Sthalamāhātmyas and *Talapurāṇams* of Kanchipuram: A Network of Texts

Jonas Buchholz (South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University)[1]

The religious landscape of South Asia is dotted with innumerable sites that are considered sacred by the people who visit them (Eck 2012). The stories of these holy places are laid out in a genre of mythological texts known as *sthalamāhātmya* in Sanskrit and *talapurāṇam* (from Skt. *sthalapurāṇa*) in Tamil, which may be characterized as "temple legends." These texts eulogize particular sacred sites and narrate their etiological myths. They were composed on numerous places across the Indian subcontinent both in Sanskrit and in local languages. Temple legends are locally rooted, but at the same time closely connected to the transregional *purāṇas*, thus highlighting the different layers that constitute the pan-Indian Hindu tradition (Lazzaretti 2016).

The South Indian city of Kanchipuram has received a particularly large number of *sthalamāhātmyas* and *talapurāṇams*. Seven such texts, four in Sanskrit and three in Tamil, have been printed, and more exist in manuscript form. The large number of texts on Kanchipuram is partly due to the city's religious importance. Traditionally counted among the seven cities (*saptamokṣapurī*) that are believed to grant liberation (Feldhaus 2003, 128), Kanchipuram is a major Hindu pilgrimage site and has therefore received more attention than many other places. Moreover, Kanchipuram's religious landscape is unusually diverse. Three major traditions of Hinduism—Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, and Śāktism, represented through the great Ekāmranātha, Varadarāja Perumāḷ, and Kāmākṣī Ammaṉ temples—have for centuries coexisted and competed in the space of this temple town (Hüsken 2017). Each of these traditions has produced their own texts. Finally, texts were composed in two languages: Sanskrit and Tamil. As we will see, the Sanskrit and Tamil texts are closely connected, while also having their own priorities and peculiarities.

With its vibrant temple traditions and its large corpus of texts, Kanchipuram is an excellent point of entry for the study of temple legends. This contribution aims to facilitate such a study by presenting an overview of the Sanskrit and Tamil

1 The research for this contribution was carried out in the scope of the project "Temple Networks in Early Modern South India: Narratives, Rituals, and Material Culture," funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) – project number 428328143. I would like to thank Peter Bisschop for his valuable feedback during the open peer review process, Ute Hüsken and Malini Ambach for their useful comments, Vasudha Narayanan and Shanty Rayapoullé for their help with procuring rare printed materials, and the Institut Français de Pondichéry (IFP) for enabling me to access their manuscript collection in digitized form.

Published in: Malini Ambach, Jonas Buchholz and Ute Hüsken (eds.): *Temples, Texts, and Networks: South Indian Perspectives*. Heidelberg: Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing, 2022.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/hasp.906.c13934

sthalamāhātmyas and *talapurāṇams* of Kanchipuram. While its main purpose is to simply map the field, it will also address issues that are relevant for the genre of the Hindu temple legend in a more general scope and highlight open research questions.

Sthalamāhātmyas and *Talapurāṇams*

Before we turn to the temple legends of Kanchipuram, a few more general remarks about the genre seem in place. Sanskrit texts dealing with sacred places are representatives of a literary genre known as *māhātmya*, lit. "greatness."[2] *Māhātmyas* are texts that were composed in order to glorify a particular subject. While many *māhātmyas* deal with other topics, for example deities or ritual practices, *māhātmyas* that deal with a particular place, more specifically called *sthalamāhātmyas* (cf. Skt. *sthala*, "place"), are the most numerous specimens of the genre. The number of Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* is difficult to estimate. In a preliminary survey, Linda Wiig has counted more than 700 *māhātmyas*, of which, according to her estimate, ninety-five percent deal with places (Wiig 1981, 16). The actual number of texts is probably considerably higher.

Sanskrit *māhātmyas* form part of the vast corpus of Purāṇic literature. The *purāṇas* are a body of voluminous mythological texts in Sanskrit, traditionally divided into eighteen major (*mahā-*) and eighteen minor (*upa-*) *purāṇas*.[3] In their extant form these works are composite texts that contain rather heterogeneous material. Many *purāṇas* include *māhātmyas* on specific topics, often sacred places. Thus, the *Skandapurāṇa* in its well known form that was first printed in 1910 is essentially a collection of *sthalamāhātmyas* (see Rocher 1986, 229-34);[4] it includes, for example, the *Aruṇācalamāhātmya* (on Tiruvannamalai) and the *Setumāhātmya* (on Rameswaram), to name just two examples from the Tamil-speaking region. More numerous however, are *māhātmyas* that claim to form part of a particular *purāṇa*, but which

2 Literature on Sanskrit *māhātmyas* in general is scarce and mostly confined to short overviews in literary histories (e.g. Gonda 1977, 277–283, Rocher 1986, 70–72). Probably the most comprehensive general overview of the *māhātmya* genre is found in an MA thesis by Linda Wiig (1981). A number of publications exists on *māhātmyas* of specific places; see e.g. the contributions in Bakker 1990.

3 For a general introduction to the *purāṇas*, see Rocher 1986, Narayana Rao 2004, and Bailey 2018.

4 The situation regarding the *Skandapurāṇa* is rather complicated. The *Skandapurāṇa* that was published by the Veṅkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay in 1910 (several reprints) has come to be well known and has often been considered 'the' *Skandapurāṇa*. However, there is no evidence that this text ever formed a single whole before it was printed. Only relatively recently, a very early version of the *Skandapurāṇa*, which has almost nothing in common with the *Skandapurāṇa* that was printed in 1910, has been discovered. So far, five volumes of the critical edition of the early *Skandapurāṇa* have been published since 1998, with the work still ongoing. See https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/research/research-projects/humanities/the-skandapurāṇa-project (accessed Feburary 4, 2022).

are not actually found in the printed text of the respective *purāṇa*. Indeed, virtually all Sanskrit *māhātmyas* affiliate themselves with a *purāṇa*. The veracity of such claims is difficult to assess due to the nature of the *purāṇas*' transmission. The *purāṇas* have come down to us in numerous vastly divergent recensions, and the printed versions represent only a fragment of the textual material that exists in manuscript form (Rocher 1986, 59–67). It can therefore not be ruled out that a *māhātmya* that claims to form part of a particular *purāṇa* was indeed included in a recension of that *purāṇa* that is different from the printed version. However, given the large number of *sthalamāhātmyas* and their largely local relevance, it seems likely that most of them were transmitted as independent texts. It might be better to see the *sthalamāhātmyas*' claims to belong to specific *purāṇas* as a way of affirming their affiliation with a larger textual tradition.

Māhātmya-like texts were composed not only in Sanskrit, but also in the numerous regional languages of the Indian subcontinent. Perhaps the most substantial body of such texts exists in Tamil, where these texts are called *purāṇam* (from Skt. *purāṇa*), or more specifically *talapurāṇam* (from Skt. *sthalapurāṇa*) if they deal with holy places.[5] The number of Tamil *talapurāṇams* is considerable. Mātavaṉ (1995) has counted almost 400 *talapurāṇams* in verse form (in addition to almost 500 prose *talapurāṇams*).[6] The earliest surviving Tamil *talapurāṇams* are dated to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but the large-scale production of *talapurāṇams* started in the sixteenth century, a period during which the Tamil country saw a major cultural shift with the beginning of Nāyaka rule (Narayana Rao et al. 1992). *Talapurāṇams* continued to be one of the most important genres of Tamil literature until the nineteenth century, before the radical transformation of Tamil literary culture under the influence of colonialism led to the decline of this genre (Ebeling 2010).

Tamil *talapurāṇams* and Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* are intimately connected. As a rule, Tamil *talapurāṇams* claim to be based on a Sanskrit source. Given the ubiquity of such claims, some scholars have been willing to dismiss them as a mere convention (e.g., Harman 1987, Nachimuthu in this volume). Indeed it is possible that Tamil poets may have claimed a Sanskrit source even if there was none, but there is also indication that many Tamil *talapurāṇams* were in fact composed on the basis of Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas*. For example, we know from U. Vē. Cāmināṭaiyar's biographical account that the nineteenth-century poet Ti. Mīṉāṭcicuntaram Piḷḷai (1815–1876), author of no less than twenty-two *talapurāṇams*, based his works on Sanskrit texts, which he studied with the assistance of Sanskrit scholars (Ebeling 2010, 57). Moreover, many Tamil *talapurāṇams* can be shown to be based on identifiable

5 For an overview of the Tamil *talapurāṇam* genre, see Kiruṣṇacāmi 1974, Shulman 1980, Mātavaṉ 1995, Ramesh 2020, and Nachimuthu in this volume.

6 Kiruṣṇacāmi (1974) lists 581 Tamil *talapurāṇams* but does not sufficiently distinguish between versified and prose texts. Zvelebil's (1975, 248, fn. 68) claim of 2000 *talapurāṇams* is unfounded.

Sanskrit texts.[7] As we will see, the corpus of Kanchipuram's *sthalamāhātmyas* and *talapurāṇams* provides ample evidence for this. As such, the temple legends of Tamil Nadu are a prime example for the interaction of Sanskrit and Tamil literary cultures in early modern South India.

Before we move on, a remark on terminology seems in place. Throughout this contribution, I use the term *sthalamāhātmya* when referring to Sanskrit temple legends, and the term *talapurāṇam* when referring to their Tamil equivalents. In Indological literature, the term *sthalapurāṇa* is often also applied to Sanskrit texts, but this usage is not backed up by the texts themselves, which consistently refer to themselves as (*sthala-*)*māhātmyas*, not as *sthalapurāṇas*.[8] Sanskrit *māhātmyas* may claim to form part of a particular *purāṇa*, but they do not normally claim to be a *purāṇa*. By contrast, Tamil texts that deal with holy places are regularly termed *talapurāṇam* (from Skt. *sthalapurāṇa*), or *purāṇam* for short.[9] A telling example are the titles *Kāñcīmāhātmya* and *Kāñcippurāṇam* for the Sanskrit and Tamil temple legends of Kanchipuram, respectively.

In what follows, each of the *sthalamāhātmyas* and *talapurāṇams* of Kanchipuram will be briefly described.

Sanskrit *Sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram

Four Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram exist in printed form. Two of these texts bear the title *Kāñcīmāhātmya*, but apart from their title, they have nothing in common. One of them is of Śaiva and one of Vaiṣṇava affiliation. Therefore, I will refer to these texts as Śaiva *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (KM(Ś)) and Vaiṣṇava *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (KM(V)), respectively. The other texts are the *Hastigirimāhātmya* (HM), also of Vaiṣṇava orientation, and the *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* (KV), which is usually considered a Śākta text (although, as we will see, this characterization might be superficial). In addition, at least two unpublished *sthalamāhātmyas* (possibly related to each other) exist in manuscript form.

---

7 The opposite process—Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* being based on Tamil *talapurāṇams*—does not seem to have been common. However, a rare example may be found in the case of two of the temple legends of Madurai, the Sanskrit *Hālāsyamāhātmya* and the Tamil *Tiruviḷaiyāṭaṟ-purāṇam* of Nampi (Wilden 2015).

