

## Acknowledgments

Although I had heard of the *Hammira-Mahākāvya* during my graduate years at the University of Heidelberg when I was doing my PhD under the guidance of Günther-Dietz Sontheimer<sup>2</sup> and Hermann Kulke, the concrete suggestion to work on the Sanskrit poem came from John Smith of the University of Cambridge more than decade ago when I was invited as a visiting professor to participate in an amazingly productive and inspiring month-long Summer Academy on Regional Sanskrit in Jerusalem. The academy was hosted by David Shulman and Yigal Bronner with the support of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. I am grateful to the hosts and the other participants of the Summer Academy, particularly H. V. Nagaraj Rao, for their encouragement and support in clarifying some of the more difficult grammatical aspects of the *Hammira-Mahākāvya*. However, after returning to the University of Canterbury where I was teaching in the Department of Religious Studies and later in the Department of Anthropology, my research interests turned in different directions that later resulted in the publication of several articles and a book.<sup>3</sup> Many, many years after the Summer Academy, my friend and colleague Ishita Bannerjee asked me to write a book about Hammira that would be published in a series she was editing for De Gruyter. However, when the series was discontinued, I was fortunate to receive an offer from Sophie Wagenhofer to publish it as a standalone volume. Subsequently, Frank Korom urged me to have the book published in this series. And, since then, Katrin Mittmann has guided me patiently and very ably through the stages of submission and publication. I am grateful to the team at De Gruyter for their enduring support and guidance; to Ben Dare for his meticulous and thorough reading of the manuscript on account of which many ideas in the book became much sharper than they were to begin with; and to Ulla Schmidt for her prompt assistance and friendly co-operation in preparing the manuscript and indexes. I am also indebted to Romila Thapar and Ann Grodzins Gold for their encouraging comments and suggestions during the initial review of the book proposal.

But it was only when I was invited as a fellow at the Max Weber Centre for Advanced Social and Cultural Studies (Max-Weber-Kolleg)<sup>4</sup> at the University of

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<sup>2</sup> I was probably his only student to work in Rajasthan. Most of his other students worked, as he himself did, in Maharashtra.

<sup>3</sup> Malik (2016/2018).

<sup>4</sup> Max-Weber-Kolleg für kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien.

Erfurt for a period of one year (2016/2017)<sup>5</sup> that I resumed working on the ideas that had initially begun to interest me at the Summer Academy in Jerusalem. The exceptional intellectual space offered at the Max-Weber-Kolleg provided perfect conditions to think, read, write and discuss some of the many ideas presented in this book with colleagues from universities from around the world who had also joined the Kolleg as fellows. The international guest house (IBZ) of the university – located in a 16<sup>th</sup>-century building that was originally a printer's workshop in which, amongst a few hundred other works, Martin Luther's bible translation was printed – was an ideal place from which to work and walk around the beautiful medieval town of Erfurt in the evenings. The weekly colloquia in which individual fellows' research was rigorously debated gave me a critical platform on which to think about the questions in this book. I am grateful to several colleagues from the fields of sociology, anthropology, religious studies, theology, philology, philosophy, classical studies, history, law and jurisprudence, Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Chinese Studies, and Hebrew Studies at the Max-Weber-Kolleg from whom I received critical and encouraging support: my hosts and friends at the Kolleg, Antje Linkenbach and Martin Fuchs as well as Jörg Rüpke, Harry Maier, Ann Murphy, Saurabh Dube, Ishita Bannerjee, Kumkum Sangari, Asaph Ben Tov, Angelika Malinar, Markus Vinzent, Jutta Vinzent, Avner Ben Zaken, Martin Mulsow, Daniel Boyarin, Michael Staussberg, Julie Casteigt, Richard Gordon and Max Deeg. I am also grateful to Oliver Schmerbauch, Diana Blanke, Diana Pueschel and Bettina Hollstein, who untiringly and generously provided many other kinds of support and assistance at the Max-Weber-Kolleg. As I was writing it, parts of the book were presented in the form of lecture presentations at the University of Leipzig, and at an enormously creative international workshop I organized together with my colleagues in the School of Historical Studies at Nalanda University that was entitled *Imagining Histories, Writing Pasts*. I am grateful to my colleagues and students at these institutions for their observations and comments: Ursula and Sadashiv Rao for their invitation to visit Leipzig and give a lecture at the Institute of Anthropology; my colleagues at Nalanda – Samuel Wright, Sraman Mukherjee, Murari Kumar Jha, Kashshaf Ghani, Pankaj Mohan, Ranu Roychoudhuri, Abhishek Amar and Christine Vial-Kayser; and my students at Nalanda – Aditya Chaturvedi, Annalisa Mansukhani, Shikhar Goel, Shashi Ahlawat, Pritha Mukherjee, Sanjivani Dwivedi, Azad Hind Gulshan Nanda and Parni Sairam. At the fortress of Ranthambore in Rajasthan where I conducted fieldwork, I was fortunate to have extended conversations about

