Article

The Ideology of Patronage and the Question of Identity in the Early Dādūpanth

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Abstract: This article focuses on the Dādūpanth, a religious community centered on the teachings of Dādū Dayāl (1544–1603), a Sant poet of Rajasthan. The aim of the text is to analyze how various forms of patronage affected the formation of the ideology and identity of this community. The article examines especially the Dādūpanthī ideology of patronage by focusing on the *Dādū Janma Līlā* (c. 1620), which contains an account of the supposed meeting between Dādū and the emperor Akbar, during which Dādū rejects all offers of patronage. His position needs elucidation as it stands in contrast with the later tendency of the post-17th century Dādūpanth to accept royal and merchant patronage. After analyzing how the hagiography establishes Dādū's authority and having considered in what types of manuscripts the hagiography was distributed by itinerant preachers, it is suggested that this work is driven by a strong proselytic agenda and that it employs a 'pedagogical strategy'—represented by the topos of rejected royal support—to establish relationships with merchant patrons. The article concludes with the observation that the increase in royal patronage from the 17th to the 19th century led to changes in the Dādūpanthī ideology that entailed a shift toward a Vaishnava identity.

Keywords: India; Rajasthan; bhakti; Dadupanth; Sant; patronage; identity; ideology

1. Introduction

In the broadest sense, this paper is about the reciprocal relations between patronage and ideology and, subsequently, between ideology and identity in the Dādūpanth, a religious community built around the teachings of the Sant poet Dādū Dayāl (1544–1603). The work on this article began with a close reading of the central scene of the *Dādū Janma Līlā* (DJL)—a hagiography of Dādū, composed by his disciple Jangopāl in ca. 1620—in which the Sant is shown as consistently rejecting gifts and offers of patronage from the Mughal Emperor Akbar. The position of Dādū is perplexing, especially when viewed against the backdrop of the rich history of royal patronage for the post-17th century Dādūpanth. The search for the rationale behind Dādū's attitude was the original impulse that led to the writing of this paper.

I postulate that the meeting in question (whether historical or not), with Dādū preaching to Akbar, was given a prominent place in the DJL to maximize the general pedagogical import of this work, to win over new recruits, and to increase the prestige of what was to become the Dādūpanth. Furthermore, it allowed the construction of an authoritative image of Dādū, which, in turn, became a foundation for the identity of the early community of his followers. I claim that, paradoxically, Dādū's refusal of patronage in the DJL makes more sense when read as part of a pedagogical strategy that is *deeply concerned* with establishing client-patron relations. This is all the more probable if one considers the fact that the DJL, in the form of notebook-type manuscripts, was used by itinerant preachers during sermons directed at potential patrons from the merchant classes.

This article is structured in two main parts. The first focuses on the analysis of the DJL and the supporting primary sources (Sections 1–4), and the second focuses on the 18th–19th-century history of the Rajasthani Dādūpanth (Section 5). In addition, the text is

organized around four crucial issues, all of which are centered on contextualizing different aspects of patronage. The first point concerns the purpose of composing the DJL, in terms of organizing and/or influencing patron-client relationships through the creation of an idealized persona of Dādū (Section 2). A further section explores the impact of patronage on the structure of the DJL and the subsequent history of the hagiography distributed in manuscripts addressed to a specific audience (Section 3). To elucidate the way in which the DJL deploys the patronage context and to inquire about the reasons behind Dādū's rejection of Akbar's gifts, I propose an interpretation that, by analyzing the source text, contextualizes its implicit position on ideology, authority, and identity, as seen through the prism of patronage relations (Section 4). The last part of the article discusses the formation of the Dādūpanthī identity in the socio-political environment of Rajasthan in the 18th–19th century when a close relationship with the Rājpūt courts led to substantial changes in the doctrine and religious practices of the *panth* and supported its shift toward a Vaiṣṇava identity (Section 5).

2. Dādū Dayāl and Jangopāl's *Dādū Janma Līlā*

By all accounts, the DJL is the earliest and still the most substantial source available on the life and works of Dādū Dayāl (1544–1603). Usually, its date of composition is given as ca. 1620, i.e., two decades after Dādū's demise (Orr 1947, p. 26; Callewaert 1988, p. 11). The author, Jangopāl, identifies himself as a *mahājana*—a merchant or moneylender (DJL 16.28[1]). This in itself is an important fact in the context of the Mughal patronage of religious groups coming from merchant castes, to which topic we will return in the following pages. Jangopāl is believed to be one of Dādū's closest disciples. We encounter his name a few times in the *Janmā Līlā*. When Dādū decided to come to Fatehpur Sikri (Sīkarī) to meet Emperor Akbar, Jangopāl awaited him there (4.20).[2] From the text, we can also infer that, on occasion, Jangopāl accompanied Dādū to meet Akbar (7.7). This would make the author an eyewitness to the event and, theoretically, add to the veracity of his account.

The DJL is a *parcaī*, a hagiography. This term was first used in 1588 by the Rajasthani Rāmānandī poet Ānantadās for the biography of Sant Nāmdev—one in the series of such works produced by this author, with probably the best-known being the *Kabīr parcaī* (Callewaert 1994, pp. 90–92; Callewaert 2000, pp. 30, 43). After the publication of the critical edition of the work (Callewaert 1988), we know that the DJL exists in two recensions encompassing (at least) eight manuscripts. The first, older recension has 425 verses with manuscripts dating from 1653, 1658, 1666, and 1711. The second, expanded recension counts 626 verses and is dated 1654, 1700, and 1739. It needs to be stressed that the second recension is replete with additions and emendations that modify and alter the image of Dādū, thereby displaying not only the changing ideology of the Dādūpanth (Callewaert 1994, p. 92) but also the changing perception of the function ascribed to a hagiography of Dādū, understood as a literary work disseminated in certain social circles. The nature of the said modifications is important, as it affords us a glimpse into the process of creating the persona of Dādū. In the present inquiry, his constructed image and the role it played in the development of the Dādūpanth will help to reveal the attitude of Dādūpanthīs toward various forms of patronage.

When reading the early Hindi hagiographies, such as the DJL, one should be aware of the various layers of meaning inherent in these texts. As pointed out by Pauwels (2010a, p. 55), hagiographic stories, while outwardly simple, convey complex information on three levels. By presenting narratives of holy men, the authors reveal not only their vision of an ideal saint (1) but also a vision of themselves and of their communities (2). Moreover, information on the creation and first-time presentation of the work is often followed by clues about the community that retells and preserves the hagiography (3).

For our present purposes, it will be vital to extract clusters of meaning pertaining, most of all, to the author and to the community responsible for expanding the text (see points 2 and 3). It is surmised that the context of patronage, itself of a changing nature, differently affected the two communities: the early circle of Dādū's disciples and the

organized, institutionalized Dādūpanth engaged in the re-composition and dissemination of Dādū's life story. To find out whether and in what way the DJL was utilized by the Dādūpanthīs in the context of patronage, we need to look at the work primarily as a tool for constructing the self-image/identity of a sect.[3] In order to reveal the impact of patronage on the composition of the hagiography and on its dissemination in manuscript form, one must scrutinize both groups representing two separate phases of the process of identity formation, which constitute also two phases of building relationships with patronage that altered those identities. When it comes to the persona of Dādū—created in the DJL and then refashioned by tradition—it will be of interest only to the extent that it reflects the process of identity formation in the Dādūpanth.

2.1. Creating the Image of Dādū as an Idealized and Sanskritized Sant

Although the earliest recension of the DJL paints a relatively restrained picture of Dādū, it is not restricted to relating facts. It is very likely that Dādū's persona was, from the very beginning, subject to idealization. However, due to the paucity of contextual, non-confessional sources, we cannot establish that with a sufficient degree of confidence. What is undisputed, though, is the considerable number of emendations and interpolations in the heavily revised manuscripts of the second recension that are concerned with refashioning the image of Dādū. This well-studied process seems to have been aimed at disassociating Dādū from his low-caste status, separating him from his Muslim roots[4], and generally shaping his persona in such a way as to fit the mold of an archetypal Sant, also by promoting Dādū's divine status.

In the oldest known non-sectarian source mentioning Dādū—a poem of Eknāth (ca. 1533–1599) from an anthology of Vārkarī Marathi verse, the *Sakal sant gāthā*—he is called a *pinjārā*, or cotton carder. He is given the same profession in the *Gāthā* of Tukārām (1598–1650) and in *Dabestān-e mazāheb* (mid-17th century) (Callewaert 1988, p. 15; Orr 1947, p. 47; Shea and Troyer 1843, p. 233). In the first recension, Dādū is also a cotton carder (*dhuniyā*) (DJL 1.6), but the second recension omits the fact of his birth in the home of a cotton carder. The case is similar to the episode of a break-in at Dādū's house—the first recension has the burglar finding threads (of cotton) (*sūta*), while the second has him finding books (3.9). It is also silent about Dādū's caste when depicting his meeting with Akbar (7.12). Similar efforts are made to conceal Dādū's Muslim origins.[5] This is visible in the case of Dādū's putative human guru, Bābā Būḍhā, whom he supposedly met at 11 years old and who might have been Shaikh Buddhan, a Qādirīyah Sufi saint living in Sambhar at the time of Akbar (Orr 1947, pp. 54–55). The second recension steers clear of this unwanted connotation by refashioning Bābā Būḍhā into simply an 'old (*būḍhā*) man', an emanation of Hari (1.7). The argument for the existence of Dādū's human guru was taken up by his disciple, Sundardās, in a striking attempt to establish orthodox legitimacy for the Dādūpanth. In the *Guru saṃpradāya*, he gives Dādū's preceptor a name of Vaiṣṇava provenance, Vriddhānanda (*vriddha* = *būḍhā*), and includes him within a lineage that goes back to Brahmā, probably emulating the strategy of the Vaiṣṇava *saṃpradāyas* (Orr 1947, pp. 52–54).

Even the first recension of the DJL suggests a supernatural element in the birth of Dādū's four children, while in the second one, Dādū's wife's impregnation is a 'miracle' (*aciraj*) (9.1). The extended recension erases Dādū's wife and mother-in-law from the scene of the burglary and replaces them with his disciples (3.9–10) (Callewaert 1988, p. 39).[6] The initial verses of the same edition depict Dādū as 'holding a body' (*tana dhārā*)[7] at the behest of Brahmā (5.1), and later as an 'ungraspable (i.e., divine) child' (*bālaka adhara*) who appears as an *avatāra* (1.6.3–5, 1.6.8). Dādū is also said to have performed miracles during his lifetime, which are too numerous to be mentioned here. However, in the fifteenth chapter of the DJL, we come across an episode worthy of special attention. Dādū, now about to die, is asked about succession. He instructs Garībdās, his eldest son and disciple, not to be hesitant about 'keeping his body' (*deha hamārī rākhau*) because it is not 'a body of five elements' (*pañca tata kī nāhīṃ deha*) and is not reflected in a mirror.[8] The disciples should

also keep an oil lamp that will burn permanently on its own. Only then will any of their future questions surely be answered (15.18.4–8). After suggesting that Dādū is a purely spiritual being, unperturbed by physical death, it seems that the text uses the symbol of a lamp to indicate the master's uninterrupted presence and confirms his identity as an *avatāra* who, after ostensibly dying, will again become one with the divine.[9]

Such attempts at deification do not automatically signify Sanskritization,[10] but the changing attitude toward caste and Dādū's Muslim roots suggest a possibility of their being manifestations of one process.[11] There are several examples pertaining to the history of the Dādūpanth that could substantiate this claim; they will be discussed later in this article.