8 The titles of Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* most commonly follow the pattern X-*māhātmya*, where "X" is the name of the place with which the text deals. The element *sthala-* is usually omitted in the titles since the place name already implies that the text is concerned with a place.

9 As with Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas*, the element *tala-* is usually omitted if the title already includes a place name. That the term *purāṇam* is also applied to *māhātmya*-like texts that deal with other topics than holy places is demonstrated by titles such as *Vināyakapurāṇam* (on the god Vināyaka or Gaṇeśa) or *Civarāttiripurāṇam* (on the Śivarātri festival).

The *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Śaiva) (KM(Ś))

The most voluminous of the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram is the KM(Ś), which contains about 4700 verses divided into fifty chapters. Also known under the alternative title *Kāñcīsthānamāhātmya*,[10] this text claims to form part of the *Kāḷikākhaṇḍa* in the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* (or the *Śaṅkarasaṃhitā*) of the *Skandapurāṇa*.[11] The KM(Ś) is available through two printed editions, one published in Karvetinagaram in 1889 and one in Vijayawada in 1967, both in Telugu script.

The KM(Ś) describes Kanchipuram's sacred space from a Śaiva perspective. After the frame story and a section that eulogizes Kanchipuram in general terms, the larger part of the text, from chapter 4 to chapter 45, narrates the myths of various Śiva temples in and around Kanchipuram. There is no room here to describe the temple network that is outlined in the KM(Ś) in detail, but it shall suffice to say that the text deals with more than one hundred Śiva temples in Kanchipuram and its surroundings, most of which can be identified with temples that still exist in Kanchipuram's cityscape. The sequence in which the sites are mentioned in the KM(Ś) is roughly geographical, in the main following an east-to-west trajectory, and culminates with the Ekāmranātha temple, which receives more ample space than any of the other sites (chapters 36 to 45). The main myth of the Ekāmranātha temple, which has been studied by Kerstin Schier (2018), is central for the Śaiva traditions of Kanchipuram and can be summarized as follows: to expiate a sin that she had committed by covering Śiva's eyes on Mount Kailāsa, the goddess Kāmākṣī (the local manifestation of Śiva's wife Pārvatī) goes to Kanchipuram, where she performs austerities on the banks of the Kampā river and builds a *liṅga* from sand under a mango tree.[12] When Śiva sends a flood to test her devotion, Kāmākṣī embraces the *liṅga* to protect it against the flood. Pleased by Kāmākṣī's devotion, Śiva agrees to marry her in Kanchipuram. In the KM(Ś) this myth is told in great detail over the course of seven chapters (39 to 45). The following and last five chapters of the

10 The title page of the printed text gives the title as *Kāñcīmāhātmya*, but the chapter-ending colophons refer to the text as *Kāñcīsthānamāhātmya*.

11 In slightly more than half of the chapters, the chapter-ending colophon ascribes the text to the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* of the *Skandapurāṇa*, but in the others we find *Śaṅkarasaṃhitā* instead of *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā*. While the *Skandapurāṇa* as it was printed in 1910 is divided into seven *khaṇḍas*, a different subdivision into six *saṃhitās*, which in turn are divided into fifty *khaṇḍas*, is known from texts that claim to belong to the *Skandapurāṇa* (Rocher 1986, 234–237).

12 The myth not only explains the name Ekāmranātha, "lord of the single mango tree," but also accounts for the origin of the two divine symbols that stand in the focus of worship in the Ekāmranātha temple: the *liṅga* in the main shrine and a sacred mango tree that is situated in a *prākāra* behind it. The main *liṅga* of the Ekāmranātha temple is said to be made of sand. As such, the Ekāmranātha temple represents the element of earth among the "five elemental sites" (*pañcabhūtasthala*), a group of five temples in South India where Śiva is thought to manifest himself in the form of one of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether). See Schier 2018, 24–27.

KM(Ś) (chapters 46 to 50) deal with miscellaneous matters, including rules of conduct and the rewards that can be earned through various pious deeds.

The *Kāñcīmāhātmya* (Vaiṣṇava) (KM(V))

The next *sthalamāhātmya* of Kanchipuram is the KM(V), which comprises around 2300 verses in thirty-two chapters and claims to belong to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*. The only printed edition of the text was published in Kanchipuram in 1906. While the title of the text is given as *Kāñcīmāhātmya* in the printed edition, in the manuscripts, the text is designated with the alternative title *Kāñcīkṣetramāhātmya*.

The KM(V) has a distinctly Vaiṣṇava orientation. Its narrative structure has been discussed at length by Marie-Claude Porcher (1985). As Porcher has shown, the narrative of the KM(V) is structured along a temporal and a spatial axis, the former represented by four successive *avatāras* of Viṣṇu—Varāha, Narasiṃha, Vāmana, and Kṛṣṇa—and the latter by a shift from the south-eastern to the north-western part of Kanchipuram.[13] After the frame story (chapter 1), the KM(V) begins with the Purāṇic myths of Varāha and Narasiṃha (chapters 2 and 3). These myths are localized in Kanchipuram by mentioning a cave which Varāha dug out at the foot of the Hastigiri (or Hastiśaila) hill and in which Narasiṃha later took residence.[14] Here the Hastigiri hill represents the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple, while the cave stands for the Narasiṃha shrine within this temple.[15] By introducing the Hastigiri hill, the stage is set for the foundational myth of the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple. After an intermezzo dealing with the praise of Kanchipuram (chapter 4) and the city's various sacred waterbodies (*tīrthas*) (chapters 5 to 8), the KM(V) devotes chapters 9 to 17 to this central myth, which can be summarized as follows: desiring to see Viṣṇu, the god Brahmā performs a horse sacrifice (*aśvamedha*) on the Hastigiri hill in Kanchipuram. However, Viṣṇu has to intervene in different forms to fight the demons (*asuras*) who try to stop Brahmā's sacrifice and to halt Brahmā's wife Sarasvatī, who, incited by the demons, rushes towards Kanchipuram in the form of a torrential river. These episodes explain the origin of several other Viṣṇu temples in the south-

13 The south-eastern part of Kanchipuram houses the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple as well as a number of other Viṣṇu temples and is therefore today known as *Viṣṇu Kāñci* (or *Ciṉṉa Kāñci*, "Little Kanchi"). Conversely, the north-western part of the city, which houses the Ekāmranātha and Kāmākṣī Ammaṉ temples, is known as *Śiva Kāñci* (or *Periya Kāñci*, "Big Kanchi"). However, there are also a number of Viṣṇu temples in Śiva Kāñci (and Śiva temples in Viṣṇu Kāñci), and the KM(V) makes a point of describing both parts of Kanchipuram as Viṣṇu's realm.

14 The Narasiṃha myth also connects Kanchipuram with two other places, Ahobilam and Ghaṭikādri (Sholingur), both of which have important temples for Narasiṃha. According to the KM(V), Narasiṃha killed the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu in Ahobilam and made a stopover in Ghaṭikādri on his way back to Kanchipuram. See Dębicka-Borek 2019.

15 The unusual elevated main shrine of the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple is conceived as a hill. The Narasiṃha shrine is found on the lower level of the main shrine, that is, at the foot of the "hill." See Raman 1975, 44–45.

eastern part of Kanchipuram (Dīpraprakāśa Perumāḷ, Aṣṭabhuja Perumāḷ, and Yathoktakārī Perumāḷ), as well as of the river Vegavatī, which runs through the city. Finally, Brahmā can complete his sacrifice, prompting Viṣṇu to appear from the sacrificial fire as Varadarāja Perumāḷ.

The second part of the KM(V) deals with the Viṣṇu temples in the north-western part of Kanchipuram. In chapters 18 to 22, the KM(V) narrates the myth of Viṣṇu's *avatāra* Vāmana, localized in Kanchipuram's Ulakaḷanta Perumāḷ temple. In this context, the KM(V) also deals with the presence of Śiva and the Goddess in Kanchipuram: chapters 23 to 25 contain a version of the Kāmākṣī–Ekāmranātha myth, which is given a distinctly Vaiṣṇava outlook by presenting Vāmana as the cause of the events (Schier 2018, 88–90). Closely connected to the Kāmākṣī–Ekāmranātha myth is the story of Gaṅgā (told in chapters 26 and 27), who comes to Kanchipuram after she has been cursed by Kāmākṣī (see Ambach in this volume). The KM(V) relates that Viṣṇu freed Gaṅgā from her curse and promised to show himself to her each year at a particular date, thus explaining the existence of the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple's annual temple festival (*brahmotsava*).[16] Chapter 28 further deals with the *brahmotsava* as Viṣṇu instructs Brahmā how the festival should be carried out. Chapter 29 then moves to another *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, and gives the foundational myth of the Pāṇḍavadūta Perumāḷ temple. Chapter 30 relates the story of the Kailāsanātha and Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temples (the former dedicated to Śiva, the latter to Viṣṇu). This is followed by the two final chapters (31 and 32), which, as Ute Hüsken argues (in this volume), appear like late additions to the text. Chapter 31 tells the origin legend of the "golden lizards," a high relief of two lizards in the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple, which draws the attention of many temple visitors (Hüsken in this volume). Chapter 32, finally, deals with the origin of the Palar river and three Śiva temples.

While dealing with the same city and partly sharing the same repertoire of myths, the KM(Ś) and KM(V) differ in their sectarian outlook by placing their respective deity (Śiva or Viṣṇu) at the top of the divine hierarchy. Thus, the KM(V) contains a version of Kanchipuram's main Śaiva myth, the story of Kāmākṣī and Ekāmranātha, but reinterprets it from a Vaiṣṇava perspective. Similarly, the KM(Ś) (in its chapter 7) also includes the story of Brahmā's sacrifice, the central Vaiṣṇava myth of Kanchipuram, but presents Śiva as the superior deity by depicting him as the cause of the events.[17] With their variegated treatment of a common stock of narrative motifs, the KM(Ś) and the KM(V) show how mythological texts could be used to negotiate contested religious hierarchies.

---

16 On the festival, see Hüsken 2013.

17 The story of Brahmā's sacrifice is included in the foundational myth of the Śivāsthāneśvara (today known as Brahmapurīśvara) temple, which is said to have been established by Brahmā before he commenced his sacrifice. In the version of the KM(Ś), Śiva not only enables Brahmā to perform his sacrifice, but also instructs Viṣṇu to protect it against Sarasvatī's assault.

