

3 The 'marriage myth'

The central myth of the Ekāmrānātha temple tells how Śiva's wife, Pārvatī, came to Kanchipuram to practice austerities under a mango tree on the banks of the Kampā River. She built a *liṅga* out of sand and worshipped it. To test her devotion, Śiva sent a flood down the river. The goddess embraced the sand *liṅga* and pressed it to her breasts, leaving the marks of her breasts and bangles. This affectionate gesture made Śiva appear under the mango tree and finally re-marry her in Kanchipuram. I refer to the myth as the 'marriage myth', because the contemporary performance of the marriage on the tenth day of the Ekāmrānātha temple festival is clearly associated with the myth. However, *the* myth exists in multiple versions and not all conclude with the re-marriage in Kanchipuram, as will be discussed ahead.

The 'marriage myth' is not unique to Kanchipuram and the Ekāmrānātha temple. Shulman (1980: 138) notes that in the majority of Tamil Sthalapurāṇas¹ the central structural element is the goddess's marriage to the god. In the pan-Indian Śaiva mythology, the mountain daughter Pārvatī performed *tapas* (austerities) for many years to win the ascetic god Śiva as husband.² In some versions, Śiva tests her firmness in the disguise of an old man or young Brahmācārin, who tries to prevent her from marrying Śiva. But Pārvatī remains steady and finally Śiva appears and marries her. The scene is set in the Himālayas. Many Tamil marriage myths follow the same pattern, but require the goddess to perform her *tapas* at a particular place or shrine in Tamil Nadu instead of the Himālayas (Shulman 1980: 144). Frequently, the rationale for her descent to earth and her *tapas* at that particular place is the expiation of some misdeed with the promise of a reunion or re-marriage at that place. The 'marriage myth' in the Kanchipuram Sthalapurāṇas adheres to this pattern, too. Furthermore, the re-marriage or second marriage on earth is explained by a promise given to the sage Agastya. He was forced to miss the original marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī on Mount Kailāsa in the Himālayas, and Śiva granted him the boon to repeat the marriage ceremony for him in the south of India (Shulman 1980: 268).

In this chapter I examine the 'marriage myth' and its variations according to different textual sources. First, I investigate how the myth is depicted in each source. In doing so, I introduce the respective source, briefly retell the myth, and identify its narrative themes and components. An overview of the themes is given as an appendix. Second, I compare and contrast the narrative themes with respect to each source in order to articulate core themes that are significant to all or most versions of the myth, and those themes or elements that are more source specific. This analysis explains how these texts are internally related to each other and, in doing so, forms the basis for the following chapter, which deals with the ritual re-enactment of the myth's narrative themes.

1 Sthalapurāṇas are localized texts that glorify a certain place, temple or sanctuary.

2 The myth appears (in variations) in several Purāṇas (for example *Śiva Purāṇa* 2.3.21–50), the *Mahābhārata* and Kalidāsa's *Kumārasaṃbhava*.

3.1 Sources

The majority of the texts under consideration here can be categorized as Māhātmyas (literally 'greatness'). These texts glorify certain places or deities by giving an account of their greatness. They provide narratives of a place's legendary history, explaining how it came into being, which deities and epic heroes visited the place, and what deeds they did there. Therefore, Māhātmyas are an important source in Indian literature for the study of myths and legends. Māhātmyas are regarded as a sub-group of Purāṇas ('ancient stories'), and some Māhātmyas are integrated in Purāṇas or claim to be part of them.³ However, these categories can not clearly be distinguished, and the titles Māhātmya and Purāṇa are often used interchangeably, as the names of the texts below show. Another frequently used term for a sub-group of Purāṇic texts is Sthalapurāṇa (Tam. Talapurāṇam) or Sthalamāhātmya. The term designates localized and place specific texts (Skt. *sthala*, 'place'), that tell of the origins and local traditions of a certain temple or sanctuary. They are often written in vernaculars, but some have Sanskrit versions as well. Pan-Indian mythological themes can be found in the Sthalapurāṇas, often modified and re-interpreted in order to locate them at the respective place and combine them with local traditions. At the same time, local myths and motifs of the folk tradition are integrated into pan-Indian myths. The mythology of every major Tamil temple has "developed through the fusion of local and imported elements" (Shulman 1980: 5). Sometimes, mythological themes are also modified to underline a sectarian favoritism by depicting the respective favorite god as the superior cause of all actions. Besides the narration of the place's mythology, Sthalapurāṇas provide practical information, such as topographical details about the location of various shrines, instructions for devotees, what kind of worship is recommended, and an overview of the marvelous merits one might expect from acting accordingly. However, the focus of this chapter is the place's mythology, and especially the variations in the account of the 'marriage myth' according to different Sthalapurāṇas and other texts.

I detected nine texts that narrate the Kanchipuram 'marriage myth' in one variation or another.⁴ More than half of the texts are written in Sanskrit, and the translations are my own. However, some of the oldest and, moreover, datable texts are written in Tamil. Unfortunately, for these texts English translations are either not available or, if they are available, are often flawed and not faithful to the original. Thus, for the analysis of the Tamil texts, I was working with new or revised English translations, produced with the help of Tamil scholars and native speakers.

The first three texts are presented in chronological order; these are written in Tamil and are datable. First, *Tēvāram* hymns from the seventh and ninth centuries; second, the *Periyapurāṇam*, dated to 1135; and third, the *Ēkāmparanātar Ulā* poem of the fourteenth century. The following four texts are Sthalapurāṇas of Kanchipuram, which probably were

3 On Purāṇa as a literary genre and the contents of specific Purāṇas see Rocher (1986). See Rao (2004: 97–115) for a more recent discussion of the genre and its scholarship. Shulman (1980: 29–39) deals especially with Tamil Purāṇas.

4 Besides, grey literature in the form of temple booklets and pamphlets exists. They mostly summarize the *Kāmākṣīlīlāpirapāvam*, which is a Tamil rendering in prose of the Sanskrit *Kāmākṣīvilāsa*.

not composed prior to the sixteenth century.⁵ The author of one of these texts, the Tamil *Kāñcippurāṇam*, is known and datable to the end of the eighteenth century. Two of the Sanskrit texts bear the same name '*Kāñcīmāhātmya*', yet one text presents the events rather from a Śaiva perspective and the other text clearly from a Vaiṣṇava perspective.⁶ To avoid confusion, I indicate the sectarian affiliation either prefixed or abbreviated in parentheses, although this is actually not part of the original title. Of the four Sthalapurāṇas of Kanchipuram, I first analyze the Śaiva *Kāñcīmāhātmya*. This text is the Sanskrit source for the Tamil *Kāñcippurāṇam*, which I examine afterwards. Following this, I address the Sanskrit *Kāmākṣīvilāsa*, which has parallels with the Śaiva *Kāñcīmāhātmya*. Last, the Vaiṣṇava *Kāñcīmāhātmya*, which obviously emphasizes Viṣṇu as the superior cause of all actions. The Sthalapurāṇas of Kanchipuram offer the most extensive and elaborated versions of the 'marriage myth'. The two remaining texts present the myth from different perspectives and are therefore placed at the end of the analysis. One text, the *Aruṇācalamāhātmya*, includes the events in Kanchipuram rather as a preamble for the main story, which glorifies Śiva on Mount Aruṇācala in Tiruvannamalai. Finally, I turn to the *Lalitāmāhātmya* or *Lalitopākhyāna*, a Śākta text dedicated to the goddess Lalitā, in which the 'marriage myth' varies significantly.

Tēvāram

The *Tēvāram*⁷ is a collection of Tamil Śaiva devotional hymns, which were composed between the seventh and ninth centuries by the three poet-saints (Tam. *nāyaṇār*) Campantar, Appar and Cuntarar. Campantar and Appar are dated to the first half of the seventh century, and Cuntarar to the first half of the ninth century.⁸ The poets travelled through Tamil Nadu and visited numerous Śaiva sanctuaries, which they praise in their hymns. Most often, the poets praise Śiva's qualities and deeds in epithetic form. For example, they address Śiva as the killer of the demon elephant or the swallower of poison, alluding to myths that can be assumed to have been common knowledge, since they are not explained any further. But there are also descriptions of site-specific features and localized myths, which are not only in epithetic form, as for example the 'marriage myth' in Kanchipuram. As mentioned in Chapter One, twelve hymns (*patikam*) are dedicated to

5 The 'golden age' of the composition of Tamil Sthalapurāṇas begins in the sixteenth century (Shulman 1980: 32). Another indication for dating the texts are references made to structures. For example, the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) mentions the *gopura* of the Ekāmrānātha temple, which has been built in the sixteenth century or later (see Chapter One).

6 However, Ayyar (1965: 151–52) speaks about three Kanchipuram Māhātmyas in Sanskrit. I was only able to detect two of them. One is the Śaiva *Kāñcīmāhātmya*, which he calls *Pañcāśat* (fifty). It has fifty chapters and claims to belong to the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*. The other is the Vaiṣṇava *Kāñcīmāhātmya* containing thirty-two chapters. According to Ayyar, the third one is named *Śatādhyāyī* (one hundred chapters) and composed on the basis of stories from the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* and the *Śiva Purāṇa*. Further, he mentions that this text has been translated to Tamil in the eighteenth century, just as the Śaiva *Kāñcīmāhātmya*.

7 The following information is based on Zvelebil (1974: 91–98) and (1975: 138–42).

8 See Shulman (1990: xli). Zvelebil (1974: 91) suggests that Cuntarar lived from ca. 780 to 830. However, on page 96 the date is given as 680 to 730. Similarly, two different dates can be found in Zvelebil (1975) on page 142 and 132.