Dādū, Kabīr and the Forming of Sectarian Identities

The emendations and intentional omissions of the second recension also aim to present Dādū in a manner befitting a true Sant, often following the pattern of the life story of Kabīr (Gold 1987, pp. 93–94). The association between those Sants is a close one. It is said that Dādū sang Kabīr's verses and, while in meditation, discussed spiritual matters with him (DJL 2.3–4). Jangopāl implies that Dādū is the incarnation of Kabīr[12]; later, the same is suggested by Akbar (4.8). Moreover, after Dādū's death, the Sants are grieving, just as they did after the demise of Kabīr (15.30). In the extended recension, the infant Dādū is found floating on water (1.6.3), just like Kabīr. This recension also has Dādū speaking with Kabīr (among other Sants and 84 *siddhās*) (15.14.2) and even *behaving* just like him in order to get away from his growing fame and crowds of people (4.1–5).[13]

The DJL displays much reverence for the famous Sant of Kāśī and there are clear structural similarities between the life stories of both Sants that embrace even the later tendency for the gradual appropriation of elements from the Brahmanic worldview. This might indicate a comparable process of developing the identities of Sants and their *panths* in two distinct periods, delineated by the changing ideological and material needs of the communities of lay devotees, *sādhus*, and singers built around these saintly figures. In the first phase, the image-building would underline the individual autonomy and authority of the Sant as a religious and social defier (an ideal, typical Sant), while the second would reflect the self-determination of a community (*panth*) in need of reaching out, for whatever reasons, to the broader cultural, religious, and political milieu (through Sanskritization).[14]

Considering the dates of Kabīr and Dādū, it would only be logical to speak of the DJL as being modeled on the life-legends of Kabīr. However, both stories seem to conform to a structural and ideological pattern that is typical of the biographies of *nirguṇa* Sants or other saints of the bhakti movement (Pauwels 2010a, pp. 66–67). The life events of Kabīr and Dādū are in general agreement with the biographies of Nāmdev, Raidās, Nānak, Pīpā, and Haridās (Lorenzen 1995, pp. 186–87). Accordingly, I think that the legends of Dādū and Kabīr, in their later, altered, and retold sectarian versions, reflect a pattern of Sanskritization of the *nirguṇī panths*.

Early sources[15] confirm Kabīr's Muslim background and *julāhā* status, but later Kabīrpanthī birth-legends—created after Anantadās' *Kabīr Parcaī* (ca. 1600)—strive to dissociate him from the context of caste and Islam (Lorenzen 1992, p. 43). The earliest extant source relating the story of Kabīr's birth is a Dādūpanthī work—the *Bhaktamāl* of Rāghavdās (1660 or 1720) (Callewaert 1978, p. 25; Callewaert 1994, p. 96; Horstmann 2000, pp. 515–16). It relates the story of Kabīr being found under a tree by a Muslim *julāhā* and, correspondingly, of Dādū being found floating on the water by a trader (*saudāgar*) (DJL 1.6.1) (Lorenzen 1992, p. 44).[16] The Kabīrpanthī legends reveal a favorable outlook on Brahmanic orthodoxy with Vaiṣṇava overtones—a trend not uncommon in the second recension of the DJL. In these legends, the issue of Kabīr's caste is not brought forth. He is unmarried, with two adopted children or, especially in the Dharamdāsī sources, is often simply an *avatāra* of the Satpuruṣa.[17] What is more important, if we turn to Kabīr's relationship with political powers, we find that, just like Dādū, he is confronted by kings (Virasimha Baghel and Sikandar Lodī) (Lorenzen 1992, pp. 14–17, 102–14), contests their authority and is

tested by them over his sainthood and wisdom; he manifests his superiority, refuses their gifts, and finally accepts the kings as disciples. These events bring out the context of social protest inherent in the spiritual message of the *nirguṇī* Sants. Accordingly, their life-legends reveal a penchant for describing the low-caste Sants' disputes with religious and political authorities who represent an unjust social system. Kabīr is a particular example of dissent, and the biographies bear witness to his fierce debates with *qāzīs*, Brahmins, and Sikandar Lodi, whom Kabīr defiantly confronts, thereby putting his life in danger. Dādū's confrontations with people of religious and social authority are frequent in the *Janmā Līlā*. In some cases, they, too, carry life-threatening risks (DJL 3.12, 15–16), but the Sant always prevails. However, his meeting with Akbar is unlike that of Kabīr and Sikandar—it is devoid of open rivalry yet is not without a perceptible underlying tension.

The stories of confronting people of superficial religiosity and those responsible for maintaining social injustice are reconciled in later sources, with the readdressing of certain sensitive notions in a manner typical of Brahmanism—the social order that the Sants were originally struggling to undermine. On the one hand, the DJL establishes Dādū's heterodoxy by placing him within the spiritual tradition (linage) of Kabīr; on the other hand, the DJL renegotiates its borders. Thus, the stories of Dādū's opposition toward *qāzīs* and Brahmins, his denial of Hindu and Muslim ritualism, and his philosophy of social equality are juxtaposed with narratives blurring his caste identity and hinting at his godlike status. These concepts address the diverse needs of the growing Dādūpanthī community, but they all work toward the same goal of establishing the ultimate authority of Dādū.

These seemingly mutually exclusive elements are an inherent trait of sectarian hagiographies. They hint at the possible risk of compromising the social position of the *panths* by watering down their original ideology. Alternatively, they can be seen as reworkings of the Sant's heterodox position, made to accommodate broader influences for the improvement of communication with a changing social base—devotees and potential patrons alike. At this point, it would be worth assuming that as they serve a community-integrating role, the hagiographies themselves and the way in which they were utilized can reveal tensions within *panths* that face the necessity of competing for resources, as well as for social and political support. In order to consider this context as a possible factor influencing the creation of the Dādū hagiography, we now need to look into the social and religious practices in which it was used as a manuscript.

3. *Dādū Janma Līlā* as Part of the Manuscript Culture

If we want to draw any useful conclusions from reading the DJL for the purposes of this article, we must start by making a distinction between its descriptive (narrative) and prescriptive (normative) aspects and choose to concentrate on the latter. A hagiography, understood as being primarily normative, is less of an autonomous literary work and more of a pedagogical tool used for advancing a certain agenda. This agenda shapes its narrative structure (generic episodes), the image of a portrayed Sant, and, as a consequence, the self-image of a community that retells and remodels the narrative. The prescriptive character of a hagiography is revealed in its rhetoric, which projects an ideal vision of reality shaped according to the general agenda. It is our task to unpack this vision and confront it with historical facts pertaining to the social practices of the religious community. Therefore, the aim is not to establish facts about the saintly figures depicted in the narratives, but instead to explore the factual or imagined consequences of proposing such-and-such an agenda for the communities that gave rise to the hagiographical legends. We assume that the agenda embraces the function(s) and goals of the text. By 'functions', we understand this as referring to those instances when the hagiography—as an oral text, a manuscript, or a printed book—is used in a social context. Only then do its 'goals' become apparent, as attempts to *implement* the projected vision and shape the social environs.

As for the function of the DJL, we can assume that it could have been used as an oral text, especially in the era preceding the institutionalization of Dādūpanth, in a manner similar to the popular *parcaīs* of Anantadās, being sung by 'traveling singers and bhaktas'

who not only disseminated the texts but also modified them (Callewaert 1994, pp. 90–91). Another example comes from the roaming Rāmanāndī ascetics supporting themselves by singing *parcaīs* and *bhajans* in villages (Pauwels 2010b, p. 523). This itinerant lifestyle was characteristic of many Sants and in the DJL, Dādū himself is often seen traveling and performing songs.[18] The hagiography of Dādū could have inspired itinerant singers and, when put into writing, this could have performed the function of an aid for Dādūpanthī preachers, especially since the *panth* (as well as the Nirañjanīs and Sikhs) had a tradition of using personal notebooks (*guṭkā*) with notes to assist oral performances (Williams 2014, p. 133). The work of those teachers exemplifies the objectives of composing and disseminating a hagiography. Filled with miraculous legends that contribute to the building of the authority and superiority of a Sant (Lorenzen 1992, p. 7), the DJL creates an ideological pattern that is ready to be utilized for a number of intents. It is easy to observe how a work such as the DJL, which describes a Sant teaching a Mughal emperor, could produce the prestige needed for expanding the community of devotees and obtaining material grants (Williams 2019a, p. 292). To understand how such a work could relate to and be used for gaining patronage, we need first to consider it within the manuscript culture of 17th-century north India.

Among the vernacular *bhakti* traditions, Dādūpanthīs, alongside Sikhs, were the first to organize their respective literature into written canons. During the initial thirty years of the 17th century, they put together a collection of Dādū's verses (*Dādūvāṇī*), a compilation of songs of five Sants (Dādū, Nāmdev, Kabīr, Raidās, Hardās) (*Pañcavāṇī*), along with two collections of verse from Dādū, various Dādūpanthī authors, and poets of Vaiṣṇava, Sufi and Sikh provenance (*Sarvāṅgīs* of Gopaldās and Rajab). This major project was part of a broader trend among North Indian bhakti communities, who began to compile their literature into written collections at roughly the same time (Hastings 2002, pp. 16–17; Williams 2014, p. 273). This broad tendency of 'scripturalization' was determined by factors that touch upon the matter of survival regarding many religious traditions of the time. The first major cause was competition among many *saṃpradāyas* of the Indo-Gangetic plain for its limited resources, such as disciples and devotees, pilgrimage routes, and centers, as well as the different forms of patronage (Burghart 1978, p. 136). The verses of Kabīr, Tulsīdās, and Harirām Vyās tell us that in the era directly preceding the discussed move toward written literature, bhakti communities were competing with *śāktas*, Nāths, and with each other[19] (Pauwels 2010b). Burghart (1978, p. 136) mentions the followers of Dādū as one of the groups that had to be challenged by the Rāmānandīs in order to consolidate their position. What followed was the process of striving for recognition through strengthening sectarian divisions by establishing authoritative lineages and building prestige by composing hagiographies (as was the case for Puṣṭimārgīs, Gauḍīyas, and Rāmānandīs) (Williams 2014, pp. 274–75). However, most importantly, investing in scriptural canons was prompted by the fact that the Mughal and Rājpūt courts were commonly using written documents for intellectual exchanges. Hence, the opportunity to present one's doctrine to potential patrons led to engagement in the intellectual culture of the courts. To achieve this, some kind of scripture seemed indispensable.

At the Mughal court, the paper book (*kitāb*) served as a primary carrier of knowledge. Abu'l-Fazl's accounts in *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* testify to the great importance of writing and books for Akbar, who initiated a translation project[20] from Indian languages into Persian and vice versa for the royal library, which gathered prose and poetical works in 'Hindi, Persian, Greek, Kashmirian, Arabic' and Sanskrit (Williams 2014, p. 278). By the same token, when describing the Hindu religious systems ('the nine schools') Abu'l-Fazl provides information on their manner of writing. For the Rājpūts, the centrality of scripture is revealed in their relationships with religious groups aspiring to patronage: only those groups possessed of textual canons maintained links with the court (Williams 2014, p. 280). A case in point is the tenure of the Kachavāhā king, Jaisingh II (1699–1743). *Saṃpradāyas* who wanted to affirm their orthodox Vaiṣṇava position, in order to remain in favor with the king, had to present

scriptural proofs in the form of commentaries on authoritative Smārta texts (Horstmann 2006a, pp. 20–21).

