamuni.

He has studied archery and learnt how to fight a lion.

The ways of warfare: how to attack and how to retreat—Prince Pradyumna mastered all this.

The merchant boy Bhaviṣyadatta is trained differently (Viddhaṇū, [1366], verses 29–32),

bhavisadattu tasu dhariu nāuṁ, vālaü čaṁdu čaḍhaui tithi ṭhāuṁ.

paṁča barisa so bhayaü sačetu, gaü čaṭasāra paḍahiṁ lahu jītu. (verse 29)

aṣara paṁti lihāi tāsu, puvva paḍiu nahi visaraï jāsu.

laččhaṇa čhaṁda paḍhaï jaï soi, bhavisavayaṇa čāhai savu koi (verse 30)

The son was named Bhaviṣyadatta. A moon-son has arisen at that place and time.

When at the age of five he became a sensible boy, he started school to ?master [jītu] early [lahu] learning.

He was taught to write lines of letters. Once he learnt something, he would not forget it.

He was taught the characteristics of poetic metres. Everyone held Bhaviṣya's face in high regard.

takku čhaṁda aru joisu gaṇaï, kāva kavitu guṇa saṁkha ko gaṇaï.

garuḍa maṁtra aru kahaï su jogu, bhavisadatta muha deṣaï logu. (verse 31)

lipya aṭhāraha so puṇi likhaï, kalā vahattari samujhaï kahaï.

puṇu āgamu avagāhaï ṣaraü, ehu phalu ahaï bhavaṁtari taṇaü. (verse 32)

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Reasoning, meters and the calculation of constellations, he also counted the virtues in aesthetics and poetics.

He learnt the snake-poison spell and the favourable moment to utter it. People held Bhaviṣyadatta in high regard.

He then writes the eighteen scripts. He understands and talks about the seventy-two arts.

Then he immerses into the Scripture. This is the fruit of previous births. <PRESS! End block quote>

A further similarity is the heroes' allegiance to their mother. The figure of the father in both stories is distant, if not inimical. The heroes' love for a partner is also unemphatic. However, they return to their mothers, who have been eagerly waiting for them during their absence and then they appear in their true identities to the wider world again. This emphasis on the mother-son relationship suggests that these stories were meant to be read out primarily

for Jain laywomen who may not have access to the higher languages but were familiar with many feelings evoked in these stories.

Conclusion <PRESS! Set A Level>

Studies examining literary traditions have often been inconsistent in their terminology about what constitutes literature, language, and tradition. I argue that the language of literature in the South Asian context is different from any spoken regional patois. Comprehensibility is vital for a literary language and therefore, with the passing of time, literary languages keep evolving. This often happens in spectacular shifts from an obsolete literary idiom to a new one through the agency of literati, who are well at home in both versions.

If we examine the emergence of literary traditions in Bihar, we find that the region actively participated in the emergence of two literary traditions around the middle of the fourteenth century: Maithili-Brajabuli, linked linguistically to Magadhi Apabhramsha and geographically to the north and the east, and Madhyadeśī Maru-Gurjar (and eventually Hindi), connected to Shauraseni Apabhramsha and to the west of India. While Maithili's participation in the literary world of eastern India is well documented, Bihar's connection to the west is less apparent. However, literati in Bihar have sustained their interest in Shauraseni Apabhramsha, Madhyadeśī Maru-Gurjar, Avadhi and eventually Brajbhasha. Participation in the Brajbhasha cosmopolis is well documented in the archives of Bihar that have preserved a high number of Brajbhasha manuscripts, comparable in scale to the archives of Uttar Pradesh. Bihar should, therefore, be considered the most important link that connected the largely diverse literary traditions of western and eastern India.

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[1]Alison Safadi surveys representative cases of colonial (including F.S. Growse and A.J.C. Grierson) and nationalist views attributing the creation of modern Hindi to Fort William College, with vocabulary referring to the 'birth' of a 'new' language. On how the British stressed their agency in creating the 'new language', see, Dalmia 1997: 148–50. The website of one of the most prestigious Hindi publishers opens with the statement that 'Hindi, in its present form, is the language that is born in modern times'; see, http://www.vaniprakashan.in/about-us.php, accessed 15 November 2017. The use of such vocabulary underlines a dissociation of Hindi from the earlier literary and speech forms.

[2] Much of this has been pointed out already by Ganapati Chandra Gupta. For an array of representative cases, see, Bangha 2010: 29–36. For a discussion on how Hindi historiography saw this problem, see, Busch 2011: 205–8.

[3] Einar Haugen presents the concepts of Heinz Klos and Charles Ferguson about the various stages of linguistic literization linked to the appearance of new genres.

[4] Colin P. Masica finds 'official and cultural recognition' as 'elastic concepts'.

[5] 'If a people …has not poems by great masters, it must have songs, and so we find abundant stores of songs of all kinds in these two dialects.' On Grierson's endeavours with regards to Bihari language(s), see, Kumar 2013: 1726–46.