The *Hastigirimāhātmya* (HM)

Another Vaiṣṇava *sthalamāhātmya* of Kanchipuram exists in the form of the HM. This text comprises around 1600 verses in eighteen chapters and is ascribed either to the *Brahmapurāṇa* or to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*.[18] The HM is available through multiple printed editions as well as through a large number of manuscripts. An edition of the HM in Grantha script, containing a commentary in Maṇipravāḷam (Sanskritized Tamil), was published in Kanchipuram in 1898.[19] Moreover there is an undated early edition in Telugu script with a Telugu commentary.[20] Another Grantha edition with Maṇipravāḷam commentary was published in Kanchipuram in 1971.[21] Finally, an edition in Devanagari script with a summary in Tamil and English was published in Chennai in 2006. Remarkably, far more manuscripts of the HM exist than of any other *sthalamāhātmya* of Kanchipuram. So far, I have been able to identify thirty-six such manuscripts. Several of them contain commentaries in Tamil and in one case even in Kannada.[22]

The title of the HM refers to the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple, which, as we have seen, is known under the mythological name *Hastigiri* ("elephant hill").[23] The largest part of the text (chapters 1 to 10) is devoted to the foundational myth of this temple. A detailed comparison of the versions of the myth found in the HM and the KM(V) is beyond the scope of this contribution, but the general outline of the story seems to be similar. Both texts deal with Brahmā's *aśvamedha*, the demons' attempt to stop the sacrifice, Sarasvatī's appearance as a river, and Viṣṇu's manifestation as Varadarāja Perumāḷ. However, the HM omits the ramifications of the story that account for the presence of other forms of Viṣṇu in Kanchipuram. Also elsewhere in the text, none of the city's other Viṣṇu temples is mentioned. Rather, the largest part of the second half of the HM (chapters 11 to 17) tells the stories of various mythical characters (the elephant Gajendra, the sage Bṛhaspati, and the snake Ananta) who are said to have worshipped Varadarāja Perumāḷ during successive *yugas*, while the last chapter contains a somewhat disjointed exposition of the *aṣṭāṅgayoga* system.

---

18 In the printed editions, the HM is attributed to the *Brahmapurāṇa*, but in a part of the manuscripts, it is instead ascribed to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*.

19 A copy of this edition is held by the Cologne University Library, but so far, I have only been able to see its title page, which has been digitized as a part of Cologne's Digital Collection of Grantha and Telugu prints (http://www.ub.uni-koeln.de/cdm/ref/collection/grantha/id/1030).

20 Since the digital copy at my disposal is lacking the title page, I cannot say where and when this edition was published.

21 Possibly the commentary is the same as in the 1898 edition of the HM, but I could not verify this since I have not been able to access that edition.

22 The content of these commentaries remains to be investigated, but at least the commentary in the manuscript R.1941, held by the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library (GOML) in Chennai, appears to partly correspond to the Maṇipravāḷam commentary in the 1971 edition of the HM.

23 On the name *Hastigiri*, see Hüsken in this volume.

Thus, while both the KM(V) and the HM describe Kanchipuram from a Vaiṣṇava perspective, the HM is rather exclusively focussed on the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple.

Although the HM has received little scholarly attention, it appears to have been an extremely popular text, as is evidenced by the large number of manuscripts and editions and the existence of commentaries in multiple languages. At least partly, the popularity of the HM might have been due to the role that the text plays in the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple's ritual practice. To this day, the HM is recited in front of the deity during the yearly *pallavotsava* festival, and its central scene, Varadarāja's appearance from the sacrificial fire, is ritually enacted.[24]

The HM is not to be confused with the Tamil *Hastigirimāhātmya*, composed by the famous Śrīvaiṣṇava author Vedāntadeśika (ca. 1268–1369), which will be discussed below. However, as we will see, Vedāntadeśika quotes the Sanskrit HM in the auto-commentary on his work. These quotations are significant as they establish a *terminus ante quem* for the Sanskrit HM: unless the quotations in the commentary are later interpolations, they prove that the HM must have been composed before Vedāntadeśika's time, that is, before the fourteenth century.

The *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* (KV)

The fourth Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmya* of Kanchipuram is the KV, which comprises around 1400 verses in fourteen chapters and claims to belong to the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*.[25] The first edition of the KV, in Telugu script, was published in Karvetinagaram in 1889 (as was the first edition of the KM(Ś)). Another edition of the KV in Devanagari script was published in Bangalore in 1968. Remarkably, I have so far been able to detect only a single manuscript of the KV.[26]

The title *Kāmākṣīvilāsa* suggests that the text is primarily concerned with the goddess Kāmākṣī. However, in addition to chapters with a clear Śākta orientation,

---

24 Personal communication by Ute Hüsken, who has witnessed and documented this festival several times between 2004 and 2008.

25 As Schier (2018, 85) points out, the fact that the KV ascribes itself to the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* indicates its Śākta orientation since the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* also includes the *Devīmāhātmya*, a text that is central for the worship of the Goddess.

26 The manuscript in question is the manuscript no. 2519 held by the Oriental Research Institute in Mysore. I have so far not been able to see this manuscript, but according to the catalogues (Anonymous 1922, 180; Marulasiddaiah 1981, 300) it is a palm-leaf manuscript in Grantha script that contains the *Kāmākṣīmāhātmya* (presumably an alternative title of the KV) from the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*. Apart from this manuscript, the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* (Raghavan 1967, 361) reports two manuscripts titled *Kāmākṣīvilāsa*, one found in the collection of the India Office Library (today held by the British Library in London), and one from a private collection reported by Oppert (1885, 510). However, the former contains a different text, namely a part of the *Lalitopākhyāna* from the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* (see Eggeling 1899, 941). The latter is (perhaps wrongly?) classified as a *kāvya* in the catalogue. In any case, its whereabouts are unknown.

the KV also contains ample Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava material. The first chapter of the KV is devoted to a description of Kanchipuram's sacred area (*kṣetra*) and to the glorification of Kāmākṣī. The rest of the text, however, successively deals with three overlapping *kṣetras* within Kanchipuram, consecrated to Viṣṇu, Śiva, and the Goddess, respectively: chapters 2 to 5 describe Viṣṇu's *kṣetra* and the myths of Hastigiri (i.e., the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple), chapters 6 to 9 deal with Śiva's *kṣetra* and the mythology of the Ekāmranātha temple, and chapters 10 to 14 describe the Goddess's *kṣetra* and myths associated with the Kāmākṣī temple. In addition to its Śākta core, the KV thus also has sections with a clear Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava focus. As Malini Ambach (in this volume) points out, these sections present Śiva and Viṣṇu respectively as the highest deity, rather than simply retelling Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava myths from a Śākta perspective. The sectarian orientation of the KV is therefore less clear-cut than that of the other *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram.

It is worth noting that R. Nagaswamy (1982, 207–208) has argued that the KV must be a very late work, possibly composed at the time of the first printed edition in 1889, because it refers to very recent structures in the Kāmākṣī Ammaṉ temple. Unfortunately, Nagaswamy does not tell us which passages of the KV he refers to, which makes it difficult to assess the strength of his argument. However, the fact that only a single manuscript of the KV can be found might indeed speak in favour of a late date of the text. Further research on the KV might provide more insights about this text's genesis.

Unpublished Sanskrit Texts

Apart from the printed texts, further *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram exist in manuscript form. One such text is found in the manuscript RE 30590, a palm-leaf manuscript in Grantha script held by the Institut Français de Pondichéry (IFP) in Pondicherry (henceforth "Pondicherry manuscript"). The text that is contained in this manuscript is identified in the colophons as the *Kāñcīsthānamāhātmya* from the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and comprises twenty chapters with an estimated 1000 verses.[27] Many leaves are broken, but otherwise the manuscript is mostly legible. Based on my preliminary investigation, the first chapter of the text contains a frame story that involves a dialogue between Brahmā and his son Sanatkumāra and a section in which Brahmā expounds the greatness of Kanchipuram to Sanatkumāra (fol. 1r–4v). This is followed by what appears to be an account of the Kāmākṣī–Ekāmranātha myth (chapters 2 to 12, fol. 4v–35r), a section relating the origin stories of the Palar and Cheyyar rivers as well as of several Śiva temples in and around Kanchipuram (chapters 13 to 15, fol. 35v–45v), and a mythical account of the kings who ruled over Kanchipuram (chapters 16 to 20, fol. 45v–66v). This text is different from all printed *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram and has so far not been published.

27 The manuscript contains sixty-six folios, each of which contains about sixteen verses on average.

Another previously unpublished *sthalamāhātmya* of Kanchipuram seems to be contained in the manuscript Mackenzie III.21a, a palm-leaf manuscript in Telugu script that is held by the British Library in London (henceforth "London manuscript"). I have so far not been able to see this manuscript, but according to the description in the catalogue (Eggeling 1899, 1040), it contains the "*Kāñcīsthānamāhātmya* from the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇasaṃgraha* and the *Sarvapurāṇasaṃgraha*" and breaks off in chapter 98. The beginning of the text, which is given in the catalogue, does not correspond to any of the printed *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram, nor to the beginning of the text in the Pondicherry manuscript. However, it seems possible that the same text as in the London manuscript is also contained in the manuscript no. 4086 held by the Oriental Research Institute (ORI) in Mysore (henceforth "Mysore manuscript"). I have not been able to see this manuscript either, but according to the catalogues (Anonymous 1922, 180, Marulasiddaiah 1981, 406), it is a palm-leaf manuscript in Grantha script that contains the "*Kāñcīmāhātmya* from the *Purāṇasaṃgraha*" in ninety-seven chapters. Unfortunately, the catalogues do not give any excerpts, which makes it difficult to say if the text is the same as in the London manuscript, but the alleged source and the number of chapters are similar enough to suspect that we might be dealing with the same text. I hope to be able to say more after having accessed the manuscripts.

As we will see, these unpublished *sthalamāhātmyas* are noteworthy because of their relation to the second book of the Tamil *Kāñcippurāṇam*. As I will show below, it is possible that the second book of the *Kāñcippurāṇam* is based on the Sanskrit text contained in the London and Mysore manuscripts (assuming that these two manuscripts indeed contain the same text), while this text, for its part, seems to have been compiled from different sources, one of which might have been the text contained in the Pondicherry manuscript. This would mean that the London and Mysore manuscripts contain partly the same textual material as the Pondicherry manuscript. We will return to this somewhat complicated issue in the section on the second book of the *Kāñcippurāṇam*. Before we turn to the Tamil *talapurāṇams*, however, we need to consider a few more issues concerning the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas*.

Authorship, Dating, and Textual History

A defining feature of Purāṇic texts in Sanskrit is their dialogical structure. The texts are invariably framed as dialogues between an interlocutor and a respondent and may contain several narrative layers nested within each other. This is also true for the *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram. Both the KM(Ś) and the KM(V) begin with a dialogue between Sūta, the mythical narrator of the *purāṇas*, and the sages who have assembled in the Naimiśa forest.[28] Into this frame story, further narrative layers are embedded: in the KM(V), Sūta relates a dialogue between the king Ambarīṣa and the sage Nārada, which forms the main narrative frame. In the KM(Ś), Sūta first recounts

28 On the Naimiśa (or Naimiṣa) forest, see Hiltebeitel 1998.

a dialogue between the primordial sage Sanatkumāra and Nandī, Śiva's bull and foremost devotee, which leads up to Nandī relating a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī. After this, we briefly return to the Naimiśa forest, where Sūta continues by retelling a dialogue that once took place between the sage Kauśika and the Brahmin residents of Kanchipuram. This dialogue forms the narrative frame for the largest part of the text. In contrast to the KM(Ś) and KM(V), the HM and the KV omit the first level of the frame story and start *in medias res*, with a dialogue between the sages Bhṛgu and Nārada in the case of the HM and a dialogue between the king Suratha and the sage Mārkaṇḍeya in the case of the KV. Similarly, the unpublished text that is contained in the Pondicherry manuscript is framed as a dialogue between Brahmā and Sanatkumāra. All these narrative frameworks have in common that the texts are put into the mouths of mythical sages and deities. This renders them as timeless revelation, but it also means that the texts present us with no information about their human authors. The highly formulaic diction of Purāṇic literature further obliterates any traces of individual authorship. All of this means that *māhātmyas* are effectively authorless texts, which are therefore very difficult to date.