The role of manuscripts at many royal courts is reflected in the scriptural activities of the Dādūpanthīs and may indicate their growing concern for obtaining royal patronage. The newly formed Dādūpanthī canon was instrumental in shaping the image of a distinct community, with well-developed, scripturally attested doctrine, performing worship centered around a book—the *Dādūvāṇī*, which was used in a way analogous to the Sikh *Ādi Granth* (compiled roughly at the same time, i.e., 1604/5) (Williams 2014, p. 335). Accounts of *Dādūvāṇī* veneration are found in the hagiographical *Sant Guṇ Sāgar*, composed by Mādhavdās.[21] During worship the scripture is given a royal setting (throne and canopy) and is placed at a central point of the temple, similar to the image of a deity (Horstmann 2006b, pp. 168–69). The recitation/reading (*bāṃcata*) from the *guru grantha* and guru Garībdās' subsequent reminder to Sants that they should keep a personal copy of the *vāṇī* testifies to the custom of using written texts as aids to oral performances.[22] This can also be attested to by modern Dādūpanthī sermonizing practices. Although sermons are delivered from memory, preachers are known to keep a book at hand and quote relevant verses, if necessary. Research conducted by Horstmann (2015, pp. 36–37) confirms the use of couplets (*sākhīs*) from the *Dādūvāṇī* (Thiel-Horstmann 1992, pp. 37–38), fragments of the Rāghavdās' *Bhaktamāl*, and excerpts from the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* on such occasions, although she did not observe the use of the DJL. In fact, it is possible that the *Dādūvāṇī* was compiled from Dādū's *sākhīs*, as used in his sermons. Moreover, in all Dādūpanthī collections, *sākhīs* are organized according to a theme, which might reflect the way that compilers acknowledged the needs of fellow preachers (Horstmann 2015, p. 59).

In the DJL, Dādū is noted for preaching and delivering sermons (*kathā*) and instructions (*upadesau*) during his peregrinations (see below, Section 3.1). Although probably illiterate himself, among Dādū's closest disciples was Mohan(dās) Daftarī, probably one of the first editors of Dādū's verses, whose text is described as 'writing (*likhe*) trustworthy through the guru'[23] (DJL 13.25) (Horstmann 2006b, p. 165). His activity fits well into the text's overall familiarity with the scriptural culture: writing, books, and letters are mentioned, together with paper and other writing paraphernalia.[24]

If Dādūpanthī tradition confirms the use of documents as aids for preaching, and if the DJL relates that Dādū gave sermons and some of his utterances were immediately recorded by his disciple(s), we might infer that they could have inspired and been used by other wandering Dādūpanthī preachers. In a similar way, Dādū's biography, providing a narrative context to his sayings, could have been one of the scriptures utilized by those preachers. Thus, the involvement of Dādūpanthīs with the manuscript culture and the undoubted pedagogical potential of this hagiography seems to have been channeled through proselytic activities involving written texts.

3.1. Two Types of Manuscripts for Two Types of Patronage

The literary culture of the Dādūpanth is reflected in the wealth of well-preserved written materials. That there are many good quality Sant manuscripts coming from Rajasthan can be ascribed to factors like climate and the influence of the Jains, as well as relative political stability and the Rājpūt patronage of arts and literature (Hess 2015, pp. 122, 412–13). It was mainly this last factor that enabled the preservation of many long manuscripts of 'calligraphic quality' (Horstmann 2015, p. 45). The oldest manuscripts that have survived since the 17th century are usually those of high ceremonial value, used as objects of public veneration (e.g., the *Dādūvāṇī*) (Williams 2014, p. 296). Others, intended for everyday and private use, were preserved less frequently and were in the form of copies that display considerable wear.

The way a text such as the DJL was utilized is related to its manuscript form because the Dādūpanthīs produced different manuscripts for different types of texts and performance purposes. There were a few formats to choose from, but *pothī* and *guṭkā* became dominant. The first (from the Sanskrit *pustaka*) was chosen for vernacular scholarly treatises, designed for study by educated monks. In a manner that could be described as Sanskritizing, these texts were fashioned to conform to an imagined standard of a *śāstric* work. Written on paper, although in a format emulating old (pre-Sultanate) palm-leaf manuscripts, they relied on paratexts (e.g., titles or sacred syllables) written in Sanskrit or pseudo-Sanskrit, which modified their content (e.g., verses of Kabīr) into scholarly works (Williams 2019a, pp. 278–83). However, there were also examples of Dādūpanthī and Nirañjanī manuscripts containing Hindi translations and commentaries of popular Sanskrit works. Such texts, presented at Rājpūt courts, offered the rulers access to Sanskrit knowledge that was exchanged for material support (Williams 2019a, p. 290).

The second relevant type of manuscript, different in form and destined for texts of different content and performative function, was the *guṭkā* (from the Sanskrit *guṭīka*, 'ball'), so named because of its frequently rounded shape, resulting from sewing together many paper folios between cloth covers. Some formal features of known *guṭkā* manuscripts (a lack of paratexts, and, often, careless handwriting) tell us that they were not intended for public performances but were, rather, used as personal reference 'notebooks' and memory-aids. As such, they contain material useful for preachers (hagiographies and hymns)[25] and singers in communal worship (Williams 2019c, pp. 158–59; Williams 2019a, pp. 282–83). Even when crafted carefully, they were always of a portable size. Considered sacred, they were passed on within a spiritual lineage, from teacher to disciple (Horstmann 2006b, p. 164). Just as in the case of *pothīs* containing scholarly materials, the correspondence between format, content, and performance context also suggests a different type of patronage that texts, circulated as *guṭkās*, could have been used to obtain. In the case of Dādūpanthī *guṭkā* manuscripts, in contrast to the scholarly *pothīs*, we have texts (such as the DJL) that were disseminated through different channels and directed to a different type of audience, but that were intended for the same goal of obtaining material support.

We have already defined the DJL as scripture with a proselytic agenda, intent on producing the prestige necessary in client-patron exchanges. We have posited that it was used as a 'personal manual' by preachers, whose task it was to attract new followers. This was possible through the employment of sermons utilizing hagiographical tropes (e.g., portraying Dādū as a second Kabīr, deification, and Sanskritization) that possessed the required pedagogical and proselytic potential. However, as some parts of the hagiography, written to underline the authority of Dādū, were directed largely against royal patrons, the text could work best outside the royal context and might have been aimed at the lay community, dominated by merchants. Recruited from a broad social background, lay devotees, often hailing from merchant families, were patrons of the *panth* from its very beginnings. Educated monks, being intellectuals who were generally more dependent on royal support (Lorenzen 2014, p. 184), could live off institutions sponsored by the Rājpūt and Mughal courts; moreover, rulers have been known to award grants in favor of the Dādūpanth.[26] However, the very basis of survival for the Dādūpanth seems to have been the support of lay devotees, who may have been the 'addressees' of the hagiography. According to this text, there were many occasions for such exchanges and, in the early days of the *panth*, patronage was efficient: we learn that Dādū did not have to work, as he did not want for food or clothing (DJL 4.3). Thus, it seems that what happened at the juncture of monks' proselytism and lay patronage may be considered a major formative factor for the *panth* as a whole.[27]

Merchants were an instrumental force in this process and their ties with the Dādūpanth were strong. Monasteries of the *panth* were distributed along the main trade routes of Rajasthan (Horstmann 2000, pp. 521–22), and the output of manuscripts was the most prolific in trade towns with a major merchant population, which may mean that Dādūpanthī monasteries, as religious and educational centers, acted as a counterbalance to state institutions and were capable of attracting merchant communities (Williams 2019b, p. 199; Williams 2019a, p. 283–84). However, patronage was flowing from the main political agents to merchants as well: we know that religious leaders who had traditions with their roots in merchant communities (e.g., Jains and Puṣṭimārgīs) lobbied for the interests of their lay supporters at the Mughal court, and obtained decrees in favor of these communities (the protection of temples, pilgrimage sites, etc.) (LaRocque 2004, p. 180–81).

Merchants feature prominently in the DJL.[28] The hagiography includes them as the sponsors and main actors of many community-building moments, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, which are devoted almost exclusively to Dādū's travels. Such occasions follow a pattern, albeit without a fixed sequence. Usually, the Svāmi is invited by a follower (always mentioned by name), often a *mahājana*, to stay at his house.[29] Food (*bhojana*) is prepared, a public sermon (*kathā*) is given, *kīrtans* are performed (DJL 4.1; 12.24), and 'auspicious songs' are sung (*maṅgala gāye*) (9.19). This is sometimes coupled with the giving of instructions (*upadesau*) (14.29; 15.4) and discussions (*goṣṭi*) (15.13) (Horstmann 2006b, p. 175). All these activities occur during many festivities described using the terms *mahochau* ('[great] feast')[30] or *līlā* ('[divine] play').[31] The latter word might suggest that these festive occasions were considered joyful interactions with the divine grace represented by Dādū, hence their boisterousness. Some of them, we are told, such as the one organized by the disciple Rajab (*bhagati mahochau līlā*, 'devotional festive play' [13.11]), gathered many Sants and lasted for a few days. The numerous examples of such celebrations point to a broad lay social base of considerable means, belonging to a wide spectrum of social classes. This is especially true in some instances of Rājpūt patronage noted by Jangopāl. In one case, Kanakāvatī of Rāṭhoṛs sponsored a *mahochau* (14.7–9). However, the most lavish of all donations was a gift of seven villages by a Kachavāhā chief (11.19). The question arises here: why were these gifts accepted when other patronage initiatives from 'kings' were not? Was it because the chiefs, Rāni and Kanakāvatī, were devotees? We will consider this issue later. For the moment, let us return to the Kanakāvatī feast: after having received many gifts, Dādū displays his typical attitude, distributing (*bāṃti*) everything and keeping nothing back for himself. Other examples of Dādū's 'generosity' abound;[32] in fact, it is through this virtue that he is recognized as a future saint by Bābā Būḍhā (1.9). The guru's 'largesse', exhibited during festivities, serves a pivotal role in transforming the relationship of patronage into a community-building event. It sets an example for patrons by establishing a virtue worthy of being emulated and imbuing patronage with a religious value in an immediate and tangible manner. The *panth* grows by receiving and distributing gifts, and Dādū—remaining impoverished and rejecting self-benefit—acts as a catalyst of the offered goods, transforming and sanctifying them (into *prasād*, in the case of food),[33] thereby enabling both the purity and prosperity of the community. Patronage in the Dādūpanth model, mediated by selfless generosity—as it entails the exchange, circulation, and redistribution of goods then endowed with spiritual value—can be seen as a primary formative factor for this religious community.

Reading these events through the lens of the text's pedagogical agenda, one can suspect that the many depictions of the hosts' 'largesse'—being an extension of Dādū's own attitude—were designed to encourage patronage. This implicit design unfolded during the many festive occasions that were the scene for Dādūpanthī monks, who, embodying the Svāmi's model of itinerant lifestyle, preached to lay merchant communities, possibly using the DJL. Hence, the hagiography contained and distributed in *guṭkā* manuscripts—when compared to scholarly text in *pothīs*, which sought to exchange knowledge and religious power for material donations—strove to capitalize on the support exchanged for spiritual wisdom, primarily in terms of enlarging the community.