[6] Moldovan is the name of the Romanian language in the Republic of Moldova prescribed by the Article 13 of its current constitution. However, the Declaration of Independence of Moldova as well as its Constitutional Court calls it Romanian. See, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moldovan_language, accessed 16 January 2019. <AUTHOR! It is not advisable to cite Wikipedia as an authentic source of information, since it is crowd-sourced. Please consider providing a more reliable source for this information.> THIS is a tangential argument that may be omitted. Definitely, it is not worth pursuing deeper than this.

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[7] See, https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-dari-farsi-persian-language-dispute/28840560.html, accessed 16 January 2019.

[8] The seminal article on low and high language is Ferguson 1959: 325–40.

[9] The *lingua franca* status of Khaṛī Bolī (in the Nāgarī script!) is testified by early foreign grammarians, such as that of Joan Josua Kettler/Katelaar (1659–1718) and François-Marie de Tours (fl. 1704). Probably the earlier English and other references to 'Hindustani', such as 'Indostan', 'Moors', etc. also refer to Khaṛī Bolī. In 1673, for example, John Fryer noted, 'The language at the court is Persian, that commonly spoke is Indostan (for which they have no proper character, the written language being called Banyan [sic!]), which is a mixture of Persian and Sclavonian, as are all the dialects of India.'

[11] The term *rekhta* was first used to name a literary style in the 1650s (Bangha 2010: 56, 24–6). Brajbhasha or 'the language of Braj' dates back to the late-seventeenth century (Cf. Busch 2011). The word Avadhi does not figure in two of its pre-eminent works, the *Padmāvat* and the *Rāmčaritmānas*, while the term Sadhukkari *(sadhukkaṛī)* for Sant Bhasha is a term conceived by Ramchandra Shukla (1972).

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[12] The famous Fatehpur manuscript, for example, contains Sant Bhasha poems of Kabīr along with the Brajbhasha poems of Sūrdās. A facsimile of this manuscript is published Bahura and Bryant 1982.

[13] In Ālam's *Mādhavānal-kāmkandalā*, Braj-Avadhi *čaupāīs* alternate with Braj *dohā*s as published in the critical edition, which, interestingly, conceives the work to be in Avadhi (Mishra 1982). All authors of Nāgarī Rekhtā produced texts in either Sant Bhasha or Brajbhasha (Bangha 2010: 53–61, 71–80).

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[14] A good example of dialect change is *čhappay* 117 of the *Kavitāvalī* of Tulsīdās. In manuscripts dating between seventeenth and eighteenth century, this poem has Avadhi verbal forms, such as *kīnhĕu* or *dīnhĕu*. Several manuscripts from the nineteenth century present the Braj forms *kīnhau*, *dīnhau* instead, and these variants make it into the *Tulsī-granthāvalī* and into the Gita Press editions. The most spectacular instance is the only extant Devanāgarī manuscript of the 'Avadhi' epic *Čāndāyan*, which is in Brajbhasha(!).

[15] Later Prabodhchandra Bagchi published a manuscript of a Tibetan translation containing 50 verses (1938).

[16] According to Chatterji, *Origin and Development*, p. 112, 'Two different dialects are found in these three works. The dialect of Caryās alone is Old Bengali, as its peculiar Bengali forms show… The two Dohā-kośas present the same (sic!) dialect, which is a kind of Western (Śaurasenī) Apabhraṁśa, as its *-u* nominatives, its *-aha* genitives, its *-ijja* passives and its general agreement in forms with the literary western Apabhraṁśa amply indicate.' also cf. p. 111.

[17] A recent Bengali study by Alibha Dakshi surveys the various claims and arguments for determining their language as Maithili (pp. 57–61), Oriya (pp. 61–63), Assamese (pp. 63–65), Bengali (pp. 65–74) and a later form of Shauraseni Apabhramsha or Avahatta (pp. 74–91).

[18] Jayakanta Mishra argues, 'the language of the *Caryápada*s represents a Proto-Maithili dialect of the Čhikā-Čhikī area, midway between Standard Maithili and Standard Bengali, having some (esp. archaic) features with Magadhan dialects.' See also, Dakshi 2011: 57.

[19] The work is published and studied in Muni Jinvijay (1953). Its position within Sanskrit texts is discussed by Richard Salomon (1982: 13–25).

[20] Mata Prasad Gupta's view is repeated by Shyam Manohar Pandey (1968: 290; quoted in Hines 2009: 53).

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[21] However, the designations given on these two pages do not overlap; p. iv mentions Kānoja as the second language in the sequence and omits the third, Ṭellī, and on p. xxi, the third dialect is 'a dialect allied to Western Hindi'.

[22] If not indicated otherwise, translations are by the present author.

[23] According to Kapadia, 'In the act of rejecting them, he [the king] establishes his superiority over their fathers' kingdoms.'

[24] The literary connections of the text are presented in Bhayani 1996: xxv–xxxvi.

[25] For a list of the ten languages and their contested interpretation, see, Faruqi 2001: 66–7. Faruqi rejects the idea that Gauri is a reference to another form Bengali and proposes that it should be a form of Marathi.