Ekāmrānātha in Kanchipuram, addressed as Kacci Ēkampam.⁹ Kacci denotes Kanchipuram and *ēkampam* or *kampam*, 'one/a pillar', is the name with which the Tēvāram poets refer to Śiva at the shrine in Kanchipuram, which is today the Ekāmrānātha temple. Two of the hymns dedicated to Kacci Ēkampam, one composed by Campantar (3.114), the other by Cuntarar (7.61), narrate the story of the 'marriage myth' within a verse.

The first reference is verse 7 in hymn 3.114 by Campantar:

*Once long ago the Woman, dark as a rain cloud, was performing tapas.
Then, as a beautiful trick, the rushing river came in flood,
Sweeping away bamboo, aloe and sandal; and tormenting the elephant,
so he could not run away.
She embraced and touched the god, who is bathed in the five products of the cow.
That pillar is still there, marked by her breast with luminous jewels.
That is Kampam in the great city of Kāñcī.¹⁰*

The second reference can be found in verse 10, hymn 7.61 by Cuntarar:

*Umā was not too proud to go there and stand in worship with joy in her heart –
like any other woman serving the lord, king of the gods.
He saw her – that trickster Kampan, our own lord –
and sent a flood to frighten her;
alarmed, she ran to embrace him,
and he revealed himself to her.¹¹*

The narrative form of both verses follows the model: goddess¹² performs *tapas*/worship;¹³ Śiva tricks (tests) her by sending a flood;¹⁴ she embraces him; he reveals himself. In addition, Campantar describes the goddess's dark complexion by comparing her with a dark rain cloud. Further, he specifies that the flood came in a river. Campantar does not name the river, but in one of his other hymns (2.12.5) he makes reference to 'Ēkampam on the banks of Kampā,' which suggests that the flooding river was the Kampā River. Moreover, he explicitly refers to Kampam as a pillar deity, as it has been proposed by Ayyar (1965),¹⁵ and describes the marks of the goddess's breasts on it.

As will be shown in the following section, the narrative of worship, testing, flood, embrace, revelation appears in almost all versions of the myth. Considering that Campantar

9 Campantar composed four hymns (1.133, 2.12, 3.41, 3.114), Appar seven hymns (4.7, 4.44, 4.99, 5.47, 5.48, 6.64, 6.65), and Cuntarar one hymn (7.61).

10 I am deeply indebted to David Shulman for a translation of this verse.

11 Shulman (1990: 395).

12 The goddess is most often addressed as Umā, 'Mountain Girl/Daughter' (= Pārvatī), or simply as the Woman/Lady.

13 In the South Indian philosophical system of Śaiva Siddhānta, *tapas* is in most cases not defined as actual mortification, but as devotion for Śiva. See Shulman (1980: 357, fn. 7).

14 One characteristic of Śiva is that he tests his devotees with his divine games (Tam. *tiruvīlaiyātal*). In the same way, he tests or tricks the goddess by sending a flood.

15 Apparently, Ayyar has not been aware of this verse, although it would support his argument. He (1965: 156) mentions only Cuntarar's verse 7.61.10 as the earliest reference to the myth.

probably composed the hymn in ± 650 ,¹⁶ it is remarkable that this pattern has been maintained up to the present day. It might be regarded as the core of the 'marriage myth', although the final marriage or re-marriage in Kanchipuram is absent in this early version. However, two more elements, which are crucial in contemporary accounts of the myth, are absent in the *Tēvāram* hymns: the sand *liṅga* (the goddess embraces a pillar) and the mango tree. Both are the divine symbols and focal points of contemporary worship in the temple, and constituent elements in later versions of the myth.

Periyapurāṇam

The Tamil *Periyapurāṇam*, composed by the poet Cēkkiḷār in ± 1135 , is a hagiography of the sixty-three Śaiva saints (*nāyaṇārs*).¹⁷ The description of the life story of each *nāyaṇār* is based on what is known about them from their hymns, and enriched with other textual sources and oral traditions. The 'marriage myth' is integrated in the hagiography of Tirukkuṛipputtoṅṭar Nāyaṇār (*Periyapurāṇam* 4.5), who was a washerman in Kanchipuram. His life story is not at the forefront, but is rather used as a framework for the narrative. Most verses are dedicated to pompous descriptions of the town Kanchipuram, beginning with the narrative of how the goddess came to Kanchipuram to worship Śiva according to the regulations of the Āgamas.

Brief summary of the story (PP 4.5.50–70):¹⁸

Śiva explained to Umā the rules of the Āgamas on Mount Kailāsa. Having heard them, she wished to perform *pūjā* (worship) for him in the Āgamic way. He pointed to the city of Kanchipuram, where he lives at the foot of a mango tree, and sent her to perform the *pūjā* there. With her attendants and the necessary implements for *pūjā* she went to Kanchipuram. There she met the big snake Patumam,¹⁹ who offered her to make a temple in the hole²⁰ in which it lived. With a steady mind she did penance until Śiva appeared under the mango tree. Full of joy she performed for days the Āgamic *pūjā* with flowers, water, sandal paste, light and incense for him, who lived in the Kampam. One day, Śiva wanted to play (Tam. *tiruvīḷaiyāṭal*) and produced a big flood in the Kampā River. The goddess feared that the devastating flood would cover the heavens and overcome her god. She tried to stop it with her hands, but it did not stop. Thus, she tightly embraced Kampam and pressed the bangles on her arms and nipples of her breasts against him. By the touch of her breasts he became soft and showed himself to her. All beings came together and praised Ekampam, who wore the marks of her breasts and bangles on his body. Then

16 He is said to have died at the age of sixteen in 655. See Zvelebil (1974: 95).

17 The information is based on Zvelebil (1974: 173–76).

18 The summary is based on the English translation of Ramachandran (1990) and a revision by David Shulman, to whom I am very grateful.

19 According to the *Fabricius's Tamil and English Dictionary* Patumaṅ is one of the eight serpents that support the earth (<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/fabricius/>).

20 The hole is reminiscent of the *bilākāsa*, the cavity in the present Kāmākṣī temple. This reference presumably indicates that the place was initially worshipped as an anthill with snakes, as it is common in Tamil Nadu.

he showed to her his beautiful bridegroom form and granted her the boon that she will remain at the place to do *pūjā* and thirty-two *dharmas*²¹ forever.

The narrative pattern of worship, testing, flood, embrace, and revelation can be seen here, too. However, a number of details have been added to this basic storyline. First, the story begins on Mount Kailāsa and provides a reason for the shifting of the scene to Kanchipuram. A rationale is absent in Campantar's verse; we do not know why the goddess performs penance in Kanchipuram. But Cuntarar's verse 'the goddess was not too proud to go there' implies at least a shifting of the scene. In the *Periyapurāṇam*, the reason for Pārvatī's descent to earth and to Kanchipuram is her wish to perform *pūjā* according to the Āgamas. The Śaiva Āgamas are a text corpus thought to have been revealed by Śiva. They contain, among other things, instructions for domestic and temple worship, and the philosophical doctrine of the South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta system. By the time of the text's composition in the twelfth century, the performance of *pūjā* in the Āgamic way must have been widespread in Tamil Nadu. Yet it is remarkable that the text stresses it in that way and that Umā not only receives lessons in the Āgamas, but that she is so eager to perform it herself.²² Nagaswamy (1982: 36) interprets this feature as a sign that Āgamic worship "knew no barrier of sex and caste," since a female does *pūjā* according to the Āgamas. In my view, this interpretation is far-fetched. After all, it is the goddess who performs *pūjā*, not just any woman. However, it must be acknowledged that Umā is provided with agency in the *Periyapurāṇam*. She is coming to Kanchipuram on her own will, and not as expiation for some misdeed, as the Kanchipuram Sthalapurāṇas account.

With reference to the divine symbols at the Ekāmranātha temple, it is important to note that the mango tree appears here for the first time in a literary source. We come to know that Śiva lives there at the foot of the tree. However, the other divine symbol of the Ekāmranātha temple, the sand *liṅga*, is not mentioned in the *Periyapurāṇam*. The goddess performs *pūjā* to 'the god, who lives in the Kampam,' which points to the worship of a

21 The thirty-two *dharmas* (Tam. *aṛam*) are a determined group of good works and charities, which are said to have been established and practiced by the goddess in Kanchipuram. Therefore, she is also known as Dharmadevī, the *dharma* goddess, or Dharmasamvardhinī ('she, who fosters good deeds'). *Periyapurāṇam* 4.5, verse 70, accounts that the goddess received the measurement of two *nāli* rice seeds from Kampam to exercise charities. The thirty-two *dharmas* and two *nāli* rice seeds appear also in the Kanchipuram Sthalapurāṇas. The *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) lists the thirty-two *dharmas* as follows: 1. offerings to the gods, 2. to ancestors, 3. to *bhūtas*, 4. to humans, 5. to Brahmins, 6. recitation of Vedic hymns, 7. establishing *mathas* for ascetics and 8. houses for householders, 9. giving of vessels for the household and 10. a place for supplying water, 11. planting of shady trees in all directions, 12. support of poor and 13. blind people, 14. giving medical help for sick people, 15. giving betel with chalk and 16. oil for anointing, 17. giving things used for bathing and 18. a bed, 19. donation of land, 20. giving cows, 21. giving daughters in marriage, 22. giving sesame and 23. lamps, 24. giving debt relief, 25. donations for Śaiva devotees, 26. giving *rudrākṣa* rosaries, 27. sacred ashes and 28. articles used for *pūjā*, 29. donation of garments and 30. Purāṇas, 31. teaching of devotion towards Śiva to twice-borns, 32. giving fearlessness (*abhaya*) to everybody. However, the list given in the *Apitānacintāmaṇi* – *Encyclopaedia of Tamil Literature* varies in some points.

