



## Publishing Information

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Hamburg, State and University Library Carl von Ossietzky, Theater-Bibliothek: 1988a, fol. 23".  
Different changes in a prompt book of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Nathan der Weise, ein Schauspiel in fünf Aufzügen von Lessing für die Bühne gekürzt v. Schiller* ('Nathan the Wise, a play in five acts by Lessing abridged for the stage by [Friedrich] Schiller'); first performance in Hamburg in the present version: 2 December 1803 (according to the playbill) <<https://resolver.sub.uni-hamburg.de/kitodo/HANSh3323>>. © Public Domain Mark 1.0. See the contribution by Martin Schäfer and Alexander Weinstock in this volume.

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## Article

# An Anonymous Vaiṣṇava Manuscript from Tamil Nadu and the Quest for Its Author

Suganya Anandakichenin | Pondicherry and Hamburg

## 1. Introduction

This article deals with a single multiple-text manuscript (MTM) – from a collection that was uncatalogued when received by the present author<sup>1</sup> (and catalogued since then)<sup>2</sup> – and strives to describe it in its context and make a few hypotheses about its scribe's identity, reading practices, and so forth. The collection, which originates from around the Kallīṭaikuṛicci area not far from Tamil Nadu's border with Kerala (and which we have therefore called 'the Kallīṭaikuṛicci collection' for the sake of convenience), consists of approximately 108 bundles of palm-leaf manuscripts of various sizes, mostly written in the Tamil and Grantha scripts, the latter being used to write Sanskrit for over a millennium in what is a predominantly Tamil region. Although it clearly shows signs of Śrīvaiṣṇava influence, the collection is eclectic in nature and attests to the vast scholarship of its owners,<sup>3</sup> as it includes Sanskrit epics like

the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*; theological and poetical works by Vedānta Deśikaṇ<sup>4</sup> like *Samkalpasūryodayam*, sometimes along with a commentary; works dealing with *vyākaraṇa* ('grammar'), *nyāya*, and *mīmāṃsā* systems of philosophy; medicine, and various other academic disciplines. The present manuscript, which we shall call KK39 here (Fig. 1), is one of a small number that are complete and very well-preserved. It includes works in Tamil and Manipravalam, a highly Sanskritised form of Tamil,<sup>5</sup> and may possibly include an unpublished work as well, which was presumably composed by the scribe or scholar himself. It would be enlightening to know what sort of scholar its owner was, if the scribe and scholar were one and the same person, how proficient he<sup>6</sup> was at the various languages involved and so forth.

## 2. A codicological description of KK39

This particular manuscript was chosen among the relatively large collection both for its unusual size (the leaves of all the other bundles are two to four times as long as this one's) and the diverse nature of its contents, which we shall discuss shortly.

<sup>1</sup> This collection of manuscripts was given to me by Prof G. Vijayavenugopalzin August 2019. He had received it from a friend in 1981, who had found it in a village near Kallīṭaikuṛicci in southern Tamil Nadu, thrown in the street when its owner died. No other information was initially available about the owners of this collection or the manuscripts' origins, except that the people were probably Brahmins who belonged to the Vāṭakalai school of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. This was corroborated by the presence of many of Vedānta Deśikaṇ's works and the mention of some *jīyars* (Śrīvaiṣṇava ascetics, often the heads of *maṭhas* ['convents']) at the Ahobila Maṭha, which is a Vāṭakalai *maṭha* (see n. 3). When the collection was catalogued and its contents analysed (see n. 4), it was found to (likely) belong to the 40<sup>th</sup> pontiff of the Ahobila Maṭha, Śrī Raṅganātha Śaṭhakopa Yatindra Mahādeśikaṇ (1851–1923) – also known as as Kāraikuṛicci Aḷakiyacīṅkar following his hometown, Kāraikuṛicci, adjacent to Kallīṭaikuṛicci – and his family.

<sup>2</sup> This collection was catalogued and digitized thanks to a project funded by the British Library Endangered Archives Programme (Pilot Project 1294) supported by Arcadia, in 2021–2022. The MS in question, as well as the whole collection, can be accessed at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.15130/EAP1294>>.

<sup>3</sup> Even before examining the collection thoroughly, we could see that the Kallīṭaikuṛicci collection must have belonged to more than one owner and was no doubt part of a family library for several generations, as even a cursory glance at it reveals. As early as 2019, Giovanni Ciotti deciphered a date on one of the manuscripts, '23 January 1849', while I found the names of two *jīyars* mentioned, presumably the scribe or the owner's Ācāryas (religious teacher), Śaṭhakopa Yatindra (d. 1879), the 33<sup>rd</sup> Aḷakiyacīṅkar (title of the pontiff of the Ahobila Maṭha) in the line, and Śaṭhakoparāmānuja

Yatindra (1813–1882), the 34<sup>th</sup> Aḷakiyacīṅkar, who was his successor. Both titles correspond to the *jīyars* of the Ahobila Maṭha, so it was clear that the owners were definitely disciples of the Maṭha (as we could confirm later after studying the salutations, colophons, and so forth during the cataloguing process). See n. 3. For more on the Ahobila Maṭha, see Appadurai 1981, 96–99.

