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Vraja/Braj

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Introduction

Vraja is an old Sanskrit word that is now used to denote “Braj,” or the Braj region. Vraja/Braj/Brij presently denotes a particular geographical area in and around Mathura that is related to the childhood activities of Krishna (Skt. Kṛṣṇa), the most popular incarnation (avatar) of Lord Vishnu (Skt. Viṣṇu)—so important, in fact, that some of his most influential devotees consider that he is “God himself” (*bhagavān svayam*), as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* declares. The word *vraja* is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *dhātu* (*vraj*), which means “go, walk, proceed,” implying “motion and movement.” In its early forms it can be used to designate areas where cows graze, but it may also refer to a cow pen or cattle shed. More broadly, it has to do with the culture of a semi-nomadic pastoral encampment. The modern-day term Braj, building on these meanings, denotes a conceptual as well as a geographic entity—the former related to the childhood of Krishna, the latter to the area on the banks of the River Yamuna where he is considered to have spent his childhood and youth. The language associated with this region is Brajbhasha [Skt. Brajbhāṣā], which came to have an almost canonical weight—along with Persian and Sanskrit—in Mughal times; for that reason, along with others, it came to be well known far beyond the geographical area of Braj itself. By no means is every usage of Brajbhasha to be associated with Krishna, although his imprint is often to be felt. Over the long course of time, then, we have, on the one hand, a sedimentation and localization of the term *vraja* (its geographical usage), and, on the other, an expansion of the term (its conceptual breadth and linguistic weight). Acknowledgement: Dr. John Stratton Hawley helped edit this article.

An Overview

Except for few important place names and the city of Mathura, not much is known of ancient Vraja apart from the archaeological record. It is in the early modern period that we come to have a detailed record of Vraja/Braj in written sources, and it was evidently at that point in time when the pilgrimage circuits that nowadays define the region, religiously speaking, were established. Mādhavendra Puri, Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa are the most important of these conceptual cartographers. It is understood by Gauḍīya Vaishnavas that Caitanya was the principal inspiration for this mapping, and we know that he did come to Mathura and visited several other locales. The same is claimed for Vallabha and Nimbārka, but the evidence is considerably weaker. In more recent times, it was Growse 1882 that first analyzed in detail various aspects of culture, history, tradition, and etymology of place names in Braj. Mittal 1966 (Mittal himself being a Brajvasi) is a wide-ranging study of Braj that includes details of bhakti literature and *paramparā*, along with history, festivals, and sacred space. Mittal 1968 is one of the most important works on the history of various sects of Braj. In Mittal 1975 the same scholar studies various art forms, particularly the local, sectarian, and folk art of Braj. Vaudeville 1976 represents an important attempt to question the historical veracity of much that is currently claimed about the religious roots of Braj culture; the author often saw Krishnaism as an overlay of earlier forms of Hindu religiosity. Entwistle 1987 provides the most comprehensive study of Braj geography, culture, and literature in English. Gupta 1982 studies Braj culture with an emphasis on Brajbhasha religious poetry from Rajasthan. Goswami 2001 and Nārāyaṇa 2001 provide a local devotee’s perspective on the region and its rituals, particularly the Rādhāramaṇa Temple in the former work; and both works are well illustrated with photographs. Haberman 1994 is an important first-person study of one enactment of the 84-*krośas* circumambulatory journey that is often held to define Braj as a sacred space. Vaudeville 1996 serves as a handy point of reference for the many essays of Charlotte Vaudeville that have to do with Braj history and culture.

Entwistle, Alan W. *Braj: Centre of Krishna Pilgrimage*. Groningen Oriental Studies 3. Groningen, The Netherlands: Egbert Forsten, 1987.

One of the most comprehensive studies on Braj. Entwistle devotes detailed and critical attention to stories, locales, and histories of interpretation associated with all aspects of the Braj region, carefully evaluating almost all prior scholarship. He surveys mythological motifs, "devotion in theory and practice," and archaeological and written records from earliest times up to the mid-1980s. He distinguishes between various kinds of sacred places in the Braj region and, in a hundred pages of closely documented study, surveys most of these individually.

Goswami, Shrivatsa. *Celebrating Krishna*. Vrindavan, India: Sri Caitanya Prem Sansthan, 2001.

Presents an insider's perspective on devotional life in Braj, with particular emphasis on the icon, rituals, and bhakti traditions at one of the important temples in Vrindavan, the Rādhāramaṇa Temple, of which the author is a priest. Numerous photographs by Robyn Beeche further enhance the quality of this work.

Growse, Frederick Salmon. *Mathurā: A District Memoir*. Allahabad, India: North-Western Provinces and Oudh Government Press, 1882.

A superb work on the heritage, tradition, and history of the Braj region by a British officer who for several years served as District Collector of Mathura. The book is a great source for understanding the early findings from various sites that had emerged before 1880, and a mine of information on old Braj traditions, festivals, heritage, and history. The chapter on the etymology of local names is also an important contribution.

Gupta, Motilal. *Braj: The Centrum of Indian Culture*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1982.

A useful study of Krishnaite religion and Braj culture, with an emphasis on unpublished manuscripts of the Vaishnavite poets of Rajasthan and the concept of semiotics in relation to Braj culture.

Haberman, David L. *Journey through the Twelve Forests: An Encounter with Krishna*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

An in-depth study of various forests and sacred places of Braj as connected by one version of the *caurāsī kos yātrā*, emphasizing the physical features of selected locales and the moods associated with them. Because the account is personal and deeply reflective, this book has attained a special status in course syllabi dealing with Krishna and Braj culture.

Mittal, Prabhu Dayal. *Braj Kā Sānskritik Itihās*. Mathura, India: Rajkamal Prakashan, 1966.

One of the most important publications on the Mathura region and its religious culture and history. Almost all aspects of Braj or Mathura are covered in this publication: history, literary references, *vanas* ("forests" as defined in the classical texts), Braj yātrā (the circumambulatory pilgrimage in various guises), the history of religious sects, art, important places, festivals, tradition, literature, geography, animals, birds, and crops. An essential work. In Hindi.

Mittal, Prabhu Dayal. *Braj ke Dharm Sampradāyon kā Itihās*. Delhi: National Publishing House, 1968.

One of the most important studies by a great savant of Braj culture. Discusses in detail every religion and sect of the Braj region, including Buddhism, Jainism, and various aspects of Hinduism. Mittal treats the sects that were established in Braj from the 16th century forward: the Sampradāyas founded in the names of Nimbārka, Vallabha, Caitanya, Hita Harivaṃśa, and Haridāsa. In addition, Rādhāvallabhis, the Arya Samaj, the Radhasoami satsang, the Sikhs, and a number of smaller groups are also treated. Mittal traces the development of the cult of Rādhā as represented in Gāthā Saptaśatī, Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda*, and the writings of Nimbārkites and others. In Hindi.

Mittal, Prabhu Dayal. *Braj kī Kalāon kā Itihās*. Mathura, India: Sahitya Samsthan, 1975.

A detailed study of various art forms of Braj, including architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and dance. Mittal has tried to study all these arts chronologically and on the basis of classification and typology. In Hindi.

Nārāyaṇa, Bhaktivedānta. *Śrī Braja Maṇḍala Parikramā*. New Delhi: Gaudiya Vedanta Publications, 2001.

Colourful and lucid account of the entire Braj region through the eyes of a Gauḍīya bhakta. All the places in Mathura as mentioned in the *Varāha Purāṇa* account are described, and the sacred spots of Vrindavan, Govardhan, Barsana, Nandgaon, Unchagaon, Kamai-Karahla, Gokul, Mahavan, Baldeo, and other important sites and important *vanas* on the circumambulatory route are described in detail, with the associated legends.

Vaudeville, Charlotte. "Braj, Lost and Found." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 18.3–4 (1976): 195–213.

In this much discussed essay, Vaudeville raises doubts whether any specifically "Kṛṣṇaite" cult, other than a primitive form of nature-worship combined with some form of *devī* worship, existed among the rural populations of Braj before the arrival of followers of the great Vaishnava "reformers" in Govardhan and Vrindavan in the course of the 16th century.

Vaudeville, Charlotte. *Myths, Saints and Legends in Medieval India*. Compiled by Vasudha Dalmia. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

A compilation of previously published articles, including "Braj, Lost and Found," "The Govardhan Myth in Northern India," "Kṛṣṇa, Gopāla, Rādhā and the Great Goddess," and "The Lord of Govardhan Hill." The collection reveals Vaudeville's particular fascination for the palimpsest-like history of Mount Govardhan and the accounts and struggles that are associated with efforts to claim and reclaim it.

Braj Culture Today

Several studies provide expositions of the distinctive religious culture of Braj as it has been lived from the last decade of the 20th century forward into the 21st. Kumar 2019 and Hawley 2020 present studies of the best-known—and in the eyes of many, the paradigmatic—town in all of Braj, Vrindavan (also familiarly spelled Vṛndāvana, Brindavan, and Vrindaban). Toomey 1994 and Haberman 2020 are two very different studies of Mount Govardhan and the surrounding area. A wider view, focusing on the river that flows through the center of Braj and provides one of its most important axes—the River Yamuna—is Haberman 2006. The distinctive culture of the Chauhe Brahmins of Mathura is the subject of Lynch 1990.

Haberman, David. *River of Love in an Age of Pollution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

A compelling study of patterns of devotion to the River Yamuna as a deity on the part of many Braj residents (*brajvāsīs*), and, at the same time, of the way in which the river deity has been massively polluted in the course of the last several decades. The appendix contains several examples of poetry addressed to the Yamuna as an object of devotion.

Haberman, David. *Loving Stones: Making the Impossible Possible in the Worship of Mount Govardhan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

The Yamuna is one of the major *tīrthas* of Braj—literally a "crossing-over" place, connecting the human world to that which lies beyond it. Mount Govardhan is another. Haberman explores the way in which Mount Govardhan and the individual stones that form it are, for devotees, alive. He also registers a general critique against blinkered understandings of the proper realm of religion put forward by more aniconic religious traditions that have informed so much European-language scholarship about Indian religion.

Hawley, John Stratton. *Krishna's Paradise: Vrindavan in the 21st Century*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2020.

This volume turns aside from the ideal Vrindavan envisioned in “classical” Sanskrit texts and many vernacular expressions and reveals the Vrindavan that has come into existence since approximately 2000: the real estate revolution that has redefined the town, the pollution and inaccessibility of the Yamuna, and the struggles that attend these facts. Hawley devotes chapters to the seventy-story Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir now being constructed by ISKCON Bangalore, contrasting efforts to provide for Vrindavan’s famous widows and the celebrated life of Shrivatsa Goswami.

Kumar, Samrat S. *Vrindavan's Encounter with Modernity: Changing Environment and Life-Worlds in an Indian Pilgrimage Town*. Zurich: LIT Verlag, 2019.

This book, built upon an Oslo dissertation submitted in 2015, is the first comprehensive attempt to assess the ways in which Vrindavan has been reshaped by its “encounter with modernity.” Himself a resident of Vrindavan, Kumar provides revealing interviews with a considerable spectrum of the town’s population, contrasting the “New Vrindavan” with the culture that preceded it and that continues to interpenetrate and flavor the Vrindavan that is rapidly coming into being.

Lynch, Owen. “The Mastrām: Emotion and Person among Mathura’s Chaubes.” In *Divine Passions: The Social Construction of Emotion in India*. Edited by Owen Lynch, 91–115. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

An anthropological exploration of the renowned “wanton, overjoyed, or lustful”—and certainly joyful—culture of the Chaube Brahmin community specific to Mathura.

Toomey, Paul. *Food from the Mouth of Krishna: Feasts and Festivities in a North Indian Pilgrimage Centre*. Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corp., 1994.

An anthropological exploration of the meaning of food in an interlocking set of religious cultures that particularly celebrates it in the context of the worship of Krishna as expressed in Mount Govardhan. Special attention is given to the sometimes contrasting practices of the Vallabhite and Gauḍīya communities, but against the background of a distinctively local culture that defies precise sectarian definition.

Edited Volumes

Govindadas and Agrawal 1959 is an important collection of edited papers on Braj and Braj yātrā. Dwivedi 1972, through a number of edited contributions by different scholars, provides a peep into the literary references related to Braj in Vedic, Epic, and Puranic literature, festivals of Braj, and traditions of Braj. Vyas 1987 and Verma, et al. 1988, through a number of edited papers, provides important information on ancient literature, sects, sacred geography, archaeology, paleography, and other aspects of Braj. Rosen 1992 is an issue of the *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* focused on Braj, Braj sects, and Braj culture. Case 1996 is a collection on papers on the architecturally magnificent Govindadeva temple.

Case, Margaret, ed. *Govindadeva: A Dialogue in Stone*. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1996.

A collection of articles on the history of the Govindadeva temple, the architectural marvel of Braj founded by Rūpa Gosvāmī circa 1590. The *mūrti* of Govindadeva was moved to Jaipur in the late 17th century, where it now resides in a royal temple of the same name. The book discusses the temple’s rituals and architectural, historical, and artistic heritage, making the case, implicitly, that from a historical point of view, this is the most important structure in Braj.

Dwivedi, Radhey Shyam, ed. *Braj Vaibhav*. Mathura, India: Bharati Anusandhan Bhawan, 1972.