22 The opening scene of Śiva teaching Umā on Mount Kailāsa is known from many Purāṇic texts. However, Umā is often inattentive or falls asleep, which is why she is being punished and cursed to incarnate as mortal (Doniger O'Flaherty 1982: 134), whereas in this text she comes to earth as an eager student.

pillar deity, as described in Chapter One. It seems that at the time of text's composition in 1135, the sand *liṅga* was not established. Further, it is not clear whether the myth ends with a re-marriage. The line 'he shows himself in his beautiful bridegroom form' can be interpreted in this way, but in comparison with the elaborate descriptions of the marriage in the Sthalapurāṇas, the marriage is certainly not a prominent element in the *Periyapurāṇam*.

Furthermore, it should be noted that another section on Kanchipuram is found in *Periyapurāṇam* 6.2. Here, too, verses allude to the myth and characteristics of Ekāmrānātha. Reference are made to 'the god who became soft when the goddess embraced him' (*maṅkai taḷuvak kuḷaintār*) (verse 287), to 'his form, which has the mark of the breast' (*mulaiccuvaṭṭuk kōlam*) (verse 288), or to 'the god who is beautified by the marks of the breasts and bangles' (*mulaiccuvaṭṭum vaḷaittalampum*) (verse 290). These epithets signify the importance of the goddess's embrace and the marks of her breasts and bangles on Śiva's body as distinguished features of Ekāmrānātha in Kanchipuram. The section in *Periyapurāṇam* 6.2 does not, however, give an account of the 'marriage myth'.

Ēkāmparanātar Ulā

As outlined in Chapter Two, the *Ēkāmparanātar Ulā*²³ poem describes in 556 verses the procession of the god Ekāmrānātha on the occasion of *tirup-paṅkuṇit-tirunāl*, the 'holy Paṅkuṇi Day'. Iraṭṭaippulavar (the 'twin poets'), who lived in the fourteenth century, composed the poem (Zvelebil 1975: 215). The poem is not only a valuable historical reference to the celebration of the Paṅkuṇi festival at the Ekāmrānātha temple in the fourteenth century, it also mentions some of the temple's architectural features, and gives an account of the 'marriage myth' at the beginning, from verse 1 to 44. Moreover, references to the goddess's embrace and marks of her breasts are interspersed throughout the poem.

Brief summary of the story (verse 1–44):

Śiva and Umā were living happily on the silver mountain (= Kailāsa) in the Himālayas. Once, for fun, Umā covered Śiva's eyes, which are the moon and the sun, with her hands. Thus, the world became dark and disordered. As expiation for this misdeed, Śiva instructed her to go south to Kanchipuram to the single mango tree, where she can see him in the tree's shadow, and to perform *pūjā* according to the Āgamas. Umā happily agreed and went with her female attendants to Kanchipuram. She was wandering through the streets of town until she came to the banks of the Kampā River, where she saw the mango tree. She piled up sand from the river and formed an idol, which she adorned with flowers and *vibhūti* (sacred ash). With the *pañcākṣara*²⁴ in her heart, she performed endless *pūjā*. Then, Śiva, who existed in the shadow of the mango tree, tested her affection. He made the

23 I am grateful to David Shulman, who showed me the beauty of this literary genre and made a copy of the *Ēkāmparanātar Ulā* available. Further, I am deeply indebted to A.K. Selvadurai, a scholar in medieval Tamil, and my research assistant N. Subramanian, who helped me to make an English rendering of the *Ēkāmparanātar Ulā*, which is the basis for the summary.

24 This is the five-syllable *mantra* of Śiva: 'na-maḥ-si-vā-ya'.

Kampā River flood the banks with such force it was as if the *pralaya* (destruction of the world) was upon them. Umā did not get scared and performed the Āgamic *pūjā* flawlessly. Then, for whatever reason,²⁵ she fell on the sand (*liṅga*) and embraced his body in such a way that her breasts and bangles left a mark on him. She softened him by the touch of her breasts, and Śiva became visible.

This version of the myth adheres to the known storyline of worship, testing, flood, embrace and revelation. However, in the *Ēkāmparanātar Ulā* the rationale for Umā's coming to Kanchipuram is not the wish to perform *pūjā* according to the Āgamas, as was stressed in the *Periyapurāṇam*, but the expiation for her misdeed of blindfolding Śiva's eyes, which caused darkness and chaos in the world. This motif will appear again in some of the Kanchipuram Sthalapurāṇas. To be sure, the performance of *pūjā* according to the Āgamas is of importance, too, and mentioned in the poem, though not as the reason for the coming to Kanchipuram.

Again, Śiva is present at the foot or in the shadow of the mango tree. Now, the goddess piles up sand with her hands and forms an idol to worship it. This is the first literary reference to the sand *liṅga*, although the specific term *liṅga* does not appear, but rather the word 'idol' (Tam. *tiruvuruvam*) or 'holy body' (Tam. *tirumēṇi*). It seems the sand (*liṅga*) gained importance between the composition of the *Periyapurāṇam* in the twelfth century and the *Ēkāmparanātar Ulā* in the fourteenth century.

A recurring theme throughout the *Ēkāmparanātar Ulā* is Umā's embrace that left the marks of her breasts and bangles on Śiva's body.²⁶ This motif can be traced back to the *Tēvāram* hymn from the seventh century. It is either used as an epithet of Śiva in Kanchipuram, describing him as 'the one, who has the breasts' marks on his body' (verse 535), or the motif is used to describe the longing and passionate feelings of the female devotees for their divine hero Ekāmranātha, as for example in verses 143 and 144: 'The ladies watched the marks of the breasts and bangles on Siva's body and thought, what will happen, if our marks fall on his shoulder?' It may seem obvious to use the allusion to the breasts so frequently, since the *Ulā* as a genre is a love poem. Nevertheless, it is the distinctive feature of Śiva in Kanchipuram to bear the marks of the goddess's breasts and bangles on his body.

Kāñcīmāhātmya (Ś = Śaiva)

The text at hand is a printed edition of the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś),²⁷ written in Sanskrit with Telugu script. It claims to be part of the *Kālikākhaṇḍa* in the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, as the following phrase at the end of each chapter shows:

25 The author goes through a variety of reasons for Umā's action, without arriving at a conclusion: 'If I leave, what will happen to the body of the god? Did she (Umā) think like this? Was it because of her ancient femaleness? Maybe her love? Was it her nature by birth? Was it the strength of her desire? Or was it due to her faithfulness to him? We do not know.' (verse 41 and 42). Most other versions of the myth are clear about, that the goddess embraced the *liṅga* to protect it from the waters.

26 For example verses 59, 65, 114, 143, 145, 171, 196, 211, 236, 261, 299, 378, 535, 547.

27 *Kāñcīmāhātmyam – Skāndapurāṇāntargatam* (*Rudrakōṭimahimādarśah*).

Kāñcīkāmakoṭīpīṭhādhipatīnāṃ Candraśēkharēndra Sarasvatī Svāmināṃ Divyādēśēna Prakāśitam Vijayatētarāṃ (ed). Pijayavāḍa; Madrasu; Haidarābādu: Vēṃkaṭrām Pavar Pres, 1967.

“*ityādimahāpurāṇē śrīskāndē sanatkumārasaṃhitāyāṃ kālikākhaṇḍē tīrthaprasāmsāyāṃ kāñcīmāhātmyē.*” The *Skanda Purāṇa* is the most extensive Purāṇa to which many Māhātmyas claim to be a part. There are two versions of the *Skanda Purāṇa*. One is based on a division in *saṃhitās* (with subsections called *khaṇḍas*), often referred to as the ‘southern recension’. The composition of the *Skanda Purāṇa* in *saṃhitās* is only known from singular texts or manuscripts, which claim to be part of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, as does the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) at hand. The *Skanda Purāṇa* based on *saṃhitās* does not exist physically, though it is possible that it once existed in this form, but is now lost. The other version of the *Skanda Purāṇa* is based on *khaṇḍas*, referred to as the ‘northern recension’. This version is available as printed editions.²⁸ However, the *Skanda Purāṇa* based on *khaṇḍas* is a rather arbitrary text. It is a collection of materials, mostly local Māhātmyas, which were combined for the printed editions by the end of the nineteenth century.²⁹ For example, the *Aruṇācalamāhātmya*, to be discussed below, is one of the Māhātmyas that has been integrated in the printed edition of the *Skanda Purāṇa*. However, the text’s claim to be part of the *Skanda Purāṇa* points rather to its imagined affiliation to a major tradition, with a view to enhance its significance.³⁰

The copy of the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) at hand is almost certainly a new edition of a rare text of the Sanskrit Śaiva *Kāñcīmāhātmya* from 1889, which was also written in Telugu script.³¹ The *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) has fifty chapters and is therefore sometimes referred to as *Pañcāśat* (fifty).³² The ‘marriage myth’ begins in chapter 39 and concludes with chapter 45, comprising almost 650 verses. However, the text also integrates other myths and the legendary origin of minor shrines in Kanchipuram, so that the ‘marriage myth’ consists of about 330 verses, the core of which is found in chapter 45, which is summarized below. The story revolves around Pārvatī’s misdeed of covering Śiva’s eyes on Mount Mandara, which plunges the entire world into darkness (chapter 40). As a remedy, she is sent to Varanasi (Kāśī), and afterwards to Kanchipuram (chapter 41), where she walks through town and visits different sanctuaries until she finds Śiva in the form of a light-ray *liṅga* under a mango tree near the Kampā River.

Brief summary of the story:

Pārvatī explained the thirty-two *dharma*s to her female friends and established a place of charity (*dharmasālā*) near the cavity in Kāñcī. There she saw the light-ray *liṅga* (*jyotirliṅga*). She wished to worship it, but wondered how to perform a proper *pūjā* for the light *liṅga*. Thus she had the idea to build a *liṅga* made of sand on top of the light-rays. To be granted the boon to do so, she practiced excessive austerities near a mango tree until Śiva became visible. He instructed her to build a sand *liṅga* on top of the light-ray *liṅga* and worship it duly. Pārvatī built the sand *liṅga* and

28 These are the Bombay edition (Veṅkaṭeśvara Press, 1910) and Calcutta edition (Vaṅgavāsī Press, 1911).

29 However, there are scholars such as Bakker, who do believe that an ‘original’ *Skanda Purāṇa* existed as a single and coherent text. On various approaches of modern scholarship see Rao (2004: 110–13).