<sup>4</sup> Deśikaṇ (approximately fourteenth century) was an important Śrīvaiṣṇava theologian, philosopher, and poet, who composed over a hundred works of different genres in various languages.

<sup>5</sup> The Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam found in the texts of KK39 is a type of Tamil in which Sanskrit words, expressions, and quotations are used abundantly. While the practice of using this type of hybrid language began after the middle of the first millennium, it was the Śrīvaiṣṇavas and the Jains who helped it thrive in the first half of the second millennium. For more on the topic, see Anandakichenin 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Although female scholars did exist (and they would have used palm leaves to write on as well), more often than not, male scribes and scholars easily outnumbered their female counterparts. This is why I have used the masculine form when referring to a scribe or scholar in this article.





Fig. 1: Manuscript KK39.

The leaves of KK39 seem to belong to the Talipot variety of palm trees (*Corypha umbraculifera*), which were not used for manuscripts as often as the palmyra palm leaves were (*Borassus flabellifer*).<sup>7</sup> This manuscript consists of 103 leaves of a rather small size (10 × 5 cm), 98 of which are inscribed with texts (and blackened with soot), mostly on both sides and apparently by the same, anonymous hand. Two holes have been pierced about halfway down from the top in order to string the leaves together, but the original cord is missing. There is a protective wooden cover at the front of the manuscript, but the rear cover is missing. As mentioned above, the bundle is in good condition and still very legible, which is unusual for manuscripts from South India, except perhaps for one leaf that has its edges chipped off, a few leaves that are cracked, and some with signs of damage caused by insects. Some of the leaves are smudged, possibly due to mould caused by humidity (Fig. 2). In a number of cases, the leaves exhibit short, natural splits, which the scribe steered clear of while writing (Fig. 3), just as he avoided the small circular area around the two holes, as the string would have tended to widen the size of the hole with time.

Folio numbers with Tamil numerals are provided on the left margin of the recto, mostly halfway down the folio, but

also on top of it sometimes. The numbers begin again with every new work, although some folios have been skipped (Table 1). We do not really know if it was the scribe himself who added them or not. Suffice it to say that the numbering has a certain logic to it and the numbers are mostly inked, except for a few folios (in which we only perceive the incisions made by a stylus), which may have been added later.

KK39 does not betray any sign of the date or place of composition or of the name(s) of its scribe and/or owner. Because it is part of a larger collection in which some of the manuscripts do contain dates of completion or have clues as to their dates inscribed on them (mostly between 1750 and 1900), it may have been composed around that period too. The facts that the manuscript is relatively well-preserved and that the period when the printing press began to (progressively but decisively) replace the practice of writing manually on palm leaves was roughly the twentieth century suggest that it must indeed have been composed sometime around the end of the nineteenth century. Since the Kallīṭaikuṛicci collection was obtained from the Tirunelvēli district in Tamil Nadu and since the original owners seem to have come from the adjacent town Kāraikuṛicci, it presumably came from that area.

<sup>7</sup> I would like to thank Giovanni Ciotti for this piece of information.





Fig. 2: Signs of smudging.