A collection of papers by different authors on various aspects of Braj, covering the nomenclature of Braj, geography of Braj, *vana* and *upavanas* of Braj, Ban-yātrā, spirituality of Braj, festivals, traditions of Braj, and important places of Braj, including Yamuna, Govardhan, etc. In Hindi.

Govindadas, and Ram Narayan Agrawal, eds. *Braj aur Braj Yātrā*. Delhi: Bharatiya Viswa Prakashan, 1959.

A collection of important papers on Braj and Braj yātrā, from which later scholars have benefitted. The papers treat themes like the history of Braj yātrā, Braj in Vedic and Puranic literature, and the sacred places of Braj. In Hindi.

Rosen, Steven J., ed. *Special Issue: Vraja. Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 1.1 (Fall 1992).

This special issue, which is first of a continuing series, has ten essays that explore Vraja or Braj from various perspectives, including those of members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Gerald Carney provides an important study of Caitanya in Vraja, O. B. L. Kapoor presents Vrindavan as the highest paradise, and Jan Brzezinski provides a translation of Jīva Gosvāmī's *Gopāla Campū*.

Verma, Thakur Prasad, S. Saran, and D. P. Singh, eds. *Yuga Yugīna Vraja: A History of Braj Region*. Varanasi, India: Bhartiya Itihas Samkalan Samiti, 1988.

An edited volume with a collection of papers on various aspects of Braj. The papers address sacred geography, archaeology, paleography, and other aspects of the region. Rana and Dubey address Mathurā Maṇḍala, and Upadhyay discusses the ancient mounds of Vrindavan. In English and Hindi.

Vyas, Gopal Prasad, ed. *Braj Vibhav*. Delhi, 1987.

Pt. Gopal Prasad Vyas was a renowned Hindi poet born near Govardhan. This edited volume includes a number of papers on different aspects of Braj by various scholars including Pt. Vyas. In Hindi.

“Vraja” in the Epics and Purāṇas

Mathurā (or Madhurā), the most famous site of Vraja in the ancient period, is frequently mentioned in Brahmanical literature. The epics, especially the *Mahābhārata*, contain many references to Mathurā and the Śūrasena region. It is only in the Purāṇas that the word “Vraja” clearly appears in the context of the region around Mathurā and in relation to the childhood *līlās* of Krishna. In the *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* (*Viṣṇu Parva*, 9.30) the term *vraja* is used for the interior parts of the region near Mathurā, designating villages inhabited by cowherders—*tad vrajasthānam adhikam su śubhe kānanāvṛtam*. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* mentions Vraja in a similar sense. The places of Vraja mentioned in both these texts are Mathurā, Gokula, Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, Tālavana, Bhāṇḍīravana, and Yamunā. The word Vraja is used in similar sense in the *Śrīmadbhāgavata Purāṇa* (10.1.10): *vraje vasan kiṃkaron madhuparyāṃ ca keśavaḥ*.

Select Editions and Translations

Śrīkrṣṇadāsa 1935 is the popular Veṅkateśvara Press edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* that includes later commentaries. Sukthankar 1927–1966 is the much acclaimed critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*. Ganguli 1972–1976 is an important early English translation of the *Mahābhārata*. Dutt 1897 is an early English translation of the *Harivaṃśa*, and Vaidya 1969–1971 is a landmark critical edition. Brodbeck 2019 is the latest English translation of *Harivaṃśa*, based on Vaidya's critical edition. Wilson 1980 is the much cited English translation of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, originally published in 1840, and is in fact the first Purāṇa to be translated into English. Pathak 1997–1999 is the critical edition of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* published by the Oriental Institute, Vadodara. Sanyal 1973 is an early English translation of the the *Śrīmadbhāgavata Purāṇa*, and Bryant 2003 is a useful recent translation of 10th book dealing with Mathura and Vraja. Shastri 1983 is an important Sanskrit edition of

the *Śrīmadbhāgavata Purāṇa* with the Sanskrit commentary Bhāvērthabodhinī of Śrīdharasvāmin. Shastri, et al. 1996–2002 is the critical edition of the *Śrīmadbhāgavata Purāṇa* published in Ahmedabad.

Brodbeck, Simon, ed. and trans. *Krishna's Lineage: The Harivamsha of Vyāsa's Mahābhārata*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Presents the complete *Harivamśa* in engaging, modern English, following the critical edition of Vaidya. Provides an introduction, brief explanatory footnotes below the translation, and a complete index of names. "The Book of Vishnu" (pp.151–348) deals with Krishna's life in Mathura and Vraja.

Bryant, Edwin F., trans. *Krishna: The Beautiful Legend of God; Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Book X*. London: Penguin, 2003.

A useful English translation of the 10th skandha, with inclusion of some parts of the 11th skandha. The first fifty chapters deal with Krishna's early life in Mathura and Vraja.

Dutt, Manmatha Nath, trans. *A Prose English Translation of Harivamsha (Translated Literally into English Prose)*. Calcutta: H. C. Dass, 1897.

One of the early and popular translations of the Sanskrit text. Each verse is numbered in the translation and is embellished by explanatory footnotes.

Ganguli, Kisari Mohan, trans. *The Mahabharata of Krishna–Dwaipayana Vyasa*. 12 vols. 3d improved ed. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1972–1976.

This is a literal English rendering of the text, which was originally published in 1884–1896 by Protap Chandra Roy, of Bharat Press, Calcutta, though translated by Ganguli. Ganguli took the help of Max Muller's translation of the text to make it more readable. This English translation is primarily based on Bengal and Bombay editions.

Pathak, M. M., ed. *The Critical Edition of the Viṣṇupurāṇam*. 2 vols. With a *pāda* index by Peter Schreiner. Vadodara, India: Oriental Institute, 1997–1999.

Critical edition of the Sanskrit based on twenty-seven manuscripts, with detailed descriptions of each, consisting of 5,276 verses. Also includes an introduction in English and a concordance with other popular editions.

Sanyal, J. M., trans. *The Srimad-Bhagabatam of Krishna–Dwaipayana Vyasa*. 2 vols. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1973.

A readable prose translation in English of the Purāṇa. In the twelve books, with three hundred and sixty chapters and eighteen thousand *śloka*s, it deals with cosmogony, genealogies, myths, legends, etc., and enumerates in detail the *avatāras* of Lord Vishnu, with particular emphasis on Krishna and his activities in Vraja in Book 10. It was originally published by Datta Bose and Company, Calcutta.

Shastri, H. G., B. K. Shelat, and K. K. Shastri, eds. *Śrībhāgavatam: Śrīmad Bhāgavata-Mahāpurāṇam*. 4 vols. Ahmadabad, India: B. J. Institute of Learning and Research, 1996–2002.

Critical edition of the Sanskrit based on numerous manuscripts, commentaries, and available printed editions. Also includes a concordance, critical notes, and an introduction and an epilogue in English.

Shastri, J. L., ed. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, with Sanskrit Commentary Bhāvārthabodhinī of Śrīdharaśvāmin*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983.

A Sanskrit edition that also includes Śrīdhara's commentary, along with a brief introduction and a table of contents in English and Sanskrit.

Śrīkrṣṇadāsa, Gaṅgāviṣṇu, ed. *Śrīmadvālmīkirāmāyaṇa*. 3 vols. Bombay, India: Lakṣmīveṅkaṭeśvara Mudraṇālaya, 1935.

The popular Veṅkaṭeśvara Press edition. Includes the commentaries of Govindarāja, Rāmānuja, and Maheśvaraṭīrtha, as well as the commentary known as Taniślokī. The work perhaps makes the earliest reference to the Mathura region when it mentions the foundation of the city by Rāma's brother Śatrughna.

Sukthankar, Vishnu S., ed. *The Mahābhārata*. 19 vols. Pune, India: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1927–1966.

This widely used critical edition of the Sanskrit text was edited over a long period of time by Vishnu S. Sukthankar, with the help of many scholars, including S. K. Belvalkar, S. K. De, P. V. Kane, P. L. Vaidya, and Prof. R. N. Dandekar, among others. It contains over 89,000 verses.

Vaidya, Parashuram Lakshman, ed. *Harivaṃśa: Being the Khila or Supplement to the Mahābhārata, for the First Time Critically Edited*. 2 vols. Pune, India: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1969–1971.

On the pattern of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*, this is the critical edition of the Sanskrit text with appendices. Introduction refers to the text as the first Purāṇa, added to the *Mahābhārata* with an intention to deliberate on Krishna and his Vrishni (Skt. Vṛṣṇi) lineage. The first volume contains the commonly found critically edited verses, and the second volume includes other material, with footnotes and appendices as found only in some manuscripts.

Wilson, Horace Hayman, trans. *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa: A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition*. 2 vols. Delhi: Nag, 1980.

After surveying the Purāṇas in the early 1800s, Wilson identified the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* as most representative of the five subjects that characterize a Purāṇa. He therefore translated it, the first Purāṇa to be translated into English, and long the only one. Useful and learned footnotes provide information on many related texts. Also includes an index. Was originally published in 1840 in London by J. Murray.

Area of Braj (Vraja) Based on Purāṇas and Traditions

Among all the Purāṇas in which Braj has been mentioned, the reference in *Varāha Purāṇa* is the most significant. The *Mathurāmaṇḍala* section of the *Varāha Purāṇa* solely deals with Braj *maṇḍala*, which is famous as *Mathurā Māhātmya* (chapter 158). In it, the extent of Mathurā *maṇḍala* is noted as 20 *yojanas* (*viṃśatiryōjanāntu māthuraṃ maṃ maṇḍalaṃ / yatra tatra naraḥ snāto mucyate sarvakilviṣai* (158.1). In the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, the extent of Mathurā *maṇḍala* is reported as 40 *yojanas*. One *yojana* roughly measures about 4 *krośa*, or 7 miles (12 km), and hence the traditional extent of Braj is considered to be 84 *krośas*. A popular *kiṃvadanti* in Braj says *ita varahada uta sonahada sūrasena uta grāma| vraja caurāsī kosa mein mathurāmaṇḍala dhāma*. Based on the references provided by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, the analysis of various scholars, and the archaeological heritage, the following limits of the greater Braj (a single religio-cultural entity) are drawn: in the north Śoṇapura (Sohna near Gurgaon/Saundhad near Hodal) or Yāyāvāra (Jewar along the Yamuna in District Bulandshahr); in the east Varhiṣad (Barhad near Bijaigarh, Hathras) or Soron (along the Ganga if it is the ancient Saurapura) and Hāsyavan (Hasayan in District Hathras or Hasangarh near Jalesar); in the south Janhuvana (Jajau near Dholpur) and Bateshwar near Shikohabad (in the southeast direction); in the west Apahārīvana (Pahari village, near Govindgarh in District Alwar) or Pahari village (to the northwest of Kaman in District Bharatpur). Mathura city may be considered the center point of Braj. Another aspect of Braj can be taken as the area in which the language of Braj (Brajhasha) is spoken. This region is much larger and extends further. Among this area the districts where pure Brajhasha is spoken are Mathura, Aligarh, Hathras, Palwal, Bulandshahr, Kasganj, Badaun, Bharatpur, Karauli, Dholpur, Morena, Agra, Firozabad, and Etah. More distant parts of this area are those in which Brajhasha is spoken with slight regional variations. Gupta 1981 is

standard Sanskrit-English translation of *Varāha Purāṇa*, one of the important texts dealing with Mathura. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa 1609 is the Sanskrit composition *Vraja Bhakti Vilāsa*, with a Hindi translation by Baba Krishnadas. Chattopadhyaya 1959 is the original Sanskrit edition of *Śrīgarga Saṃhitā*, and Ram, et al. 2010 is a Hindi translation of *Śrīgarga Saṃhitā* from Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Nagta 1959 provides a description of early Braj yātrā accounts of Puṣṭimārgī followers, and Shesh 1959 traces the antiquity of Braj yātrā. Gupta 2019, providing the archaeological details of the sites on the *parikramā* route, states that an area of around 84 *krośas* around Mathura is considered sacred for circumambulation (*parikramā*). Varma 1954 presents an important linguistic study of Brajbhasha and the area in which it is spoken.

Chattopadhyaya, Kshetresachandra, gen. ed. *Śrīgarga Saṃhitā*. Vol. 1. Varanasi, India: Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishva Vidyalaya, 1959.

Original Sanskrit edition of *Śrīgarga Saṃhitā*, one of the most important works that defines Vraja in detail, along with the *līlās* of Krishna. It also provides the limits of Vraja. Its composition date is also considered quite late (c. 16th century CE), but whatever it may be, this *grantha* surely works as a bridge between the early Paurāṇika Vraja and medieval Braj.

Gupta, Anand Swarup, ed. *Varāha Purāṇa*. English translation by Ahibhushan Bhattacharya. Varanasi, India: All-India Kashiraj Trust, 1981.

Among the Purāṇas, *Varāha Purāṇa* is the one that provides the most detailed account of Mathura. Most of this text is considered to have been written during the medieval period, with some scholars suggesting as late a date as the 16th century, but the text must be earlier than that, and some portions of the original text must be very early. This edition is an important one, particularly due to offering an English translation.

Gupta, Vinay Kumar. “Braj 84 Kos Parikramā: History, Tradition and Archaeology.” In *The Mahābhārata: Its Antiquity, Historicity and Impact on Society*. Edited by Neera Misra and Vinay Kumar Gupta, 283–299. New Delhi: Research India Press, 2019.