30 The same is also true for other Purāṇas, as, for example, the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* claims to be part of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, indicating a Śākta affiliation.

31 Dessigane (1964: vi) mentions this rare text in the introduction to the synopsis of the *Kāñcīpurāṇam*.

32 See Ayyar (1965: 151).

performed an elaborate *pūjā* according to his commands. After some time Śiva wanted to test her devotion. He called the primordial waters to arise as a flood in the Kampā River. Pārvatī, fearing that the *liṅga* might dissolve in the waters, embraced it closely, so that she left the imprints of her breasts and bangles on it. Then, her friend Bhadrakālī came to help her. She gathered the waters and confined them to her skull-bowl. All gods and celestials came together, celebrating the goddess's transformation of the former light *liṅga* into a sand *liṅga*. Finally, Śiva manifested from that *liṅga* and commanded Bhadrakālī to release the waters from the skull-bowl, so that they could flow into Sarva Tīrtha. Then, he granted Pārvatī the wish that they would always be present in Kāñcī together. Furthermore, Pārvatī wished to become Gaurī ('the golden one'), and not be addressed as Kālī ('the black one') any longer, as Śiva did before on Mount Mandara. Śiva commanded her to cast off her dark skin, and explained that this was necessary for the welfare of the world. From Pārvatī's dark skin a goddess manifested, named Kauśi-Durgā, who was created to destroy the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha. Pārvatī became fair-skinned (Gaurī) and happily asked for the celebration of a Gaurī-wedding in Kāñcī. Śiva agreed, since he formerly also promised this to the sage Agastya. He determined that the wedding should take place every year at the end of the great festival on the star Uttara Phalgunī in the month of Phālguna in the wedding pavilion near the cavity. Then he assigned Viṣṇu to arrange the wedding ceremonies. Later, Śiva also married Kauśi-Durgā and appointed her as the protector of Kāñcī, known by the name Kāñcīkanyārakṣā.

This is the bulkiest version of the myth. Besides the above-mentioned insertions on myths of minor shrines, the text contains a lengthy description of the performance of the *pūjā* (chapter 45.22–65), and the marriage party (chapter 45.166–225), which I did not retell. Evidently, the text shows some internal contradictions. To begin with, it was Pārvatī's idea to build a sand *liṅga*, but then she performs *tapas* to get Śiva's permission and instructions for doing so. Further, the story of Bhadrakālī seems to be misplaced at this point in the narrative. Some more examples could be cited which, taken together, give the impression that the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) was not written by a single author. Its Tamil rendering, the *Kāñcippurāṇam*, on the contrary, was written by two authors and is a very coherent text (see next section). However, the central narrative of worship, testing, flood, embrace, and revelation is maintained. New narrative elements are integrated, some of which also appear in other Sthalapurāṇas of Kanchipuram. New motifs include a stopover in Kāśī, the light-ray *liṅga*, Bhadrakālī as helper to stop the flood, the transformation of the goddess from dark-skinned to fair-skinned, and the manifestation of the goddess Kauśi-Durgā. These will be discussed successively.

A narrative theme, which reoccurs in other versions of the myth, is the stopover in Kāśī (Varanasi in North India). When Pārvatī asked Śiva where to perform *pūjā*, he explained to her that among all holy places on earth Kāśī and Kāñcī are eminent, but that of these two places, Kāñcī is dearest to him. Therefore, Pārvatī goes first to Kāśī, worships Śiva, who resides there as Viśveśa (Viśvanātha), and establishes a *liṅga*. Afterwards she comes to Kāñcī, where the main plot unfolds. This stylistic device is often employed in Sthalapurāṇas. First, a connection to the pan-Indian tradition is established and

acknowledged by, for example, honoring a renowned pilgrimage site such as Kāśī. As the story progresses, the local site is, in comparison to the renowned site, depicted as superior. In this case, however, Kanchipuram is itself a renowned pilgrimage site on a pan-Indian level. Thus, it is likely that the goddess's stopover in Kāśī is meant to establish a connection between the North and South Indian tradition.

A distinctive feature of this myth is the light *liṅga* (*jyotirlinga*), which Pārvatī covers with sand. The text's internal explanation is that the light *liṅga* can not be worshipped duly, since an ablution with milk, fruits and water would not be appropriate for it (KM (Ś) 45.13). The transformation of the *liṅga*'s materiality may reflect changes in the main object of worship at the Ekāmranātha temple, from Kampam, the pillar, to the sand *liṅga*, built by the goddess.

Another new element, which also occurs in the *Kāmākṣivilāsa*, is the appearance of Bhadrakālī, who confines the waters of the flood in her skull-bowl. This seems to be a rather confusing interpolation (KM (Ś) 45.90–92). It interrupts the storyline, which actually describes the joyous assembly of gods after Pārvatī embraces and marks the *liṅga* with her breasts and bangles. Later, when Śiva appears, he instructs Bhadrakālī to let the waters run into Sarva Tīrtha. Sarva Tīrtha is a huge water tank to the west of the Ekāmranātha temple, at the banks of which the final bathing rite is performed on the last day of the festival (see Chapter Two). Further, Śiva assigned Bhadrakālī a place in front of him, giving her the name Pralayamandā ('the one who slowed down the *pralaya*'), since she confined the waters, which came like the final destruction of the world (*pralaya*), in her skull-bowl.

Another theme is Kauśī-Durgā and the transformation of the goddess from dark-skinned to fair-skinned. This appears in the *Kaccippurāṇam*, too, and in variations in the *Kāmākṣivilāsa* and the Vaiṣṇava *Kāñcīmāhātmya*. Kauśī-Durgā or Kauśikī is a figure known from Purāṇic mythology: Śiva, who is known for his fair skin, teased Pārvatī for her dark skin. Thus, she performed penance until she sloughed her dark skin. The dark skin became the goddess Kālī ('the black one'), also known as Kauśikī ('born of the sheath'), who later killed the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha. Pārvatī became fair-skinned, and known as Gaurī ('the golden one').³³ The 'marriage myth' in the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) picks up on this Purāṇic myth, but with the addition of Śiva marrying Kauśī-Durgā, too, and appointing her as the guardian goddess of the city Kanchipuram, known as Kāñcīkanyārakṣā ('the virgin protectress of Kāñcī'). In the text itself, the goddess Kauśī-Durgā is also called Ādiśakti. This may point to goddess Āti Kāmākṣī Kālikāmpāl who, by the Kāmākṣī temple priests, is considered one of the eight protecting deities of Kāmākṣī, and who joins the bridal procession of the Paṅkuṇi Uttiram marriage rituals, to be discussed in Chapter Five.

Kāñcippurāṇam

The Tamil *Kāñcippurāṇam*³⁴ was written by the scholar and poet Civañāṇacuvami and his pupil Kacciyappamuṇivar at the end of the eighteenth century. Civañāṇacuvami died in 1785 and his student Kacciyappamuṇivar then finished the *Kāñcippurāṇam* (Zvelebil 1975:

33 See Doniger O'Flaherty (1980: 350) for the myth and references to it in different Purāṇas. Further, Joshi (1996: 4–6, 30–31) for the myth and for Kauśikī's iconography in depictions of Pārvatī's penance.

34 *Kāñcippurāṇam* of Civañāṇacuvami. C. Aruṇai Vaṭivelu Mutaliyār (ed). Kanchipuram, 1937.

248). The *Kāñcippurāṇam* is regarded as one of the four great Tamil Purāṇas.³⁵ It is a translation of the Śaiva *Kāñcīmāhātmya*. The author himself indicated the Sanskrit source in verse 5.26 of the *Kāñcippurāṇam* (Dessigane 1964: vii). Dessigane (1964) translated the *Kāñcippurāṇam* into French in condensed form. The 'marriage myth' is told in chapter 63 (427 verses) and chapter 64 (82 verses). The Tamil *Kāñcippurāṇam* is indeed a "rather close translation" of the Sanskrit *Kāñcīmāhātmya*, as Zvelebil (1975: 248) states. Almost the same ramifications for, and insertions about other myths and minor shrines, as in the Sanskrit text, can be found in the Tamil text. Yet, the text is written as a coherent whole. Again, here I will only summarize the parts which are relevant for the storyline of the 'marriage myth'.³⁶

Brief summary of the story:

One day, Pārvatī playfully covered the eyes of Śiva. This caused complete darkness in the world and all *pūjās* and rituals stopped. Śiva recommended her to do penance and worship him and his disciples as expiation for this great offense. Then he explained in which way the *pūjā* should be performed and praised Kāñcī as a highly qualified place for it. The goddess bid farewell and went together with female deities and other friends first to Kāśī, where she worshipped Viśvanātha, then arrived in Kāñcī. She stayed at the cavity near Ulakānīrtha and developed thirty-two *dharmas*. Desirous to see Śiva, who is present in the form of a mango tree near the Kampā River, Pārvatī walked through the decorated streets of town, where the inhabitants praised her joyfully. After entering the *gopura* of Tiruvekampan, she saw Śiva, who lived there under the mango tree. Immediately she performed an elaborated *pūjā* for him. Having completed it without fault, she went back to the cavity and observed the thirty-two *dharmas*. One day, when she was doing the *pūjā* again, Śiva thought of a holy play and made all waters come together in a big flood in the Kampā River. Pārvatī was very frightened, but with great affection she embraced Śiva closely to protect him from the flood. She left the marks of her breasts and bangles like scars on Śiva's body. Then, the whole world immersed in happiness and all gods with their wives came along. Śiva appeared from the *liṅga* and banished the flood in Sarva Tīrtha. Then, he showed his bridegroom form and granted her the boon that all people in Kāñcī will be blessed. Being asked a second time to tell her wishes, Pārvatī asked that she not be called Kālī any longer and wished for her dark skin color to be made fair. Śiva explained to her that this was only necessary, because Durgā has to appear as Kauśī from her dark skin sheath to destroy the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha. Then, Pārvatī removed her dark skin like a snake, from which Kauśikī arose, and wished, now fair-skinned, for a Gaurī-

35 See Zvelebil (1974: 172, 178). The others are *Periyapurāṇam*, Parañcōti's *Tiruvilaiyāṭṭarpurāṇam* (Madurai) and *Kantapurāṇam*.