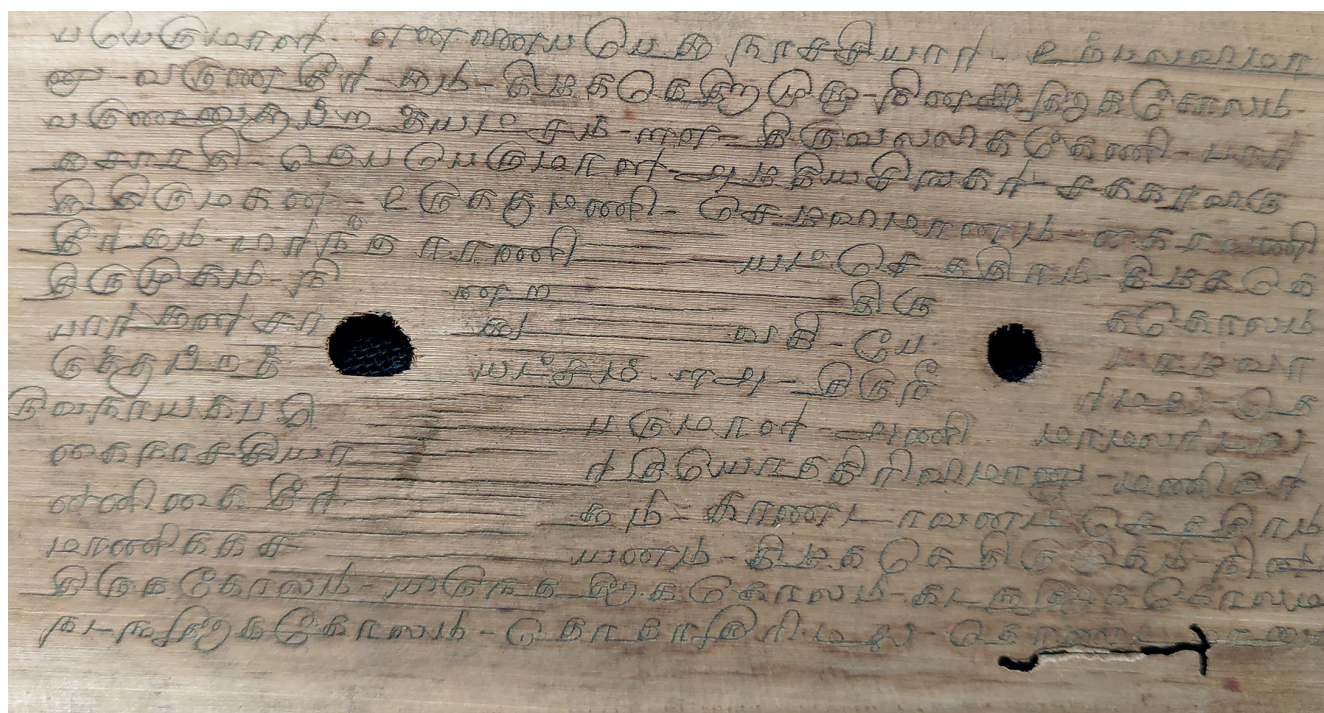


Fig. 3: Natural slits resembling incision marks.



Table 1: Foliation.

Work	Number of folios (Tamil numerals on the MS)
1	29 (1 to 58 + one blank)
2	10 (59, and then 2 to 10) <sup>8</sup>
3	7 (1 to 7)
4	2 (2 to 3) <sup>9</sup>
5	19 (2 to 20) <sup>10</sup>
6	2 (20 to 22) <sup>11</sup>
	3 blank leaves

As for the scribe, although his handwriting cannot be said to be particularly elegant, he did manage to fit as many as 15 lines into that small space, writing mostly in *scriptio continua*, although hyphens appear frequently in order to mark some kind of a break, such as the end of a sentence (e.g. on fol. 59<sup>r</sup>; see Fig. 4), after a quotation (e.g. fol. 4<sup>r</sup>) or even to separate a list of words, functioning like a comma (fol. 59<sup>r</sup>). The other mark that makes an appearance here is what is popularly known as the *piḷḷaiyār cuḷi* (உ), especially to mark the end of a work, although it was not used in a systematic manner by this scribe (Fig. 5).

As mentioned earlier on, both the Grantha and Tamil scripts are used, which we shall return to later. A cursory look reveals a few spelling mistakes (Fig. 6)<sup>12</sup>, which the scribe sometimes corrected by crossing out a particular letter

and writing the correct one beneath it or even next to the crossed-out letter if he caught himself (or someone else?) making a mistake (Fig. 7)<sup>13</sup>.

The author, undoubtedly a Śrīvaiṣṇava, as we shall see, seems to have been a native speaker of Tamil with a working knowledge of Sanskrit and used both Tamil and Grantha, but predominantly the former. When it comes to MSS, how Sanskrit sounds and words were transcribed in Manipravalam texts largely depended on the individual scribe: while some transcribed the whole Sanskrit word in Grantha, others chose to use Grantha to render only the syllables containing sounds that Tamil does not have, like the aspirated ones. As for the scribe of KK39, he tends to Tamilise a Sanskrit word and use the Tamil script: for example, *svarūpaṅkaḷai* (Skt *svarūpa-*) is written as *corūpaṅkaḷai* (the base form of which is *corūpam*, the Tamil *tadbhava* [‘derived from that’, i.e. derived from Sanskrit] form of *svarūpa*) and *puṣkaraṇi* as *puṭkaraṇi*.<sup>14</sup> And side by side, we also find Sanskrit words transcribed in Grantha (Fig. 8).

There is an inconsistency in his choice of script, however, as it is hard to say why one was used and not the other. The word *svarūpa* is written in Grantha four times, for example, but it appears in the Sanskrit *tadbhava* form (*corūpa*) the fifth time, as pointed out earlier. It seems that the scribe only goes back to his Tamil mode when his attention wavers.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, his spelling the Sanskrit-derived word *maṅgalāsāna*<sup>16</sup> as *mankalācātana* (on fol. 45<sup>r</sup>) indicates that he is more at ease with Tamil than Sanskrit: while the other changes to the word are part of the normal process of rendering a Sanskrit word in Tamil, the transformation of *sa* into *ta* is less frequent, although not entirely unheard of.<sup>17</sup>

regardless of the fact that *t* cannot be followed by *ṇ* in Tamil without the interposition of a vowel.