As far as the date of the *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram is concerned, Kerstin Schier (2018, 74–75) believes that these texts "probably were not composed prior to the sixteenth century," which she justifies by the fact that the golden age of the composition of Tamil *talapurāṇams* began in said century. However, as her argument is based on Tamil *talapurāṇams*, it does not seem very convincing in the case of Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas*. As for the date of the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* of Tamil Nadu in general, all we know is that the genre as such must be "somewhat older" (Shulman 1980, 32) than its Tamil counterpart, for Tamil *talapurāṇams* are often based on Sanskrit models, but exactly how much older is unclear. At the same time, one can assume that Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* continued to be composed even after the large-scale production of Tamil *talapurāṇams* had begun. Therefore, neither an earlier or a later date for the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram can be ruled out. In the case of the HM, as we have seen, the quotations by Vedāntadeśika point to a date before the fourteenth century.

Given the scarcity of external information, the only way to date the *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram would seem to be on text-internal grounds, for example if the texts mention particular, dateable structures. However, this approach also does not seem to lead very far. Firstly, even if a temple that is mentioned in a particular text can be dated to a particular century, this does not necessarily mean that the text was composed after this date, for it is always possible that the present temple was preceded by another structure, of which no traces remain. Secondly, since the texts are concerned with the mythical, rather than with the worldly realm, they rarely describe architectural details of the sites with which they are concerned, and if they do, they do it in a highly idealized way that does not allow any conclusions to dateable architectural features. For example, the KM(Ś) describes the Ekāmranātha temple as "surrounded by golden walls that are bedecked with multitudes of various jewels"

(*nānāmaṇigaṇākīrṇahemaprākārasaṃvṛtam*) (KM(Ś) 42.19a–b) and as "adorned with *gopuras* (gateway towers) that compete [in height] with the Kailāsa and Mandara mountains" (*kailāsamandaraspardhigopurair upaśobhitam*) (KM(Ś) 42.20c–d). Perhaps this suggests that the Ekāmranātha temple had *gopuras* at the time of the text's composition, but it could also simply mean that whoever composed the text conceived of an ideal temple as possessing tall *gopuras*. This means that the text—or this particular passage of the text—must have been composed at a time when *gopuras* had become a prominent feature of Tamil temple architecture, that is sometime after the twelfth century (Branfoot 2015). This already gives some kind of indication of the text's age, but it does not allow to date it with more precision. More specifically, it does not seem possible to link the passage in question with any particular, dateable *gopura* of the Ekāmranātha temple, *pace* Schier (2018, 75, fn. 5), who claims that the KM(Ś) "mentions the *gopura* of the Ekāmranātha temple, which has been built in the sixteenth century or later."[29] It remains to be seen if a careful study of Kanchipuram's Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* will bring to light more text-internal clues that could help dating them, but for the time being, the question of the texts' dates must be left open.

Another problem is posed by the fluid nature of Purāṇic texts in Sanskrit. Such texts often exist in multiple widely divergent recensions. This is due to a process that Hans Bakker (1989) has termed "composition in transmission": since individual authorship was not a relevant category in the case of these texts, the people who transmitted them felt authorized to change, add, or delete text material while they were copying them. The *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram appear to have been no exception to this phenomenon. Kerstin Schier (2018, 82) has already noted that the KM(Ś) contains a number of narrative inconsistencies, which give the impression that the text was not composed by a single author. Moreover, as also noted by Schier (2018, 86), the KM(Ś) and the KV have some text passages in common. These findings suggest that the *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram as we have them today contain different text layers, which may have accrued in the course of time, or which may have been compiled from different sources. These findings are confirmed through an investigation of three manuscripts of the KM(Ś) from the collection of the Institut Français de Pondichéry (IFP), which I could access in digitized form. One of these manuscripts (RE 30565) is rather close to the text that is found in the printed editions, whereas the two others (RE 30550 and RE 39684) represent a different recension, which differs considerably from the printed text. Apart from numerous variants that concern individual words or phrases, entire sections of the text, dealing with particular temples, are missing in these manuscripts. Thus, while the printed editions reduce the *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram to a single version, the

29 The Rājagopura, the tallest of the Ekāmranātha temple's *gopuras*, was indeed constructed during the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, Schier does not specify which passage of the KM(Ś) she refers to, but I could not find any passage in the text that would seem to refer specifically to the Rājagopura, rather than to any other *gopura*.

manuscripts of the texts appear to transmit various divergent recensions. A more detailed investigation of the textual history of Kanchipuram's *sthalamāhātmyas* therefore seems highly worthwhile in order to understand the dynamics that were at play in the transmission of these texts.

Tamil *Talapurāṇams* of Kanchipuram

Turning to the Tamil *talapurāṇams* of Kanchipuram, two such texts, both titled *Kāñcippurāṇam*, exist. The first of them was composed by the two authors Civañāṉa Muṉivar and Kacciyappa Muṉivar during the second half of the eighteenth century and the other one, which is also known as the "Old *Kāñcippurāṇam*," by the author Kaccālaiyar at an unknown date. However, as we will see, the works of Civañāṉa Muṉivar and Kacciyappa Muṉivar, while framed as two books of the same text, are, in fact, independent compositions, which could also be considered separate texts. In what follows, I will refer to Civañāṉa Muṉivar's and Kacciyappa Muṉivar's work simply as *Kāñcippurāṇam* (KP), specifying the book wherever necessary, and to Kaccālaiyar's text as "Old *Kāñcippurāṇam*" (KP(O)). In addition to these texts, I will also revisit the *Hastigirimāhātmya* of Vedāntadeśika (HM(V)), which as we will see, is not a *talapurāṇam* in the strict sense, but which is closely connected with the Vaiṣṇava *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram, and a number of prose versions of Kanchipuram's *talapurāṇams*.[30]

The *Kāñcippurāṇam* (KP)

The KP comprises two books (*kāṇṭam*), the first composed by Civañāṉa Muṉivar and the second by Kacciyappa Muṉivar. Unlike with the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas*, the authors of Tamil *talapurāṇams* are usually known by name, and in the case of the KP, we are in the lucky position to have quite a bit of historical information about the text's two authors. Civañāṉa Muṉivar (d. 1785), who composed the first book, was one of the most important Tamil intellectuals of his time and a Śaiva monk in the Tiruvāvaṭuturai Ātīṉam, an influential non-Brahmin monastery (*maṭha*) located in the Kaveri delta region in central Tamil Nadu.[31] Born to a Śaiva family of the Vēḷāḷar caste, a prominent landowning community, in Vikkiramaciṅkapuram near Tirunelveli in southern Tamil Nadu, he joined the Tiruvāvaṭuturai Ātīṉam at a young age. In Tiruvāvaṭuturai, Civañāṉa Muṉivar was trained in Tamil, Sanskrit, and Śaiva

30 Apart from the texts discussed here, a rather obscure work with the title *Kāñcippurāṇakkalitturai* also exists. This text, whose author and date are unknown, comprises 212 verses in the eponymous *kalitturai* meter and is available through a rare edition published in 1927. Two further texts are mentioned by Kamil Zvelebil (1995, 322): an "Old *Kāñcippurāṇam*" by Piratāpa Mutaliyār and a *Kāñci Makattuvam* by Naracimmalu Nāyuṭu. However, I have not been able to locate these texts.

31 On the Tiruvāvaṭuturai Ātīṉam, see Koppedrayer 1990.

Siddhānta philosophy and soon became an eminent scholar. He is best known for his commentaries on Śaiva Siddhānta treatises, but as a versatile author, he also produced grammatical commentaries, translations of Sanskrit religio-philosophical works, scholarly polemics, as well as poetic texts. In addition to the first book of the KP (his only *talapurāṇam*), Civañāṉa Muṉivar composed around a dozen shorter works of devotional poetry.[32]

Kacciyappa Muṉivar (d. 1790), the author of the second book of the KP, was Civañāṉa Muṉivar's student. He was born to a Śaiva Vēḷāḷar family in Tiruttaṇi in northern Tamil Nadu and also became a monk in the Tiruvāvaṭuturai Ātīṉam. Unlike his teacher, Kacciyappa Muṉivar seems to have concentrated on poetic compositions and became a prolific author of *talapurāṇams*. In addition to the second book of the KP, he composed four more *talapurāṇams* (*Tiruvāṉaikkāppurāṇam*, *Pūvaḷūrppurāṇam*, *Pērūrppurāṇam*, and *Taṇikaippurāṇam*), as well as a *purāṇam* on the god Gaṇeśa (*Vināyakapurāṇam*) and a number of shorter works.[33]

The two books of the KP are self-contained compositions, which, as we will see, are based on two different Sanskrit sources. The first book, composed by Civañāṉa Muṉivar, comprises sixty-seven chapters with a total of 2742 verses, and the second book, composed by Kacciyappa Muṉivar, 2113 verses divided over eight chapters.[34] In this respect, it is important to note that the number of verses in the Tamil and Sanskrit texts cannot be directly compared. The KP, like other Tamil *talapurāṇams*, employs a variety of complex metres, which are much longer than the *anuṣṭubh* verses found in the Sanskrit *māhātmyas*. On average, one Tamil verse can be said to correspond to approximately two Sanskrit verses. With a combined length of 4855 verses, the two books of the KP thus constitute a very voluminous work.

The KP is commonly considered one of the most important Tamil *purāṇams* (Zvelebil 1974, 172). Its popularity is mirrored by the large number of printed editions: since the *editio princeps* of 1878, at least nine editions of the KP, some containing only one of the two books or parts thereof, have been published (see the bibliography for details). Many of these editions contain elaborate commentaries and lavish illustrations. Till this day, the KP is considered an authoritative text for the Śaiva traditions of Kanchipuram. The summaries of the myths of Kanchipuram's temples that are found in popular pamphlets (e.g., Vijayakumār 2014) or on

---

32 On Civañāṉa Muṉivar's biography and works, see Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai 1955, Cāmi Aiyā 1989, 11–39, and the biographical sketch that is found in the prefaces of the 1878, 1900, and 1910 editions of the KP.

33 On Kacciyappa Muṉivar's biography, see the biographical sketch that his found in the prefaces of the 1883 edition of the *Taṇikaippurāṇam* and the 1884 edition of the *Pērūrppurāṇam*. This biographical sketch seems to be the source for the information found in Zvelebil 1995, 300–301.