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the history of the fortress with Wahid Mohammed, Manohar Lal Mina and Naresh Gujjar.<sup>6</sup>

While the idea for this book was first conceived in Jerusalem, different parts of it were written in Christchurch, Erfurt, Nalanda and Delhi. Wherever I happened to be, I was constantly accompanied by the love, support and encouragement of my parents, Zarine Malik and Subhash Chandra Malik. I am grateful to my father, Bhashiji, for reading through the draft of the book and offering many valuable and critical observations. My daughters Renuka and Ambika have always been patient about the vast distance there is between India where I now work and live, and New Zealand which is their home. They are a constant source of strength and inspiration. My aunts Usha Malik (Ushaji), Kapila Vatsyayan (Kapilaji) and Anjali Capila (Anjuji) have brought depth to my own thinking through their prodigious creativity in so many areas of the arts and scholarship.

This book is dedicated to Meethu, who is the embodiment of brilliance, tenacity and compassion, without whom I would not have endeavoured to undertake and complete many things, including this book.

Aditya Malik

22 May, in the First Year of COVID-19

## Note

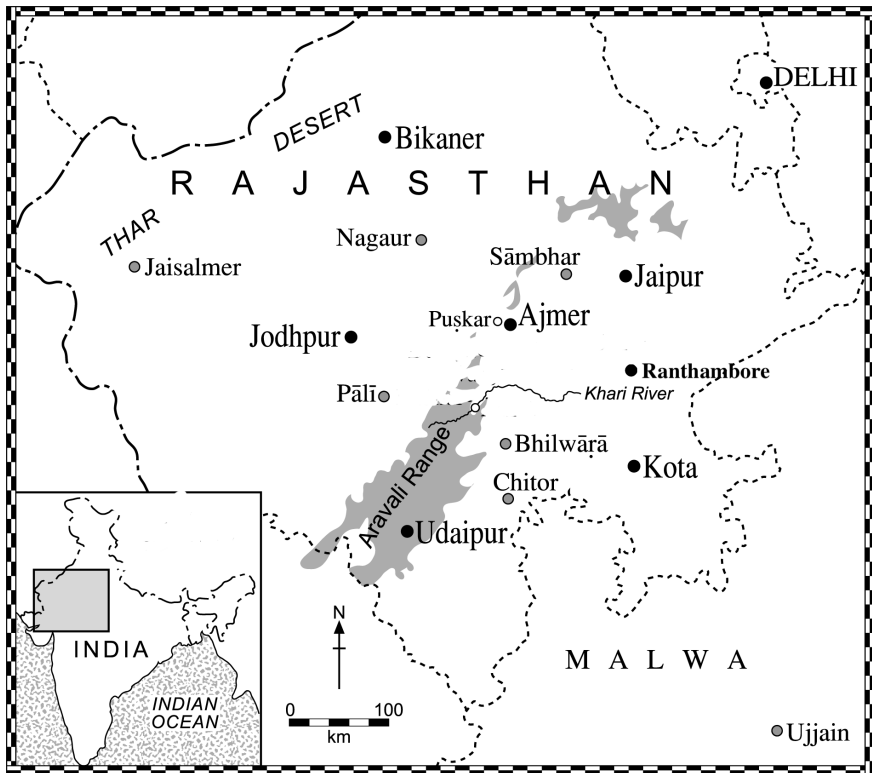
While this book substantially, though not solely, draws on the content of the Sanskrit poetical work, the *Hammīra-Mahākāvya*, in which the life and deeds of the Rajput king Hammīra Chauhan and his ancestors are described, it does not contain a full length translation of the *Hammīra-Mahākāvya*. To do this would be to alter the size, direction and character of the book. Instead, some translated passages of the poem along with the original Devanagari text have been included in the main body of the text, while other translated sections that I found relevant to the broader purpose of the book are contained in Appendix 1.

Here I would like to express my gratitude for the assistance I received in the translation from scholars of Sanskrit literature and language: Rakesh Das (Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Belur Math), Abirlal Gangopadhyay (Central University of Hyderabad) and Aneesh Raghavan (Pondicherry University).

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<sup>6</sup> The bulk of these conversations are included in Appendix 2.

In addition to the translated portions of the Sanskrit text featured in Appendix 1, Appendix 2 incorporates translations of several longer conversations in Hindi concerning the history, architecture and the ritual and religious significance of the fortress of Ranthambore, which is the site of the siege laid by ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī against Hammīra. These conversations were recorded during a short period of fieldwork conducted at the fortress and nearby locations. Excerpts of these conversations are also included in the chapters of the main text.



**Map 1:** Map showing location of Ranthambore in relation to other cities and towns in Rajasthan.