Study of various aspects of ancient Vraja, *vanas*, and *upavanas*, and an analysis is made of the history of Braj yātrā and the yātrās of Caitanya, Vallabha, and their disciples. The route of 84 *kos parikramā* is discussed, and so is the archaeology of sites on this route.

Nagta, Agarchand. “Braj Yātrā ke kuch Prācīn vivaraṇ.” In *Braj aur Braj Yātrā*. Edited by Govindadas and Ram Narayan Agrawal, 112–117. Delhi: Bhartiya Vishwa Prakashan, 1959.

Provides description of early Braj yātrā accounts of Puṣṭimārgī followers who traveled in Braj during the 16th to 18th centuries. Most of these accounts are by Marwari and Gujarati pilgrims. In Hindi.

Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. *Vraja Bhakti Vilāsa*. With Hindi translation by Baba Krishnadas. Mathura (Kusumsarovar), India: Baba Krishnadas, Samvat 1609.

Possibly the most important publication to understand places of Braj during the post-revival phase. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, a disciple of the Gosvāmīs of the Caitanya sect, reinvents all the sacred forests, groves, ponds, and *līlā-sthālīs* in this work. Bhaṭṭa also provides references of many earlier works that are neither available nor known from other sources.

Ram, Pandit Ramanarayanadatt Shastri Pandey, Gajadhar Sharma, and Ramadhar Shukla, trans. *Śrīgarga Saṃhitā*. Gorakhpur, India: Gita Press, 2010 (reprint).

This is the most popular Hindi translation of the text *Śrīgarga Saṃhitā*, believed to have been composed by Śrīgargācārya, the *kulaguru* of Krishna. The work has been divided into nine *khaṇḍas* and provides a detailed account of the complete life of Krishna, including four complete chapters on the childhood activities of Krishna in Vraja, and also his love dalliance with Rādhā and the Gopīs.

Shesh, Chunni Lal. “Braj Yātrā kī Paramparā.” In *Braj aur Braj Yātrā*. Edited by Govindadas and Ram Narayan Agrawal, 91–111. Delhi: Bhartiya Vishwa Prakashan, 1959.

Important article on Braj yātrā in which the author traces the antiquity of Braj yātrā, which later on takes shape as the Braj *parikramā*. He gives a description of the yātrā of Vallabha and his son Viṭṭhalanatha, and Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa.

Varma, Dharendra. *Brajbhasha*. Allahabad, India: Hindostani Academy, 1954.

Varma, a renowned linguist and Hindi author was born in District Bareilly, an area where Brajbhasha is spoken. He presents a superb linguistic survey of Brajbhasha and also provides in-depth analysis of areas in which this language is spoken, thus defining the Braj region on the basis of linguistics. In Hindi.

Archaeology

Mathura has long been considered one of the most important archaeological sites, but it is one of the most callously destroyed archaeological sites as well. Archaeological studies in Mathura started with Sir Cunningham, who during his surveys of India visited Mathura many times and reported his findings in Archaeological Survey Reports (see Cunningham 1862–1865). During that time, archaeology as a subject had not developed in India, so the archaeological work remained restricted to digging out sculptures, architectural pieces, inscriptions, coins, and other antiquities. A number of Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmanical findings were reported, but, unfortunately, no structures were documented. Gupta 2013 reviews all the past archaeological work done in Braj and presents a complete scenario of the archaeology of Mathura by carrying out extensive explorations in the area. Gupta 2014 reports that archaeological cultures in the Braj region begin with Ochre-Colored Pottery (OCP) culture (generally dated to pre-2000 BCE) but at Mathura proper, the earliest culture is still considered Painted Grey Ware. The properly excavated sites in the Braj region, which chronologically begin with Ochre-Colored Pottery culture, are Noh in District Bharatpur (34 km south of Mathura), Atranjikhhera and Jakhera in District Etah (about 100 km east of Mathura), Lal Qila in District Bulandshahr (about 90 km north of Mathura) and Fatehpur Sikri in District Agra (50 km south of Mathura). Gupta and Mani 2017 analyzes two early dates circa 2200 BCE from the Painted Grey Ware period from Gosna, Mathura, and vouches for the early dating of this culture, which has certain ramifications on the chronology of entire Braj region. Gupta 2019 presents a survey of prehistoric rock shelters in the Braj region. Vogel 1915 provides the only available brief account of two of the most important excavations at Mathura: the Kushan *devakula* site at Itokri Tila, Mat, and the famous Vrishni temple site at Mora. The first scientific excavation at Mathura took place at the site of Katra by M. Venkataramayya and Ballabh Saran of the Archaeological Survey of India (see Venkataramayya and Saran 1955), and then excavations at selected spots of Mathura city took place between 1973 and 1977, the final report of which could never be published except for a brief summary by the excavator Joshi 1989. Chakrabarti, et al. 2004 provides a rapid survey of Mathura and surrounding districts, and the explored sites are mentioned in the book. The most important archaeological work in the entire district was conducted by Prof. Herbert Hartel and his German team from 1966 to 1973 at the site of Sonkh, about 24 km south of Mathura. Hartel 1993 is a meticulously written excavation report that provides the basis for dating sculptures, terracottas, coins, pottery, etc.

Cunningham, Alexander. *Archaeological Survey Report*. Vol. 1. Calcutta: Archaeological Survey of India, 1862–1865.

In this and three other volumes (Vol. 3, 1971–1972; Vol. 17, 1881–1882, and Vol. 20, 1882–1883) of the *Archaeological Survey Report*, Sir Cunningham provides valuable information on the early explorations and excavations in Mathura. These include the identification of various mounds as archaeological sites, particularly of Buddhist affiliation, for the first time, like those of Katra, Chaubara, Kankali, Chaurasi, Jamalpur/Jail, Ambarikha, Dhruv, Nag, Bali, Narad, Saptarshi Tila Pali-khera, Kota, Parkham, Mahwan, Tumola, Chaumuhan, Anyor, Mora, Lohban, and Mahaban.

Chakrabarti, Dilip Kumar, Rakesh Tewari, and R. N. Singh. “Bateshwar, Mathura and Ahar: Sites in the Agra-Mathura-Aligarh-Bulandshahr Sector of the Upper Ganga-Yamuna Doab in Uttar Pradesh.” *South Asian Studies* 20 (2004): 57–59.

Based on the archaeological explorations in Mathura and nearby districts of Uttar Pradesh, this paper provides a good idea of the location of archaeological sites, their nature, and various ancient routes of the region.

Gupta, Vinay Kumar. *Mathura: An Art and Archaeological Study*. New Delhi: Kaveri Books, 2013.

Based on thorough explorations, the volume attempts to provide a complete archaeological picture of the entire Braj region. Based on the village-to-village survey, it identifies roughly a thousand sites in the region. Chapters on Buddhism; Jainism; Saiva cult; Vaishnava cult; Sakta cult; Surya cult; Ganesa, Skanda, Revanta, Yaksha, and other deities; terracottas; and Mora evidence provide valuable information.

Gupta, Vinay Kumar. "Early Settlement of Mathura: An Archaeological Perspective." *NMML Occasional Paper, History and Society, New Series*, 41. New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 2014.

With a basic introduction to the archaeology of Mathura, the paper talks about the nature of archaeological sites in the Braj region, with a case study of the site of Gosna from which two early radiocarbon dates were obtained. Also discusses the ancient trade routes inside the Mathura region, which finally become part of pan-Indian trade routes.

Gupta, Vinay Kumar. "Archaeological Landscape of Ancient Mathura in Relation to Its Art Workshops." *ICHR SAGE Publications. Indian Historical Review* 42.2 (2015): 189–209.

The paper draws the archaeological landscape of ancient Mathura to find spots of various stone carving centers and the Buddhist monasteries, and presents a holistic picture of ancient Mathura that is different from the hitherto believed Buddhist landscape.

Gupta, Vinay Kumar, and Buddha Rashmi Mani. "Painted Grey Ware: Changing Perspectives." University of Kerala, Thiruanantapuram. *Heritage: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology* 5 (2017): 370–379.

Discusses the chronology, authorship, and origin of Painted Grey Ware culture and its association with the *Mahābhārata* in light of the new radiocarbon dates obtained from various sites and Gupta's detailed archaeological survey in the Mathura region, a core area of Painted Grey Ware culture. This article advocates a change in the accepted chronology of this culture.

Gupta, Vinay Kumar. "Prehistoric Art of Braj Region: Based on Study of Rock Shelters near Fatehpur Sikri." University of Kerala, Thiruanantapuram. *Heritage: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology* 7 (2019): 373–396.

Explores the Mesolithic rock art of caves at Jajauli, Patsal, Bandrauli, Rasulpur, Madanpura and Churyari situated near Fatehpur Sikri in the Braj region.

Hartel, Herbert. *Excavations at Sonkh: 2500 Years of a Town in Mathura District*. With contributions by Hans-Jurgen Paech and Rolf Weber. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1993.

One of the most comprehensive and well-written excavation reports in Indian archaeology. Gives description of the excavations at Sonkh, which still remains the only site in the entire Mathura region scientifically excavated with a proper excavation report. The chapters that describe terracottas, sculptures, metal objects, coins, pottery, and miscellaneous objects found from stratified context provide a base for the dating of similar objects generally found in the Mathura region.

Joshi, Munish Chandra. "Mathurā as an Ancient Settlement." In *Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage*. Edited by Doris Meth Srinivasan, 165–170. New Delhi: Manohar, 1989.

Provides a brief report on the excavations at Mathura conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India from 1973 to 1977. This is the only source of information on the excavated spots and their chronology in the absence of any detailed report of the excavations.

Venkataramayya, M., and Ballabh Saran. "Mathura." In *Indian Archaeology, 1954–55: A Review*. Edited by Amlananda Ghosh, 15–16. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1955.

Brief report of excavations done at the Katra mound, Mathura, during the field season of 1954–1955. The excavators observed two ringed fortifications at Katra, the inner elliptical and outer quadrangular. On the surface, Painted Grey Ware was found in abundance. In the excavations, the earliest deposit was of a culture that used handmade pottery. Period I consisted of plain grey and polished black pottery, while Period II was characterized by Northern Black Polished Ware.

Vogel, Jean Phillip. "Excavations at Mathura." In *Archaeological Survey of India: Annual Report, 1911–12*. Edited by John Marshall, 120–133. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1915.

The only available brief report of excavations done by Pt. Radhakrishna at the important sites of Itokri Tila, Mat, and Mora. The old black-and-white photographs, drawings, sculptural findings, inscribed bricks, inscriptions, and the firsthand information of the digs make the paper very useful.

Early History and Geography

The Mathura district forms part of the fertile Ganga-Yamuna doab plains, except for hilly outcrops of Aravallis in the western part at Govardhan, Nandgaon, and Barsana. The River Yamuna bisects Mathura district into two parts, *cis* and *trans* Yamuna, and is the most important stream of the area. In the district the other smaller channels are Patwaha and Karban and the Govardhan drain. The Ganga canal following the course of an old water channel forms an important part of the present-day water supply system of the entire region. In the greater Braj region, the river Ganges is the most important river, and the linguistic Braj extends up to Haldwani in the lower Himalayas in the east. In the south there are Vindhyan outcrops, and in the west the Aravalli hills. Kali Nadi flows in the Aligarh and Etah districts and has a number of OCP and later period sites on its banks. Chambal is also an important river of the greater Braj region. The Braj circumambulation area is mostly limited to the west of Yamuna and only a minor part of it lies to the east of the Yamuna. Drake-Brockman 1911 and Joshi 1968 provide detailed information on the geographical features, land, soil, agriculture, and occupations of Mathura in the district gazetteers. Cunningham 1871 for the first time tried to draw a historical (Buddhist) map of ancient India including Mathura. Bajpai 1955 drew an historical outline of Mathura. Srinivasan 1989 is one of the most important publications on the ancient history and culture of Mathura. Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1949 is a brilliant study of history and art of the Scythians and one of the most important works dealing with ancient Mathura. Mukherjee 1981 is another significant work on the history and society of ancient Mathura during Saka-Pahlava phase. Gupta 2009 deals with Buddhist sites of the Mathura region. Luders 1961 and Bajpayee 1980 are the two most important studies on the inscriptions of Mathura, and Gupta 1989 is one of the most important studies on the early coinage of Mathura.

Bajpai, Krishna Datt. *Uttar Pradesh ke Sānskritik Kendra—Mathurā*. Lucknow, India: Education Department, Uttar Pradesh, 1955.

A basic introductory book on Mathura in an informative book series initiated by the Education Department of Uttar Pradesh. Bajpai provides a basic introduction to Mathura's history and art. Some of the black-and-white photographs provided at the end are quite valuable. In Hindi.

Bajpayee, Kalyani Das. *Early Inscriptions of Mathurā: A Study*. Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1980.

A good study of the political history, administrative systems, religions, economic life, and social life of Mathura through the study of Mathura inscriptions. In the appendix, summaries of inscriptions are quite valuable.

Cunningham, Alexander. *The Ancient Geography of India*. London: Trubner and Co., 1871.

A base book for all subsequent studies on ancient geography of India. Sir Cunningham bases this ancient geography of India on the accounts of the Greek and Latin historians and Buddhist literature, particularly the accounts of the Chinese traveler to India Hwen Thasang (Xuanzang).