4. *Dādū Janma Līlā* and the Ideology of Court Patronage

This section closely scrutinizes the central narrative event of the DJL in the light of the two types of patronage outlined above. Of particular interest is the impact of court patronage on the early Dādūpanth and its relation to the primarily merchant-based patronage of the lay devotees. Establishing a position will entail tackling the issue of ambivalence toward royal patronage displayed in the DJL: on the one hand, the proven instances of Rājpūt support, on the other, the strategy of distancing the community from the royalty; and, finally, a major display of indifference toward Mughal patronage in those chapters recounting Dādū's involvement with Akbar.

4.1. *Dādū, Rulers, and Some Ideological Aspects of Rejecting Court Patronage*

Despite the fact that the material sustenance of the *panth* was dependent on lay communities to which Jangopāl's Dādū traveled on a regular basis, in the DJL, the Svāmi is often confronted by offers of patronage from the Rājpūt and Mughal courts. This matter is presented with a certain ambivalence. Dādū's initial position is laced with reluctance as he states that meeting kings is not his business (*hamārai kāja na rānā rāī* (DJL 4.14). This stance has ramifications for all his encounters, which end with rejecting any proposals of establishing a lasting relationship of patronage. At the same time, the hagiography provides instances of patronage coming from the ruling classes and, additionally, we find many similar examples in the later history of the *panth*.[34] This discrepancy can best be explained as an exemplification of a thought-out strategy in which patronage is used to create ideological leverage.

Rājā Bīrbal (1528–1586) was a Brahman poet and musician, an army general, and a friend of Akbar's. In the DJL, he acts as an intermediary between Akbar and Dādū and eventually develops a spiritual bond with the latter. Dādū's relationship with Bīrbal mirrors that with Akbar, entailing discussions on spiritual matters, the offering and refusal of lavish gifts (DJL 8.5), and Bīrbal eventually becoming enthralled by Dādū's wisdom (8.14). Dādū also enjoys a prolonged relationship with Mānsingh I (1550–1614), a Kachavāhā ruler of Āmer, Akbar's general and, like Bīrbal, one of the *navaratnas* of his court. All the usual *topoi* are at play here: a lengthy debate, Dādū being recognized as a true saint, and the king becoming his disciple (11.8.7; 11.19). Dādū is said to distribute (unspecified) gifts, but we are left to guess if they came from the *rājā* (11.8).

Nevertheless, the topos of rejected patronage surfaces when Dādū is invited by the local *rāū* to settle in Bikaner (12.14–17).[35] Jangopāl notes that his offer was not treated lightly and was put under discussion (*svāmī sevaga bāta bicārai*); only then was it turned down (12.16). Apparently, for the developing *panth*, the benefits of royal patronage were outweighed by the disadvantage of losing the mobility needed for maintaining a proselytic impetus. Moreover, the justification of the decision ('Sants should not be dependent on others') is given in ideological terms expressing fear of losing autonomy or of becoming dependent on kingly authority, which is immediately contrasted with the will of God that directs the community away from obtaining worldly favors (12.17). Sanctioning the decision with divine will clearly underlines the importance of coming to terms with the ideology of patronage but, concomitantly, testifies to the uneasy relationship between patronage and spiritual identity; it seems to suggest the potential of weakening one's identity by entering a relationship with patrons, especially royal ones. The rejection of patronage in the DJL is present only in the context of the *panth*'s contacts with royalty and is never touched upon in the many depictions of Dādū's journeys to the homes of lay devotees. The reason for that may lie in the overall intent of a hagiography to maximize the prestige of a Sant by providing examples of confrontations comparing his authority against that of kings. For Sants, one of the central elements of the spiritual path is the search for God and/or a guru. Undoubtedly, it is He who constitutes the *ultimate authority*. It seems that the depictions of encounters with kings and nobles have the purpose of evoking associations with this kind of authority, but only to further justify the rejection of any kind of worldly power, at least on a rhetorical or symbolic level. The implicit rivalry thus created,

expressing two dimensions of power, suggests the unquestioned primacy of only one of them.

This topos is offset by the example of a local Kachavāhā chieftain donating seven villages to the *panth* in fulfillment of a vow (*vrat*). This most substantial offering, and the putative relation between the chieftain and Dādū, is left uncommented upon by Jangopāl. Nevertheless, this example might prove that the hagiography's ideological impetus against royal authority went hand in hand with the practice of accepting patronage from minor rulers. We may suspect that the above case was not elaborated upon because the Kachavāhā chieftain simply lacked the authority necessary to develop his story into a case with pedagogical potential, worthy of the text's agenda. Equally, we can suspect that the topos of rejected court patronage was supported in the DJL by the notion of social and political defiance, understood as a symbolic retaliation for the marginalization of the social groups from which Sants were recruited.[36] A hagiography, such as the DJL, which is intent on creating unquestionable authority for the low-caste Sant chooses to underline his struggles with adversaries of considerable social standing. Dādū, unlike Kabīr, is not openly in conflict with kings, but he can still display his superiority by not accepting their gifts; the more powerful the potential patrons, the greater the prestige gained from declining their offers. The overall picture of the social practice linked to court and merchant patronage in the early Dādūpanth suggests that the topos of court patronage rejection was primarily a rhetorical strategy, aimed not at discouraging the establishment of *actual* relations with patrons but at strengthening the ideological agenda of the hagiography, in which the political authority of kings must be subjugated to the spiritual authority of Sants. The most vivid exemplification of this strategy is implemented in the meeting between Dādū and Akbar.

4.2. Patronage-Related Historical Background of the Dādū–Akbar Debate

The meeting of the two protagonists, being a central event of the narrative, brings together all of the *topoi* outlined in the previous section. Additionally, it allows us to paint a larger picture of the Dādūpanthī attitude toward royal power and patronage, which is particularly notable as it includes an interesting socio-religious dimension. The historicity of the meeting is not crucial to our inquiry but, nevertheless, may not be ignored as it contextualizes the main notion of authority, which will be the focus of our analysis.

According to Jangopāl, Dādū met the Emperor in Fatehpur Sikri in 1585 (DJL 16.27). Orr (1947, p. 56) divides Jangopāl's account into two parts: the first, termed the 'original work', has the characteristics of an eyewitness account, while the second is 'extravagant in the extreme'. Indeed, the latter parts of the narrative in chapters 4–7 are especially extended in the second recension, and compellingly build Dādū's authority at the cost of Akbar's.[37] Chapter 7 is an especially fitting example, with its depiction of Dādū ascending a magical, brightly shining throne and Akbar exclaiming, 'you are the master, I am a poor slave' (*tum murasida maiṃ garībgulāma*) (7.25.9–10). Orr's faith in extracting historical facts from the DJL notwithstanding, his view seems inadequate for determining the function of the text: one can easily see that the bombastic fragments of the second recension simply extend the ambitions of the 'original work' to create an unshakable image of Dādū in a sweeping and unrefined way. Although no traces of the meeting exist outside Dādūpanthī sources (Horstmann 2012, p. 210), there is some evidence supporting the historicity of the event. Firstly, Akbar supposedly resided in Fatehpur Sikri for the most part of 1585[38] and, secondly, Bhagavantdās, whose palace towered over Dādū's residence in Āmer, was closely related to the Mughal court: his sister was Akbar's wife and the mother of prince Salīm, the future Emperor Jahangir. Moreover, in 1585, Bhagavantdās married his daughter, Manbhāvatī Bāī, to prince Salīm (Orr 1947, pp. 56–57). As stated by Horstmann (2015, pp. 54–55), the proximity of Dādūpanthīs to the king makes it improbable that they would fabricate a story in which Bhagavantdās plays a considerable role in persuading Dādū to meet the Emperor and, later, acts as an intermediary (4.9–15; 5.1–3, 21).[39] What also lends credence to the historicity of the event is Akbar's unparalleled willingness to discuss religious matters

with spiritual teachers. For that very purpose, he built the Ibādatkhāna in 1575 and, three years later, began to meet there with Hindus and Jains (but, apparently, he received yogis only in his private apartments) ([Rizvi 1975](), pp. 128–29). Another factor is the flourishing of religious patronage under Akbar: beginning with his tenure, the difference between grants for Muslims and non-Muslims was gradually abolished ([Khan 2001a](), p. 281). *Jizya* was rescinded in 1564. According to [Nizami]() ([1989](), pp. 31–33), the Emperor maintained close relationships with bhakti *sampradāyas*, such as the Rādhāvallabhas, Puṣṭimārgīs, as well as with Sikhs, and conferred titles and land onto them.[40] He awarded a revenue grant to Rāmānandīs from Galta and offered a land grant to the Gauḍīya priest of Govindadev temple in Vrindavan, as well as to several temples in the Braj region ([Burchett 2012](), pp. 47, 52). To Jain monks, who were regular guests at his court, Akbar issued orders protecting cultic activities ([LaRocque 2004](), pp. 183–84). The Mughal rulers also maintained patronage over Nāths, who owned large stretches of land in Punjab. In addition, they sponsored the building of mosques, as well as Hindu temples, and were involved in settling sectarian disputes ([Copland and Mabbett 2012](), p. 118).

The above considerations, even if accepted as valid proofs, can still justify an exactly opposite view in which the historicity of the meeting is irrelevant and is subordinate to a pedagogical strategy that proves the prestige of Dādū. If read with such a mindset, the hagiography becomes, primarily, an expression of the vital goals of the *panth*, and the meeting with the Emperor, a kind of necessity. Living at the same time as Akbar and under the rule of Rājpūts deeply tied to the Mughal court ([LaRocque 2004](), pp. 192–93), Dādū simply had to be confronted by Akbar ([Callewaert 1988](), p. 12). Including this encounter in the narrative allowed for two authority-building strategies: the effective archetyping of Dādū's biography ('a Sant meets a king') and the fulfillment of an ideological agenda based on the topos of rejected court patronage. What follows is an analysis of the DJL in which the topos of *rejection* reveals, as mentioned, the tension between the two notions of authority but, more importantly, points to the possibility of reading the text as one oriented towards *gaining* patronage.

4.3. The Debate as a Discourse on Authority

While residing in Āmer, Dādū was sent for by Akbar, with Bhagavantdās acting as an intermediary. Jangopāl uses this opportunity to show Dādū's reluctance regarding establishing relations with royalty. He does this rather convincingly by depicting Bhagavantdās as being forced to send a determined courtier, who must resort to blackmail in order to compel the Sant into answering Akbar's request (DJL 4.7–15). Dādū decides to go, only after being instructed by Rām while in a state of *samādhi* (4.16). Here we are, in fact, assured that the upcoming encounter is part of God's grander scheme, and, more importantly, that Dādū is acting on God's behalf, representing his will. Especially during his meeting with Akbar, Dādū is shown as no less than an agent of God, an extension of his authority. Dādū's position is surely determined by his identity, built upon the union of his spiritual 'self' with God within him. At the other extreme are kingly identity and authority. This juxtaposition creates a pattern that unifies every one of Dādū's debates with noblemen and kings.