[26] Manabendu Banerjee's Preface to Grierson 2007 mentions that 'Umāpati Upādhyāya… is sometimes identified with Umāpatidhara'.

[27] Jha 1917; as referred to in Mathur and Ojha 1970: 3 (introduction to the *Pārijātaharaṇa nāṭakaṁ*); in Mishra 1949: 304–5 and Jha 1985: 17 (as quoted in http://maithilimandan.blogspot.co.uk/2016/05/umapati-1-7.html, accessed 17 January 2019.

[28] Mathur and Ojha 1970: 6 (introduction to the *Pārijātaharaṇa nāṭakaṁ*). The other Hindi authors include Krishnanandan 'Piyush', author of the monograph *Umāpati kā pārijāt-haraṇ* and Baldev Upadhyay, author of the article '*Hindī mẽ vaiṣṇav padāvalī kā pratham račayitā*'. See also, Singh 1964: 378. <AUTHOR! Should the highlighted word be a single term? Please confirm.--- NO>

[29] The list of manuscripts is given in Mishra 1949: 307 n48; and Mathur and Ojha 1970: 7 (introduction to the *Pārijātaharaṇa nāṭakaṁ*).

[30] Griersons text has been republished twice: Mathur and Ojha 1970: 1–26; and Grierson 2007.

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[31] Umesh Mishra's article in *Hindustānī* (vol. 5, no. 2, April 1935, p. 117) is referred to in Mishra 1949: 304.

[32] Ernest Bender explains that such 'aidbooks for kathaks' ('public reciters') are current in Bengal.

[33] 48/34, Government Collection of manuscripts in the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. See, Chatterji and Mishra 1940: ix–x. The manuscript was obtained from Mithila sometime before 1900. The editions are Chatterji 1928; and Mishra and Jha 1980. The former has been reprinted several times since 1928 including, Chatterji and Mishra 1940; and Chatterji and Misra 1998.

[34] The overlap between poetic devices discussed in the *Varṇa-ratnākara* and those used Dāūd's *Čāndāyan* has been indicated in Behl 2012: 84–5. This overlap may be due to shared cultural interests and not definitely direct influence. No further connection with Hindi works has so far been pointed out.

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[35] The earliest known specimens of paper include two manuscripts written in 1105 and 1185 (see, Losty 1982: 11), a *Dhvanyāloka-ločana* from 1147 in the Chopasni Research Institute and a Jain paper manuscript from 1189 at the Śrī Jinabhadrasūri Jñān Bhaṇḍār in Bikaner (See, Singhal 2011; 513, 518).

[36] The original *ardhālī* appears to be corrupt and there is no agreement amongst the four manuscripts used in the edition. The interpretation loosely follows that in Kashlival and Chainsukhdas 1960: 221.

[37] I have studied elsewhere the linguistic similarities between Viṣnudās's archaisms and those of early Madhyadeśī Maru-Gurjar texts. See, Bangha 2014: 390–7; and Bangha 2018: 18–22.

[38] According to Vinaysagar (2006: 83, 198), his *Trivikram rās* (1368) is a *rās-čaupaī* in Apabhramsha, his *Śāśvata jina bimba stotra* is in Prakrit and his *Yu.* [*Yugapradhāna*]

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Jinadattasūri ćhanda is a *gīt-stavan* in Rajasthani. The latter is printed in Vinaysagar 1993: 26–8.<AUTHOR! Should the highlighted word be a single term? Please confirm. -- NO>

[39] *utkīrṇāća suvarṇā ṭhakkura ṅālhāṅgajena puṇyārthaṁ; vaigyānika suśrāvakavareṇa vīdhābhidhānena*. <AUTHOR! Should these be two single words? Or should there be spaces in between? Please confirm. – Spaces as indicated>

The inscription is nr. 236 in Nahar 1918: 57–62.

[40] The manuscript is 3233 at Shri Hemachandracharya Jain Jnanamandira. It is called *Jñāṇpañćamīmāhātmya ćopaībandh* in Punyavijay 1972: 151. See also, Desai and Kothari 1986: 35. Based on verses 1–2, they call it *Siya-pañćamī-ćopāī*. Currently, I am preparing an edition of this text. <AUTHOR! Should the highlighted word be a single term? Please confirm – Two words.>

[41] This half-line appears to be corrupt. It has 16 moras instead of 13 and the reading *phūlu* "flower" is apparently a corruption of a more appealing *phalu* "fruit".

[42] The exact conversion of this date is unclear. See, https://www.cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp/~yanom/pancanga/, accessed 16 January 2019. VS 1423 Bhādrapada śukla 11 is AD 1366 Tuesday, 18 August, while Bhādrapada kṛṣṇa 11 is Tuesday, 1 September.

[43] The earlier date is proposed in Jacobi 1918: 6. Devendra Kumar Shastri, however, claims that he had discovered 'the hitherto oldest copy of the manuscript . . . that proves that this poem was composed in the fourteenth century. The poet was a resident of Zafarabad near Jaunpur. He wrote the poem for the righteous rich man of Delhi [called] Vādhū.' See, Shastri 1965: 263–75; as presented in Prakash 1966: 180–1.

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