36 The 'marriage myth' comprises over 500 verses in Tamil, written in an 'old' and poetical style. A synopsis in Tamil prose is appended to each chapter in the printed edition of the *Kāñcippurāṇam* at hand. Since the text follows closely the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś), and is, moreover, available as French synopsis by Dessigane (1964), I concentrated only on the text in prose. I am very thankful for the help of my Tamil teacher S. Arokinathan, who made with me an English rendering of the relevant sections.

wedding in Kāñcī. Śiva agreed, since he had already promised Agastya that their wedding shall take place every year on the Pañkuṇi Uttiram festival. Later, Kauśikī appeared and asked Śiva for marriage. He assented and assigned her as guard of Kāñcī. Thereupon she was called Kacci Kaṇṇikāppu.

The Sanskrit *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) and the Tamil *Kāñcippurāṇam* are close in respect of their story line and the relative lengths they devote to each narrative theme. Here, I will only deal with the deviations, which are basically two. First, Pārvatī does not form a sand *liṅga* in this version of the 'marriage myth'—either on the banks of the Kampā River or on top of a light-ray *liṅga* as in the Sanskrit *Kāmākṣīmāhātmya* (Ś). This is remarkable, not only in comparison to the Sanskrit source, but also to the other texts, most of which include the sand *liṅga*, and especially with respect to the text's late composition at the end of the eighteenth century. To be sure, Śiva appears from a *liṅga*, which was worshipped and embraced by the goddess, but she did not establish it, and sand as its materiality is not mentioned. It is only mentioned that Śiva was there (in the form of a *liṅga*)³⁷ at the foot of the mango tree on the banks of the Kampā River when she entered the temple. Second, the narrative theme of Bhadrakālī, who confined the waters of the flood into her skull-bowl, is missing. Śiva banishes the waters straightforwardly into Sarva Tīrtha. As mentioned above, the section with Bhadrakālī appears in the printed edition of the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) slightly misplaced. Possibly, the section is an interpolation, and was not in the manuscript that has been used as source for the Tamil translation. However, the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* includes the narrative theme of Bhadrakālī, too, and shows also another parallel to the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś).

Kāmākṣīvilāsa

The *Kāmākṣīvilāsa*³⁸ is one of the Sanskrit Sthalapurāṇas of Kanchipuram, which has also been translated into Tamil.³⁹ It claims to be part of the *Śrīvidyākhaṇḍa* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*. Part of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* is the *Devīmāhātmya*, a central and famous text in the worship of the goddess. By affiliating itself with the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* indicates a Śākta orientation. The name 'Kāmākṣīvilāsa' highlights the goddess Kāmākṣī as the main actor. However, the text gives almost equally space to the myths of the three major deities of Kanchipuram, Śiva Ekāmrānātha, Devī Kāmākṣī, and Viṣṇu Varadarāja. The *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* is a text which has received some attention from scholars. Shulman (1980: 392, fn. 28) notes that it "offers perhaps the most complete and most mature versions of the myths of Kāmākṣī." However, the text's date is disputable. Shulman (1980: 392, fn. 28) and Wilke (1996: 157) are of the opinion that the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* is of uncertain date. Nagaswamy (1982: 207-8) argues that the text refers to structures in the Kāmākṣī temple, which are of recent origin. He proposes therefore that it is a late nineteenth-century work, possibly composed at the time of the first printed edition in

37 Dessigane (1964: 86) includes in his translation the 'liṅga', which, however, is not mentioned in the Tamil verse (63.142) and prose.

38 *Kāmākṣīvilāsa*. Beṅgalūr: Bhāratlakṣmī Mudraṇālayam, 1968.

39 The *Kāmākṣīlīlāpirapāvam*, first published in 1906, and the *Kāñcimahimai*, first published in 1927, are Tamil renderings in prose of the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa*.

1889. The *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* comprises fourteen chapters. Chapter 8 (13–158) deals with the 'marriage myth' of Ekāmranātha and Kāmākṣī across 145 verses. The major storyline of the myth is told from verse 13 to 94, with a lengthy description of the wedding party carrying through to verse 158. The description of the wedding hall, the bride's ornaments and the marriage ceremony (KāVi 8.92b–137b) are the same verses as those found in the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) (45.166–213a).⁴⁰

Brief summary of the story:

Once Pārvatī covered the three eyes of Śiva on Mount Kailāsa. This caused destruction in the world. As a consequence of this offense, Pārvatī's golden body turned black. Distressed, she asked Śiva for a remedy to regain her golden color. He instructed her to go first to the hermitage Badarikāśrama, then to Kāśī and finally to Kāñcī. She followed his order. At Badarikāśrama she stayed in the form of a child with the sage Kātyāyana for eight years. The sage gave her thirteen implements to take with her, which would change when she reached Kāñcī. Then she set forth for Kāśī. There was a terrible famine when she arrived. She stayed there for twelve years, gave food to the people and became known as Annapūrṇā. Afterwards she went to the South. In one place her implements changed in the same manner as the sage Kātyāyana had formerly predicted it. Hence she recognized Kāñcī. She searched for a single mango tree and named it Ekāmra. At its root she built a *liṅga* of sand, worshipped Śiva and performed severe penance. After some time, the sage Nārada came along. He discerned her desire to gain Śiva as husband and indicated the god Kāma as a good means to achieve him. Through Pārvatī's fierce penance and Kāma's spell, the fire of passion inflamed Śiva. As he could not stand the heat any longer, he released Gaṅgā out of his hair and plunged into her cooling water. Afterwards he sent Gaṅgā in the form of the great *pralaya* flood to Kāñcī to interrupt Pārvatī's penance. When Pārvatī saw the flood, she instructed her female attendant Durgā Kālikā to stop it. Durgā gathered the waters and confined them to the skull-bowl in her hand. Hence, Pārvatī gave her the name Pralayabandhinī. However, Śiva released the waters from the skull-bowl again with great wrath. This time Pārvatī thought of her brother Viṣṇu. He appeared in the form of Candrakāṅṭha, so that she almost mistook him for Śiva. Viṣṇu explained her that Śiva comes in the form of the waters and that he will be pleased, if she protects the sand *liṅga*. Thus, when the flood came near, she embraced the sand *liṅga* closely and Śiva became visible. He placed her to his left and she was again shining in her golden color. Then, Śiva proclaimed that their marriage should be performed every year, since this boon was formerly given to Agastya. He assigned Viṣṇu to arrange for the festivities and finally the marriage took place on the tenth day of the great festival for Śiva.

40 Parts of the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* have been translated to German in an unpublished master's thesis (Moßner 2008). Moßner (2008: 7) remarks that the preface of the printed edition of the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* in Nagari script names as its source an old text of the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa*, published in Kurveṭinagaram, 1889, written in Telugu script. Coincidentally, there exists an old edition of the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś), published in Kurveṭinagaram 1889, written in Telugu script, too (Dessigane 1964: vi). Possibly, the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* and the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) have more text passages in common.

As in other versions of the 'marriage myth', the account in the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* follows the same model: Pārvatī performs *tapas* and *pūjā*, Śiva tests her by sending a flood, she embraces him and he reveals himself. However, Pārvatī has two stopovers on her way to Kanchipuram. First, she stays in the hermitage of the sage Kātyāyana called Badarikāśrama.⁴¹ Here, she receives thirteen implements that would transform once she reached Kanchi. These implements are:

<i>vyāghrāsana</i> (tiger-skin seat)	→	<i>somavṛtta</i> (edifice to install a <i>liṅga</i>) ⁴²
<i>ghaṭa</i> (pot)	→	<i>sūtraka</i> (drainage channel at the <i>liṅga</i> base)
<i>gaṅgāsaikata</i> (sand of the Gaṅgā)	→	<i>liṅgarūpa</i> (form of a <i>liṅga</i>)
<i>ākṣamālā</i> (rosary)	→	<i>bilvamālikā</i> (garland of <i>bilva</i> leaves)
<i>chatra</i> (parasol)	→	<i>nāgabhūṣaṇaka</i> (snake ornament)
<i>yogadaṇḍa</i> (staff for ascetic exercises)	→	<i>triśūla</i> (trident)
<i>cāmaradvandva</i> (a pair of fly whisk)	→	<i>yuvatīyugma</i> (a pair of young woman)
<i>vyajana</i> (fan)	→	<i>sukarūpaka</i> (parrot)
<i>dīpadhāra</i> (light stand)	→	<i>vahnirūpa</i> (fire)
<i>pustaka</i> (book)	→	<i>dhenuś</i> (cow)
<i>vidyādhāra</i> (book stand)	→	<i>sūcikā</i> (needle)
<i>taptamudga</i> (roasted mungbeans)	→	<i>aṅkura</i> (sprouts of beans)
<i>gaṅgāthīrtha</i> (Gaṅgā water)	→	<i>payorūpa</i> (milk)

An interpretation of the transformation of the implements was offered to me by the Śaiva adept (*sādhaka*) Ramanadhan Vaidyanaat.⁴³ He explained that the implements change so that Pārvatī is able to perform a proper *pūjā* according to the Āgamas. The first set of implements belongs to an ascetic way of life, whereas the second set is adjuncts to perform a temple-style *liṅga pūjā*. They seem to contrast the renouncer (*sannyāsin*) with the

41 Badrikāśrama is modern Badrinath, a major pilgrimage site in North India, and place of one of the Śaṅkara Maṭhas.

42 See <http://www.kamakoti.org/kamakoti/kamakshi%20Vilasa/bookview.php?chapnum=8> (accessed 12.02.2018).

43 Interview with Ramanadhan Vaidyanaat, 23.04.2009.

householder (*gṛhastha*). However, the needle and fire are used to perform *tapas*, as Pārvatī is instructed in verse 39: "Hold in the hand the best parakeet, and stand on top of a needle in the middle of five fires."⁴⁴ Although the verse describes mortification rituals, *tapas* is, as mentioned above, understood as devotion to Śiva. The other implements are used for the establishment of the sand *liṅga*, its adornment, and proper worship (fig. 7.4 depicts some of the implements).