Jangopāl puts a strong emphasis on the confidence Dādū derives from the understanding that his life belongs to God (4.20.3), that he is at God's disposal (5.22, 6.13), like an instrument (*jantra*) in the hands of a musician (*bajāvanahārau*) (5.5). Dādū teaches Akbar about detachment from worldly passions, a practice that makes it possible to submit oneself to divine grace (6.5). Submission to God's will is available for everyone because all beings were created equal (6.7); nevertheless, Dādū's position as a teacher is unique—he embodies God's will and can channel it directly. Such a strategy of building transcendent authority only implicitly contrasts Dādū's own authority with its worldly counterpart. However, we then come across a more crude example: a revealing dialog, in which Bīrbal tells Dādū that Akbar deserves respect as an *avatāra* (6.20) and because 'the six schools[41] worship him and he is a God for Hindu and Muslims alike' (*darasana chahū karta hai sevā, hīndū turaka sabani kau devā*). Dādū answers: 'I am concentrated only on the One and do not

bow my head before any other' (*eka hī dhāūṃ, dūjai kau māthau nahīṃ nāūṃ*) (6.21). Other examples follow: Dādū ignores Bīrbal's request to humble himself before Akbar (7.3–4), remains impartial/indifferent (*nripakha*) to his greetings, and suggests that the Emperor is not pure enough (*sudhī nahīṃ*) to recognize God (7.10–11). Finally, Akbar entrusts himself to Rām (7.16) and several times tries to bestow generous gifts on Dādū, but to no avail (5.25; 7.17–18, 21, 24). After one such instance (7.21–22), Dādū again manifests his God-given authority: wealth is an obstacle on the spiritual path and, if he is serious about it, the Emperor should abandon his kingdom (*pātisāha pātisāhī choḍai*). However, later, he offers a teaching surprisingly close to Akbar's own idea of *ṣulḥ-i-kul* ('peace for all' or 'universal harmony') by saying that he should 'treat all beings with equality' (*saba jīvani sūṃ samitā kījai*) (7.24). Is Dādū relating here to the Emperor's imperial policy? Such an implication might have been the original intent of Jangopāl, but we are also justified in thinking that it is suggesting that Akbar created the said idea under Dādū's influence. This is because, in the same chapter, a fragment from the second recension states that, inspired by the Svāmi, Akbar gave a decree 'not to hurt living beings' (7.25.1). In reality, Akbar only banned cow slaughter in the empire and no evidence supports the role of Dādū (Chandra 1992, p. 31; Khan 2001b, p. 21). Finally, the chapter concludes with a substantial interpolation regarding the Sant's miraculous powers that compel Akbar to totally submit to him (7.25.10). Here, the central role is played by the scene already mentioned (see Section 4.2) of Dādū ascending to a radiant throne. This passage reminds the reader of both the Throne Verse and the Light Verse of the Quran (2.255, 24.35) expressing, respectively, the unsurpassable authority and luminosity of Allah. Furthermore, this 'throne of light' evokes the Sufi and Shia notion of 'Muhammadan light' (*nūr muḥammadī*), this being a pre-cosmic divine spirit manifesting itself in Muhammad and earlier prophets. Therefore, this scene might be read as claiming the superiority of the spiritual authority of Dādū over the authority of Akbar, which is worldly in essence, but nevertheless displays the pretense of divine legitimation by recognizing the Emperor as the bearer of 'divine light' (see below). All the above cases are telling examples of the narrative's tendency to subdue Akbar's authority, although in a peaceful manner (unlike in the case of Kabīr and Sikandar Lodi, as related by Anantadās). However, the DJL maintains a tension between its general agenda, which confronts both interlocutors, and an opposing tendency, which brings them together by implicitly touching upon the corresponding ideas of *ṣulḥ-i-kul* and *nirpakha*.

Ṣulḥ-i-kul had at its core some (theological) suppositions that reflect centuries-long interactions between Indo-Islamic traditions at a historical moment ripe for religious dialog. The Sant movement (including the Sikhs) represented the spirit of this time by seeking to obliterate the boundaries between sectarian differences on the grounds of a perennial vision of mystical experience, based on internalized worship. While the roots of Akbar's policy go back to the philosophy of the great Andalusian Sufi scholar Ibn 'Arabī (1165–1240) and his concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* ('Oneness of Being'),[42] it can be perceived as being indebted to the bhakti-related traditions that Akbar so eagerly sponsored. However, this policy highlights his authoritative role as both a sovereign and a spiritual authority: he recognizes that all religions are paths to one God, refrains from discriminating between them, and guarantees religious tolerance, but he also serves as a guide, channeling the God-given *nūr* or *farr-i izidi* ('divine light') and displaying himself daily as a *darśan* to his subjects, much like a Hindu deity.[43] The affinity of *ṣulḥ-i-kul* to Dādū's own spiritual views is also reflected in some theological notions prevalent in Akbar's infamous royal cult of *tawḥīd-i-ilāhī* ('Oneness of God'). Akbar saw proper worship as being separate from the prescriptions of any religion. Believing that God was formless, he frowned upon external rituals and was disposed towards an internal cult (Ali 1980, pp. 326–27). He also maintained that studying scriptures and the guidance of religious leaders was subordinate to personal experience (Chandra 1992, p. 34). However, *ṣulḥ-i-kul* was definitely not a religious doctrine but was rather a state policy implemented to ensure socio-political stability. Somewhat similar, the *tawḥīd-i-ilāhī*, although famed as the 'syncretic religion of Akbar', was not a religious system; neither was it universal. Better understood as the Emperor's private cult, it also had

specific and pragmatic undertones. To consolidate his power at the court, Akbar formed an elite order of his most loyal disciples (*murid*), for whom he held a position analogous to a Sufi *murshid*.[44] With the qualities mentioned above, the idea of Akbar's 'peace for all' embodies the proximity of socio-religious thinking to the bhakti ethos through its affinity with Dādū's notion of *nirpakha*, as expressed in the *Dādūvāṇī* (Chandra 1992, p. 34). Both concepts share a number of traits. Dādū's notion rests upon the idea of one formless God (*Dādūvāṇī* 6.21)[45] that is accessible through personal devotion, regardless of religious norms. To become *nirpakha*, i.e., 'non-sectarian' (16.10), means attaining the One and relying only on Him, not on religious traditions (16.61), which, if devoid of devotion, appear as deceit (*kapaṭa*) (14.33). Thus, bearing external religious marks (14.24), worshipping idols (13.122), frequenting temples and mosques (16.43–44), going on pilgrimages (13.130), or studying scriptures (4.203) pales in comparison with the cult of God within (4.260–263) as performed by *sumiraṇ* (remembrance of the Name) (10.14). *Nirpakha* is also the *madhi mārga* ('middle way'): a path uniting the 'extremities' of asceticism and householder life through bhakti (16.29)[46]—which can be interpreted as interior worship (as in Rajab's *Sarvāṅgī*) and/or selfless service (Misra 1984, p. 47). Lastly, *nirpakha* denotes impartiality—a disposition known by Rajab and Kabīr as *samatā* or *samasarasa* (Callewaert 1978, pp. 328–29). It stands for the ability to perceive the diversity of the world in terms of a unified whole; hence, Dādū's call to Akbar to treat all beings equally. It is also manifest in the Sant's aversion toward discriminating between castes (13.116) and in his faith that all beings can live in non-hostility (*nirvairī*) (29.4).

A word needs to be said about *nirpakha* in its social dimension of 'impartiality', which supports the equality of castes. Chandra (1992, p. 35) might be right in proclaiming that Dādū did not believe that this idea could be 'supported by royal authority' because he saw the state as an 'upholder of hierarchy in society.' Undoubtedly, Akbar's policy did not seek to obliterate differences of a *social* nature. This surely could have influenced Dādū's attitude, but whether it was a key matter for Jangopāl remains debatable, as the theme of social equality, although present in the DJL,[47] is not central to the dialog. When a *nirpakha*-related idea appears in the debate (6.4–10), it is there to illustrate an epistemic and ethical quality (nonattachment through non-differentiating).

The two notions, serving as an implicit ideological background for the discussion, created a platform for (potential) communication. Every one of the three aspects of *nirpakha*—internal worship, 'non-sectarianism', and impartiality (non-differentiating)—is somehow reflected in the policy of *ṣulḥ-i-kul*. The second and third aspects in particular translate well into an idea of religious tolerance that would support social order in a multicultural society. For Akbar, a saint proclaiming such truths would probably be worthy of support. We can even speculate that an Emperor implementing a state policy that sits well with so many root ideas of the Sant tradition could have also been perceived as an attractive patron. Thus, the postulate of religious tolerance would have naturally served to lessen the ideological distance between the two interlocutors. However, this proximity was not capitalized upon. In fact, we see that possible communication was sacrificed in the name of the authority-aggrandizing agenda of the hagiography. What is more, the said affinity was again used to distinguish the position of Dādū by suggesting that he planted the seed of *ṣulḥ-i-kul* in the Emperor's mind. For Jangopāl, even the possibility of communication on the grounds of a shared ideology could not be realized through partnership, but only through an asymmetrical guru–disciple relationship (suggesting, perhaps, that patron–client relations would be equally asymmetrical). This can be surmised because Akbar can establish a rapport with Dādū and only (re)gain some sort of authority by entering into such an arrangement and becoming Dādū's *siṣa*. This dominant model of building human relationships reveals the text's agenda, in which an unequal distribution of power is accepted as axiomatic.

In the next example, we see the most explicit juxtaposition of two ideas of authority in the DJL. When instructing Dādū on how to behave in front of the Emperor, Bīrbal praises him as an *avatāra* and a *devā*—words indicating a status of sanctity and authority. When used by a Hindu to describe a Muslim ruler, these terms, inadequate as they may seem, enable us to draw some useful conclusions. They express a naïve mode of understanding that might simply reflect an opinion of a (Hindu) courtier and close friend of Akbar, or—more importantly—a popular understanding of the Emperor by the non-Muslim populace as a sovereign of a great empire with an unheard-of interest in religion and spiritual aspirations.

It is obvious that Akbar never explicitly proclaimed himself a deity, let alone an *avatāra*. Nonetheless, Akbar's rule was unusual since—by a series of manifestations of power—he made himself an 'embodiment of the Empire' and concomitantly established a spiritual authority that was 'unprecedented in previous Indo-Muslim experience' (Richards 1998, pp. 128–29). The ideology of his imperial rule, created by Abu'l-Fazl, abounds with instances of conferring onto the Emperor many forms of spiritual excellence. Hardy (1985, pp. 114–17) opines that Abu'l-Fazl's Akbar was no ordinary human being but instead a king of 'cosmic status'; he was the most excellent expression of God's will; he was 'the spirit of the world'; he was a king through obedience to whom men could truly worship God; he possessed an insight into the esoteric nature of things. This last quality supposedly made Akbar an authority for Muslim and Hindu ascetics, who 'daily have their eyes opened' by him (Hardy 1985, p. 121). Furthermore, Abu'l-Fazl created Akbar's genealogy by making him an heir of divine light, carried through 52 generations—from Adam, through the biblical prophets, to a line of Turko-Mongol rulers. Accordingly, Abu'l-Fazl states that Akbar is closer to God than most men and embodies the ideal of a Perfect Man (*insān-i kāmil*; originally an epithet of Muhammad), destined to bring people to righteousness (Richards 1998, pp. 125, 143). Many practices at Akbar's court and his royal policies seem to support Abu'l-Fazl's exuberant claims. We have already witnessed Akbar assuming religious authority by embracing a *murshid*-like role for the initiated into *tawḥīd-i-ilāhī* and the use of *darśan*, which apparently inspired worship by the masses, who believed that the Emperor had healing and wish-granting powers (Rizvi 1975, pp. 407–8). He also ordered the phrase *Allah-o Akbar* to be used in official correspondence and engraved on coins. Seeing submission to the sovereign as submission to God, he introduced the practice of prostration for the initiated.[48] In 1579, Akbar compelled the court *ulamas* to sign a decree recognizing him as an arbiter of religious matters; he also manifested his authority as an *imam* by publicly reciting the *khutba* (Fisher 2018).