<sup>13</sup> The words *śrīvaiṣṇavaciṇṇamāṇa* inscribed here (fol. 36<sup>r</sup>) ought to have been spelt as *śrīvaiṣṇavaciṇṇamāṇa* (‘...that are signs of a Śrīvaiṣṇava’). As for fol. 92<sup>r</sup>, the scribe misspells *tirunigraṇvūr* as *tirunagṇiṇi* (the name of a town). The latter could have been considered a variant if the town had actually borne that alternative name, which it does not. As a matter of fact, an online search shows that no town bears the name of *tirunagṇiṇi*.

<sup>14</sup> The scribe probably began to write the name of the river as it is pronounced in Sanskrit (Kāvīri காவிரி) and then erased the *kompū* sign (which would have added [ē] to the consonant preceeding it, making it *vē*) and opted instead for *vi* வி, which produced the word Kāvīri (காவிரி), its Tamil variant.

<sup>15</sup> Note that while he writes *puruṣārtha* as *puruṣārtha* (a common practice of rendering *rtha*), he switches to the entirely Tamil way of spelling *rtha* with the word *arttapaṇcakam* (instead of *arthapaṇcakam* or even *arthapaṇcakam*).

<sup>16</sup> ‘Invocation of blessings by great persons’, *Madras Tamil Lexicon*.

<sup>17</sup> For more on this topic, see Emeneau 1953, 106–107.

<sup>8</sup> The first folio of this work continues the numbering and gives 59 as its folio number, but from the following recto, the numbering starts anew from 2 (not 1).

<sup>9</sup> The first folio of the work is not numbered, but the following recto is numbered from 2 onwards.

<sup>10</sup> See n. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Works 5 and 6 have been numbered together and no new folio was used to begin the second work either.

<sup>12</sup> At times, one wonders whether it was a deliberate, personal decision to Tamilise any given Sanskrit word. For example, just like *puṣkaraṇi/putkaraṇi*, the scribe writes the word *śrīvaiṣṇavar* (‘Śrīvaiṣṇavas’) as *śrīvaiṇavar* (fol. 98<sup>r</sup>), a community to which he would have belonged himself, which does not usually use this Tamil variant. Note the hybrid way in which the word has been written here: while *śrī* remained unchanged (with no Tamil spelling or variant preferred here), *vaiṣṇavar* became *vaiṇavar*, which only partially applied the Tamil rules: it turned the Sanskrit *ṣ* into *ṭ* in Tamil,



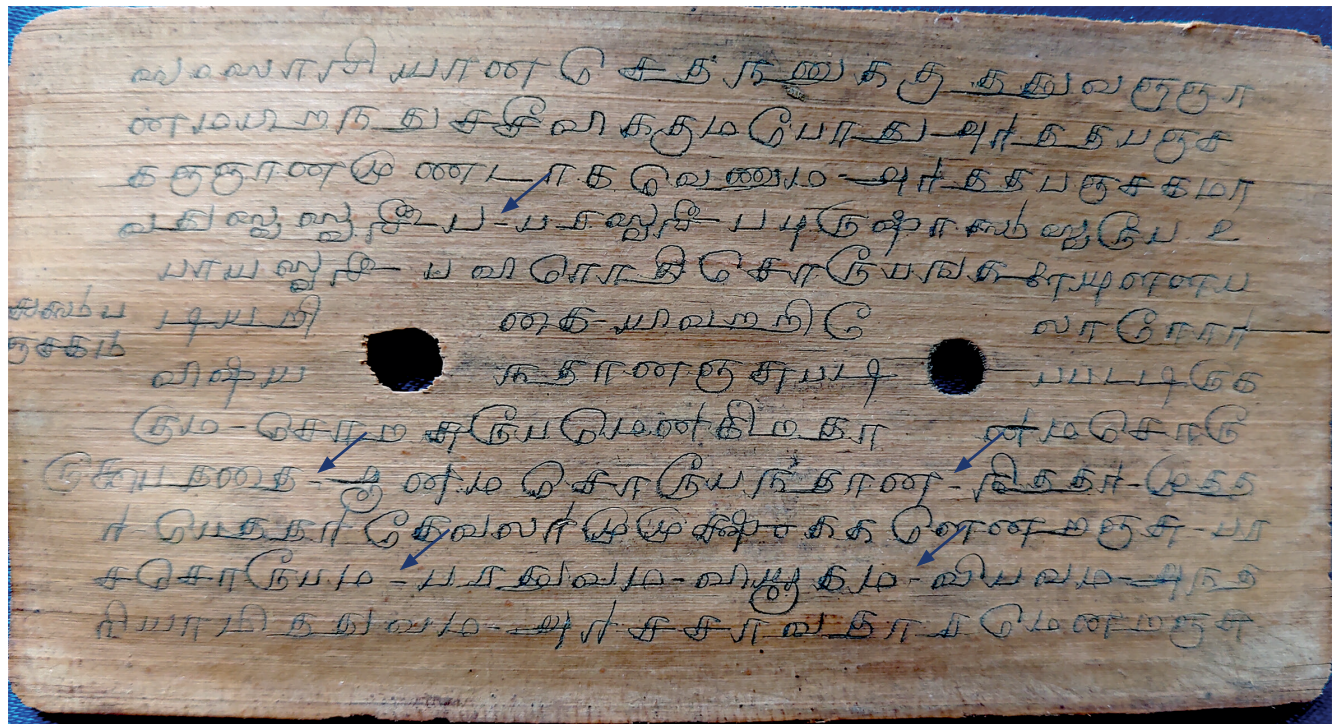


Fig. 4: Punctuation after a quotation (see blue arrows), fol. 59r.