34 The numbering of the chapters may differ depending on whether or not the prefatory section (*pāyiram*) is included in the chapter count. I follow Dessigane et al. 1964 in counting the *pāyiram* as chapter number 1.

signboards in the temples themselves are based on the narratives found in the KP and often explicitly refer to the KP as their source. However, it is almost exclusively the first book of the KP by Civañāṉa Muṉivar that is referred to, whereas the second book by Kacciyappa Muṉivar appears to be far less well known.

The first book of the KP has been investigated in a Tamil monograph by Cāmi Aiyā (1989), and its contents have been summarized in French by Dessigane, Pattabiramin, and Filliozat (1964). As has already been noticed by Dessigane et al. (1964, vi–vii) the first book of the KP is based on the KM(Ś). The KP begins with four chapters that have no equivalent in the KM(Ś): a prefatory section (*pāyiram*) and two lengthy chapters that contain an ornate description of the region surrounding Kanchipuram and of the city itself (*tirunāṭṭuppaṭalam*, "chapter on the country," and *tirunakarappaṭalam*, "chapter on the city"), followed by a chapter that summarizes the contents of the text (*patikam*). These chapters are conventional elements of Tamil *talapurāṇams*, which Civañāṉa Muṉivar added following the rules of Tamil poetics. The rest of the first book of the KP, however, closely follows the KM(Ś): chapters 5 to 7 contain the Purāṇic frame story, chapters 8 to 64 deal with the various Śiva temples of Kanchipuram, and chapters 65 to 67 correspond to the miscellaneous matter found at the end of the KM(Ś).[35] The temples described in the first book of the KP are, except for a few omissions, the same as in the KM(Ś), and they are listed in exactly the same sequence.[36] The narratives, too, closely correspond to those found in the KM(Ś). However, while the KP follows the KM(Ś) very closely on a narrative level, it differs markedly with regards to its literary outlook. I have discussed this question in more detail elsewhere (Buchholz forthcoming), but here it will be enough to maintain that unlike the KM(Ś), which, like most Sanskrit *māhātmyas*, is a relatively unpolished text, the KP is written in an extremely sophisticated poetic style, employing a complex poetic diction and intricate figures of speech. Such a situation is typical for Tamil *talapurāṇams* in general, which, as has already been noted by George L. Hart (1976, 343), are much more akin to Sanskrit ornate poetry (*kāvya*) than to Purāṇic literature. The KM(Ś) and the KP thus provide a prime example for the way in which Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* and Tamil *talapurāṇams* are intimately connected, while at the same time pursuing entirely different literary agendas.

35 The number of chapters in the KM(Ś) and the KP differs because of the different organization of the texts. While the KM(Ś) often lumps sections on different temples together in a single chapter, the KP, as a rule, devotes a separate chapter to each temple.

36 The reason for the omissions remains to be investigated. However, at least partly they can be explained through the fact that the KP seems to be based on a different recension of the KM(Ś): some of the passages that are omitted in the KP are not found in all manuscripts of the KM(Ś).

Kacciyappa Muṉivar's Second Book of the *Kāñcippurāṇam*

As I have already pointed out, Kacciyappa Muṉivar's second book of the KP stands in the shadow of Civañāṉa Muṉivar's first book. It is telling that the second book is not included in the French summary of the KP by Dessigane et al. (1964), and also otherwise Kacciyappa Muṉivar's work has been almost completely ignored by scholarship. As we have seen, the second book of the KP is, for all practical purposes, an independent composition. Unlike Zvelebil (1975, 248) claims, Kacciyappa Muṉivar did not "finish" Civañāṉa Muṉivar's work, but rather created an entirely new text. He did, however, choose to frame his composition as the second book of the work that had been begun by his teacher. The ambivalent status of the second book of the KP becomes clear from its prefatory section (*pāyiram*). Whereas the first book contains a lengthy *pāyiram* of 27 verses, as it was customary for Tamil *talapurāṇams*, the second book begins with only four introductory verses: one invocation verse each to Gaṇeśa, Ekāmranātha, and Kāmākṣī, and a verse in which the author states his intention to compose the text. In other words, the fact that Kacciyappa Muṉivar's text was a separate composition by a different author called for some kind of introduction, but its status as the second book of the KP did not allow for the inclusion of a full-fledged *pāyiram*.

The second book of the KP contains rather heterogeneous material. After the short prefatory section, it includes two lengthy chapters, the *tirukkaṇpuṭaittapaṭalam* or "chapter on the covering of the sacred eyes" and the *kaḻuvāyppaṭalam* or "chapter on the expiation," which contain another retelling of the Kāmākṣī–Ekāmranātha myth. Chapter 4 (*antaruvētippaṭalam*, "chapter on the *antarvedī*") describes Kanchipuram's sacred space as the area lying between the Palar and Cheyyar rivers (termed *antarvedī*).[37] Chapter 5 (*nakarēṟṟuppaṭalam*, "chapter on the founding of the city") contains a mythical account on Kanchipuram's founding. Chapter 6 (*tīrttavicēṭappaṭalam*, "chapter on the excellence of the *tīrthas*") then deals with the sacred waterbodies (*tīrtha*) in Kanchipuram, chapter 7 (*paṉṉirunāmappaṭalam*, "chapter on the twelve names") with the city's mythological names, and chapter 8 (*irupatteṇṭaḻippaṭalam*, "chapter on the twenty-eight temples") with what are deemed the most

37 The term *antarvedī*, lit. "inside of the sacrificial ground," normally refers to the area between the Ganges and Yamuna rivers. Here it is applied to the area between the Palar and the Cheyyar rivers, which is explicitly said to be superior to the *antarvedī* between the Ganges and the Yamuna (KP II.4.22). Incidentally, the *antaruvētippaṭalam* seems to reflect a state of affairs when the Palar river had a different course than it currently has. Today, Kanchipuram is *not* situated between the Palar and the Cheyyar, but both rivers flow to the south of the city. However, the places that are said to be on the banks of the Palar in the *antaruvētippaṭalam*—Varākapuram (Tāmal), Tirumāṟpēṟu (Tirumālpūr), and Parācirāmēccaram (Paḷḷūr) (cf. KP II.4.6–14)—are all situated to the north of Kanchipuram along what seems to be a former riverbed of the Palar. On the shifting courses of the Palar river, see Resmi et al. 2016. This intriguing issue deserves further investigation.

important temples of Kanchipuram, encompassing twenty Śiva temples and eight Viṣṇu temples.

Like Civañāṉa Muṉivar's first book of the KP, Kacciyappa Muṉivar's second book is also based on a Sanskrit source, albeit a different one. As it is often the case in Tamil *talapurāṇams*, the second book of the KP itself lists its sources, in the last verse of the prefatory section (KP II.1.4), where the author declares his intention to compose the work:

> *viyaṉ caṉaṟkumāra caṅkitai teritta mēṉmaiy īṇṭ' aṟaintaṇam itaṉmēl*
> *iyampu pal vēṟu purāṇattum āṇṭ' āṇṭ' ilakiya kāñci māṉmiyattai*
> *nayant' eṭutt' oḻuṅku paṭat tokutt' uraippāṉ pukuntu muṉ ṉavil piramāṇṭatt'*
> *ayaṉ caṉaṟkumāraṉ ṟeḷitarat teruṭṭum aṟputak kātaikaṭṭ' uraippām.*
>
> We have told here the greatness that has been revealed in the vast *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā*. In addition, having gladly set out to select, orderly collect, and tell the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* that shines (or: the *Kāñcīmāhātmyas* that shine) here and there in the many different famous *purāṇas*, we will tell that which is found in the marvellous stories that Brahmā proclaimed to Sanatkumāra in the ancient *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*.

The reference to the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* at the beginning of the verse refers to the first book of the KP (as we have seen, the first book is based on the KM(Ś), which claims to belong to the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* of the *Skandapurāṇa*). The wording of the rest of the verse is not entirely clear, but it seems that the author claims to retell different *māhātmyas* on Kanchipuram that have been compiled from various *purāṇas*, beginning with one that is said to have been told by Brahmā to Sanatkumāra in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*. This is matched by a statement in the last verse of the *nakarēṟṟuppaṭalam* (KP II.5.279), where the author tells us: "We have told here the story that Brahmā, who lives on the pericarp of the fragrant lotus flower, revealed to Sanatkumāra in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*. [Now] we will tell other things" (*piramāṇṭa purāṇaṉ taṉṉiṉ maru malarp pokuṭṭu vāḻkkai vāṇavaṉ caṉaṟkumārar̲k' aruḷiya kātai maṟṟ' iṅk' aṟaintaṇam piṟavuñ colvām*). In other words, the first four chapters (discounting the prefatory section) of the second book of the KP seem to be based on a source that claims to belong to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and is framed as a dialogue between Brahmā and Sanatkumāra, whereas the remaining three chapters are based on a different source, which is not identified.

The source of the first four chapters of the second book appears to be identical with, or at least closely related to, the unpublished text that is contained in the manuscript Pondicherry IFP 30590 (see above). As we have seen, this text claims to belong to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and is framed as a dialogue between Brahmā and Sanatkumāra. While the Pondicherry manuscript calls for more detailed investigation, my preliminary findings suggest that its contents match those of the first five chapters in the second book of the KP. Chapters 2 to 12 of the Pondicherry manuscript correspond to the *tirukkaṇpuṭaittapaṭalam* and the *kaḻuvāyppaṭalam*, chapters 13 to 15 to the *antaruvētippaṭalam*, and chapters 16 to 20 to the *nakarēṟṟuppaṭalam*. On a more

concrete level, one may consider for example the mythical account of the origin of the Palar river found at the beginning of chapter 13 in the Pondicherry manuscript (fol. 35v, l. 2 to fol. 36r, l. 7), which closely matches that found at the beginning of the *antaruvētippaṭalam* (KP II.4.1–5).

Another piece of information concerning the sources of the second book of the KP is found in the preface to the 1910 edition of the KP. Here the editor Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār claims that the second book of the KP is based on a Sanskrit text called *Śatādhyāyī*, a text which is said to consist of one hundred chapters and to be "compiled from many *purāṇas*, such as the *Śivapurāṇa* and the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*" (Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār 1910, 10–11).[38] The source of Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār's information is unknown, but it is possible that he based himself on traditional knowledge that was current in Kanchipuram during his time. The text to which Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār refers may be identical to the one that is contained in the manuscripts London Mackenzie III.21a and Mysore ORI 4086 (see above). We may recall that the London manuscript contains a text that is said to be part of the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇasaṃgraha* and the *Sarvapurāṇasaṃgraha* and breaks off in chapter 98, whereas the text in the Mysore manuscript is said to belong to the *Purāṇasaṃgraha* and contains ninety-seven chapters. In both cases, the number of chapters (close to one hundred) and the reference to a "compilation" (*saṃgraha*) of *purāṇas* seems to match the information given by Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār.