These examples indicate that Bīrbal's view of Akbar has some historical grounding. The full extent of Jangopāl's knowledge of Akbar remains unknown, but the extravagant opinions put into Bīrbal's mouth cause us to think that he was aware of the Emperor's spiritual ambitions. Likewise, the remark about the equal treatment of all beings implies that he was cognizant of the 'peace for all' policy. By acknowledging this ideological context, we can observe how the image of Akbar was fitted into the authority-maximizing agenda of the DJL. In creating this image as *contrasted* with that of Dādū, Jangopāl corresponds with Abu'l-Fazl in building 'an ideology of authority and legitimacy', showing, as Abu'l-Fazl did, his master's 'superiority to ordinary men' (Richards 1998, p. 140). This confirms our supposition that the meeting of both 'masters' has to be read as a clash of authorities that, for Jangopāl, represented *the* perfect pedagogical opportunity to prove whose eyes should be opened by whom in religious matters.

Jangopāl deliberately exaggerates the spiritual status of Akbar—through Bīrbal's words, he inflates the Emperor's position, only in order to effectively diminish it later. This is achieved by confronting Akbar's supposedly semi-divine persona with the wisdom and miracle-working of the self-denying Dādū, whose authority comes from an intimate bond with Rām. The implication seems to be that Akbar, not being rooted in the ethos of bhakti but still demanding respect on spiritual grounds, appears to Dādū as a false guru. On the other hand, if Jangopāl saw Akbar as a proficient politician, then it was only as one who

established a 'sacred kingship' in which his loyal 'disciples' found religious significance in implementing state policies. In this case, too, conferring religious sanctions on state activities could only have inspired distrust in Dādū. In this way, Akbar appears, as odd as it may sound, to be an incompetent theocrat. However, as far as social values are concerned, Akbar, by definition, also stands devoid of authority as *the* upholder of social injustice. Thus, the DJL takes upon itself the role of expressing a social critique through the persona of a low-caste Sant.

Akbar's royal cult, bound by ties of loyalty, was somewhat evocative of guru-centered *panths*, but, being state-centered and socially elitist at its core, it was antithetical to the Sant ethos (Rizvi 1975, p. 379). For Dādū, loyalty was a salient issue, but it was defined exclusively by obedience to Rām. Therefore, he might have taken Akbar's offer of establishing a patron-client relationship as endangering this central bond and not as simply expressing the Emperor's willingness to obtain spiritual teachings. Hence, the DJL raises doubts about entering into relations with political powers that can potentially entail a loss of self-determination for the whole community.[49] There emerges a notion of endangered autonomy. However, on the upside, there is the idea that Dādūpanthīs can prosper without the support of kings. I see this as one of the two most important *topoi* of the DJL concerning patronage, the first one being the rejection of royal patronage. Both of them work to impart an inviolable spiritual authority to Dādū (and Rām).

Acknowledging the notion of authority as a central ideological theme is worthwhile only if we care to look at the DJL as being engaged with matters of patronage, i.e., as a document providing insights into its early history and, more to the point, as a pedagogical tool created to *obtain* patronage. With such an assumption, the debate between Akbar and Dādū manifests itself as a central point of the hagiography. Yet the question of why Dādū rejected Mughal patronage still awaits a comprehensive treatment. The simplest answer to this question would be that he and his community simply did not need it. The text itself explicitly suggests this (4.3; 7.19). The fear of becoming dependent on royal support has to be acknowledged as an additional factor. However, both of these answers are not immediately related to (detract from) the ideology of the DJL—its authority-aggrandizing and pedagogical agenda. Making sense of the agenda means combining it with the notion of patronage. Therefore, if we consider that the DJL was circulated in a *guṭkā* manuscript that was used as a 'manual' for itinerant Dādūpanthī monks to preach to lay devotees, including merchants, we will be able to postulate that the emphasis put on Dādū's meeting with the Emperor—*especially* his declining royal support—and the depiction of Dādū's 'generosity', displayed during numerous festivities organized by lay donors, was a conscious effort to use the Svāmi's authority, magnified in this way, *together with* the image of a good bhakta-*cum*-patron to secure a further expansion of the community by encouraging continuous support from the laymen. Nonetheless, the DJL situation should *not* lead us to the conclusion that the early Dādūpanth renounced court patronage, nor even that Dādū himself did not receive royal support. There is evidence to the contrary in both instances. What seems to be the case is that Jangopāl's hagiography was not designed to be used in a court environment. For the purposes of obtaining royal support, the *panth* simply used other texts. There is a paradox at work here: as a narrative set in kingly courts, the DJL depicts the rejection of patronage, but ultimately seeks to capitalize on the re-enactments of that rejection (sermons utilizing fragments of the DJL) to create opportunities for eliciting support from different sources. However, the performative contexts thus created could be attractive only for an audience who were susceptible to the ideological force of a narrative with a Mughal emperor deprived of authority by a low-caste saint. This very context of affirming the saint's authority was also suitable for triggering the topos of autonomy because Dādū and his emerging community stood as worthy of support, not only as representing spiritual superiority but also as forming the nucleus of a new polity, with 'laws and structures of authority and administration' (Williams 2019b, pp. 192, 197).

5. Changes in Dādūpanthī Ideology and Identity under Royal Patronage in the 18th Century

This section offers a brief overview of changes in the Dādūpanth ideology in the 18th century, as seen through the lens of client–patron relations. The ideology in question is represented by the two analyzed *topoi* which, in turn, caused considerable identity shifts in the *panth*. Thus, to get a clear picture of this ideological evolution, we need to scrutinize the changes in identity and their relation to patronage. The material will be provided by glimpses of Dādūpanth history under the rule of Jaisingh II (1699–1743) and by the history of Nāgās, one of the *panth*'s sub-branches.

The Dādūpanth did not exist as a single and organized community before the end of the 17th century (Bahuguna 2009, pp. 27–32). It underwent a process of institutionalization under Jaitrām, who held the *gaddī* (seat) at Naraina from 1693 to 1732. Jaitrām established the *mahant* at Naraina as the supreme authority in matters of orthopraxy. He laid down the code of conduct for the *sādhus*, a code of respect for the *mahant*, rules of ritual (including a formal initiation) and communal celebrations, as well as a code of dress. During the rule of Jaitrām, the *panth* of *sādhus* consisted of fifty-two branches distributed among six groups, of which only the Nāgās retained an independent status. They claimed descent from Dādū's disciple, Sundardās (the Elder)—a Rāṭhor Rājpūt from Bīkāner, born Bhim Singh, who had pursued a military career before joining Dādū. His disciple, Prahlāddās, a former *rājāpurohita* of Sundardās' family, established a line of *sādhus* that attracted men of Rājpūt background. His most distinguished disciple was Hari Singh, later Haridās—a younger brother of Mānsingh of Āmer. The lineage of Prahlāddās and Haridās had a distinct character from the onset, owing to its Rājpūt roots and to the fact that both teachers had only limited contact with Dādū and his other disciples (Hastings 2002, pp. 161–76). The Nāgas, initially interested in literary production, began cultivating a militant ethos at the end of the 17th century (Horstmann 2000, pp. 538–39). In the latter half of the 18th century, they were organized into *akhāṛās* (in the sense of 'regiments').

Two Dādūpanthī sources, the *Bhaktamālā* of Rāghavdās (1660) and the *Bansadīpikā* of Mangaldās (19th century), not only prove the growing importance of Nāgās but also provide insights into the changed perceptions of their identity. Rāghavdās, himself of Haridās' lineage, sees the Dādūpanthī *sādhus* primarily as men worthy of praise for their literary skills, knowledge of yoga, Veda, and *śāstras*, or for their miraculous powers. In contrast, Mangaldās strongly underlines the aspect of social hierarchy by relating to Dādū's relationship to the ruling house of Āmer and to the Kachavāhā/Rāṭhor roots of the Nāgās (strongly underlines the aspect of social hierarchy by relating Dādū's relationship to the ruling house of Āmer with the Kachavāhā/Rāṭhor roots of the Nāgās) (Hastings 2002, pp. 178; 194–203).

In the Dādūpanth, the method of distributing grants developed toward a more and more organized model. A comparison of the accounts of the DJL and the *Jayatprakāś* of Jñāndās (composed before 1872) shows, firstly, that patronage was increasingly provided by courts and, secondly, that the method of allotting goods evolved from an immediate redistribution of spontaneous gifts to an institutionalized model in which gifts were distributed according to certain rules and were handled by a storehouse-keeper (*bhaṇḍārī*). Most frequently, perhaps even in Dādū's times, such grants were given as part of a *sadāvrat*—a continuous effort to provide sustenance to a community. This type of patronage involved both the period of wandering (*rāmat*) and residency for the rainy season (*caumāsā*). In the first instance, food and provisions were supplied to whole villages in which the *sādhus* were staying; in the second, the abbot and the monks were invited by a host. If they were received by a royal court, the ruler would sometimes be given the *darśan* of the abbot, invited for a communal meal (*paṅgat*), and offered *prasād*. Many examples support the claim that there was a close relationship between the *panth* and the Rajasthan courts. During Jaitrām's tenure, a *sadāvrat* grant (1701) and a *rāmat* grant, as well as the annual *melā* at Naraina (1732) were sponsored by the court of Marwar. *Mahant* Kṛṣṇadev (1732–1753) was given land in Meṛtā by Abhaysiṅgh, the Mahārājā of Jodhpur. *Mahant* Cainrām (1753–

1780) received charitable grants (including the realized revenue from a village) for the Naraina temple from the Mahārājās of Jodhpur in the 1760s; similarly, the activities of the *mahant* Nirbhairām (1780–1814) were sponsored by the Mahārājās of Jaipur and Jodhpur (Horstmann 2000, pp. 539–58). The prosperity of the *panth*, then, was becoming more and more reliant on the generosity of the rulers. However, as a consequence—during the tenure of Jaitrām, coinciding with the religious reforms of Jaisingh—the alliance with political powers began compromising the *panth*'s ideological coherence.