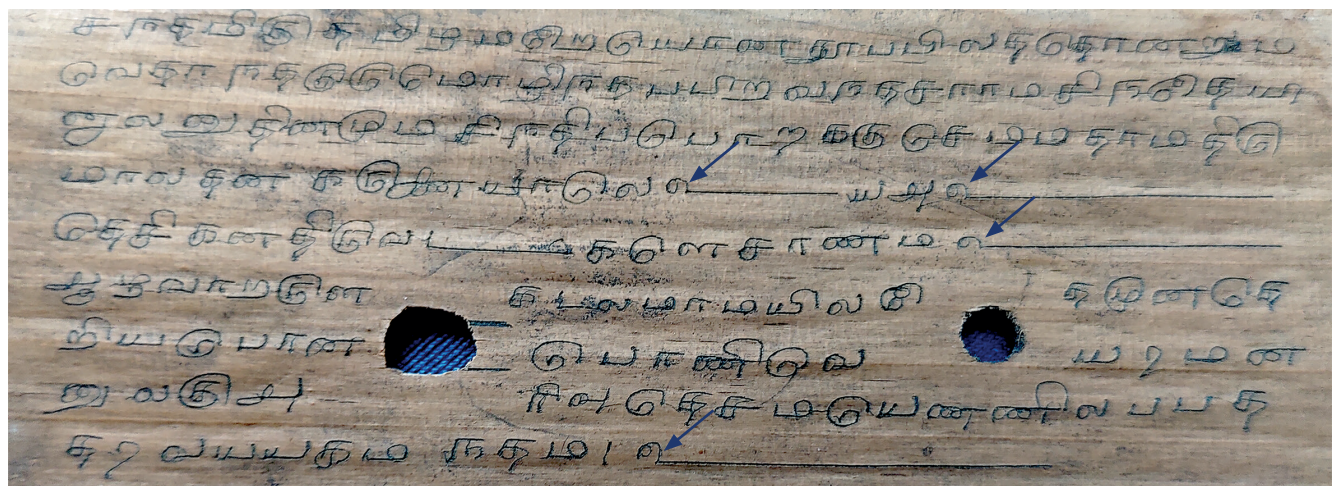


Fig. 5: pillaiyār culi marking the end of the text (see blue arrows).

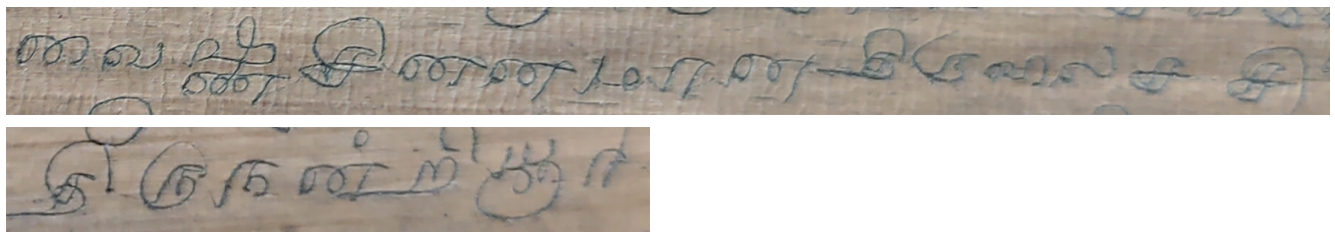


Fig. 6: Spelling mistakes, fols 36v and 92r.



Fig. 7: Self-correction.