Drake-Brockman, D.L. *Muttra: A Gazetteer, Being Volume VII of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Allahabad, India: Government Press United Provinces, 1911.*

The gazetteer provides important information about the general geographical features of Mathura district, as well as the agriculture and commerce, the people, and the administration and revenue and the history. Important cities, towns, and villages of the district are described in detail.

Gupta, Parmeshwari Lal. "Early Coins of Mathurā Region." In *Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage*. Edited by Doris Meth Srinivasan, 124–139. New Delhi: Manohar, 1989.

The most important study on the early coins of Mathura. Gupta identifies certain symbols punched on them as indicative of the Mahajanapada or its chief city, Mathura. Identification of a certain tree symbol as "Mathura symbol" and a person carrying a plough and *musala* as Samkarsana/Balarama are significant.

Gupta, Vinay Kumar. *Buddhism in Mathura*. Delhi: Bhartiya Kala Prakashan, 2009.

Identifies various places mentioned in ancient Buddhist literature in and around Mathura. The description provided by two Chinese pilgrims, Fa-xian and Xuan Zang, is also analyzed. A number of archaeological sites in and around Mathura possibly connected to Buddhism are located and identified.

Joshi, Esha Basant. *Uttar Pradesh District Gazetteers Mathura*. Lucknow, India: Government of Uttar Pradesh, 1968.

The gazetteer of Mathura with an enlargement of information provided by Drake-Brockman in his earlier gazetteer, particularly through the addition of chapters on industries, banking, trade and commerce, occupations, education and culture, medical and public health services, law, order and justice, and various aspects of administration.

Lohuizen-de Leeuw, Joanna Engelberta van. *The Scythian Period: An Approach to the History, Art, Epigraphy and Palaeography of North India from the 1st Century B.C. to 3rd Century A.D.* Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1949.

The work of Lohuizen-de Leeuw has remained a milestone in which she describes in detail the history and arts of pre-Kushan Saka Parthian and Kushan kings in northwestern India and Mathura. She advocates the Mathura school to have been responsible for carving out the first image of the Buddha.

Luders, Heinrich. *Mathura Inscriptions: Unpublished Papers*. Edited by Klaus L. Janert. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961.

The most comprehensive and important work on the epigraphs of Mathura. The unfinished work of Heinrich Luders was compiled, corrected, edited, and published by Klaus L. Janert. The book discusses the epigraphs found in and around ancient Mathura. The author has painstakingly provided facsimiles of all the inscriptions that are discussed.

Mukherjee, Bratindra Nath. *Mathurā and Its Society: The Śaka Pahlava Phase*. Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1981.

Detailed study of Mathura and its society during the Saka Pahlava phase, up to the end of the Kushan period, based on the information retrieved primarily from inscriptions and coins, and also from literature, archaeology, and art.

Srinivasan, Doris Meth., ed. *Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1989.

A milestone volume dedicated to studies of Mathura. Shiva G. Bajpai presents an important study on Mathura's trade networks; Roshan Dalal on historic geography; Romila Thapar, B. N. Mukherji, and R. S. Sharma on early economy and society; P. L. Gupta and others on early coinage; and N. P. Joshi and Doris Srinivasan on Mathura art. U. P. Shah and Ernest Bender write on Jainism in Mathura; P. S. Jaini on Buddhism in Mathura, Norvein Hein on Kalayavana; Alf Hiltebeitel on Krishna in Mathura; H. Hartel on pottery; and M.C. Joshi on archaeology. All the papers in the volume are a must read for understanding Mathura's history, archaeology, paleography, numismatics, religions, art and other areas of study.

Mathura Art

During the post-Mauryan, particularly during the Kushan period (c. 2nd century BCE–3rd century CE), Mathura emerged as a great school of art, along with the Gandhara school in the northwest. Mathura art is mostly religious, but significant numbers of figures are also found that can be termed secular art. Mathura was a great center of terracotta art, Buddhist art, Jaina art, Brahmanical art, and art of the local cults. Smith 1901 is a brief report on the Jaina findings of A. Führer from the excavations at Kankali Tila. Vogel further contributed to the study of Mathura art with his publication in French, Vogel 1930. Joshi 1966 is a valuable contribution to the study of Mathura art through the important sculptures in the Mathura Museum. Rosenfield 1967 is a landmark study of dynastic arts of the Kushans, particularly the royal statues and coinage. Sharma 1984 is a significant study of the Buddhist art of Mathura. Quintanilla 2007 is a valuable work on the pre-Kushan art of Mathura. Kreisel 1986 is an important study of the Saiva cult of Mathura, though in German. Srinivasan 1997 is a very important publication on the concept of multiplicity in Brahmanical art, with a particular focus on Mathura. Srinivasan 2016 is another important publication on the Brahmanical art of Mathura by an author who has many previously published scholarly articles.

Joshi, Nilakantha Purushottam. *Mathura Sculptures: A Handbook to Appreciate the Sculptures in the Archeological Museum, Mathura*. Mathura, India: Archaeological Museum of Mathura, 1966.

A good selection of important Mathura sculptures from the Government Museum, Mathura, along with their description. Joshi analyzes sculptures in the light of literary mentions about various deities in ancient religious texts.

Kreisel, Gerd. *Die Śiva-Bildwerke der Mathura Kunst: Ein Beitrag zur Frühhinduistischen Ikonographie*. Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Weisbaden, 1986.

The most comprehensive documentation and analysis of iconic and aniconic representations of Siva produced in the region of Mathura from the 3rd century BCE to the 5th century CE. Analyzes the meaning of these forms within their social, political, and religious contexts.

Quintanilla, Sonya Rhie. *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura ca. 150 BCE–100 CE*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007.

Establishes the existence of two vital and important periods of sculpture at Mathura before the Kushan period that had not been clearly formulated earlier. The first of these, which parallels work from other parts of India, stretches from the middle of the 2nd to the 1st century BCE, and the second extends from about the 1st century BCE to the so called Kushan period. Also makes an important contribution to the study of Jaina Ayagapatas and iconography of tirthankaras.

Rosenfield, John M. *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

A landmark study of Kushan art. Gives a detailed view of the Kushan Empire, including its history and art, and particularly the dynastic art that relates to royal portraits and coins. The study of Kushan royal sanctuaries/portraits from Mat, Surkh Kotal, Shami, Nimrud Dagh, Kuh-i-Khwaja, Toparak Kala in Khwarezm, and Hatra is a valuable contribution.

Sharma, Ramesh Chandra. *Buddhist Art of Mathura*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1984.

A comprehensive study. Also includes the findings from Govindnagar site in Mathura, which are brought to the notice of the scholarly world for the first time.

Smith, Vincent Arthur. *The Jain Stupa and Other Antiquities of Mathura*. Allahabad, India: Archaeological Survey of India, 1901.

Important publication on the excavations and findings from Jain stupa at Kankali Tila, Mathura. The only source of information on the subject, through some old photographs, line drawings, and descriptions of a number of sculptural findings.

Srinivasan, Doris Meth. *Many Heads, Arms, and Eyes: Origin, Meaning, and Form of Multiplicity in Indian Art*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1997.

Srinivasan takes references from ancient religious texts to understand the origins, development, and meaning of the convention of multiplicity in Hindu icons. Particular emphasis is given to the early images of Siva as *mukhalingas* and *ashtamurti*; Vishnu as *caturbhuj*, *vyuha*, and *visvarupa*; Mahishamardini as multi-handed warrior goddess; Shashthi as multi-headed goddess; and Skanda-Karttikeya as multi-headed deity. According to Srinivasan, Mathura played a pivotal role in the development of multiplicity convention in Indian art.

Srinivasan, Doris Meth. *Listening to Icons. Vol 1, Indian Iconological Studies*. New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2016.

This book is an anthology of Srinivasan's previously published scholarly articles. Many of the articles are closely related to Mathura, particularly papers on the "Significance and scope of pre-Kushan Saivite iconography"; "Bhagavan Narayana: a colossal Kushan icon"; "Early Vaishnava imagery: *caturvyuha* and variant forms"; "Early Krishna icons: the case at Mathura"; "Monumental Naginis from Mathura"; and her recent work on "Mathura's "personality" and the development of narrative art."

Vogel, Jean Philippe. *La Sculpture de Mathura*. Ars Asiatica 15. Paris: Les Editions G. Van Oest, 1930.

The first important publication in the form of a book specifically dedicated to the Mathura school of art. Vogel describes Mathura sculptures with acumen.

Catalogues

Vogel 1910 was one of the early important studies on Mathura art, wherein he published a scholarly catalogue of sculptures in the Mathura Museum. Agrawala 1936 published an important work on Mathura terracottas. Agrawala 1948 is a catalogue of the Buddha and Bodhisattva images in the Mathura Museum, while Agrawala 1950 is a catalogue of Jaina tirthankara and miscellaneous objects including the Kushan royal portraits in the Mathura Museum. Agrawala 1951 is an important catalogue of Brahmanical images in the Mathura Museum, and Agrawala 1951–1952 covers architectural pieces in the museum. Asthana 1999 is a catalogue of Mathura art pieces in the National Museum, New Delhi, while Chakrabarti 2006 catalogues Mathura objects in the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Czuma 1985 is a scholarly catalogue of the Kushan exhibition organized at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Gupta 1985 is an important publication based on the finding of Mathura sculptures from Sanghol, the largest repository of Mathura art outside Mathura region.

Agrawala, Vasudeva Sharana. "Mathura Terracottas." *Journal of United Province Historical Society* 9.2 (July 1936): 6–38.

Among all the studies on terracottas, this is the only work fully dedicated to Mathura terracottas. The Mathura Museum has thousands of terracottas in its collection, and this work includes maximum typologies.

Agrawala, Vasudeva Sharana. "Buddha and Bodhisattva Images in Mathura Museum." *Journal of United Provinces Historical Society* 21 (1948): 43–95.

This catalogue by Agrawala provides a complete inventory of the Buddha and Bodhisattva sculptures in the Mathura museum, the majority of which were acquired from the sites in Mathura and surroundings.

Agrawala, Vasudeva Sharana. "Catalogue of the Mathura Museum: Jain Tirthankaras and Other Miscellaneous Figures." *Journal of United Provinces Historical Society* 23 (1950): 35–147.

This catalogue provides a complete inventory of Jaina sculptures in Mathura Museum, the majority of which were acquired from the excavations at Kankali Tila. This catalogue also includes Kushan royal statues, miscellaneous images, female figures, miscellaneous fragmentary figures, and bas-reliefs that are either decorative or depict narrative scenes of the Buddha's life.

Agrawala, Vasudeva Sharana. *A Catalogue of Brahmanical Images in Mathura Art*. Lucknow, India: United Provinces Historical Society, 1951.

Provides important information on the Brahmanical sculptures in the repository of the Mathura Museum, which includes Brahma, Vishnu, Balarama, Siva, Ganesa, Karttikeya, Krishna-lila, Indra, Hari-hara, Agni, Hanuman, Lakshmi, Durga and Parvati, Mahishasuramardini, Matrika, Vasudhara, Surya, Kubera and Yakshas, Hariti, Bacchanalian groups, and Naga images.

Agrawala, Vasudeva Sharana. "Catalogue of the Mathura Museum: Architectural Pieces." *Journal of United Provinces Historical Society* 24–25 (1951–1952): 1–160.

Provides a complete inventory of architectural pieces acquired by the Mathura Museum up until 1939, and includes railing pillars, coping stones, cross-bars, Torana architraves and brackets, stupas, lion figures, miscellaneous architectural pieces (both Buddhist and Brahmanical), and inscriptions.

Asthana, Shashi Prabha. *Mathurā Kalā: Catalogue of Mathurā Sculptures in National Museum*. New Delhi: National Museum, 1999.

Well-written catalogue of sculptures of Mathura housed in the National Museum, New Delhi, one of the important repositories of Mathura art, along with the Government Museum, Mathura; State Museum, Lucknow; and Indian Museum, Kolkata.

Chakrabarti, Mangala. *Mathura Sculptures: A Catalogue of Sculptures of Mathura School in Indian Museum, Kolkata*. Kolkata: The Indian Museum, Kolkata, 2006.

The Indian Museum in Kolkata houses a significant collection of the Mathura school of art, and this study by Mangala Chakrabarti provides a complete catalogue of Mathura sculptures, including beautiful Kushan sculptures and Gupta pieces, among others.

Czuma, Stanislaw. *Kushan Sculpture: Images from Early India*. With the assistance of Rekha Morris. Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1985.

Scholarly catalogue of an exhibition of Kushan sculpture that was organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art. Majority of the pieces in the exhibition originated from the Mathura region.

Gupta, Swarajya Prakash. *Kushan Sculptures from Sanghol (1st–2nd century A.D.): A Recent Discovery*. New Delhi: National Museum, 1985.

Important findings of Mathura sculptures found from Sanghol (Punjab) have been well elaborated by Dr. Gupta. This is the biggest cache of Mathura sculptures outside Mathura and is of high aesthetic quality.

Vogel, Jean Philippe. *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathura*. Allahabad, India: Superintendent, Government Press, United Provinces, 1910.

First-ever catalogue on the collection of the Government Museum, Mathura, with pieces acquired up until 1909. The high scholarship of Vogel is still relevant to scholars. He divides the whole collection into various categories.