The second stopover brings Pārvatī to Kāśī, not to worship Śiva Viśvanātha and establish a *liṅga*, as in the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś), but to associate her with the nourishing goddess Annapūrṇā ('full of food'), which underlines the text's preference for the goddess.

Further, in this version of the myth Pārvatī has two helpers. First is Durgā Kālikā, who confines the waters in her skull bowl; hence Pārvatī names her Pralayabandhinī. To recall, in the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) the helping goddess Kālī (Bhadrakālī) was later named Pralayamandā by Śiva. Both names refer to the same event, the stopping of the water that came like the *pralaya* flood. However, in the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa*, Pārvatī is the agent who assigns the new name to Kālī. There is a shrine for the goddess Pralayabandhinī in the second *prākāra* at the Ekāmrānātha temple (see fig. 1.9). Possibly, she was also formerly known as Pralayamandā. Today, most people address her as Pralayakālī. The second helper is Viṣṇu, who appears in the form of Candrakāṅṭha, 'having the moon (light) on his throat.' Viṣṇu Candrakāṅṭha is also mentioned in the Vaiṣṇava *Kāñcīmāhātmya*. He has a shrine in the first *prākāra* of the Ekāmrānātha temple, known by the Tamil name, Nilātatuṅṭa Perumāḷ⁴⁵

In the preamble to chapter 8, Śiva is described by the known epithet 'he, who bears the breasts' and bangles' marks from Umā's embrace' (KāVi 8.5).⁴⁶ Yet, this is not mentioned again in the account of the myth. Essentially, the text only says 'she embraced the *liṅga*' (KāVi 8.84), without the detailed and emotional descriptions found in other versions. It seems the author(s) did not want to stress the embrace and especially not the marks on Śiva's body. Another point here is the Kampā River: the bank of the river is not the scene of the story and the river is not mentioned in chapter 8. However, in the following chapter a reference is made to the Kampā River, where it is described as an invisible river which runs into Sarva tīrtha, and which previously had dried up (KāVi 9.7–9). This suggests that the Kampā River also lost its importance. Possibly, the composition of the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* is rather late and adapted to the topography.⁴⁷

Kāñcīmāhātmya (V = Vaiṣṇava)

This text, too, bears the name *Kāñcīmāhātmya*,⁴⁸ but it differs from the above-mentioned *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) by presenting its myths from a purely Vaiṣṇava perspective. It has

44 KāVi 8.39a: *kare dhṛtvā śukaśreṣṭhaṃ pañcāgnau sūcikopari*.

45 This is one important Viṣṇu shrine, praised by the Vaiṣṇava poet-saint Tirumaṅgai Ālvār (eighth century) (see Chari 1982: 56).

46 In another chapter Śiva is addressed in a similar way (KāVi 9.11 and 9.52–53).

47 There have been two streams around Kanchipuram, which are dried up now. It is very likely that Kanchipuram was often affected by floods, and that the Kampā River was one of them.

48 *Kāñcīmāhātmyam – Brahmāṇḍapurāṇāntargataṃ*. P.B. Anantācārya (ed). Śāstramuktāvalī No. 26, Conjeeveram/Kāñcī: Sudarśana Press, 1906.

thirty-two chapters, written in Sanskrit (Nagari script) and claims to be connected to the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*. Porcher (1985) published in an article a synopsis in French (1985). The 'marriage myth' is found in chapters 23–25.⁴⁹

Brief summary of the story (chapters 23–25, comprising 139 verses):

Śiva and Pārvaṭī quarreled after a game of dice on Mount Kailāsa. Śiva felt offended by Pārvaṭī's jokes about his dubious appearance and cursed her with ugly eyes and a dark colored, misshaped body. As remedy for the curse he advised her to go to Kāñcī, to a place called Kāmakoṣṭha, which was created by Vāmana (Viṣṇu), and worship Vāmana there at the entrance of the cavity.⁵⁰ Pārvaṭī followed Śiva's instructions, and after one year of severe penance and worship, Vāmana appeared before her and freed her from the curse. Like a snake, she cast off the dark skin, and regained her divine body and beautiful eyes. Vāmana named her Kāmākṣī ('having loving eyes') and designated her to stay in Kanchipuram as the bestower of all that is desired. After some time, she desired to have her husband Śiva near. Thus, Vāmana instructed her to build a *liṅga* made of sand in the northwest and worship it continually with various offerings. Śiva, attracted by her devotion, came in the form of the sun at the end of the world. Pārvaṭī was heated by this fire and took refuge with Vāmana, who created a single mango tree for shelter. In return, Śiva burned the tree with the fire of his third eye and Pārvaṭī fainted from the unbearable heat. Again, she meditated on Vāmana, who appeared as Candrakhaṇḍa ('having a part of the moon').⁵¹ He showered nectar on her and on the mango tree, by which the heat declined, and both Pārvaṭī and the tree were revived. Then, at the root of the mango tree, Pārvaṭī once again built a *liṅga* out of sand and worshipped it. This time Śiva came near and released the river Gaṅgā out of his hair to frighten Pārvaṭī with a big flood. Vāmana advised her to appease Gaṅgā, since the river (goddess) was her elder sister. But Gaṅgā became more and more swollen and Pārvaṭī, in fear for the sandy *liṅga*, embraced it closely, so that she left the marks of her breasts and bangles on it. Then, she cursed Gaṅgā to be treated like an outcast and Gaṅgā seeped away into the earth. Pārvaṭī started anew with the worship of Śiva and Vāmana. Finally, Śiva appeared on his bull to be united with her at the root of the single mango tree.

The basic storyline of worship, testing, flood, embrace and revelation is also visible in this version of the myth. However, ramifications and details that present Viṣṇu, in his manifestation as Vāmana, as the cause of actions, extend the narrative. Further, a battle between Śiva and Viṣṇu is interwoven in the storyline. The story begins on Mount Kailāsa,

49 A text titled *Kāñcīkṣetramāhātmya* is accessible through the library of the French Institute of Pondicherry. The text is a transcript (T.No. 1083) from a paper manuscript (D. 15705) of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai. It is the same text as the Vaiṣṇava *Kāñcīmāhātmya*, but the contents are arranged in twenty-eight chapters, instead of thirty-two. The corresponding chapters of the 'marriage myth' are 20–22.

50 Viṣṇu in his manifestation as Vāmana is worshipped in the Ulagaḷanda Perumāḷ temple near the Kāmākṣī temple (Kāmakoṣṭha).

51 Candrakhaṇḍa ('having a part of the moon') became Candrakaṇṭha ('having the moon on his throat') through the mediation of Tamil Cantirakaṇṭaṅ (Shulman 1980: 173).

but the reason for Pārvatī's descent to Kanchipuram is a quarrel after a game of dice, in which she humiliates Śiva and is subsequently cursed to become ugly and dark colored. Only through the grace of Vāmana is she freed from the curse. Moreover, he created the Kāmakoṣṭha (Kāmakoṭṭam), and, after all, installed her at that place with the name Kāmākṣī. The transformation of the goddess from dark to bright color is a theme in all Kanchipuram Sthalapurāṇas, but the transformation of the eyes is a new element, probably included to explain her name Kāmākṣī ('having loving eyes'). The transformation is not happening through Śiva's appearance, but through Vāmana's grace after excessive penance and worship towards him. However, the goddess wishes to have Śiva as her husband and Vāmana instructs her to build a sand *liṅga* and worship it. Śiva appears and a battle between him and Viṣṇu begins. First, Śiva burns the goddess with his heat. Vāmana creates a single mango tree to give her shelter in its shadow. Then, Śiva burns the tree, too, and Viṣṇu appears as the moon to shower nectar on Pārvatī and the tree. After this episode, Pārvatī builds a sand *liṅga* once more, now under the revived mango tree, and worships it until Śiva releases Gaṅgā out of his hair, who comes in a big flood to frighten her. The Kampā River, however, is not mentioned in this version of the myth. Again, Pārvatī seeks refuge with Vāmana, who advises her to talk to Gaṅgā, without success. When the flood comes, she embraces the sand *liṅga*—the motif which is found in all but one versions of the myth—and leaves upon it the marks of her breasts and bangles. Finally, Śiva appears from the *liṅga* to stay together with her at the single mango tree. Clearly, Śiva is addressed as Pārvatī's husband and manifests in Kanchipuram to be united with her again, but a re-marriage is not mentioned. Far less, Viṣṇu's playing host to the marriage ceremony. The narrative ends with the résumé: 'In that way, the daughter of the mountain king, who has been cursed in a game of dice by the angry Rudra (Śiva), became in Kanchipuram again bright and a heart's joy through Vāmana.'⁵² This verse illustrates the intention of the author(s) to present Vāmana as the cause of all actions.