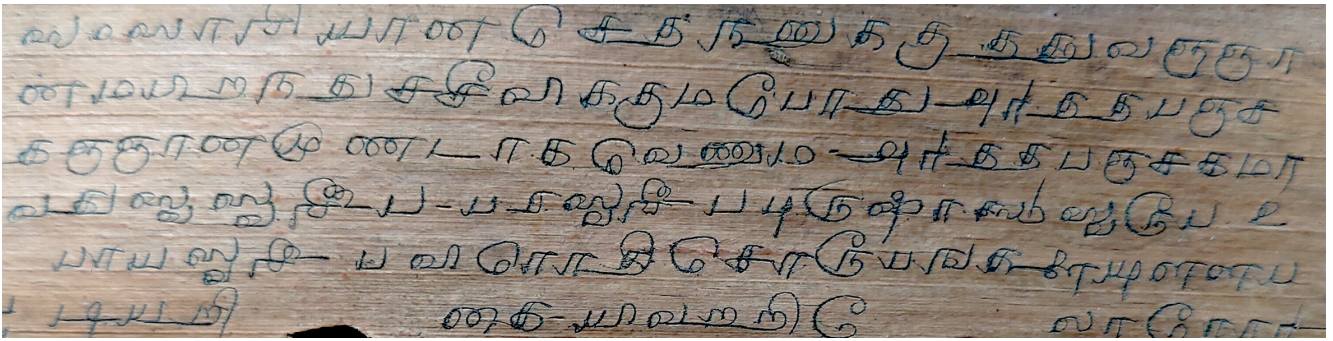


Fig. 8: The use of the Tamil and Grantha scripts (words in Sanskrit are underlined and the words or syllables for which the scribe used Grantha letters are in bold), fol. 1': *samsāriyāṇa cetanaṇukku tattuvaṇṇam pīrant' uccivikkum pōtu arttapañcakañṇāṇam uṇṭākac vēṇum. arttapañcakam āvatu svasvarūpa-parasvarūpapuruṣārththa svarūpa upāyasvarūpa viroticorūpañcalaṇṇaiy uḷḷapaṭiy aṇikai.* 'When knowledge of the realities arises in a sentient being who is a worldly being and he is saved, it is essential that the knowledge of the five topics (*arthapañcaka*) should arise. *Arthapañcaka* is knowing one's essential nature, the essential nature of the Supreme Being, the nature of the human goal, the nature of the means, and the nature of the obstacles [to achieving that goal] as they are' (*Arthapañcakam* 1). The passage ends just before the first hole.

Also, while in general the scribe seems to prefer using Grantha for Sanskrit quotations, he uses Tamil for the rest, although he does not seem to have been very consistent, even when writing in Tamil. Let us take the use of the *kompū*<sup>18</sup> for example: sometimes the scribe does not mark the long *ē* and *ō* (which was actually general practice among scribes), while at other times he does, viz. by using the more modern version of *kompū* with two loops, which distinguishes the long *ē* and *ō* from the short vowels, *e* and *o* (Fig. 9). The same goes for the *pulli* (the dot put over a consonant), which is not used at all in some cases and which appears like a circular dot<sup>19</sup> towards the end of the manuscript (Fig. 10).<sup>20</sup>

The lack of consistency throughout the manuscript and the fact that some of the changes (like the marked *pullis*) appear towards the end of it make one wonder whether we are even dealing with a single scribe here, yet the handwriting is very similar, with some letters like *ā* in Tamil transcribed in a peculiar way throughout the manuscript. Could this possibly mean that the leaves were written on over a considerable period of time, during which the scribe's practices evolved as he experimented with different options, perhaps influenced by the changes that were taking place in the field, such as the

advent of paper and then print?<sup>21</sup> That is certainly possible, but it is hard to say for sure.

At times, informal Tamil pronunciations creep into the scribe's way of spelling words. For example, the oral *tuṭaṇki* and *kālāntarattule* replace the more formal *toṭaṇki* (fol. 4<sup>r</sup>) and *kālāntarattile* respectively. It is rather difficult to say whether the original text (in this case by the thirteenth-century Periyavāccāṇ Pillai) uses these forms or not, especially since Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam is indeed influenced by oral language with some oral forms being preferred over their formal counterparts on more than one occasion (e.g. the informal *añcu* is sometimes preferred over the more formal *aintu* ['five']). But as far as I have seen, these oral forms found their way into printed editions,<sup>22</sup> while the ones mentioned above did not. Therefore, the former actually seem to characterise late Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam. It thus seems to me that the scribe sometimes slips into his personal way of spelling while copying the older works.

For these reasons, it seems to me that the manuscript must be the personal copy of a scholar whose mother tongue was Tamil, a copy that was not necessarily meant to have a didactic

<sup>18</sup> 'The symbol "o" in certain Tamil letters', *Madras Tamil Lexicon*.

<sup>19</sup> Some of the issues found in Tamil manuscripts have been summarised by Wilden 2014, 39: 'The major problem of the palm-leaf notation is its ambiguity (...). To summarise briefly: the dot above the letter that marks a consonantal cluster (*pulli*) is not yet in use. There is a single graph (an open *kāl*) for long *ā* and intervocalic *r*. No distinction is made between short and long *e/ē* and *o/ō* (due to the fact that the double *kompū* is not employed)'.

<sup>20</sup> The manuscript reads செல்வநம்பியாழ்வாரை, but the standard spelling (especially when printed or written on paper) would be செல்வநம்பியாழ்வாரை.

<sup>21</sup> See Wilden 2014 for more on the topic.

<sup>22</sup> Although hard to believe, the Śrīvaiṣṇavas claim (e.g. Velukkudi 2016, 2.1.8) that the writing of the Ācāryas is so sacred that not even a *pulli* has been changed or omitted when their works are copied. If this were to be true (and reality tells a different story), then it would mean that there were fewer attempts at intentional tampering with the text. This does not rule out any spelling errors on the scribe's part. It is worth pointing out here that I have personally found variants, e.g. in the text of Vedānta Deśikan's *Munivāhanabhogam*, which may have already been introduced during the transmission-via-manuscript period or later when it went to print, a transition that tended to add errors.



