

## Preface

This volume presents seven Sant authors living in Rajasthan in the period from the first half of the sixteenth to the eighties of the seventeenth century. The Sant literature of this period consists overwhelmingly of metrical compositions. Its language is a regional literary idiom representing a variant of western Hindi. Linguistically and poetically it continues medieval traditions of the region. Sant poetry shares features with other literary traditions in the same region, notably with the poetry of the Cāraṅs, the bards attached to the Rajput clans, of whom they were panegyrists, genealogists and educators. The heroic stance of this poetry appears more often than not in Sant compositions.<sup>1</sup>

The seven poets united in this volume are Hardās, Dādū, Bakhanām, Rajab, Santdās, Sundardās, and Bājīd. With the exception of Hardās from the first half of the sixteenth and Bājīd from the first half of the seventeenth century, all authors were members of the Dādūpanth, which started evolving around 1580. Hardās precedes the rise of the Dādūpanth, but his oeuvre is pivotal to this sect as well as to the Nirañjanī sect, which is intertwined with the Dādūpanth. Bakhanām, Rajab, Santdās, and Sundardās were Dādū's direct disciples. Although Bājīd is claimed by the Dādūpanth and has also been copiously represented in Dādūpanthī anthologies since 1628, nonetheless, he seems to have been more of a free spirit, non-partisan towards any particular sect.

All the seven authors were active in Rajasthan, all of them are historically traceable, and all of them figured in a network comprising sadhus and lay patrons. By their generic and cultural roots in Rajasthan they are distinguished from a number of other Sant authors, who originated in other regions but whose fame spread over North India, where their poetry first appeared in written form in manuscripts compiled in Panjab or Rajasthan. Prominent among these are Kabīr and Raidās of Banaras, and Nāmdev of Maharashtra.

The seven poets have been selected for the quality of their compositions and the contemporaneous or near-contemporaneous appreciation of both their personalities and literary production. This is revealed by reference to them in the works of their colleagues and by the fact that their compositions had become anthologized as early as 1628. To some authors this criterion does not, or only partially, apply, because the works of these partly or entirely postdate those early anthologies.<sup>2</sup> The vast majority of the compositions in this volume have not been translated before, and the original text of one of these is also being published for the first time.<sup>3</sup>

The authors have partly drawn on and revised published and unpublished material of their own.

For texts 9–28, see Monika Thiel-Horstmann, tr., *Dādū: Lieder*, Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, Südasiens-Institut, Universität Heidelberg, vol. 138, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991.

For text 60, see Monika Thiel-Horstmann, ‘On the Dual Identity of Nāgās,’ in *Devotion Divine/Dévotion Divine: Studies in Honour of Charlotte Vaudeville*, ed. Diana L. Eck and Françoise Mallison, Groningen and Paris: Egbert Forsten and École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1991, pp. 256–71.

For texts 61 and 66–9, see Dalpat Rajpurohit, ‘*Bhakti* versus *rīti*? The Sants’ Perspective’ in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 84, issue 1, 2021, pp. 95–113.

For texts 76–7, see Monika Horstmann, ‘Sant and Sufi in Sundardās’s Poetry’, in *Religious Interaction in Mughal India*, ed. Vasudha Dalmia and Munis D. Faruqi, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 233–63.

For text 81, see Monika Horstmann, ‘Als Reiseführer unbrauchbar,’ Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek, 2009. <http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/331/>

## Notes

- 1 See p. 41–2.
- 2 Appendix I shows the presence of the authors in the anthologies of Gopāldās and Rajab.
- 3 Sundardās’s *Gazal*, see text no. 79.