How does this relate to what we have seen about the relation between the Pondicherry manuscript and the first four chapters of the second book of the KP? It is possible that the text contained in the London and Mysore manuscripts (the *Śatādhyāyī* of Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār) is a compilation of different sources, one of which is the text that is contained in the Pondicherry manuscript. Possibly this compilation later became the source for Kacciyappa Muṉivar's second book of the KP. This would account for the references to a compilation that are found both in the London and Mysore manuscripts and in Kacciyappa Muṉivar's prefatory verse, as well as for the parallels between the second book of the KP and the Pondicherry manuscript. However, since I have so far not been able to investigate the London and Mysore manuscripts, this conclusion is far from being an established fact. More research on the unpublished Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram as well as on their relation to each other and to the second book of the KP is called for.

Kaccālaiyar's Old *Kāñcippurāṇam* (KP(O))

Another Tamil *talapurāṇam* of Kanchipuram exists in the form of the KP(O). This work is also known under the alternative title *Kamparpurāṇam*, which betrays its Śaiva orientation (*Kampar* being an old Tamil name for Ekāmranātha). It was authored by a certain Kaccālaiyar, who is said to have belonged to the Āḷavantār

38 Cf. also Ramanatha Ayyar 1965, 151–152, whose information is presumably based on Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār.

Ātīṉam, apparently a Śaiva monastery, about which I, however, could find no further information. The date of the KP(O) is unknown, but the fact that it is known as the "Old KP" suggests that it must predate the KP of Civañāṉa Muṉivar and Kacciyappa Muṉivar. The KP(O) is far less well known than the KP and was edited as late as 1983. So far, it has received no scholarly attention.

The KP(O) comprises 1272 verses divided over twelve chapters of unequal length. After the prefatory section (*pāyiram*), the very long second chapter, titled *civālayac carukkam*, "chapter on the Śiva temples," describes various Śiva temples in and around Kanchipuram. It is followed by chapters on the city's Viṣṇu temples (*aritirumuṟṟac carukkam*, "chapter on Hari's sacred courtyard"), its sacred waterbodies (*tīrttac carukkam*, "chapter on the *tīrthas*"), and its mythological names (*apitāṉac carukkam*, "chapter on the names"). The following six chapters (*kayilāyac carukkam*, "chapter on Mount Kailāsa"; *umaivaru carukkam*, "chapter of Umā's arrival"; *nakarac carukkam*, "chapter on the city"; *nakarkāṇ carukkam*, "chapter on the sight of the city"; *pūcaic carukkam*, "chapter on the worship"; *tiruviḻāc carukkam*, "chapter on the festival") appear to contain a retelling of the Kāmākṣī–Ekāmranātha myth. The last chapter (*tarmac carukkam*, "chapter on *dharma*") finally deals with rules of conduct.

The KP(O) seems to be based on two different Sanskrit sources. The chapter on the Śiva temples in Kanchipuram is clearly based on the KM(Ś). It describes the same temples in largely the same sequence. The narratives also mostly appear to correspond to those found in the KM(Ś), although the KP(O) follows its Sanskrit source less closely than Civañāṉa Muṉivar's first book of the KP. The last chapter of the KP(O) might likewise be based on the KM(Ś), which also includes a section on rules of conduct. The other chapters, on the other hand, have no basis in the KM(Ś). However, their contents seem to correspond to those of Kacciyappa Muṉivar's second book of the KP. Both texts contain sections on Kanchipuram's sacred waterbodies, the city's mythological names, and an account of the Kāmākṣī–Ekāmranātha myth. Moreover, both texts also deal with Viṣṇu temples in Kanchipuram (in a separate chapter in the case of the KP(O) and as a part of the chapter on the city's twenty-eight most important temples in the second book of the KP). How exactly the two texts relate to each other remains to be investigated, but it appears possible that the other chapters of the KP(O) are based on the same Sanskrit text that also was the source for Kacciyappa Muṉivar's second book of the KP.

What the KP(O) itself says about its sources seems to point towards the same direction. In the *pāyiram*, we find the following verse in which the author names his sources (KP(O) 1.20):

pōta neṟiy aṟi cūtar pukaṉṟat' āṉa purātaṉam ākum patiṉeṇ purāṇan taṉṉiṟ
cōti tikaḻ kāñci nakarp purāṇan taṉṉai coṟ payilap paṟpalavuñ collāniṟkum
cātakam ām piramāṇṭaṅ kāntan taṉṉiṟ caṉaṟkumāra caṅkitaiyiṟ ṟarukkāṟ kūṟum
pētam elān terint' ematu kurunātaṉ ṟaṉ pēr aruḷāl ik kātai pēcuvāmāl

> Among the eighteen ancient *purāṇas* that were narrated by Sūta, who knows the way of wisdom, many eloquently tell the *purāṇa* of the city of Kāñci, which shines with light. Knowing all the different versions (*pētam*) that are elaborately told in the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* of the *Skāndapurāṇa* and in the accomplished *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, we will tell this story thanks to the great grace of our exalted Guru.

The KP(O) thus identifies as its sources the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* of the *Skandapurāṇa*, to which, as we may recall, the KM(Ś) claims to belong, and the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*. As we have seen, the unpublished *sthalamāhātmya* contained in the Pondicherry manuscript, whose contents match the first four chapters of the second book of the KP, ascribes itself to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*. However, the KP(O) also contains material that seems to correspond to the latter chapters of the second book of the KP, suggesting that its other source might have been the same text on which the second book of the KP appears to be based, namely the more comprehensive text in one hundred chapters (possibly contained in the London and Mysore manuscripts) that was presumably compiled from various sources, including the text contained in the Pondicherry manuscript. In this case, too, more research is needed before we can reach any definite conclusion.

Vedāntadeśika's *Hastigirimāhātmya* (HM(V))

While the aforementioned Tamil *talapurāṇams* of Kanchipuram are Śaiva works, there is also a Vaiṣṇava text in Tamil, namely the HM(V) (not to be confused with the Sanskrit HM). The HM(V) is rather different from both the Tamil *talapurāṇams* and the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* and might be better considered a work *sui generis*. It was authored by Vedāntadeśika (ca. 1268–1369), one of the most important preceptors of the Śrīvaiṣṇava sect of Hinduism, who was a native of Kanchipuram and a devotee of Varadarāja Perumāḷ.[39] Vedāntadeśika left behind a very sizeable oeuvre, which comprises both religio-philosophical texts and poetical works in Sanskrit, Tamil, and Prakrit. The HM(V) is counted among his thirty-two esoteric works or *rahasyagranthas*. It is also known as *Satyavratakṣetramāhātmya* (*satyavratakṣetra*, "the field of true vows," being a common designation for Kanchipuram's sacred area in the Vaiṣṇava texts) or under the Tamil title *Meyviratamāṉmiyam* (*meyviratam* being the Tamil translation of Skt. *satyavrata*). The text consists of twenty-nine verses in Tamil and an autocommentary by Vedāntadeśika in Maṇipravāḷam (Sanskritized Tamil). It tells the story of Brahmā's sacrifice (the foundational myth of the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple) in a condensed poetic form, while the autocommentary interprets the myth from a theological point of view. A translation and analysis of the HM(V) has been published by Steven Paul Hopkins (2002, 84–113).

Due to its brevity, its poetic form, and the philosophical outlook of Vedāntadeśika's autocommentary, the HM(V) is a rather unique text. Lacking most of the usual

39 On Vedāntadeśika's life and works, see Singh 1958 and Hopkins 2002.

features of a Tamil *talapurāṇam*, it can hardly be considered to belong to this genre.[40] As a poetic composition by an individual author, it is also very different from the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas*. Nevertheless, there is a palpable connection between the HM(V) and the Vaiṣṇava *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram, all of which deal with the same mythical narrative. Moreover, the HM(V) appears to be directly based on a Sanskrit source. In his autocommentary on the first verse, Vedāntadeśika states his intention to retell "the greatness of Viṣṇu that has been shown through the *Satyavratakṣetramāhātmya* in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*" (*brahmāṇḍapurāṇattil satyavratakṣetramāhātmyamukhattālē sandarśitamāṉa pēraruḷāḷaṉ perumaiyai*). I suggest that, in spite of the different title, the text to which Vedāntadeśika refers is identical to the Sanskrit HM. We may recall that while the printed editions ascribe the HM to the *Brahmapurāṇa*, in some of the manuscripts, the text is ascribed to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*. It is true that the KM(V) also claims to belong to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and even refers to itself as *Satyavratakṣetramāhātmya* in one place (KM(V) 32.24). However, the narrative of the HM(V) seems to be closer to the HM than to the KM(V). While a detailed narrative comparison of the three texts is outside the scope of this contribution, we may note that verse 26 of the HM(V) refers to Gajendra, Bṛhaspati, and Ananta, who are said to have worshipped Varadarāja Perumāḷ during successive *yugas*—a narrative element that is also found in the HM, but not in the KM(V). Moreover, as we have already seen, Vedāntadeśika also quotes from the HM in his autocommentary.[41] All of this seems to suggest that the HM(V) is based on the Sanskrit HM. However, a more detailed comparison of the different Sanskrit and Tamil versions of the Varadarāja Perumāḷ temple's foundational myth remains a desideratum.

Prose *Talapurāṇams*

As a rule, Tamil *talapurāṇams*, like most literary texts in premodern India, were composed in verse form. However, prose versions of Tamil *talapurāṇams* also exist. Although such texts are occasionally found in manuscript form, for the most part they seem to be a product of modern print culture.[42] In parallel with the printing of

40 Hopkins's claim that the HM(V) incorporates "in one way or another" most of the conventional elements of a Tamil *talapurāṇam* notwithstanding (cf. Hopkins 2002, 276, fn. 80).

41 So far, I have been able to identify the following quotations from the HM in Vedāntadeśika's autocommentary: HM 7.62–63 (*ad* HM(V) 15), HM 8.8c–9b, 8.10c–11b (*ad* HM(V) 20); HM 9.32c–34b, 9.69c–70b (*ad* HM(V) 23).

42 A prose summary of the KP, titled *Kāñcippurāṇac curukkam* and dated to 1847, is found (along with summaries of a large number of other Tamil texts) in the paper manuscript Indien 162, held by the Bibliothéque nationale de France in Paris. However, since the manuscript goes back to the collection of Edouard Ariel (1818–1854), a colonial administrator in Pondicherry and a scholar of Tamil, it seems likely that the summaries were in fact commissioned by Ariel. As such, this prose summary of the KP might be best seen as a product of Orientalist knowledge

text editions of Tamil *talapurāṇams*, prose retellings of these texts, usually termed *vacaṉam* ("prose"), also started to appear from the late nineteenth century onwards. Thus, a prose version of the first book of the KP by a certain Pu. Kaṉakacapai Nāyakar was published in 1887 under the title *Kāñcippurāṇa vacaṉam*. This text follows the KP rather closely, but rephrases its verses in a simpler prose idiom. Evidently its purpose is to make the contents of the KP accessible to a broader audience, as the original text is not easily intelligible because of its complicated poetic language. As such, the goal of the prose paraphrase is similar to that of a commentary, but it differs from the latter by disjoining the contents of the text from the original wording. Jay Ramesh (2020, 177) has argued that such prose *talapurāṇams* can be characterized as "informative" because their main objective is to simply present the reader information about the places they describe, as opposed to poetic *talapurāṇams*, which are "affective" as they seek to create an emotional experience for the reader (or rather listener, since these texts were meant to be publicly recited). Clearly, prose *talapurāṇams* follow a very different agenda than traditional Tamil *talapurāṇams*, mirroring the radical change that Tamil literary culture underwent under the influence of print.