Krishna

Braj's popularity in the modern world can be credited to a single character, Krishna, who is considered an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and sometimes even superior to him. A number of studies have been made to understand the cult of Krishna, but with the finding of the Heliodorus pillar inscription from Vidisha and the Nārāyaṇa vāṭakā inscription from Nagari, Chittorgarh, it is clear that by the 2nd century BCE, the Bhāgavata cult had already evolved, in which aspects of the cults dedicated to Vedic Vishnu, Nārāyaṇa, and Epic/Paurāṇic Vāsudeva Krishna had merged. Another aspect of Krishna, which is identified with Gopāla-Krishna and his *līlās* in Vraja, also became popular by the Gupta period, at least in Indian art. Scholars assign different dates to various scriptures dealing with the life and *līlās* of Krishna. During the so-called *bhakti* period, Krishna-bhakti evolves as one of the most popular *bhakti* cults, and all the attributes of Vedic Vishnu, Vṛṣṇi Vāsudeva of Mathura, and the Gopāla of Vraja are observed in a single character who is Krishna. But the attributes of the Krishna of Vraja who did *bāla* and *kīśora-līlās* attain the highest popularity in popular bhakti traditions. Significant for Rādhā and Krishna, Vraja becomes the most important center of Krishna-bhakti. Bhandarkar 1982 is an early study discussing the development of the Krishna cult. Gonda 1954 is a detailed study of early Vaishnavism in which the Krishna cult occupies an important place. Majumdar 1969 and Jayaswal 1981 further study the development of the Krishna cult by taking into consideration early literary references. Preciado-Solis 1984 studies the development of Krishna as hero in Vedic, Epic, and Purāṇic sources up to 10th century CE, tracing themes in iconography. Banerjee 1978 is an attempt to study Krishna in Indian art in a pan-Indian context. Gupta 2019 looks into Vṛṣṇis in Indian literature and early art. Coleman 2011 is an important bibliographical study on Krishna. Randhawa 1963 is an important study of paintings of the *Gītagovinda* in the Kangra school, and Spink 1971 an important work on Krishna in Indian paintings.

Banerjee, P. *The Life of Krishna in Indian Art*. New Delhi: National Museum, 1978.

An art-historical survey of Krishna in Indian art, including an epigraphic survey of sculptural art and paintings, categorized by regions: northern, eastern, western, southern, and central India.

Bhandarkar, Ramakrishna Gopal. *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, and Minor Religious Systems*. Reprint. Poona, India: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1982.

First published 1913. This book is the earliest pioneering effort at tracing the historical origins of such major religious systems as Vaishnavism and Saivism. In order to show how Bhāgavatism gave rise to a full-fledged theistic theology of Vaishnavism, Bhandarkar thoroughly examines the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*.

Coleman, Tracy. "Krishna." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Presents an overview of the subject with details of texts such as the *Mahābhārata*, *Bhagavadgītā*, *Harivaṃśa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and *Gītagovinda*. Coleman also discusses depictions of Krishna in Indian art and medieval poetry, along with study of temple rituals, festival, worship and other aspects.

Gonda, Jan. *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*. Utrecht, The Netherlands: Oosthoek, 1954.

One of the important works which delves into textual evidence from the early Vedic texts and later Purāṇas and through them confirms that certain traits of Vishnu persist and are developed further. The characteristic of human welfare in particular is associated with Vishnu from the earliest times up till the development of the ancient bhakti cult.

Gupta, Vinay Kumar. "Vṛṣṇis in Ancient Literature and Art." In *Indology's Pulse Arts in Context: Essays Presented to Doris Meth Srinivasan in Admiration of Her Scholarly Research*. Edited by Corinna Wessels-Mevissen and Gerd J. R. Mevissen, with the assistance of Arundhati Banerji and Vinay Kumar Gupta, 71–94. New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2019.

Discusses the Vṛṣṇis in ancient literature and art, particularly highlighting their presence in the Mathura region, with which they are strongly associated. Also delves into the antiquity of the cult and representations in early art, including rock painting.

Jayaswal, Suvira. *The Origin and Development of Vaishnavism*. 2d rev. and enl. ed. New Delhi: Mushiram Manoharlal, 1981.

Jayaswal traces the early origin and development of Vaishnavism by focusing more on sectarian doctrines than art. She suggests the merger of some cults gave rise to the Vaishnavism of Kushan-Gupta periods.

Majumdar, Bimanbehari. *Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1969.

Explores the Krishna cult in ancient literature and legend, and counters the impact of Tantricism on the Krishna cult. Also gives emphasis to the cult of Rādhā through two chapters.

Preciado-Solis, Benjamin. *The Kṛṣṇa Cycle in the Purāṇas: Themes and Motifs in a Heroic Saga*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984.

Studies the development of Krishna legend in Vedic, Epic, and Purāṇic sources up to the 10th century CE, and also traces themes in iconography. Analyzes the themes and motifs in the Krishna saga, presenting them in a folk-comparative method, paying attention to the resemblances to the legend of Hercules.

Randhawa, M. S. *Kangra Paintings of the Gīta Govinda*. Introduction by W. G. Archer. New Delhi: National Museum, 1963.

Important study of paintings of *Gītagovinda* of the Kangra school, which are remarkable for their adorable romantic themes, like Krishna adorning Rādhā and arranging her tresses. Indices present the inscriptions and the *Gītagovinda* in Devanagari.

Spink, Walter M. *Krishnamandala: A Devotional Theme in Indian Art*. Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1971.

Important study on the life of Krishna in Indian art, particularly paintings. Also traces the development of the theme of Rādhā and Krishna, romance between the two, and the Rāsamaṇḍala, the divine dancing theme.

Rādhā

Rādhā is the foremost of the *gopīs*, or milkmaids, of Braj, and is considered the *hlādinīśakti* of Krishna, the Lord of Mathura. The modern identity of Braj is dependent on the combined cult of Rādhā and Krishna, whom some consider inseparable. Rādhā is passion incarnate; metaphorically, she stands for the human soul and its longing for God. As Krishna's childhood and teenage sweetheart, her foremost characteristic is her fervent innocent love. Rādhā is venerated as a goddess in her own right, sometimes even being elevated above Krishna. While she is not mentioned in the early Purāṇas (even the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), her love for Krishna is celebrated in the 12th-century composition *Gīta Govinda* and in poetry from Bengal and Mithilā, particularly in Caṇḍīdāsa's works. The *Brahmaivaivartapurāṇa* extols her above Krishna. She may also have links with the South Indian Nappinnāi. She is celebrated especially in devotional literature in Brajbhasha from the 16th century onward, particularly the Aṣṭachāpa kavis. In miniature art, Rādhā is portrayed romantically as the embodiment of ideal Indian feminine beauty, often in intimate embrace with Krishna. Rādhā is worshipped most significantly, especially in the pilgrimage center of Braj, Vrindavan and Barsana being foremost, and songs celebrating her love for Krishna are sung and performed in temples. Majumdar 1955 and Upadhyay 1963 are two early studies that trace the evolution of the Rādhā cult, particularly through the study of Indian literature. Miller 1975 also looks for Rādhā before the *Gītagovinda*. Hawley and Wulff 1982 remains an important publication

specifically dedicated to studying various aspects of the cult of Rādhā. Wulff 2005 is an encyclopedia entry, and Pauwels 2012 is an entry in Oxford Bibliographies. Miller 1977 is an important translation of the *Gītagovinda* of Jayadeva, a significant work for the development of the cult of Rādhā. Sen 1974 is an English translation of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, and Brown 1974 a study on the cult of Rādhā based on the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*.

Brown, C. Mackenzie. *God as Mother: A Feminine Theology in India: An Historical and Theological Study of Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*. Boston: C. Stark and Company, 1974.

An important study on the cult of Rādhā, the foremost female divinity of Braj, based on the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*.

Hawley, John Stratton, and Donna Marie Wulff, eds. *The Divine Consort: Rādhā and the Goddesses of India*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Religious Studies Series, 1982.

Includes articles by renowned scholars. Vaudeville tries to link the development of the Krishna and Rādhā cult to the preexisting *devī* cult in Braj. Wulff delves into the portraiture of Rādhā in the plays of Rūpa Gosvāmī. Hawley discusses portraiture of Rādhā in the *Sūr Sāgar*, and Brown the theology of Rādhā in the Purāṇas. Goswami, as an ardent follower of Caitanya, explains that Rādhā is the quintessence of *rasa*, the supreme aesthetic experience.

Majumdar, A. K. "A Note on the Development of the Rādhā Cult." *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 36 (1955): 231–257.

Majumdar traces the development of the cult, examining the impact of Tantric Buddhism on the development of Rādhā.

Miller, Barbara Stoler. "Rādhā: Consort of Kṛṣṇa's Vernal Passion." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 95.4 (October–November 1975): 655–671.

Discusses Rādhā with a comprehensive collection of references that antedate the *Gītagovinda* from a number of Sanskrit and Prakrit texts. Miller argues that the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa story must have proceeded from a rich folk tradition preceding the *Gītagovinda*.

Miller, Barbara Stoler, trans. *The Gītagovinda of Jayadeva: Love Song of the Dark Lord*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

A readable English version of the *Gītagovinda* prefaced by a detailed introduction with sections on Jayadeva and his *kāvya*, Krishna's *daśarūpa* (ten-incarnate) forms, and Rādhā's brief literary appearances preceding the *Gītagovinda*.

Pauwels, Heidi. "Rādhā." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Important bibliographical study on Rādhā in which the author discusses theology, North and South Indian cults, devotional literature, art, play, and popular culture.

Sen, Rajendra Nath, trans. *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*. 2 vols. New York: AMS Press, 1974.

Originally published as Volume 24 of the *Sacred Books of the Hindus* from Allahabad in 1920–1922. This is the only extant English translation of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*.

Upadhyay, Baladev. *Bharatiya Vangmay mein Sriradha*. Patna, India: Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, 1963.

An account of the history and development of the conception of Rādhā from the Vedas to the present, drawing on nearly all the literary references and religious traditions. In Hindi.

Wulff, Donna M. "Rādhā." In *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Vol. 11. 2d ed. Edited by Lindsay Jones, 7593–7595. Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005.

Summarizes research linking Rādhā with Durgā and Ekānamsā, and pays special attention to Bengali traditions of worshipping this goddess.

Nimbārka Sampradāya

The Nimbārka (or Sanakānīka) Sampradāya is both a school of thought and an organized religious community that subscribes to the teachings of Nimbārka, the founder of the sect (also known as Nimbabhāskara or Nimbāditya, dated as early as the 7th century and as late as the 13th century CE). Neemgaon near Govardhan is the place where Nimbārka is said to have established the sect. Nimbārktīs (also called Nimāvats) are mostly found in Braj and at their seat Salemabad (in Ajmer District), founded by Paraśurāma since the 15th–16th centuries. It forms one of the oldest extant groups of Rādhā-Krishna worshippers in North India today. Many centuries after Nimbārka, Keśava Kaśmīrī Bhaṭṭa, Śrībhaṭṭa, and Hari Vyās Dev became principal figures of this sect. Bose 1943 is one of the earliest studies on the doctrines of Nimbārka in comparison to Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, the great revivalists. Sharan 1972 is one of the most important studies of Nimbārka, his disciples, and the sect, by the pen of a practitioner. Clementin-Ojha 2018 is an important bibliographical essay on the Nimbārka sect. Satyanand 1997 and Ramnarace 2014 establish early dates of Nimbārka on the basis of in-depth studies in the theology of Nimbārka and contemporary sects.

Bose, Roma. *Vedāntapārijātasaurabha of Nimbārka and Vedāntakaustubha of Śrīnivāsa (Commentaries on the Brahma-sūtras)*. Vol. 3, *Doctrines of Nimbārka and His Followers*. Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1943.

Bose describes the system of Nimbārka in comparison to those of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. She opines that it was influenced by Rāmānuja, whose doctrine of qualified nondualism (*viśiṣṭādvaitavāda*) was formed in the context of a Vaishnava theistic reaction against Śaṅkara's pure nondualistic interpretation of the Upanishads (*kevalādvaitavedānta*).

Clementin-Ojha, Catherine. "Nimbārka Sampradāya." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Important study on Nimbārka Sampradāya in which the author discusses the sect, life, and chronology of the founder Nimbārka, as well as later ascetics, the monastery at Salemabad, literary works of the sect, and its present position.

Ramnarace, Vijay. "Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's Vedantic Debut: Chronology and Rationalisation in the Nimbārka Sampradāya." PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2014.

On the basis of philosophical and theological arguments, the author proposes that Nimbārka lived between 620 and 690 CE. He also proposes quite early dates for his early disciples, and also for the saints of later phases.

Satyanand, Joseph. *Nimbārka: A Pre-Śaṅkara Vedāntin and His Philosophy*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1997.

Through this scholarly work, Satyanand confidently tries to establish that Nimbārka lived before Śaṅkara. The author also reviews and critically evaluates the sectarian accounts of Nimbārka's life and times, as well as the findings and speculations of other Indologists on the subject.

Sharan, Vrajavallabha, ed. *Śrī Nimbārka aur unkā sampradāya*. Salemabad, India: Śrī Nimbārkācārya Pīṭha, 1972.

Edited and partly written by an erudite scholar of the sect in the 20th century, this volume comprises more than one hundred contributions on the life, philosophy, and devotional writings of Nimbārka and his main disciples. Though written with sectarian leanings, the work is quite valuable to understand the Nimbārka sect. In Hindi.