Savāī Jaisingh II inherited the throne of the Kingdom of Āmer in 1699, but it was not until 1713 that, having restored his position at the Mughal court, he began pursuing his political ambitions. Consolidating his political power meant distancing himself from the Mughals by implementing a new vision of kingship, with himself as a revitalized version of the Hindu *dharmarājā*. This called for an ideology unifying the sectarian disparities. He found this in an orthodox ('Vedic') interpretation of Vaiṣṇavism, which had been the religious tradition of his family, the Kachavāhās, from the 16th century. The rules of Vaiṣṇava *dharma* were based on a Gauḍīya position, supplemented mainly by the Puṣṭimārgīyas; their joint efforts were used to uphold the king's political vision (Horstmann 2011, pp. 188, 198). Their orthodoxy underlined the role of the 'Vedic' rituals—*purāṇic* in character and with dominant Vaiṣṇava elements. The political role of such rites found its ultimate expression in Jaisingh's two horse sacrifices (1734 and 1741). These, together with the building of the Kalkī temple in his new capital, Jaipur, revealed the king as an upholder of *dharma*, able to precipitate the end of *kaliyuga* or even to become Kalkī himself (Horstmann 2006a, pp. 18, 31–32). Jaisingh's religious policy had far-reaching consequences for the heterodox *saṃpradāyas*, such as the Dādūpanthīs. In particular, the new *bhakti* sects opposing *varṇāśrama-dharma*, considered by the king as undermining ancient beliefs, were pressed to nominally accept the identity of one of the four orthodox Vaiṣṇava schools (*catuḥsaṃpradāya*) or to face the risk of either being exiled or losing their leaders (Horstmann 2011, pp. 184–85). In 1718 and 1723, Jaisingh called two conferences for the purpose of unifying and legitimizing Vaiṣṇava communities as following *śāstric* notions of doctrine and practice. He went so far as to give sects an ultimatum that they either ally with the *catuḥsaṃpradāyas* or produce textual proof of doctrinal independence (Hastings 2002, pp. 92–98). He also had an ambition of regulating the lifestyle of *sādhus* and imposing rules of social behavior. Intent on retaining separation between castes, as well as between the Hindu and Muslim communities, in 1725 and 1733, he wrote letters to Dādūpanthīs, urging them '(. . .) to break their contacts with the Muslims' (Khan 2002, pp. 220–21).

In general, reforms in the *panth* enacted during the tenure of Jaitrām express the policy of Jaisingh. This is discernible in the rules forbidding *mahants* to be recruited from non-Brahmins, forbidding Muslims and unclean castes to participate in communal meals and female renunciants (*sādhvīs*) to be accepted into the order (albeit in the Jaipur area only). In spite of the paucity of proofs for a direct influence of Jaisingh on the Vaiṣṇavization of the *panth* in this period, it seems improbable that, considering their position in the region, the Dādūpanthīs could have afforded to ignore the ideological pressures from the court. This has led Hastings to postulate that around the time of the conferences, the *panth* pledged to comply with Jaisingh's vision and adopted a nominal Vaiṣṇava identity (Hastings 2002, pp. 99–104, 288). Thus, the Vaiṣṇavization and Sanskritization of the *panth*, the effects of which are still visible today, may have been triggered by the necessity to stay within the orbit of court patronage.

A further identity shift in the Dādūpanth—based on the aforementioned processes, but initiated in the second half of the 18th century by the Nāgās—was related to patronage in a more complex way. From the mid-18th century until the disbanding of their armed groups (*jama'at*) in 1938, Nāgās constituted the majority of all Dādūpanthī *sādhus*. Exhibiting a distinct identity but retaining influence over the *panth* as a whole, they introduced rites and beliefs incorporated from mainstream Hinduism and Sikhism, which undermined the integrity of the original Dādūpanthī ethos: the worship of *Dādūvāṇī* in book form, the introduction of pilgrimage sites, the building of *dādūdvārās*, and the worship of Hanuman.

Nāgās enjoyed regular patronage from the kingdoms of Jodhpur, Koṭa, and Būndī, being employed as part of their regular armies. They found a generous patron in Pratap Singh (1764–1803) of Jaipur and, from 1797, received regular pay as soldiers used to suppress rebellions and collect taxes.

During the 18th century, the *panth*, more and more reliant on the support of the courts, made the first attempt at determining its ideology, rules of behavior, and, eventually, its sense of identity. This process was closely interlinked with and determined by the religious policy of Jaisingh, which must have been a serious challenge for a heterodox and egalitarian community. At the risk of losing state patronage, the Dādūpanthīs adopted a Vaiṣṇava identity—an enduring change that proved to be emblematic of their Sanskritization. In this sense, patronage may be termed the *cause* of the shift in their identity and ideology, enabling the adoption of alien values, while in the latter half of the century, it became a factor *intensifying* the different displays of said shift, initiated by the Nāgās. It seems that in the case of the Nāgās, patronage did not directly provoke an identity change, but surely *enhanced* an already existing (sub)identity (and sub-ideology?), thereby intensifying the ongoing process of Sanskritization that encompassed the whole Dādūpanthī *sādhu* community ([Hastings 2002](), pp. 227, 232, 258). Possessing a hybrid Rājpūt-Sant identity, living off warfare, and extensively supported by the courts, the Nāgās expanded the ideology of the *panth* and tested the limits of its integrity. Both trends indicate Sanskritization and share common tendencies: strengthening relations with royal power, confirming the dominant position of the higher castes, and a turn toward Vaiṣṇava practices. Even a brief review of the history of Dādūpanthī patronage relations reveals a reality that is inconsistent with the contents of the patronage-related *topoi* described in this paper. As the *panth* became more and more reliant on the endorsement and aid of royal power, the topos of autonomy, as articulated in the DJL, was transformed into something akin to a *myth* utilized to retain authority over the *panth*. Earlier, such a notion might have been useful for a community in a formative stage that demanded a stable identity. As such, the DJL might have been formed into a pedagogical tool for preaching against the status quo in the name of ideological purity. However, it appears that in the latter phase of Sanskritization—which undermined the cohesion of the *panth* and unveiled it as a 'subject' produced within a discourse dominated by institutionalized forms of power—the topos of autonomy appears to have lost its community-forming potential. Likewise, the topos of patronage rejection—still active in the times of Garībdās, who is said to refuse gifts from Jahangir[50]—seems to have become obsolete in post-18th century texts that bear witness to an increased role of royal patronage. What remained is the authority-aggrandizing agenda itself, cultivated by Mangaldās, who asserted the superiority of Dādūpanthī *sādhus* over kings ([Hastings 2002](), pp. 37–39, 212–13). However, this statement seems to be unconnected with matters directly concerning patronage.

6. Conclusions

The analyzed Dādūpanthī texts, composed between the 17th and 19th centuries, offer glimpses into the reciprocal relationship between patronage and ideology. However, in the hagiography of Dādū, this relationship is obscured by two central patronage-based *topoi* that undermine the nature and intensity of patron–client relationships known from the later history of the Dādūpanth. Nevertheless, as the present investigation has proven, paradoxically, both *topoi* could be interpreted as a means of establishing patronage by fashioning the text into a pedagogically efficient tool for recruiting new supporters from the merchant community. Therefore, undoubtedly, in the case of the DJL, patronage can be viewed as determining the ideological import.

The idea of lay patronage brings up the notion of Dādūpanthī identity, linked to the 'strategy' of creating an authoritative image of Dādū. In the analyzed cases, client–patron reciprocity entails identity-building, influenced by the ideology of authority. On the one hand, a Dādūpanthī identity is formed by underlining the infallible persona of its leader; on the other hand, we can see how obtaining patronage contributes to the expansion of

the supporting community, and how it eventually shapes its identity by securing the new devotees' frequent contact with Dādū and the *sādhus* through communal feasts. This can not only be inferred from the structure of the two *topoi* themselves but also from the manner of distribution of the DJL manuscripts. Brought to the ears of the lay populace by itinerant preacher-monks—who carried it in easy-to-handle, bound notebooks—the DJL stood in contrast with scholarly manuscripts intended for circulation at royal courts. Its form and its content—the idea of saintly authority, always in relation to patronage—suggest that the text was intended to encourage potential patrons and inspire a sense of belonging to a community led by a charismatic figure, provided that the patrons-to-be were open to the kind of discourse in which a low-caste Sant is preaching to an Emperor who represents spiritual hubris and social injustice. Thus, in the above case, the ideology of authority can be seen as encouraging patron–client relations, which, in turn, shape and sustain the identity of an *emerging* community. This observation pertains to the internal movement from ideology to patronage in the mutual relationship between those phenomena. The identity (of the archetypal Sant and his emerging merchant-based community) it produces, although marked by Sanskritization, is characterized by autonomy and authority (supported by the two *topoi*) and a fairly high level of stability and coherence ('first phase', see Section 2.1). Accordingly, the Dādūpanth's closer relationship with royal power exemplifies an internal movement from patronage to ideology. The necessity of obtaining and sustaining royal support reveals new types of identity, emerging under the strong influence of the Vaiṣṇava and Nāgā/Rājpūt ethos and under the political pressure exerted by the court of Jaisingh ('second phase'). In this way, the identity of the *mature community* is revealed as being produced by a discourse of power. It is characterized by intensified Sanskritization, lesser coherence, and even fragmentation, caused by adopting numerous new traits that are inconsistent with the (original) ethics and heterodox ethos of the *panth*. In effect, we get an image of a community slipping into disintegration. This is perhaps confirmed by the fact that the Dādūpanthī sources make no reference to the disparity between the declared identity and the identity emerging from cultural practice (Hastings 2002, p. 103). This, in turn, might be evidence that the *panth* considered identity changes as being imposed and a threat to integrity.

It seems, however, that the emerging, altered modes of Dādūpanthī identity cannot be tackled without acknowledging the Vaiṣṇava elements present in the Sant way of thought *before* Dādū. Thus, the politics of imposing a nominal Vaiṣṇava identity onto the *panth* in 18th-century Rajasthan could be seen as merely an intensification of a much longer, more 'organic', and less abrupt process of identity-formation of the North Indian Sants, based on quite different sources. This viewpoint could, in theory, eliminate even the need to perceive the 'new' identity as 'imposed'. Instead, it might be possible that the extrinsic identity assumed during the Jaisingh reforms, necessary to secure patronage, was a 'pragmatic' one, i.e., already negotiated, with previously worked-out patterns of self-defining behavior adopted as a tactic to ensure survival. This would facilitate the explanation of Dādūpanthī Vaiṣṇavism as an element of a broad identity-project consisting of many context-dependent identities that can be 'activated' according to the group's needs (Levitan and Carr-Chellman 2018). Furthermore, the modern Dādūpanthī orientation toward Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy (Gold 1987, pp. 94–95; Hastings 2002, p. 103), and the rapid shift in the Jaisingh/Jaitrām era, could be counted as consecutive developments in a long process of identity-formation that reveals the general propensity of the pre-Dādū Sant tradition toward Vaiṣṇavism, showing the multifaceted origins of the Sant movement that brings together Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* with Sufi and yogic (Nāth) influences.[51]

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Notes

1　Chapter and verse number follow the edition of *Dādū Janma Līlā* by Callewaert (1988).

2　There were actually three disciples of Dādū bearing the name Gopāl, out of whom the author of the DJL supposedly lived in Fatehpur Sikri (Orr 1947, p. 209; Callewaert 1988, p. 83).

3　Throughout the article, the term 'sect' is used to indicate both *panth* and *saṃpradāya*. They cover similar semantic ground, with *panth* usually (but not exclusively) used to denote religious movements from the Sant tradition (Lochtefeld 2001, pp. 497–98; Wood 2008).

4　However, it is crucial to acknowledge the ties that Sants have with Indian Sufism (cf. Gold 1987, pp. 201–13). As far as this section is concerned, it is worth noting that the figures of shaikhs in the Sufi hagiographical literature were often presented in an exaggerated, authority-emphasizing manner (e.g., by stressing their supernatural powers and miracle-workings) that could have influenced not only the 'Vaishnava *bhaktamālas* and Sikh *janamsākhīs*' (Digby 2003, p. 238), but perhaps also the hagiographies of Sants.