Of particular interest is the episode in which Pārvatī curses the river Gaṅgā, making it an outcast. By extension, everybody who comes into contact with the river also becomes an outcast. Usually, Gaṅgā is regarded as the salvific river par excellence. The curse of Gaṅgā occurs only in this version of the myth. I can offer no explanation for this singular variation, except the underlying jealousy of Pārvatī and Gaṅgā, which is known from pan-Indian myth, and serves as a theme in the oral tradition of the Ekāmranātha temple festival (see Chapter Four).

Aruṅācalamāhātmya

The *Aruṅācalamāhātmya* is, as the name indicates, a text that describes the glory of Aruṅācala, a mountain near Tiruvannamalai. Aruṅācala is associated with the *liṅgodbhava* myth, in which Śiva revealed himself in the form of a fiery *liṅga* to prove his supremacy over Brahma and Viṣṇu. The *Aruṅācalamāhātmya* I read⁵³ is found in the printed edition of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, book 1 (*Māheśvarakhaṇḍa*), section 3 (*Aruṅācalamāhātmya*), which again is divided into two parts (*pūrvārdha* and *uttarārdha*). Part 1 (*pūrvārdha*), chapter

52 *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (V), chapter 25, verse 46.

53 Rocher (1986: 230) mentions also an *Aruṅācalamāhātmya* that claims to be part of the *Liṅga Purāṇa*. It seems to correspond partly with the section in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

3.23 to 4.52, tells the 'marriage myth' in Kanchipuram. However, the myth does not end with the re-marriage in Kanchipuram. In the *Aruṇācalamāhātmya*, Pārvatī's penance and worship of the sand *liṅga* in Kanchipuram appears merely as a stopover on her way to Aruṇācala.

Brief summary of the story:

One day, while Śiva and Pārvatī enjoyed themselves on Mount Kailāsa, Pārvatī thoughtlessly closed her hands over Śiva's three eyes, which are the moon, the sun and the fire. Consequently, the entire world was filled with darkness and destruction. As expiation for this improper behavior, Śiva instructed her to perform penance near a single mango tree at the Kampā River in Kanchipuram. Accompanied by female friends, the goddess went to Kanchipuram. There she performed good deeds, practiced severe penance, made a *liṅga* of sand and worshipped it duly. After some time, Śiva, with the intention to test Pārvatī's devotion, caused a big flood in the Kampā River. On seeing this, the goddess became worried about the potential hindrance of her worship and destruction of the sand *liṅga*. Thus, she closely embraced the *liṅga* and pressed her breasts and bangles so hard against it that the impressions of them were left on the *liṅga* like a scar. She heard Śiva's voice telling her she can release the *liṅga*, since the flood had now receded. After this, he declared that the sand *liṅga* worshipped by her will always bless human beings and instructed her to go further to perform penance at the Aruṇācala mountain, where he reveals himself in his fiery form (*tejorūpa*). Before the goddess leaves Kanchipuram, she proclaims that she shall be known as Kāmākṣī at that place.

The 'marriage myth' in the *Aruṇācalamāhātmya* begins with the familiar setting on Mount Kailāsa: Pārvatī blindfolded Śiva's eyes, which caused darkness in the entire world. As expiation for her misbehavior she is sent to Kanchipuram to perform penance near a mango tree on the banks of the Kampā River. She built a sand *liṅga*, and worshipped it. Then, Śiva sent a flood down the river to test her devotion. To protect the *liṅga* she embraced it tightly, leaving upon it the marks of her breasts and bangles. Up to this point, the storyline follows the sequence we know already from the previously discussed texts. In this version of the myth, however, the goddess's effort does not effect Śiva's revelation of himself before her. Pārvatī only hears his divine voice that instructs her to travel further to Aruṇācala (where she once more performs penance to be finally freed from the misdeed of having blindfolded Śiva's eyes). To be sure, the myth acknowledges the sand *liṅga* and praises its salvific power, but Śiva in his manifestation as Ekāmranātha, the 'Lord of the single mango tree', is not mentioned. The final reunion of Śiva and Pārvatī is shifted to Aruṇācala, hence a reunion or re-marriage in Kanchipuram is absent, too. Yet, the presence of Kāmākṣī in Kanchipuram has to be explained somehow. Therefore, Pārvatī declares in one verse (4.52), that devotees who worship her as Kāmākṣī at the place shall obtain all that they desire. In the next verse, Pārvatī immediately leaves for Aruṇācala to follow Śiva's command. Thus, Kāmākṣī is not prominent in that version of the myth, being mentioned in one verse only, which may have been interpolated.

Lalitāmāhātmya

The *Lalitāmāhātmya*, also known as *Lalitopākhyāna*, is found at the end of the printed edition of the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* in part 3 (*Uttarabhāga*), section 4 (*Upasamhārapāda*), chapters 5 to 44. It is likely that the *Lalitāmāhātmya* was originally an independent work, which has been subsequently appended to the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* by Śakti devotees in order to include it among the more authoritative scriptures, and to give the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* a "Śākta colouring," as Tagare (1984: part 4: viii) states.⁵⁴ Most Purāṇic texts are difficult to date. Dates proposed for the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* vary between 400 and 1000 CE (Rocher 1986: 157). Datta (1976: 466f.) assumes that the *Lalitāmāhātmya* was written during the reign of the Chola king Rājarāja (985–1014 CE). However, this seems very early considering the fact that the goddess Kāmākṣī, who occurs in inscriptions only by the end of the fourteenth century, is named in the text.⁵⁵ Venkataraman (1968: 27) suggests that the parts of the *Lalitāmāhātmya* dealing with the goddess Kāmākṣī were added much later, although he does not specify a date.

As the name *Lalitāmāhātmya* indicates, the main deity, who is glorified in the text, is the goddess Lalitā, also known as Tripurāsundarī. She is the major deity in the Śākta cult of Śrīvidyā (see Chapter Five). The *Lalitāmāhātmya* describes the goddess's origin, her manifestations, and major exploits, such as the destruction of the demon Bhaṇḍāsura. The goddess Kāmākṣī in Kanchipuram is regarded as one of her manifestations, and the Kāmākṣī temple is an important center of her worship. Chapters 39 to 41 of the *Lalitāmāhātmya* are exclusively dedicated to Kāmākṣī's deeds and glory. The 'marriage myth' of Śiva and Pārvatī in Kanchipuram is described in thirty-five verses in chapter 40 (verses 10–45).

Brief summary of the story (BṇḍP 3.4.40.10–45):

Once, as a pastime, Pārvatī blindfolded Śiva's eyes on Mount Kailāsa. Since his eyes are the moon and the sun, the three worlds became dark and all religious rites ceased. As expiation for this misdeed, Śiva instructed her to go to Kāśī and afterwards to Kāñcī. There, she should keep a Tulasī plant in front of herself and perform penance on the banks of the Kampā River to propitiate goddess Kāmākṣī, who destroys all sins. Pārvatī went to Kāñcī and acted accordingly. Pleased with Pārvatī's severe penance, Kāmākṣī manifested, holding the noose, goad, sugarcane bow and five arrows in her hands, and granted her the boon of obtaining Śiva as husband, as she desired. Pārvatī, delighted, praised Kāmākṣī. Then, Kāmākṣī declared: 'What sin can there be in your case? I am you. What is the difference? You are I. You are the destroyer of all sins,' and went directly into Pārvatī's heart. At the same time, Śiva was agitated due to the separation from Pārvatī. He meditated on Kāmākṣī at the root of the single mango tree to regain Pārvatī. Kāmākṣī appeared before him and assigned him to stay forever at her place (*pīṭha*),

54 The *Lalitāmāhātmya* as an independent work is discussed by Datta (1976: 451), Tagare (1984: part 4: viii) and Schwarz Linder (1996: 112).

55 To my knowledge, the first reference to the name Kāmākṣī is an inscription (ARE 1890, No. 29 and ARE 1954/55, No. 316) from the Vijayanagara king Harihara II, dated to 1392 CE.

known as Ekāmra, and to bless Pārvatī at the banks of the Kampā River. Further, she instructed him to refrain from twofold distress, one that arises from yogic activities and one from separation from Pārvatī. Then she vanished into Śiva's heart. Śiva delightedly accepted Pārvatī in accordance with the rules for marriage and took her to Mount Kailāsa.

This version of the 'marriage myth' depicts the events obviously from a Śākta point of view. Śiva and Pārvatī are reunited in marriage due to the grace of Kāmākṣī, who is a manifestation of the omnipotent goddess Lalitā-Tripurāsundarī. Interestingly, and unlike other variations of the myth, the *Lalitāmāhātmya* indicates an equal status for both characters. Pārvatī performs penance, and her husband Śiva, too, performs penance in order to regain her. The first on the banks of the Kampā River, the latter under the mango tree, but both with the intention to please the supreme goddess Kāmākṣī and the wish to become united again. The storyline is very different from other versions of the 'marriage myth'. It begins on Mount Kailāsa and the rationale for Pārvatī's descent to Kanchipuram is the blindfolding of Śiva's eyes, but key elements such as the sand *liṅga*, the flood, and the embrace, are missing. However, other elements like the Kampā River, the mango tree and the marriage are there, but presented differently. Pārvatī performs penance on the banks of the Kampā River, but with a Tulasī plant in front of her, and not the sand *liṅga*. Tulasī is known as Viṣṇu's plant; yet, Pārvatī's penance is directed towards Kāmākṣī. The omission of the sand *liṅga* is easier to understand, since the text centers exclusively on the worship of Kāmākṣī. Pārvatī is not worshipping Śiva, therefore, testing her devotion with a flood and the subsequent embrace of him becomes redundant, too. Thus, the core storyline, as we know it from the earliest references in the *Tēvāram* hymns—*tapas/worship*, testing, flood, embrace and revelation—is not existent in the *Lalitāmāhātmya*. Moreover, the supremacy of the goddess is expressed by the assignment to Śiva to stay at *her* place, known as Ekāmra.