The Vallabha Sampradāya and *Aṣṭachāpa Kavis*

Vallabhācārya (b. 1479–d. 1531) was the founder of the theistic school of Vedānta known as Pure Non-Dualism, or Śuddhādvaita. Vallabha's philosophy proclaimed Krishna as the fullest manifestation of Ultimate Reality (*brahman*). The community founded by Vallabha came to be known both as the Vallabha Community (Vallabha Sampradāya) and the Path of Grace (Puṣṭi Mārga). Vallabha's male descendants, known as *mahārājas*, were responsible for the growth of the community after Vallabha's death, particularly Viṭṭhalnāthjī and Gokulnāthjī. Some scholars, in fact, believe it would be more accurate to describe Viṭṭhalnāth as the community's institutional founder, although its philosophical and theological basis is no doubt the work of Vallabha himself. During the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Viṭṭhalnāthjī and Gokulnāthjī created the community's structure of religious authority as well as its temple rituals (*sevā*), and they created a canon of devotional literature that still shapes Vallabhite devotion in the 21st century. Combining the widely reputed Brajhasha poets Sūrdās and Parmānandadās with a set of six others who had specifically Vallabhite associations—for example, Nandadās, Chītasvām, and Caturbhujdās—they created a canon of bhakti performance called the *aṣṭachāp* (eight seals). These eight poets are also known as *aṣṭachāpakavis* or *aṣṭasakhās*, and they are depicted as always having been oriented to the service of Śrīnāthajī at Mount Govardhan. Mittal 1968 and Parekh 1969 are important works on the history and development of the Puṣṭi Mārga by practitioners themselves. Marfatia 1967 and Saha 2006 are studies of the philosophy or theology of Vallabha. Bhatt 1984 is another important study of his life and works. Tandon 1960 is a detailed study of Brajhasha Vārtā *sāhitya*. Mittal 1949 is a significant study of the life and history of *aṣṭachāpa kavis*. Sanford 2002 is a readable analysis of Parmānandadās's poetry. Vaudeville 1980 provides a partial translation of the *Śrīnāthjī Ke Prāgaṭya Ki Vārtā* along with analysis. Saha 2015 is a useful bibliographical study of the Vallabha sect.

Bhatt, G. H. *Śrī Vallabhācārya and His Doctrines*. Baroda, India: Shri Vallabha, 1984.

This work is a collection of nine articles written by G. H. Bhatt evaluating Vallabha's life and works based on a critical examination of sectarian texts written in Sanskrit, Hindi, and Gujarati. The articles were originally published in the *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* in the early decades of the 20th century.

Marfatia, Mrudula I. *The Philosophy of Vallabhācārya*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967.

An important study of the Śuddhādvaita philosophical tradition of Vallabhācārya. Marfatia makes an important comparison of Śuddhādvaita with Śaṅkara's Advaita and philosophical doctrines of Rāmānuja and Mādhva.

Mittal, Prabhudayal. *Aṣṭachāpa Paricay*. Mathurā, India: Agrawala Press, 1949.

A very important study of eight great poet disciples of Vallabha and Viṭṭhalnāth: Kumbhandās, Sūrdās, Parmānandadās, Kṛṣṇadās, Govindasvāmī, Nandadās, Chītasvāmī, and Caturbhujdās, who are known as *aṣṭachāpa kavis* or *aṣṭasakhās*. Mittal sifts information from the Vaishnava *vārtā sāhitya* and presents a detailed account of the life story and poetic and musical compositions of these great Brajhasha poets, Sūrdās being foremost among them.

Mittal, Prabhudayal. *Brajastha Vallabha Sampradāya Kā Itihās*. Mathurā, India: Sāhitya Samsthān, 1968.

One of the most important works on history and development of the Vallabha sect, by a Puṣṭi Mārgī follower.

Parekh, Manilal. *Shri Vallabhacharya: Life, Teachings, and Movement: A Religion of Grace*. Rajkot, India: Shri Bhagavata Dharma Mission, 1969.

A devotional biography of Vallabha that contains a simple summary of his life and development of the sect and its philosophical and theological views.

Saha, Shandip. "A Community of Grace: The Social and Theological World of the Puṣṭi Mārga." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 69.2 (2006): 225–242.

Explores the history of the *vārtā* literature and the effect of social and theological dimensions in shaping the religious identity of the Puṣṭi Mārga.

Saha, Shandip. "Vallabha." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Important bibliographical study of Vallabha, his life, his writings, the sect, the followers, later preachers, the theology, Puṣṭi Mārga, *vārtā* literature, Havelī sangīt, and other related topics.

Sanford, A. Whitney. "Painting Words, Tasting Sound: Visions of Krishna in Paramānand's Sixteenth-Century Devotional Poetry." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70.1 (March 2002): 55–81.

A readable analysis of Paramānand's poetry, for which the author suggests that Paramānand's devotional poems and metaphors effect a "synaesthetic transformation of sound into sight."

Tandon, Hariharanath. *Vārtā Sāhitya (Ek Bṛhat Adhyāyan)*. Aligarh, India: Bhārat Prakāśan Mandir, 1960.

An important work that traces the compositional stages of the *vārtā* literature between the 16th and 18th centuries. The work is based on an examination of sectarian manuscripts stored in various collections.

Vaudeville, Charlotte. "The Govardhan Myth in Northern India." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 22.1 (1980): 1–45.

A partial translation of the *Śrīnāthjī Ke Prāgaṭya Ki Vārtā* along with an analysis that argues that the Śrīnāthjī image was a folk deity (a Nāga) that was absorbed into Vaishnavism by Vallabha, though her proposition may not stand scrutiny by Braj scholars.

Vārtās

Vārtā literature contains the life stories of those who received their initiation from either Vallabha or his son Viṭṭhalnāth, and is the most important source for understanding the early Puṣṭi Mārga. Barz 1976 studies the bhakti sect of Vallabha and also provides an English translation of *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan Kī Vārtā*. Barz 2007, through translation of *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan Kī Vārtā*, focuses upon the *vārtā* of Vallabha's disciple and seniormost *aṣṭachāpa* poet Kumbhandās. Gokulnāth 1995 is a Brajbhasha account of the life and travels of Vallabha, and Gokulnāth 2002 provides details of *sevā* and *bhog* in Puṣṭi Mārga. Gokulnāth 1995 gives details of *Chaurāsī Baiṭhaks* of Vallabha. Harirāy 2002 is an English translation of the *Do Sau Bāvan Vaiṣṇavan Kī Vārtā*, a text in Brajbhasha which recounts the stories of 252 disciples said to be associated with Vallabha's son, Viṭṭhalnāth. Harirāy 1879 is Brajbhasha account of the history of the Śrīnāthjī idol and its relocation from Braj to Nathdwara in Mewar. Harirāy 1992 is the Brajbhasha text with commentary about Vallabha and his eighty-four most exemplary disciples.

Barz, Richard. *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya*. Faridabad, India: Thomson, 1976.

Talks about Vallabhācārya's life and his establishment of an organization for his followers, a philosophical system to explain his view of the world, and a spiritual method for putting his teachings into practice. The second part of the book offers an English translation of the sections of the *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan Kī Vārtā*, describing the lives of four early disciples of Vallabhācārya, one of whom was the poet Sūrdās.

Barz, Richard. "Kumbhandās: The Devotee as Salt of the Earth." In *Krishna: A Sourcebook*. Edited by Edwin F. Bryant, 477–506. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

A translation of one of the *vārtās* from the *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan Kī Vārtā*, which focuses upon the *vārtā* of Vallabha's disciple and seniormost *aṣṭachāpa* poet Kumbhandās. Barz also provides a short introduction about Vallabhite theology and the history of the *vārtā* literature.

Gokulnāth. *Chaurāsī Baiṭhak*. Translated by Shyamdas. Baroda, India: Shri Vallabha, 1985.

An English translation of a Brajbhasha account of Vallabha's travels throughout India titled *Caurāsī Baiṭhak Caritra*, which focuses on the eighty-four seats of Vallabhācārya. Out of these eighty-four, about two dozen are located in the Braj region.

Gokulnāth. *Śrī Mahāprabhūjī Kī Nijavārtā, Gharūvārtā, Baiṭhak Caritra*. Edited by Ghanashyamdas Mukhiya. Indore, India: Vaiṣṇav Mitra Maṇḍal, 1995.

Consists of the stories written in Brajbhasha and attributed to Gokulnāthjī about the life and travels of Vallabhācārya.

Gokulnāth. *Rahasya Bhāvnā, Nikuñja Bhāvnā*. Edited by Niranjandev Dev Sharma. Mathura, India: Śrī Govardhan Granthamālā Kāryālay, 2002.

This Brajbhasha text attributed to Gokulnāthjī explains the symbolism associated with various items used in the performance of *sevā*, ranging from the food offerings made to the *svarūpa* to various items of clothing used to adorn the deity.

Harirāy. *Śrī Govardhanāthjī Ke Prāgaṭya Kī Vārtā*. Edited by Mohanlal Vishnulal Pandya. Bombay: Induprakash Chhapkhana, 1879.

A local Brajbhasha account detailing the history of the Śrīnāthjī idol and its relocation from Braj to Nathdwara in Mewar. The text is attributed to Harirāy.

Harirāy. *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan Kī Vārtā*. Edited by Ghanshyamdas Mukhiya. Indore, India: Vaiṣṇav Mitra Maṇḍal, 1992.

Contains the entire Brajbhasha text with commentary about Vallabha and his eighty-four most exemplary disciples, including four of the *aṣṭachāpa kavis*. Some scholars, though, suggest that originally this work should be attributed to Gokulnāthjī.

Harirāy. *252 Vaishnavas*. 3 vols. Translated by Shyamdas. Kota, India: Pratham Peeth, 2002.

This is a complete English translation of the *Do Sau Bāvan Vaiṣṇavan Kī Vārtā*, another text in Brajbhasha which recounts the stories of 252 disciples said to be associated with Vallabha's son, Viṭṭhalnāth.

Caitanya, Six Gosvāmīs, and the Gauḍīya Sect

Caitanya (or Krishna Chaitanya, born Viśvambhara Miśra/Nimāi, 1486–1533 CE) is one of the most influential bhakti saints of medieval India; he founded the Gauḍīya (or Bengali) Vaishnavsect. This sect believes in finding the Supreme God Krishna through joint worship of Rādhā and Krishna; *nām-jap* and *kīrtan* form the most important act of worship in the Gauḍīya sect. Advaitācārya and Nityānand were two

famous disciple-cum-companions of Caitanya, followed by Ṣaḍ (six) Gosvāmīs who settled in Braj and became responsible for the growth of the theology and doctrines of the sect. They are Sanātana, Rūpa, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Raghunāthadās, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, and Jīva Gosvāmī. Besides these six, two of their disciples, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, are important for the sect and the reconstruction of the sacred space of Braj. These saints have left a vast literature on various tenets of the Caitanya sect. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja composed the biographical *Caitanya caritāmṛta* and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa the *Haribhaktivilāsa*. The *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (Condensed essence of the *Bhāgavata*) is Rūpa's main theological work and was meant as a theological distillation of his brother Sanātana's narrative *Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (Great essence of the *Bhāgavata*). Jīva Gosvāmī composed *Laghuvaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī* and *Bhaktiratnākara*, among others, and Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa composed *Braja Bhakti Vilāsa*. Majumdar 1969 is an early study of the life and doctrines of Caitanya. Chatterji 1980 also studies Caitanya and his sect, but the emphasis is more on the theological base, particularly the impact of the Mādhva sect. Bansal 1980 is a study of principles and theology of the Caitanya sect and its literature. Gupta 2013 is an important bibliographical essay on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Rosen 1991 is an important introductory work on the life, theology and writings of six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan. Delmonico 1993 is a critical assessment of the various historical documents and hagiographic narratives of Rūpa's life. Brzezinski 2007 provides details of Jīva's life drawn from various sources, including Jīva's *Laghuvaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*. Taneja 2007 documents the life of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. Packert 2010 talks about the rituals and ornamentation of icons of Govindadeva temples in Vrindavan and Jaipur. Case 2000 is an eyewitness account of *puja*, rituals, and performances at the celebrated Rādhāramaṇa temple in Vrindavan.

Bansal, Naresh Chandra. *Caitanya sampradāy: Siddhānt aur sāhitya*. Agra, India: Vinod Pustak Mandir, 1980.

A very useful work on the theology and literature of the Caitanya sect, distinguished by its rigorous examination of relevant manuscripts. In Hindi.

Brzezinski, Jan. "Jiva Goswami: Biography and Bibliography." *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 15.2 (Spring 2007): 51–80.

Brzezinski, or Jagadanand Das, provides details of Jīva's life from various sources, including Jīva's *Laghuvaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*, Narahari Chakravartī's *Bhaktiratnākara*, land grants, and other documents, including Jīva's own will and other hagiographies. Also gives a detailed account of works attributed to Jīva.

Case, Margaret H. *Seeing Krishna: The Religious World of a Brahman Family in Vrindaban*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

The Rādhāramaṇa temple was founded by one of the six Gosvāmīs, named Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, and Gosvāmīs of his family lineage still look after the temple rituals and performances. This book is an eyewitness's account of *puja*, rituals, and performances at this celebrated temple of Vrindavan.

Chatterji, A. N. "Sri Chaitanya and His Sect." *Proceedings of Indian History Congress* 41 (1980): 289–296.

The author delves into the theological base of the Caitanya sect and seeks answers to the question of whether Caitanya was founder of an altogether different sect, or was simply branching off from the Mādhva's Sampradāya.