5　Evidence for Dādū's Muslim background is given by Orr (1947, pp. 50–51); e.g., his name is supposedly a distorted version of Dāūd or a diminutive of Allāhdād, although Horstmann (2012, p. 209) considers 'Dādū' to be a respectful Rajasthani term for 'grandfather').

6　This tendency might simply indicate that the authors of the second recension of the DJL were ascetics. In the initial period (1603–1693), the leadership of the community of Dādū's disciples lay in the hands of his family members. All were celibate, except for Maskindās (the younger brother of Garībdās) (Orr 1947, p. 191). According to some sources, the *gaddī* was, for some time, held by two daughters of Dādū. Moreover, after the death of Faqirdās (1693), his aunt took over the role of *mahant*. Nonetheless, after this mentioned period, the male ascetic fraction began to dominate the leadership of the sect and 'the opinions of householders' (Hastings 2002, pp. 39–40).

7　All translations are the author's unless marked otherwise.

8　*Deha hamārai hai pari nāhīṃ jyuṃ drapana maiṃ dīsai chāhī.* 'I have a body, but not one reflected in a mirror' (DJL 15.18.5). Here, Dādū could be suggesting that his body has become invisible, like a transformed body of a yogin (Cf. DJL 15.31.2–3 where Dādū's physical body is described as disappearing soon after death and 15.31.5–6, where Dādū is said to have 'met God' through his 'subtle body' (*kāyā sūkhima*) [15.31.5–6]) (On the power of the yogin to make his body invisible, see Patañjāli's *Yogasūtra* III.21; on *haṭhayoga* as bestowing immortality and transforming the body, see *Haṭhapradīpikā* 1.9; 3.3; 3.87–88; 4.48; 4.103). Furthermore, one can observe that the extended recension endows the process of transferring authority from Dādū to Garībdās with symbols of yogic legitimation (on the complex and uneasy relationship between Sants, Nāths, and *haṭhayoga*, see Horstmann (2014, 2021)).

9　Later, in the same passage, Dādū is given the status of a primordial being, existing before creation (DJL 15.18.21).

10　I will use Sanskritization to designate the process of social emancipation of low-caste peoples through the deliberate adoption of the social and religious practices of the higher castes, not necessarily Brahmins. Hinduization, in turn, is the shaping of a religious tradition in order to conform it to the orthodox standards of *purāṇic* Hinduism (Lorenzen 1981, pp. 161–62) (cf. https://lubin.academic.wlu.edu/sanskritization-brahmanization-hinduization, accessed on 4 April 2022).

11　Striking examples of the relatively recent Sanskritization pertaining to Dādū suggest it as a longstanding and probably still ongoing process (especially as the sect's identity shifts toward Vaiṣṇava). In *Dādū Gāyatrī*, penned by the 19th-century poet, Mangaldās, a Nāgā Mahant, Dādū is an *avatāra* of Niranjan (i.e., Viṣṇu). One contemporary Dādūpantī author made Dādū into an incarnation of the Vedic *ṛṣi* Sanaka, while another translated the *Dādūvaṇi* into Sanskrit (Hastings 2002, pp. 298–99).

12　. . . *mānahu autare dāsa Kabīru* ('just as if Kabīr had descended' [DJL 1.17]).

13　Dādū is said to have embraced cotton-carding only to seek isolation by exposing himself to ridicule, just as Kabīr is said to have done when he let himself be seen with a prostitute (DJL 4.5.3).

14　Cf. the Heidi Pauwels-inspired scheme above.

15　E.g., the *Bhaktamāl* of Nābhādās (c. 1585–1623) (Cf. Hare 2011, pp. 44–45).

16　According to Vaudeville ([1993] 1997, p. 46), up to the point of *Bhaktirasabodhinī* (1712), Priyādās' commentary on the *Bhaktamāl* of Nābhādās, Kabīr's Muslim roots were left undisputed. In the most popular legend created after the said period, Kabīr is the abandoned son of a Brahmin widow, found and adopted by a Muslim couple, Nīrū and Nīmā, or a Viṣṇu *avatāra* descended onto a lotus (Lorenzen 1981, p. 157; Vaudeville [1993] 1997, pp. 46–47; Keay [1931] 1997, p. 9).

17　Even the *Parcaī* of Anantadās mentions the body of Kabīr being immortal (*amara*) (10.10) (Lorenzen 1992, pp. 114, 183).

18　DJL 1.4 (singing Kabīr); cf. (Horstmann 2000, pp. 520, 526–27; Horstmann 2015, pp. 34–35).

19　That can be inferred from the verses of Tulsīdās, which criticize the notions of heterodox low-caste Sants (Pauwels 2010b, pp. 525–26).

20   Cf. Rizvi (1975, pp. 203–22). A major example of this initiative, requiring many resources and the combined efforts of multiple translators, was the rendering of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* into Persian in the 1580s (Truschke 2012, pp. 181–253, 279–301).

21   The dating of this work is uncertain. Although it places itself not long after Dādū's death, its present form might be a modern rendering (Callewaert 1978, pp. 22–23; Horstmann 2006b, p. 167).

22   The resolve of Dādūpanthī *sādhus* to always carry the words of the Sants prompted the production of portable manuscripts (Horstmann 2000, p. 548).

23   According to the *Bhaktamāl* of Rāghavdās it was Mohān, Rajab, and Jagannāth, who undertook the task of revising and arranging of *sākhīs* (Horstmann 2006b, p. 169). Cf. (Williams 2018, pp. 97–98).

24   DJL 2.8; 4.12–13; 16.2; 16.24–25.

25   One of the DJL manuscripts found by Callewaert (1988, p. 17) (dated 1666) is in *guṭkā* format.

26   For the examples of royal patronage for the Dādūpanth, see Section 5.

27   The process of forming a 'territorial structure', based on the exchange between ascetics and lay followers, has been termed 'domestication of the *panth*' by Horstmann (2006b, p. 173).

28   Jangopāl himself and Dādū's stepfather were of a merchant background; there is a story of a *saudāgar* saved by uttering the name of Dādū and offering half of his stock in return (DJL 8.21–22); seven hundred merchants are saved by uttering the name of Rām (8.23.1–2); Dādū is accused of proclaiming the equality of Brahmans and *baniyās* (10.4); the merchant Prāgdās is mentioned as an exceptional disciple (12.22); traveling merchants (*baṇijāra*) are liberated on hearing Dādū's words (15.6.1–2).

29   DJL 9.18; 13.1; 13.4.

30   DJL 9.19; 13.7; 14.9, 14.

31   DJL 14.2–3, 5; 14.17, 24, 28.

32   DJL 4.3–4; 8.6; 14.11.

33   As he told Bīrbal: 'if you want to please me, remember I only take to give, I do not receive (*svāmī kahyau hamahi sukha dehu tau laina daina kau nāva na lehu*) (DJL 8.6) (after Callewaert 1988, p. 56). Cf. (Horstmann 2000, p. 520).

34   In the hagiographical literature of the Sufis, there is a disparity between the prescribed mode of behavior (poverty, 'avoidance of contact with the rich and powerful') and the actual practices of Chishtī shaikhs, who accepted patronage and accumulated wealth. In the case of Chishtīs, an analogy with the topos of patronage rejection is visible in examples such as the rejection of a grant of Ulugh Khan (later Sultan Balban [r. 1266–1286]) by Farīduddīn Ganjshakar (1179–1266), which can be contrasted with the later acceptance of gifts from the Tughluq dynasty by the descendants of the shaikh (Digby 2003, pp. 243, 249).

35   Minor examples of Dādū's contacts with the ruling classes encompass also Bhagavantdās (1527–1589), king of Āmer and adoptive father of Mānsingh I (DJL 5.1). Moreover, a certain Īśvar Kachavāhā from Naulāsā is described as a devotee (*sevaga*) (12.20). Nobles of the Rāṭhoṛ clan are also mentioned: Kanakāvatī (14.7–9, see above, Section 3.1) and the disciples Kisansingh (11.16), and Mānsingh of Bhavādi (11.19).

36   Cf. (Lorenzen 1992, pp. 6–8) and the case of Anantadās' *Kabīr Parcaī*.

37   DJL 4.6.14–15; 5.27.2; 7.25.1; 8.14.2.

38   However, he abandoned the city that same year and never returned to it (Rizvi 1975, p. 129).

39   Even though she considers the event to be factual, Horstmann admits that 'there are no other sources to support it.'

40   In fact, the rule of Akbar began an era of increased popularity for the bhakti movements (especially Vaiṣṇava), propelled by the Mughal and Kachavāhā patronage (Burchett 2012, pp. 34–59).

41   Reference to the six classical schools of Brāhmaṇic philosophy: Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā, Vaiśeṣika, Nyaya, and Vedānta.

42   In a broad sense, this concept states the essential unity of God and his creation (created things are a reflection of God's hidden essence) without falling into pantheism (Khoury 2009, p. 327).

43   Cf. (Ali 1980, p. 331); (Copland and Mabbett 2012, pp. 112–113); (Burchett 2012, p. 40).

44   Cf. (Rizvi 1975, pp. 396–417); (Ali 1980, p. 330); (Nizami 1989, pp. 132–36); (Copland and Mabbett 2012, p. 113).

45   All examples from the *Dādūvāṇī* refer to Dās (2009).

46   For, if devotion is present, the wilderness of the ascetic (*vairāgī*) and the home of the householder (*gharbārī*) are equal (*samāna*) (*Dādūvāṇī* 16.29).

47   Cf. DJL 1.15.1; 10.4–5; 10.22. Furthermore, one can find a fair amount of social critique in the *Dādūvāṇī*. Let us, however, note the opinion of Harbans Mukhia, who stated that Dādū did not see himself as a social reformer and 'accepted the social institutions of his time' (Hastings 2002, p. 34).

48   However, this provoked criticism as, in the context of the *tawḥīd-i-ilāhī*, this practice was seen by some as another way of deifying the Emperor. To alleviate discord, Akbar made prostrations voluntary (Nizami 1989, pp. 136–40).

49   Cf. the case of Harirām Vyās who, in order to 'affirm the priority of divine over mundane power', was against bhaktas 'lobbying for material grants from kings' (Pauwels 2010a, p. 69).

50   According to Rāghavdās; cf. (Hastings 2002, p. 38).

51 Cf. (Callewaert 2011, p. 532). Most Mārāṭhī Sants, before Kabīr, were associated with the cult of Viṭhoba (Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa): Nāmdev (1270–1350) composed songs describing Kṛṣṇa (Gold 1987, pp. 57, 203–4). Kabīr, being the most prominent of the aniconic (*nirguṇa*) Hindī Sants, is traditionally connected with the Vaiṣṇava faith through Rāmānanda; both Kabīr and Dādū refer to God as Rām; this name is also used in a popular mantra-cum-greeting among Dādūpanthīs: *Dādūrām, Satyarām* (Hastings 2002, p. 291). The Vaiṣṇava hagiographers from the 17th–18th century (Nābhādās, Anantadās, Priyādās) appropriated important *nirguṇī* Sants as archetypal Vaiṣṇava bhaktas (Bahuguna 2008).

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