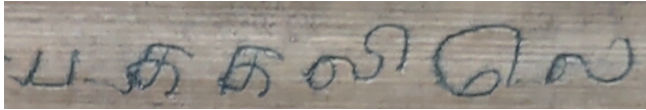


Fig. 9: The use of *kompu*, fol 31<sup>o</sup>, left: *pakkalile*; right: long *ē* in *tiraiḷē/taniyē*.

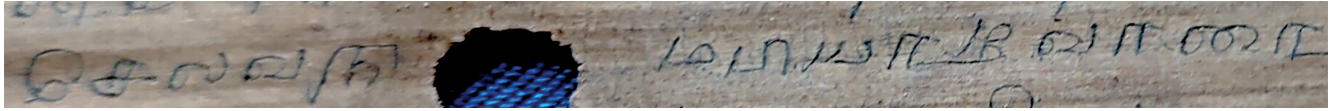
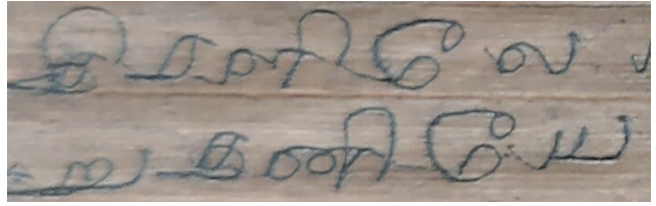


Fig. 10a: The use of *pulli* (or the absence of it), fol. 4<sup>o</sup>: no *pulli*s can be seen.<sup>23</sup>



Fig 10b: The use of *pulli* (or the absence of it). Several circular *pulli*s appear.<sup>24</sup>

purpose nor was it intended for anyone else to read. But as Giovanni Ciotti pointed out to me in a personal communication (September 2019), what we need to take into consideration is the fact that there were no established rules as to how to spell words in Tamil Manipravalam, which explains why different scribes transcribed this language in various ways. Having said that, it must be pointed out once again that this particular scribe was not very consistent within the same paragraph, which probably means that consistency with spelling was not his greatest concern for some inexplicable reason.

### 3. The contents of KK39

All the works inscribed in this multiple-text manuscript are Śrīvaiṣṇava works, with the exception of the *Tiruvāciriyam*, which is still a Vaiṣṇava work<sup>25</sup> although it has been included in the Śrīvaiṣṇava canon now known as the *Nālāyira Divya Prabandham*<sup>26</sup> (Table 2).

As mentioned earlier, some works in KK39 are in Tamil, while others are in Manipravalam, although the latter are definitely more prominent. The genres (marked in Table 2 in bold) it spans also differ greatly, as it includes a commentary, esoteric works, poetry, and even a list of sacred places (a kind of *aide-mémoire*). The latter, number 5, deserves a special mention among all these works. It does not seem to be a literary work proper, but rather a list of places that are sacred to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas (115 of them, in fact) and which includes – without them being labelled as such – the *divyadeśas* (supposed to be 108 in number) and what are known as *abhimānasthalas*.<sup>27</sup> The list contains details of these places, like the name of the main deity (*mūlavar* or *mūlabera*), of the main goddess, the posture of the deity, the direction in which he faces, the name of the temple tank, and so forth. This seems like a personal list made for easy consultation and is very likely to be an unpublished work.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The manuscript reads கரசினியோர்தாம்வாழக்...

<sup>24</sup> Owing to the short lives of palm leaves due to climactic and other factors, manuscripts made from this material needed to be copied afresh every hundred years or so on average as the old ones fell apart and were then discarded. Therefore, we cannot really know how the texts were written in those days; our knowledge of the script or spelling the scribes used is only indirect.

<sup>25</sup> The *Tiruvāciriyam* was composed before the Śrīvaiṣṇavas (who belong to the school of Rāmānuja) saved it from oblivion and claimed it as part of their own canon. Nevertheless, as it is in praise of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa (or one of his forms), it can be called a Vaiṣṇava work.

<sup>26</sup> As its name indicates, this is a collection of around 4,000 (*nāl āyira*) verses in Tamil written between the sixth and ninth centuries by twelve poets now known as Ālvārs. The only poet we can date with any certainty is Tirumāṅkai Ālvār, who probably lived around the ninth century and wrote one of the compositions transcribed in KK39.

<sup>27</sup> These *divyadeśas* ('divine lands') correspond to places named in the *Nālāyira Divya Prabandham* (henceforth, NDP). This list was made and given a name during the second millennium. The *abhimānasthalas* ('beloved places') are temples that were not mentioned by the Ālvārs in their corpus, but are dear to the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas. For more on this point, see Gopalan 1972.

<sup>28</sup> A comparison with either the earliest list of these places or with the more common lists today is beyond the scope of this article. Velukkudi 2016, 8.6.10 explains that older editions of the NDP included such a list of the *divyadeśas* with details similar to those mentioned in this part of the KK39. A part of the manuscripts like this may therefore have been meant to accompany a copy of the NDP. The practice of including details on the *divyadeśas* in the manuscripts along with the NDP may, in turn, have led to similar practices being adopted in the early printed editions of the work.