3.2 Narrative themes

A comparison of the numerous variations of the 'marriage myth' shows that the core storyline—*tapas/pūjā*, testing, flood, embrace, and revelation—is shared by all sources, except the *Aruṅācalamāhatmya*, which skips Śiva's revelation, and the *Lalitāmāhātmya*. Yet, there are narrative themes which do not occur in all versions, or which are unique to just one version. In this section I will summarize the themes of the core storyline.

Most versions of the 'marriage myth' rationalize their plots in terms of Pārvatī's blindfolding of Śiva's eyes. This misdeed causes chaos in the world and has to be expiated by Pārvatī. In the Vaiṣṇava *Kāñcīmāhātmya*, a quarrel over a game of dice and the subsequent curse on Pārvatī to become ugly is the reason for her descent to earth. Joshi (1996: 4–7) in his study of the iconography of 'Pārvatī in penance' analyzed the related Purāṇic mythology, locating two forms of penance Pārvatī performs after her marriage. In one account, Pārvatī quarrels with Śiva about her dark skin and performs penance to get rid of it. The dark skin sheath is then transformed into Kauśikī, who later kills the two demons Śumbha and Niśumbha, while Pārvatī becomes fair-skinned and is named Gaurī. In the

second account, Pārvatī playfully covers Śiva's eyes, which causes darkness in the world. Because of this misconduct, Pārvatī has to practice austerities. However, Joshi analyzed only major Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata*. Actually, the Sthalapurāṇas of Kanchipuram blend both forms of Pārvatī's post-marriage penance. In most versions, the rationale is the blindfolding, yet, the transformation from dark-skinned to fair-skinned goddess and the creation of the goddess Kauśikī is included in the myth, too.

One text, distinguished in this regard, is the *Periyapurānam*. Here, the rationale for Pārvatī's descent to Kanchipuram is her desire to practice *pūjā* in the Āgamic way. The text refers frequently to the Āgamas and the performance of Āgamic *pūjā*. Additionally, the *Ēkāmparanātar Ulā* stresses *pūjā* according to the Āgamas. Further, a reference to the *Kāmikāgama* appears in the Śaiva *Kāñcīmāhātmya*. The *pūjā* is also important in other versions of the myth, but focuses less explicitly on a performance in the Āgamic way. However, the descriptions of the *pūjā* in these versions are essentially Āgamic, mentioning for example purification rituals such as *bhūtaśuddhi*, or the imposition of mantras (*nyāsa*), and so on. Some texts did not consider it necessary to underline the Āgamic way, possibly because Āgamic *pūjā* was already widespread and well known at the time of their composition. Besides, texts presenting a rather sectarian view, such as the *Lalitāmāhātmya*, might not have been interested in stressing the Āgamic way.

In the South Indian philosophical system of Śaiva Siddhānta, the terms *tapas* and *pūjā* are often used interchangeably, understood as devotion for Śiva. Many Tamil Purāṇas even state that worship at a shrine is a superior path to truth than renunciation, as Shulman (1980: 357, fn. 7) notes. This notion is also expressed in two of the texts under consideration here. First, in the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Ś) 45.20, Śiva stops Pārvatī's penance and encourages her to perform *pūjā* for him. Second, in the *Kāmākṣivilāsa*, a preference for worship over renunciation is indicated by the transformation of the implements from articles associated with an ascetic lifestyle into adjuncts used for temple-style *liṅga pūjā*. All versions of the myth, except the *Lalitāmāhātmya*, stress the goddess's worship and describe the performance of *pūjā*, whether to a pillar or sand *liṅga*.

While Pārvatī performs the *pūjā*, Śiva is sending a flood to test her devotion. One of Śiva's characteristics is his tendency to test and trick his devotees with his divine games (Tam. *tiruviḷaiyāṭal*). In the same way, he tests the goddess in the myth. In some versions it is the river Gaṅgā that appears as a flood, in others, the primordial waters. Most versions, however, mention that the flood comes in the Kampā River.

Consequently, Pārvatī embraces the pillar, sand *liṅga* or body of Śiva so tight that she leaves the marks of her breasts and bangles on him. In some versions, Śiva is so touched that he becomes soft by her embrace. The embrace and the marks of the goddess's breasts appear already in the *Tēvāram* hymn of Campantar in the middle of the seventh century. The goddess's embrace and the subsequent marks is the distinctive feature of Śiva in Kanchipuram.⁵⁶ It is also frequently depicted on temple pillars and other materials, and can be regarded as the emblem of Śiva Kanchi (see Chapter Seven). However, it seems that the

56 To be sure, the image of the embrace is known from other myths, too, for example Mārkaṇḍeya clasped the *liṅga* to escape death. Scars or marks on the *liṅga* are a recurring theme in South Indian Sthalapuranas as well. Yet, marks of the goddess's breasts are particular to Kanchipuram. The motif of the wounded *liṅga*, has been studied in detail by Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi (1987: 23–47).

closeness of the embrace, and especially the reference to the marks of breasts and bangles, is avoided in modern depictions and downplayed in some texts. For example, an English translation of the *Aruṇācalamāhatmya* states “she devoutly adorned the *liṅga* clasped to Her breast” (Subramanian 2004: 21), whereas the Sanskrit text says “she pressed the nipples of her breasts hard against the *liṅga*” (4.31). Obviously, sexual connotations are omitted. Yet, Śiva reveals himself because of the tight embrace, and not only through the (Āgamic) *pūjā*.

After Śiva’s revelation, the Sthalapurāṇas of Kanchipuram in particular concentrate on the re-marriage and lengthy descriptions of the marriage party. They also specify the date of the marriage as Paṅkuṇi Uttiram on the last day of the great festival. However, at present the marriage is celebrated on the tenth day of the thirteen-day festival, which corroborates the assumption that the *mahotsava* has been built around Paṅkuṇi Uttiram and was extended to a thirteen-day festival (see Chapter Two).

3.3 Concluding remarks

I examined the ‘marriage myth’ in nine textual sources, which have been produced in a time period spanning over a millennium (ca. seventh to eighteenth century). The texts differ in style and length. For example, the *Tēvāram* hymns from the seventh century describe the core of the myth very concisely in a few lines, whereas the Kanchipuram Sthalapurāṇas dedicate lengthy passages to it. Some versions are extremely dense and complex, incorporating additional themes and elements which would have been interesting to examine more closely, such as the goddess’s identity as Dharmadevī and her role in establishing and fostering the thirty-two *dharmas*, or Viṣṇu’s role as helper to stop a flood, which is also known from the *Hastagirimāhātmya*, or the relation of the temple’s architecture to shrines mentioned in the Sthalapurāṇas. However, I touched on these themes only briefly, since my focus is on the myth’s themes that are associated with the contemporary performance of the marriage rituals on Paṅkuṇi Uttiram.

The analysis of the different sources has shown that a core storyline—*tapas/pūjā*, testing, flood, embrace, and revelation—runs through almost all versions. Clearly, motifs have been adapted to changing circumstances, such as the shift from embracing Kampam, the pillar, to the sand *liṅga*. Besides, each text features some motifs of the core story line more than others or highlights different themes. For example, the *Tēvāram* poet-saints underline in their hymns the goddess’s *bhakti* towards Śiva. Cēkkiḷār, a Śaiva Siddhānta scholar and author of the *Periyapurāṇam*, promotes Āgamic *pūjā* in his version of the ‘marriage myth’. The ‘twin poets’, who composed the *Ēkāmparnātar Ulā*, place special emphasis on the goddess’s embrace and her breast marks on Śiva’s body, as may be appropriate for a love poem. The authors of the Kanchipuram Sthalapurāṇas embellish the ‘marriage myth’ with themes known from the pan-Indian tradition, and some of them utilize the motifs of the core storyline in a modified form, to present their respective god as superior. Thus, the different versions of and variations in the Kanchipuram ‘marriage myth’ often represent the interests of the authors, the religious community with which they are affiliated, and also the literary genre.

Considering that Tamil temple myths developed through the fusion of local and transregional elements, the Kanchipuram 'marriage myth' has been influenced by three major currents. First, *bhakti*—the devotion to Śiva, mainly expressed in the motif of the goddess's embrace and the marks of her breasts and bangles on Śiva's body. This seems to be a place specific theme and unique feature of Śiva Ekāmrānātha. Another local element is the notion of the thirty-two *dharmas*, or Viṣṇu's appearance as Candrakāṇṭha. Second, the 'marriage myth' is influenced by the pan-Indian tradition, which is mostly felt in the Sthalapurāṇas. A known theme from the pan-Indian Śaiva mythology is that Pārvatī performs *tapas* to gain Śiva as husband. Other elements are the promise given to sage Agastya to witness the second marriage on earth, and the manifestation of the goddess Kauśikī from Pārvatī's dark skin sheath. However, in the Kanchipuram 'marriage myth' the latter is modified, because Śiva marries goddess Kauśikī, too. Possibly, this serves to connect the two local goddesses Kāmākṣī and Āti Kāmākṣī Kālīkāmpāl to the pan-Indian myth, and to adapt the pan-Indian mythological theme to the local situation of having two intimately connected goddesses in Kanchipuram (see Chapter Five). Third, the South Indian philosophical system of Śaiva Siddhānta must have influenced the preference for *pūjā* in the 'marriage myth'. *Tapas* is mentioned casually, but the true means is *pūjā* according to the Āgamas and, in line with *bhakti*, only the goddess's devoted embrace makes Śiva appear and eventually re-marry her. Thus, the Kanchipuram 'marriage myth' features local elements and place specific themes influenced by three major currents, namely *bhakti*, pan-Indian Śaiva mythology, and the South Indian philosophical system of Śaiva Siddhānta.