Delmonico, Neal. "Rūpa Gosvāmin: His Life, Family, and Early Vraja Commentators." *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 1.2 (1993): 133–157.

A critical assessment of the various historical documents and hagiographic narratives of Rūpa's life.

Gupta, Ravi M. "Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Important bibliographical essay on Caitanya, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, the six Gosvāmīs, theology and philosophy, temple rituals, music, literature, dramas, ISKCON, 18th-century Gosvāmīs Viśvanātha Cakravartī and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣāṇa, and comparative studies with contemporary sects.

Majumdar, A. K. *Caitanya: His Life and Doctrine*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969.

Important work on the life and doctrines of Caitanya, including his sojourns in the Braj region.

Packert, Cynthia D. *The Art of Loving Krishna: Ornamentation and Devotion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

In this valuable study of Govindadeva temples in Vrindaban and Jaipur, the author describes what devotees see when they behold gorgeously attired representations of the god, and why these images look the way they do. Some scholars attribute the establishment of the Govindadeva temple at Vrindavan to Rūpa Gosvāmī in 1590 CE. The author also offers historical and contemporary ethnographic studies of three temple communities and the story of Govindadeva's migration from Vrindavan to Jaipur.

Rosen, Steven. *The Six Goswamis of Vrindavan*. 2d ed. New York: FOLK, 1991.

An important publication dealing with the lives, writings, and theologies of the six Gosvāmīs, the chief disciples of Caitanya.

Taneja, Leena. "The Forgotten Story of Narayan Bhatt." *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 15.2 (2007): 35–50.

Documents the life of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, who worked to re-sacralize the geography of Vraja and establish the pilgrimage circuit in Vraja. He was the first scholar to identify a number of sacred sites and groves.

Original Texts

Dāsa 2016 is an English translation of *Śrī-laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* of Rūpa Gosvāmī. In Dāsa 2007 Haridāsa presents an important text, *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ*, written by Rūpa Gosvāmī, with the Sanskrit commentaries of Jīva Gosvāmī, Mukundadāsa Gosvāmī, and Viśvanātha Cakravartin, as well as a modern Bengali translation. Dimock and Stewart 1999 is the complete translation of the *Caitanya caritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, the most important hagiography of Caitanya. Haricaraṇa Dāsa 1373 BS is the text of *Advaita maṅgala*, an important work on the life of Advaita, a companion of Caitanya. Goswami and Chatterjee 1967–1988 is a study of Jīva Gosvāmī's *Ṣaṭ Sandarbha*. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, in his *Haribhaktivilāsa*, provides details of rituals and worship methods.

Dāsa, Haridāsa, ed. *Śrī Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ*. Kolkata, India: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 2007.

Haridāsa presents an important text written by Rūpa Gosvāmī, with the Sanskrit commentaries of Jīva Gosvāmī, Mukundadāsa Gosvāmī, and Viśvanātha Cakravartin, as well as a modern Bengali translation by himself. In this work various symptoms of pure devotees are systematically described.

Dāsa, Gopīparāṇadhana. *Śrī-laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*. Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 2016.

An English translation with a brief commentary of *Śrī-laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* of Rūpa Gosvāmī, by a prominent modern devotee-scholar.

Dimock, Edward C., Jr., and Tony Stewart, trans. *Caitanya caritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja*. Edited by Tony K. Stewart. With an introduction by the translator and the editor. Harvard Oriental Series 56. Cambridge, MA: Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University, 1999.

A complete annotated translation of the most influential hagiography of Caitanya, along with a lengthy introduction to the life of Caitanya, the text, and the tradition.

Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. *Haribhaktivilāsa*. With the commentary *Digdarśinī ṭīkā* of Sanātana Gosvāmin. 2 vols. Baranagar, India: Pāṭhabāḍī Āśrama, n.d.

This exhaustive work provides details of rituals and worship methods in Brahmanical and *śāstric* authority.

Goswami, Sitanath, and Chinmayi Chatterjee, eds. *Ṣaṭsandarbha* by Śrījīva Gosvāmin. 6 vols. Calcutta: Jadavpur University, 1967–1988.

The original name of the *Ṣaṭ Sandarbha* was *Bhāgavata Sandarbha*, indicating that it is an exposition and analysis of the essential message of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Jīva Gosvāmī's *Ṣaṭ Sandarbha* consists of six parts, each delving into a different aspect of the Bhāgavata's philosophy. The *Tattvasandarbhā* was edited by Sitanath Goswami; the remaining *sandarbhās* by Chatterjee. Each volume has a lengthy introduction in English and the *Tattvasandarbhā* includes Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary.

Haricaraṇa Dāsa. *Advaita maṅgala*. Edited by Rabīndranātha Māiti. Bardhamāna: Bardhamāna Viśvavidyālaya, 1373 BS.

This text outlines the life and basic teachings of Advaita and his family, a close companion of Caitanya.

Rādhāvallabha Sect and Haritrayī

Rādhāvallabha is a name of Krishna and also refers to a Vaishnava lineage and community known as the Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya that is part of the bhakti tradition. Differing from other Vaishnava denominations that place Krishna as the central divinity, it places Rādhā as primary in the theological hierarchy. The sect was founded in c. 1535 CE by the poet-saint Hita Harivaṃśa (b. 1502–d. 1552 CE) in Vrindavan. Harivaṃśa established the worship of the deity of Rādhāvallabha in a grove near the Yamunā River in Vrindavan in c. 1545 CE. Hita Harivaṃśa's principal work in Brajhasha is the *Caurāśī-Pada*, consisting of eighty-four verses describing the erotic love pastimes of Rādhā and Krishna. There is also a work in Sanskrit glorifying Rādhā as supreme. The songs or hymns of this sect are sung in the style of *samāj-gāyan*, a special interactive manner of vocal music that is unique to Braj yet related to Dhrupad, a form of early Hindustani music. Besides Hita Harivaṃśa, two more Haris are famous as great propounders of bhakti in Vrindavan. One is Svāmī Haridāsa, who is considered the greatest musician saint of medieval India and is responsible for giving Hindustani classical music a new touch. His sect is termed Haridāsī or Sakhī Sampradāya, and the most famous temple of Banke Bihari and the Tattiya Sthan in Vrindavan are its principal seats. The other saint, Harirāma Vyās, was also contemporaneous to Hita Harivaṃśa and Svāmī Haridāsa and is considered important for the development of Rāsa in Braj. These three saints are sometimes referred to as “Hari trayī.” Goswami 1957 is an important study of the history, theory, and literature of the Rādhāvallabha sect. Beck 2011 is a summary of Rādhāvallabha sect, along with a bibliography. Snatak 1968 looks into the theology, principles, and literature of the Rādhāvallabha sect. Ali 1950 provides a bibliography of unpublished manuscripts and the printed works of the sect. White 1977 is the first English translation of the *Caurāśī Pada* of Hita Harivaṃśa. Snell 1991 is a study of the sectarian background and life of Hita Harivaṃśa, including his hagiography and the works attributed to him, along with a detailed analysis of the *Caurāśī Pada*. Poems of Harirām Vyās are published along with a Brajhasha translation in Goswami 1952. Ali 1977 is the study of *Śrī-Rādhā-Rasa-Sudhā-Nidhi*, a work ascribed to Hita Harivaṃśa. Goswami 1964 is a collection of various works ascribed to Hita Harivaṃśa. Rosenstein 1998 makes an analysis of differences between the Rādhāvallabha and Haridāsī Sampradāyas.

Ali, Kishori Sharan. *Śrī Hita Rādhāvallabhīya Sāhitya-Ratnāvali*. Bombay: Bombay Nivasi Katipaya Rādhāvallabhīya Vaishnava, 1950.

This early work provides the most complete bibliography of unpublished manuscripts, printed editions, and early scholarly works on the Rādhāvallabha sect. In Hindi.

Ali, Kishori Sharan, ed. *Śrī-Rādhā-Rasa-Sudhā-Nidhi* of Śrī Hita Harivaṃśa. Vrindavan, India: Mohan Granthamala, 1977.

Śrī-Rādhā-Rasa-Sudhā-Nidhi is a Sanskrit text of 270 stanzas generally ascribed to Hita Harivaṃśa. This text anoints Rādhā as supreme in the Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya's theology and worship. In Hindi.

Beck, Guy L. "Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya." In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Vol. 3. Edited by Knut A. Jacobsen, 467–477. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011.

This article provides useful information on the Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya with an introduction and basic facts regarding theology, liturgy, musical tradition, temple rituals, and festivals. Also provides a bibliography for further reading.

Goswami, Hita Kirtilal, ed. *Śrī Hita Sudhā Sāgara* ["Śrī Hitavāṇī Jī"]. Vrindavan, India: Shri Bijaya, 1964.

This is an early one-volume collection of all the important works of Hita Harivaṃśa, including *Yamunāṣṭaka*, *Śrī- Rādhā-Rasa-Sudhā-Nidhi*, *Caurāsī-Pada*, and the *Sevaka-Vāṇī* of Dāmodar Dās, *aṣṭayāma* texts, and other short works of Rādhāvallabha saints. In Hindi.

Goswami, Lalita Charan. *Śrī Hita Harivaṃśa Gosvamī: Sampradāya aur Sāhitya*. Vrindavan, India: Venu Prakashan, 1957.

One of the foremost scholar saints of Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya, Sri Lalita Charan Goswami provides one of the most important accounts of the sect, including its history, theology, and literature. In Hindi.

Goswami, Vasudev, ed. *Bhakta-Kavi Vyās Jī*. Mathurā, India: Agrawal, 1952.

Poems of Harirām Vyās are published along with Brajbhasha translation; also includes a substantial biography of the poet as well as discussion of his Siddhānta, or beliefs and doctrines. Vyās was also influential in the development of classical music and Dhrupad singing. In Hindi.

Rosenstein, Lucy. "The Rādhāvallabha and the Haridāsī Sampradāyas: A Comparison." *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 7.1 (Fall 1998): 5–18.

This article explores the doctrinal and aesthetic differences between the Rādhāvallabha and Haridāsī traditions and the probable influence of the former on the latter.

Snatak, Vijayendra. *Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya Siddhānta aur Sāhitya*. Delhi: National Publishing House, 1968.

Important publication on Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya, particularly its theology, principles, and the literature. It is one of the most cited works on the sect. In Hindi.

Snell, Rupert. *The Eighty-Four Hymns of Hita Harivaṃśa: An Edition of the Caurāsī Pada*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991.

A remarkable study on the Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya, which includes the sectarian background, the life of Hita Harivaṃśa, his hagiography, and works attributed to him. Snell also makes a detailed analysis of the *Caurāsī Pada* involving its language, script, phonology, orthography, meter, edited text and apparatus criticus, its annotated translation, and contents.

White, Charles S. J. *The Caurasi Pad of Sri Hit Harivams: Introduction, Translation, Notes and Edited Braj Bhasha Text*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1977.

An important publication, in fact the first English translation of the *Caurāsī Pada*. Also provides an introduction to the sect and to Hita Harivaṃśa in particular.

Brajbhasha Poets (Sūrdās and Mīrābāī)

In shaping the personality of Braj, late medieval bhakti saints played an important role. Prominent among these are Kumbhandās, Sūrdās, Parmānandadās, Kṛṣṇadās, Govindasvāmī, Nandadās, Chītasvāmī, and Caturbhujdās, who have been grouped together by the Vallabha Sampradāya as the *aṣṭachāp*. According to John Stratton Hawley, however, Sūrdās and Parmānandadās were almost certainly not members of the Vallabhite community in historical fact; they were rather claimed by Vallabhites later. Mīrābāī, the so-called Haritrayī, and notably the Muslim poets Rahīm and Raskhān add to the list, although the poetry attributed to Mīrābāī is by no means entirely composed in Brajbhasha. Sūrdās, born and brought up in the Braj region, is considered the foremost Brajbhasha poet of medieval bhakti tradition, almost at par with Tulasīdās. Mīrābāī, though belonging to the Mewar region, is one of the most popular medieval bhakti poets due to her devotion to Krishna. Hawley 2014 and Martin 2017 are important bibliographical studies on Sūrdās and Mīrābāī, respectively. Hawley 2009 is a study of the poetry of Sūrdās, and Hawley 2015 examines how the idea of the bhakti movement came to play an extraordinarily important role in India's literary and cultural record of its past. Hawley disputes the idea that such a thing existed in some easily established—assumed—historical sense. Alston 1980 translates poems of Mīrābāī that appear in the influential Hindi edition of Paraśurām Caturvedī. Hawley 2005 historicizes the study of the three important bhakti poets—Mīrābāī, Sūrdās, and Kabir. Bryant 1978 marked a new era in studies of the poetic logic of poems attributed to Sūrdās. In Bryant and Hawley 2015 we have a critical edition and translation of the poems of Sūrdās that can be traced back to the century in which he almost certainly lived, the 16th. Other poems attributed to Sūrdās were apparently composed later, in an ongoing Sūr tradition, as Bryant has termed it. Dwivedi 1973 (originally 1936) is an early critical study of Sūrdās and his poetry that locates him as one of the most influential poets of the bhakti movement, a concept Dwivedi embraced and for whose influence he himself was to a large extent responsible.

Alston, A. J. *The Devotional Poems of Mira Bai*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.