Apart from prose versions of Tamil *talapurāṇams*, renderings of Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* in Tamil prose also exist. As far as Kanchipuram is concerned, two such texts were authored by Kā. Ē. Ālālacuntaram Piḷḷai (1852–1922).[43] The first of them is the *Kāmākṣi Līlā Pirapāvam*, a Tamil prose rendering of the KV, first published in 1906 and reprinted in 1939 and 1999. The second is a Tamil prose rendering of the KM(Ś), published posthumously in 1941 under the title *Kāñcimakātmiyam*: *vaṭamoḻik kāñcip purāṇam* or "*Kāñcīmāhātmya*: the *Kāñcippurāṇam* (or: a *purāṇa* on Kanchi) in Sanskrit." As in the case of the prose retellings of Tamil *talapurāṇams*, the purpose of these texts, too, seems to have been to make the contents of the original accessible to a larger readership (in this case, one that does not read Sanskrit). The appearance of such texts is meaningful because it attests a shifting paradigm of "translation." Unlike traditional Tamil *talapurāṇams*, which, as we have seen, are also often based on Sanskrit sources, but may be better described as poetic transcreations, these modern texts simply aim at conveying the meaning of the Sanskrit original in Tamil and thus adopt a novel concept of translation.

Apart from his two Tamil translations of Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas*, Ālālacuntaram Piḷḷai also authored the *Kāñci Kṣēttira Mañcari*, a list of Śiva temples in Kanchipuram mostly based on the KM(Ś). This text was published together with the *Kāmākṣi Līlā Pirapāvam* in 1906, apparently in a single volume. In 1927, the *Kāñci*

---

production. Whether there are also prose versions of Tamil *talapurāṇams* that originated in the indigenous manuscript culture remains to be investigated.

43 The same Kā. Ē. Ālālacuntaram Piḷḷai was (together with a certain Cupparāya Ceṭṭiyār) also responsible for the 1900 edition of the KP. His birth and death dates are based on the information found the online catalogue of the Roja Muthiah Research Library. I have not been able to find more biographical information on him.

Kṣēttira Mañcari and the *Kāmākṣi Līlā Pirapāvam* were published under the common title *Śrī Kāñcī Mahimai*, without, however, crediting the original author Ālālacuntaram Piḷḷai. This publication seems to have found wide dissemination through numerous reprints. The most recent edition of *Śrī Kāñcī Mahimai* of which I am aware must have been published after 2018.[44] An English rendering of the *Śrī Kāñcī Mahimai*, by a certain P. R. Kannan, is also found on the website of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham.[45] This example shows that *sthalamāhātmyas*, though they may be rarely read in the original today, are still influential through the mediation of the numerous new incarnations that they have undergone.

Conclusion

This survey of Kanchipuram's *sthalamāhātmyas* and *talapurāṇams* shows that Kanchipuram possesses a rich corpus of temple legends, which reflects both the dynamic relations between the city's diverse religious traditions and the interaction between the Sanskrit and Tamil literary cultures. It is worth noting that while the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* of Kanchipuram represent different sectarian traditions (Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, and Śāktism), the city's Tamil *talapurāṇams* are all of Śaiva orientation. The only Vaiṣṇava text in Tamil, the HM(V), as we have seen, is a rather unusual case and cannot be considered a *talapurāṇam* in the strict sense. This situation is fairly typical for the Tamil *talapurāṇam* genre: in contrast to hundreds of Śaiva *talapurāṇams* in Tamil, only a handful of Vaiṣṇava texts (and a single Muslim *talapurāṇam*) are known (Mātavaṉ 1995, vol. II, 88–90). Even if one takes into account that Śiva temples are simply more numerous than Viṣṇu temples in Tamil Nadu, Vaiṣṇava *talapurāṇams* are clearly underrepresented. The Tamil *talapurāṇam* genre thus seems, for reasons that remain to be investigated, to be a largely Śaiva affair as even Kanchipuram, one of the major centres of Vaiṣṇavism in Tamil Nadu, did not receive a Vaiṣṇava *talapurāṇam* in Tamil.

Moreover, we have seen that the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* and Tamil *talapurāṇams* of Kanchipuram are intimately related. Each of the Tamil texts is based on a Sanskrit source: the first book of the KP on the KM(Ś), the second book of the KP on an unpublished Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmya*, which, however, appears to be available in manuscript form, and the KP(O) apparently on a combination of the two aforementioned sources. Furthermore, the HM(V) seems to be based on the Sanskrit HM. These findings underscore the importance of studying texts in Sanskrit and in regional languages (in our case, Tamil) in conjunction—an approach that unfortunately has been often neglected in Indological scholarship. A more detailed investigation of the relation between the Sanskrit *sthalamāhātmyas* and the Tamil

44 The edition is undated, but it refers to Vijayendra Saraswati as the seventieth pontiff of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham. Vijayendra Saraswati assumed this office in February 2018.

45 http://www.kamakoti.org/kamakoti/books/Kanchi-Mahima.html (accessed March 25, 2021).

talapurāṇams will advance an understanding of how the Sanskrit and Tamil literary cultures interacted in early modern South India, but also highlight how the two traditions differ from each other.

While the purpose of this contribution is to present an overview of Kanchipuram's *sthalamāhātmyas* and *talapurāṇams*, a more substantive discussion of the texts and of their relation to Kanchipuram's lived religious traditions must be left to future publications. In this respect, a study of the temple network that is outlined by the KM(Ś) and the first book of the KP (a task that involves correlating the sites that are mentioned in these texts with temples that exist in Kanchipuram's cityscape) seems particularly promising. As we have seen, the KP is today considered an authoritative source on the Śaiva temples of Kanchipuram. An investigation of how this text has contributed to the shaping of Kanchipuram's religious landscape may provide valuable insights into the relation between textual sources and Hindu sacred topography in a more general scope.

Apart from these prospective avenues of research that I have just outlined, this survey of the *sthalamāhātmyas* and *talapurāṇams* of Kanchipuram has identified a number of other future tasks. This begins with the very basic task of making the unpublished *sthalamāhātmyas* that exist in manuscript form available for further scholarship by producing text editions. Similarly, the textual history of those texts that have been printed appears complex enough to award an investigation. Moreover, while some texts have received scholarly attention, others have gone virtually unnoticed. This is true, for example for Kacciyappa Muṉivar's second book of the KP, which, as we have seen, has been eclipsed by the renown of Civañāṉa Muṉivar's first book, but which contains remarkable and largely untapped material. This survey of the *sthalamāhātmyas* and *talapurāṇams* of Kanchipuram has thus shown how much scope for research there is even in the corpus of the temple legends of a single city—not to speak of the vast number of such texts that exist on other places all over India.

References

Primary Sources

Hastigirimāhātmya:

1) *Sakalajagadujjīvanaikabheṣajaṃ Śrīhastigirimāhātmyam. Pūrvarkaḷ aruḷicceyta Maṇipravāḷavyākhyānasahitam*. [In Grantha script, with Maṇipravāḷam commentary.] Ed. by Mucarppākkam Kiṭāmpi Raṅkācāriyar. Kanchipuram: Śrīkāñcībhūṣaṇamudrākṣaraśālai, 1898.
2) *Śrīhastigirimāhātmyaṃ Maṇipravāḷavyākhyānam*. Ed. by R. Tātatēcikatātācāriyar. [In Grantha script, with Maṇipravāḷam commentary.] Kanchipuram: Śrī Vēṅkaṭēcvara mutrākṣara cālai, 1971.

3) *The Hastigiri Mahatmyam in Brahmanda Purana*. [In Devanagari script, with exposition in Tamil and English.] Ed. by G. R. Srinivasan. Chennai: S. N. Publications, 2006.
4) [Edition in Telugu script, with Telugu commentary. Title page missing. Digital copy retreived from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.496639]

Hastigirimāhātmya of Vedāntadeśika: *Śrīnigamāntamahādeśikaṉ aruḷicceyta Satyavratakṣetramāhātmyam eṉkiṟa Hastigirimāhātmyam*. Madras: Piramāti varuṣam [= 1879]. [Digital copy retrieved from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.496638]

Kāmākṣi Līlā Pirapāvam. Transl. by Kā. Ē. Ālālacuntaram Piḷḷai. Madras: Vityā Pāskara acciyantiracālai, 1906. Several reprints.

Kāmākṣīvilāsa:
1) *Śrīmārkaṇḍeyapurāṇāntargataḥ Śrīkāmakoṭimahimādarśaḥ Śrīkāmākṣīvilāsākhyagranthaḥ*. [In Telugu script.] Karvetinagaram: Bhāratīlīlāsadanamudrākṣaraśālā, 1889.
2) *Śrīmārkaṇḍeyapurāṇāntargataḥ Śrīkāmakoṭimahimādarśaḥ Śrīkāmākṣīvilāsaḥ*. [In Devanagari script.] Bangalore 1968.

Kāñci Kṣēttira Mañcari. Compiled by Kā. Ē. Ālālacuntaram Piḷḷai. Madras: Vityā Pāskara acciyantiracālai, 1906.

Kāñcīmāhātmya (Śaiva):
1) *Śrīskāndapurāṇāntargataḥ Śrīrudrakoṭimahimādarśaḥ Śrīkāñcīmāhātmyagranthaḥ*. [In Telugu script.] Karvetinagaram: Bhāratīlīlāsadanamudrākṣaraśālā, 1889. [Digital copy retrieved from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.372832]
2) *Śriskāndapurāṇāntargataṃ Śrīkāñcīmāhātmyam (Śrīrudrakoṭimahimādarśaḥ)*. [In Telugu script.] Vijayawada/Madras/Hyderabad: Vēṅkaṭrāma aṇḍ kō., 1967.

Kāñcīmāhātmya (Vaiṣṇava): *Kāncīmāhātmyam. Brahmāṇḍapurāṇāntargatam*. [In Devanagari script.] Ed. by P.B. Ananta Chariar. Kanchipuram: Sri Sudarsana Press 1906.

Kāñcimakātmiyam eṉṉum vaṭamoḻik Kāñcip purāṇam. Transl. by Kā. Ālālacuntaram Piḷḷai. s.l. 1941.

Kāñcippurāṇakkalitturai. Ed. by Kāñci Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār. s.l., 1927. [Reprinted as *Kāmākṣikaliyāṇam*: s.l., 1929.]

