

# Remarks on Transliteration and Translation

## Transliteration

Sanskrit words are transliterated according to the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliterations (IAST) and comply with standard academic conventions. Words in Tamil are transliterated following the Tamil Lexicon (TL; 1924–1936). For a precise reading of the transliterated words, the following table indicates instances in which the same diacritic mark signifies different consonants in the Tamil and in the Sanskrit—Devanagari and Telugu scripts—transliteration conventions:

|   | Sanskrit in Devanagari          | Sanskrit in Telugu script       | Tamil                           |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ḷ | vocalic consonant ऌ             | retroflex lateral approximant ఌ | retroflex lateral approximant ள |
| ḷ | retroflex lateral approximant ळ |                                 | retroflex approximant ள         |

Names of deities are written in scholarly transcription (Viṣṇu, Yathoktakārī). For languages, scripts, historical persons, and dynasties, as well as toponyms (cities, states, rivers, mountains) the modern names in non-scholarly transcription are used (Kanchipuram, Ramanuja).

The Sanskrit primary sources mention various sacred places. Many of these sites may be identified with historical places, often still in existence.<sup>1</sup> For immediate distinction and reading ease, the very spelling of the toponym signals whether the particular name refers to a place mentioned in the source text or to an actual historical, that is, historically documented, place. Hence, the names of places found in the texts are reproduced the way they appear in the primary sources, that is, in transcription from Sanskrit (or rarely Tamil) with diacritic marks (Pāṇḍavadūta, Kāñcī). For the nowadays

1 The phrasing *historical* is borrowed from Melanie Conroy’s distinction of literary places (2021, 6). She uses the term “historical” for those places from the literary sources whose existence can also be proven in historical documents, while those for which this is not possible are “nonhistorical.” For details, see subsection 1.3.2.

existing sites, the modern Tamil names are given in scholarly transcription, corresponding to the spelling in Tamil script as found on temple signboards (Pāṇṭavatūta Perumāḷ, Kaccapēsvarar; see the appendix and the index of this book).

### **Use of the terms *Sthalamāhātmya* and *Māhātmya***

The glorifying texts on Kanchipuram dealt with in this book belong to the broader genre of *Māhātmyas* (glorifications), an integral part of the Purāṇic literature. More specifically, they belong to the subcategory of *Sthalamāhātmyas*, glorification (*māhātmya*) of a place (*sthala*). The texts on Kanchipuram are less specific and call themselves only *Māhātmya* and not *Sthalamāhātmya*. For better readability and in recognition of the texts' own terminology, I follow a two-part use of the two terms. In the general chapters 1, 2, parts of chapters 3 (up to and including section 3.2), and chapter 7, I use the designation *Sthalamāhātmya* / *Sthalamāhātmyas* to denote texts from the subcategory of *Sthalamāhātmyas*; in those chapters and sections that specifically and exclusively deal with the glorifying texts on Kanchipuram, chapters 3 (from section 3.3), 4, 5, and 6, I use *Māhātmya* / *Māhātmyas* as designation for the (*Sthalamāhātmya*) texts.

### **Translation**

Unless otherwise stated, translations from the primary sources are my own. Narratives summarised from these texts are in a synoptic present tense.