This work includes straightforward translations of 201 songs from the most popular Hindi edition of Mīrābāī's poetry in Hindi, that of Parasurām Caturvedī—Mīrābāī kī Padāvalī, 18th ed. (Prayāg, India: Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan, 1989).

Bryant, Kenneth E. *Poems to the Child-God: Structures and Strategies in the Poetry of Sūrdās*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

This revolutionary book questions the applicability of traditional rasa theory to the task of appreciating the poetry of the Sūrsāgar.

Bryant, Kenneth E., and John Stratton Hawley. *Sur's Ocean: Poems from the Early Tradition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.

This thousand-page book contains Bryant's critical reconstruction of poems attributed to Sūrdās that can be shown to have circulated in the 16th century, when Sūrdās undoubtedly lived. Hawley supplies an English verse translation of each. The two parts of the volume are on facing pages so that readers can examine both at the same time.

Dwivedi, Hazariprasad. *Sūr-Sāhitya*. Delhi: Rājkamal Prakāśan, 1973.

An enduringly influential monograph originally published in 1936 that places Sūrdās at the center of the saguṇa bhakti movement.

Hawley, John Stratton. *Three Bhakti Voices: Mirabai, Surdas, and Kabir in Their Times and Ours*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

This collection of previously published work, sometimes slightly revised, begins with three programmatic essays that explore the reception and understanding of the three major poets who appear in the title. These concern the relationship between author and authority, the nirgun/sagun (formless/form) distinction, and dominant patterns in the hagiographies of Nābhājī and his commentator Priyādās. Otherwise, Hawley attempts to historicize these three poets insofar as is possible, given the evidence.

Hawley, John Stratton. "Sūrdās." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Important bibliographical entry offering general overviews, editions, and commentaries on Sūrdās's works, critical studies in Hindi and European languages, and translations of his poetry.

Hawley, John Stratton. *A Storm of Songs: India and the Idea of the Bhakti Movement*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.

This work shows how the notion of the bhakti movement—one of the cardinal features of India's cultural and religious historiography—came into being. He traces its roots to the late 16th and early 18th centuries, although the poets involved are often much earlier. Braj is at the center of the narrative, and Hawley presents a radical reconstruction of its sectarian history, arguing, for example, that Vallabha and Nimbārka cannot be shown to have been personally present in Braj.

Hawley, John Stratton, trans. *The Memory of Love: Sūrdās Sings to Krishna*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

In this students' book, Hawley presents a selection of the poetry that forms the earliest stratum of poetry attributed to Sūrdās—the *līlās* of Krishna, as well as more personal poems of the *vinaya* tradition and poetry about Rāma and Sītā, as well as the Yamunā and the Gaṅgā. These poems are often quite different from the general run of poems that have come to be considered part of the *Sūrsāgar*, most of which were composed by other poets in Sūr's name.

Martin, Nancy M. "Mirabai." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Presents an overview of the subject, discussing reference works, particularly in Hindi, her life-story, popular literature and fiction, the poetry, earlier manuscripts, major collections, and translations. Gender and feminist analysis are an important contribution.

Beyond the Sampradāyas

In a number of works, Heidi Pauwels has drawn attention to the importance of breaking away from the sectarian categories that have principally constructed common understandings of the religious life of Braj, both historically and in the present day. Pauwels 2002 takes as its point of departure an important figure in the literary history of Braj who is very hard to capture in sectarian categories, Harirām Vyās. Pauwels 2017 does a similar thing in regard to geographical categories by focusing on interactions between Kishangarh in Rajasthan and the Braj region, to which some of its rulers and people have looked for refuge and inspiration. Stewart 2010 performs a similar task for the history, culture, and theological self-construction of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya as it exists in Braj-based and Bengal-based modes. Hawley 2018 considers Bhaṭṭas as a group, rather than sorting them according to their sectarian identities. Ray 2019 studies Braj visual culture from 1550 to 1850 by attending not primarily to sectarian patrons or expressions, but to the overarching categories of water, land, forest, and ether. Snell 1991 sorts classical Brajbhasha literature according to its expressive forms rather than its theological predilections as defined by Sampradāya.

Hawley, John Stratton. "Bhaṭṭas in Braj." In *Text and Tradition in Early Modern India*. Edited by Tyler Williams, Anshu Malhotra, and John Stratton Hawley. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018.

An effort to regard the various Bhaṭṭas who played especially significant roles in defining what would come to be known as Braj culture, not according to what later came to be accepted as their sectarian affiliations, but with respect to the common group of Bhaṭṭ Brahmins to which they all belonged. These Bhaṭṭas moved from various locations in South India to Braj in the course of the sixteenth century.

Pauwels, Heidi R. M. *In Praise of Holy Men: Hagiographic Poems by and about Harirām Vyās*. Groningen, The Netherlands: Egbert Forster, 2002.

Pauwels foregrounds the hagiographical portraits of various religious luminaries of Braj as they were drawn together in the late 16th and early 17th centuries in the poetry of Harirām Vyās. In a similarly catholic way, she describes how Vyās himself proved very hard to capture in a single sectarian stream.

Pauwels, Heidi R. M. *Mobilizing Krishna's World: The Writings of Prince Sāvant Singh of Kishangarh*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017.

A masterful exposition of the life and career of the 18th-century ruler Sāvant Singh, seen especially through the literary and religious identity he formed for himself under the pen-name Nāgaridās. Pauwels analyzes his relationship to his consort Banī-thanī, the manner in which he was capable of spanning literary genres that tie Hindi to Urdu, and his own account of his pilgrimage to Braj and desire to remain there forever.

Ray, Sugata. *Climate Change and the Art of Devotion: Deoaesthetics in the Land of Krishna, 1550–1580*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019.

In this inventive, beautifully illustrated book, Sugata Ray considers the thesis that the so-called Little Ice Age (1550–1580) exercised a determinative influence on the development of various cultural art forms practiced in Braj. His particular foci are visual art, architecture, and landscape culture, and Mathura receives particularly detailed attention.

Snell, Rupert. *The Hindi Classical Tradition: A Braj Bhāṣā Reader*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1991.

This volume provides an unparalleled introduction to the literary traditions associated with the Braj region, called collectively Brajbhasha. Snell parses them out by genre and poet and provides a glossary that makes it possible for the book to function as a self-contained whole.

Stewart, Tony K. *The Final Word: The Caitanya Caritāmṛta and the Grammar of Religious Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

This is quintessentially a work concerned with the formation of a particular Sampradāya, that of the Gauḍīyas, yet Stewart attends closely to the bipolar impetus behind the growth and development of that very community: Braj on the one hand, and Bengali/Orissa, on the other. The book is a literary and historical tour de force, focusing especially on the work that was, within the Gauḍīya community, exactly that: the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* of Krishnadās Kavirāj.

Music, Dance-Dramas, and the Brajbhasha Canon

The exact history is often difficult to determine, but it is widely held that most aspects of what has come to be the classical music and dance heritage of Braj developed in the 16th and early 17th centuries. The *dhruvada* and *dhamār gāyan* are the most notable among the musical forms, being associated especially with the Rādhāvallabha sect and the figure of Svāmī Haridāsa. The term Havelī Sangīt is sometime also used. The Mewati, Agra, Gwalior, and Etawah *gharānas* and Jaipur and Kirana *gharānas* partly can be considered as part of Braj tradition itself. The contributions of Muslim musicians are of major importance, familiarly traced back to the towering figure of Tansen at the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar. Sanyal and Widdess 2004 studies in detail the historical development of *dhruvada* tradition and performance styles. Thielemann 2001 is a study of *samāj-gāyan* and *dhruvada gāyan* in Vrindavan temples. Saksena 1990 is an important study of classical music associated with all the bhakti sects of Vrindavan that flourished during the 16th century and afterwards in Vrindavan. Beck 1998 studies the *samāj-gāyan* of the Rādhāvallabha sect. Hein 1972 is a remarkable study of dance-dramas, particularly *rām līlās* and *rās līlās* of Braj. Hawley and Goswami 1981 studied four *rās līlās* of Vrindavan along with their narrative and context for the play being performed. Sharma 2000 is a collection of important articles on Indian aesthetics and musicology. Busch 2011 shows that literary Brajbhasha is far more than the poetry of Krishna as performed in a temple setting; it is courtly as well.

Beck, Guy L. "Samāj-Gāyan for Rādhā and Krishna: Devotional Music in the Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya." *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 7.1 (Fall 1998): 85–100.

A brief introduction to the vocal music known as *samāj-gāyan* in the Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya, which is played in the temples of the sect.

Busch, Allison. *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

The most important single study of Brajbhasha literature in any language, tearing down the familiar dichotomy that separates the bhakti domain from its *rīti* cousin, and showing how the cultural environment established and sustained by the Mughal state was key to the development and spread of many branches of the performative culture of Brajbhasha. The many-sided figure of the poet Keśavdās is a key example.

Hawley, John Stratton, with Shrivatsa Goswami. *At Play with Krishna: Pilgrimage Dramas from Brindavan*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.

A study and translation of the four *rās līlās* on the basis of transcripts of their actual performance, each preceded by an introduction that explores the narrative context for the play being performed, and sets it in a broad comparative perspective. The first chapter of the book provides a good idea of how the town of Vrindavan seemed at the time these plays were performed in the late 1970s.

Hein, Norvin. *The Miracle Plays of Mathurā*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972.

One of the most important publications on Indian dance-dramas. Based on inscriptional evidence, early literary references, and traveler's accounts, Hein studies ancient Mathura's background for religious and secular drama and dramatic spectacle. Presents a detailed study of five North Indian dramatic forms, including the *rām līlā* and the *rās līlā*, in their social, historical, and religious contexts.

Saksena, Rakesh Bala. *Madhya-Yugīn Vaiṣṇava Sampradāyon mein Saṅgīt*. New Delhi: Rādhā, 1990.

The volume is a detailed comparative study of the music associated with the various Vaishnava Sampradāyas in Vrindavan. The book provides a lengthy introduction and examines music in Vallabha, Rādhāvallabha, Haridāsa, Nimbārka, and Gauḍīya Sampradāyas in separate chapters. The text also highlights the rudiments of Hindustani music followed by compositions in Indian notation system with commentary. In Hindi.

Sanyal, Ritwik, and Richard Widdess. *Dhrupad: Tradition and Performance in Indian Music*. SOAS Musicology Series. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004.

Ritwik Sanyal, a renowned Dhrupad singer, and Richard Widdess, a leading musicologist, provide a detailed study of the genre built around issues of tradition and performance. There is an overview of the historical development of the *dhrupad* tradition and performance styles from the 16th century to the 19th, followed by analyses of performance techniques, processes and characteristics.

Sharma, Premalata. *Indian Aesthetics and Musicology*. Vol. 1, *The Art and Science of Indian Music*. Edited by Urmila Sharma. New Delhi: Ananya Prakashan, 2000.

A compilation of research articles on Indian aesthetics and musicology, with some groundbreaking research.

Srivastava, Induram. *Dhrupada: A Study of Its Origin, Historical Development, Structure, and Present State*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.

Important study of Dhrupad, a formal and important form of Hindustani classical music, which shares the closest affinity to *samāj-gāyan* of Rādhāvallabha sect and Haveli-Sangīt of the Puṣṭi Mārgī sect. The author also tries to study the impact of court and temple *gāyan* on the development of *dhrupad*.

Thielemann, Selina. *Musical Traditions of Vaishnava Temples in Vraja: A Comparative Study of Samaja and the Dhrupad Tradition of North Indian Classical Music*. 2 vols. New Delhi: Sagar, 2001.

Important work on musical traditions of Vaishnava temples in Braj, with emphasis on *samāj-gāyan* and *dhrupad gāyan*, particularly in the temple of Rādhāvallabha and other contemporary sects.

Digital Videos

The land of Braj is well represented in many feature films and television serials. Most important among them are two feature films *Gopal Krishna* (1979) and *Brij Bhoomi* (1982). The two important and popular serials are *Mahabharata* (1988–1990) and *Shri Krishna* 1993–1996.

Chopra, B. R., prod. *Mahabharat*. TV serial. Bombay: B.R. Films, Doordarshan, 1988–1990.

The popular serial of 94 episodes was produced by B. R. Chopra in 1988–1990 for Indian National Television Doordarshan. Many of its episodes are exclusively dedicated to the early life of Krishna in Braj till his departure to Dvarka.

Kumar, Shiv, dir. *Brij Bhoomi*. Bombay: Ocean Movies, 1982.

A 1982 Hindi film based on Braj culture. It was directed and produced by Shiv Kumar and the music and lyrics were by Ravindra Jain.

Sagar, Ramanand, prod. *Shri Krishna*. TV serial. Bombay: Sagar Arts, Doordarshan, 1993–1996.

The popular TV serial of 221 episodes was produced by Ramanand Sagar in 1993–1996 for Indian National Television Doordarshan. The serial is based on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and shows in detail all the Krishna-*līlās* that are considered to have occurred in Braj. The role of Krishna, up until the killing of Kamsa in Mathura, is played by Swapnil Joshi.

Sharma, Vijay, dir. *Gopal Krishna*. Bombay: Rajshri Productions, 1979.

A 1979 Hindi film by Rajsri Productions starring Sachin Pilgaonkar and Zareena Wahab, in the roles of Krishna and Radha, respectively. The music is by Ravindra Jain. The film shows the whole story of Krishna which is related to Braj from his birth to the killing of his maternal uncle Kamsa.

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