Kāñcippurāṇam of Civañāṉa Muṉivar and Kacciyappa Muṉivar:
1) *Kāñcippurāṇam*. Ed. by Tiricirapuram Mīṉākṣicuntaram Piḷḷai and Irāmanātapuram Irāmacuvāmip Piḷḷai. Madras: Ātikalāniti accukkūṭam, Vekutāṉiya varuṣam [= 1878]. [Both books, without commentary. Digital copy retreived from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.294992]
2) *Kāñcippurāṇam*. Ed. by Cupparāya Ceṭṭiyār and Kā. Ālālacuntaram Piḷḷai. Madras: Paṇṭitamittira yantiracālai, Vikāri varuṣam [= 1900]. [First book only, with commentary. Digital copy retrieved from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.294994]

3) *Kāñcippurāṇam*. Ed. by Kāñci Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār. Madras: Kalāratnākaravaccukkūṭam 1910. [Both books, without commentary. Digital copy retreived from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/gc-sh1-0523]
4) *Kāñcippurāṇam*. Ed. by Aruṇaivaṭivēlu Mutaliyār. Kanchipuram: Meykaṇṭār Kaḻakam 1937. [First book only, with commentary]
5) *Kāñcippurāṇam*. Ed. by Poṉ. Caṉmukaṉār. Kanchipuram: Meykaṇṭar Nilaiyam 1953. [Second book only, with commentary]
6) *Kāñcippurāṇam. Tirunāṭṭup paṭalam, Tirunakarap paṭalam*. Ed. by Ce. Re. Irāmacāmi Piḷḷai. Tirunelveli/Madras: South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society 1956. [Only the first two chapters of the first book, with commentary. Digital copy retreived from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.497076]
7) *Kāñcippurāṇam*. Ed. by Poṉ. Caṉmukaṉār. Kanchipuram: Muttamiḻ Accakam 1964. [First book only, with commentary]
8) *Kāñcip purāṇattil Oḻukkap paṭalam. Uraiyuṭaṉ*. Tiruvāvaṭuturai: Tiruvāvaṭuturai Ātīṉam 1987. [Only chapter 66 of the first book, with commentary.] Digital copy retrieved from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/acc.no.25247kanchipuranathilozhakapdalam1987]
9) *Kāñcippurāṇam*. Ed. by Caravaṇa Catācivam. Tiruvāvaṭuturai: Tiruvāvaṭuturai Ātīṉam, 2012. [Second book only, with commentary]

Kāñcippurāṇam of Kaccālaiyar: *Āḷavantār ātīṉak Kaccālaiyar iyaṟṟiya Kāñcippurāṇam* (*Kampar purāṇam*). Ed. by S. K. Irāmarājaṉ. Chennai: Makāmakōpāttiyāya Ṭākṭar U. Vē. Cāmināthaiyar Nūlnilaiyam 1983. Digital copy retreived from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/dli.jZY9lup2kZl6TuXGlZQdjZU6kJpy.TVA_BOK_0006614]

Kāncippurāṇa vacaṉam. By Pu. Kaṉakacapai Nāyakar. Madras: Rippaṉ acciyantiracālai, 1887.

Pērūrppurāṇam. Ed. by Ñānacampantap Piḷḷai. Madras: Śrīrañcani accukkūṭam, Tāraṇa varuṣam [= 1884]. [Digital copy retreived from the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.293276]

Śrī Kāñcī Mahimai. Kumbakonam: Srī Kōmaḷampā Press, 1927. Several reprints.

Taṇikaippurāṇam. Ed. by Ti. Vai. Tāmōtaram Piḷḷai. Madras: Scottish Press, Cupāṉu varuṣam [= 1883].

Secondary Literature

Anonymous. 1922. *Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Govt. Oriental Library, Mysore*. Mysore: Government Branch Press.

Bailey, Greg. 2018. "Purāṇas." In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism Online*, edited by Knut A. Jacobsen, Helene Basu, Angela Malinar and Vasudha Narayanan. https://doi.org/10.1163/2212-5019_BEH_COM_2020070.

Bakker, Hans. 1989. "Some Methodological Considerations with Respect to the Critical Edition of Puranic Literature." In *XXIII. Deutscher Orientalistentag vom 16. bis 20. September 1985 in Würzburg. Ausgewählte Vorträge*, edited by Einar von Schuler, 329–341. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden.

———, ed. 1990. *The History of Sacred Places in India as Reflected in Traditional Literature*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Branfoot, Crispin. 2015. "The Tamil Gopura." *Ars Orientalis* 45:78–113. https://doi.org/10.3998/ars.13441566.0045.004.

Buchholz, Jonas. Forthcoming. "Same Same but Different: The Tamil *Kāñcippurāṇam* and Its Sanskrit Source." In *Visions and Revisions of Sanskrit Narrative: Studies in the Indian Epics and Purāṇas*, edited by McComas Taylor and Raj Balkaran. Canberra: ANU Press.

Cāmi Aiyā, Cu. 1989. *Civañāṉa Muṉivariṉ Kāñcippurāṇam: ōr āyvu*. Aṇṇāmalainakar : Aṇṇāmalaip Palkalaikkaḻakam.

Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai, Kā. (1932) 1955. *Civañāṉa Cuvāmikaḷ varalāṟu*. Tirunelveli, Chennai: Tirunelvēlit Teṉṉintiya Caivacittānta Nūṟpatippuk Kaḻakam.

Dębicka-Borek, Ewa. 2019. "From Kāñcīpuram to Ahobilam and Back: Narasiṃha Chasing the Demons in the *Kāñcīmāhātmya* 3." *Folia Orientalia* LVI:160–185. https://doi.org/10.24425/for.2019.130708.

Dessigane, R., P. Z. Pattabiramin, and Jean Filliozat. 1964. *Les légendes çivaïtes de Kāñcipuram. Analyse de textes et iconographie*. Pondicherry: Institut Français d'Indologie.

Ebeling, Sascha. 2010. *Colonizing the Realm of Words: The Transformation of Tamil Literature in Nineteenth-Century South India.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Eck, Diana. 2012. *India: A Sacred Geography*. New York: Harmony Books.

Eggeling, Julius. 1899. *Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office: Part VI*. London: Gilbert and Bivington.

Feldhaus, Anne. 2003. *Connected Places: Region, Pilgrimage, and Geographical Imagination in India*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gonda, Jan. 1977. *Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Harman, William. 1987. "The Authority of Sanskrit in Tamil Hinduism: A Case Study in Tracing a Text to Its Sources." *The Mankind Quarterly* 27 (3): 295–315.

Hart, George L. 1976. *The Relation Between Tamil and Classical Sanskrit Literature.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Hiltebeitel, Alf. 1998. "Conventions of the Naimiṣa Forest." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 26:161–171.

Hopkins, Steven P. 2002. *Singing the Body of God. The Hymns of Vedāntadeśika in Their South Indian Tradition*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Hüsken, Ute. 2013. "Flag and Drum: Managing Conflicts in a South Indian Temple." In *South Asian Festivals on the Move*, edited by Ute Hüsken and Axel Michaels, 99–135. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

———. 2017. "Gods and Goddesses in the Ritual Landscape of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Kāñcipuram." In *Layered Landscapes: Early Modern Religious Space Across Faiths and Cultures*, edited by Eric Nelson and Jonathan Wright, 63–81. New York: Routledge.

Kiruṣṇacāmi, Ve. 1974. *Tamiḻil talapurāṇa ilakkiyam*. Muttucāmipuram: A. Vēluk Kōṉār.

Koppedrayer, Kathleen Iva. 1990. "The Sacred Presence of the Guru: The Velala Lineages of Tiruvavatuturai, Dharmapuram, and Tiruppanantal." PhD thesis, McMaster University. http://hdl.handle.net/11375/8299.

Lazzaretti, Vera. 2016. "Questioning Meaningful Layers of Locality in a Pan-Indian *tīrtha*." *Cracow Indological Studies* 18:119–144. https://doi.org/10.12797/CIS.18.2016.18.06.

Marulasiddaiah, G., ed. 1981. *Oriental Research Institute: Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts, Vol 6: Itihasa, Purana, Upakhyana, Mahatmya, Gita and Sahasranama*. Mysore: Oriental Research Institute.

Mātavaṉ, Vē. Irā. 1995. *Tamiḻil talapuraṇaṅkaḷ*. 2 vols. Tañjāvūr: Pāvai.

Nagaswamy, R. 1982. *Tantric Cult of South India*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan.

Nākaliṅka Mutaliyār. 1910: See *Kāñcippurāṇam*.

Narayana Rao, Velcheru. 2004. "Purāṇa." In *The Hindu World*, edited by Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby, 97–115. New York: Routledge.

Narayana Rao, Velcheru, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. 1992. *Symbols of Substance: Court and State in Nāyaka Period Tamilnadu*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Oppert, Gustav. 1885. *List of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Private Libraries of Southern India*. Vol. 2. Madras: Government Press.

Porcher, Marie-Claude. 1985. "La représentation de l'espace sacré dans le Kāñcīmāhātmya." In *L'espace du temple: Espaces, itinéraires, médiations*, edited by Jean-Claude Galey, 23–52. Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales.

Raghavan, V. 1967. *New Catalogus Catalogorum: An Alphabetical Register of Sanskrit and Allied Works and Authors*. Vol. 3. Madras: University of Madras.

Raman, K. V. 1975. *Śrī Varadarājaswāmi Temple, Kānchi: A Study of Its History, Art and Architecture*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.

Ramanatha Ayyar, V. 1965. "Development of the Name and Composition of a Divine Symbol at Kāñcī." *Adyar Library Bulletin* 29:144–176.

Ramesh, Jay. 2020. "Abodes of Śiva: Monuments and Memory in Medieval and Early Modern South Indian Purāṇas." Phd thesis, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University. https://doi.org/10.7916/d8-h0zf-pg97.

Resmi, M. R., Hema Achyuthan, and Manoj Kumar Jaiswal. 2016. "Middle to Late Holocene Paleochannels and Migration of the Palar River, Tamil Nadu: Implications of Neotectonic Activity." *Quaternary International* XXX:1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quaint.2016.05.002.

Rocher, Ludo. 1986. *The Purāṇas*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Schier, Kerstin. 2018. *The Goddess's Embrace: Multifaceted Relations at the Ekāmranātha Temple Festival in Kanchipuram*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Shulman, David. 1980. *Tamil Temple Myths: Sacrifice and Divine Marriage in the South Indian Śaiva Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Singh, Satyavrata. 1958. *Vedānta Deśika: His Life, Works and Philosophy. A Study*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office.

Vijayakumār, V. 2014. *Kāñci Koyilkaḷ*. 2 vols. Kāñcipuram: Tillai Varataṉ Veḷiyīṭu.

Wiig, Linda. 1981. “Māhātmyas: A Preliminary Descriptive Survey (Including a List of Māhātmyas From Aufrecht’s Catalogus Catalogorum).” MA thesis, South Asian Studies, University of Pennsylvania. https://repository.upenn.edu/southasia_theses/1.
Wilden, Eva. 2015. “Translation and Transcultural Adaptation in a Multicultural Lingual Environment: Tamil and Sanskrit Versions of the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭaṟpurāṇam*.” In *La traduction dans l’histoire des idées linguistiques. Représentations et practiques*, edited by Émilie Aussant, 93–110. Paris: Paul Geuthner.
Zvelebil, Kamil V. 1974. *Tamil Literature*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
———. 1975. *Tamil Literature*. Leiden, Köln: E. J. Brill.
———. 1995. *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*. Leiden, New York, Köln: E. J. Brill.