Table 2: Works inscribed in the manuscript and their description.

	Name/title given in the margin	Language <sup>29</sup>	Nature of the work/author/genre	Folios	Remarks
1	<i>pallāṇṭu</i>	MP	Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai's <b>commentary</b> on the <i>Pallāṇṭu</i> <sup>30</sup>	116	The first few lines and the last few paragraphs of the commentary are missing
2	<i>artta-pāñcakam</i>	MP	<i>Arthapañcakam</i> , one of Piḷḷai Lokācārya's <b>rahasya-granthas</b> ('esoteric treatises')	19	The last few words of the work are missing due to the manuscript being damaged a little along the edge
3	Not named	T	<i>Pirapantacāram</i> (also spelt as <i>Prabandhasāram</i> ), a <b>set of verses</b> by Vedānta Deśikaṇ	13	–
4	<i>tiruvācariyam</i>	T	<i>Tiruvācariyam</i> ( <b>poem</b> ) by Tirumaṅkai Āḷvār	15	–
5	<i>arccāvatāra-vipavam tiruppattikaḷ</i>	T	A detailed <b>list of the places</b> that are sacred to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas	22	–
6	Not named	T	<i>Prapannaparitrāṇam</i> , one of Piḷḷai Lokācārya's <b>rahasya-granthas</b>	4	–
7	<i>navarattiṇa-mālai</i>	T	<i>Navarattiṇamālai</i> (also spelt as <i>Navaratnamālai</i> ), one of Piḷḷai Lokācārya's <b>rahasya-granthas</b>	189 pp with text	No gap between the previous work and this one

What is more interesting than this is the fact that the manuscript includes works from what later became two rival schools within Śrīvaiṣṇavism, namely the Vaṭakalai ('northern school') and the Teṅkalai ('southern school') schools. As a matter of fact, these compositions belong to writers who were retrospectively considered as leaders of those schools<sup>31</sup> (Table 3). While theological differences may have begun to crop up within Śrīvaiṣṇavism after Rāmānuja's time (twelfth century), they were articulated in written works around the fourteenth to fifteenth century, as demonstrated by Vedānta Deśikaṇ's (fourteenth-century) criticism of Piḷḷai Lokācārya's (fourteenth-century) positions on important issues (e.g. in his *Rahasyatrayasāram*), and by Deśikaṇ being criticised in turn by Maṇavāḷa Māmuni (fifteenth century),

who defended Lokācārya's views (e.g. in his commentary on Lokācārya's *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam*). The rift grew deeper and spread to non-theological fields, and a more clear-cut schism occurred during the colonial period around the eighteenth to nineteenth century, which led to conflicts between them, ranging from fisticuffs to legal cases.<sup>32</sup>

It is therefore interesting to see that a Vaṭakalai scribe/scholar – clearly a devout follower of his school – took pains to copy the works of a Teṅkalai Ācārya ('teacher') at a time when troubles between the two factions must have been raging. And a natural question would be: why did he do that? Is there anything else in this manuscript that could reveal his religious inclinations, if we did not know more about the collection to which this MS belonged?

<sup>29</sup> T = Tamil, MP = Manipravalam.

<sup>30</sup> This is, in fact, Piḷḷai's commentary of Periyāḷvār's first decade of the *Periyāḷvār Tirumoli*, known as the (*Tiru*)*pallāṇṭu*.

<sup>31</sup> Long after they had passed on, Deśikaṇ came to be considered the leader of the Vaṭakalai school and Lokācārya that of the Teṅkalai school.

<sup>32</sup> I have provided a grossly simplified version of a truly complex, multi-faceted issue here that involved many people and evolved across many centuries with various socio-political and socio-economic factors playing a role in it. See Raman 2007 for more on this topic, and for more on the two different schools of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, see Mumme 1988.



Table 3: Paratextual material found in the MSS (marginalia and colophons).

	Author/work	Marginalia (other than foliation)	Colophons
1	Periyavāccāṇ Pillai, commentary on <i>Pallāṇṭu</i>	first folio: <i>Pallāṇṭu</i> (title of the work)	–
2	Lokācārya, <i>Arthapañcakam</i>	first folio: <i>Arttapañcakam</i> (title of the work)	–
3	Deśikaṇ, <i>Pirapanta-cāram</i>	–	– first folio: <i>cīronru tūppil</i> and <i>āraṇṇāṇa</i> ( <i>taṇiyaṇs</i> <sup>33</sup> on Vedānta Deśikaṇ) – last folio (after the work): <i>tecikaṇ tiruvatikaḷē caraṇam</i> ('Deśikaṇ's feet are the refuge') – <i>aṭivaravu</i> (the first word of each verse of the work is given) <sup>34</sup>
4	Tirumaṅkai Ālvār, <i>Tiruvācariyam</i>	first folio: <i>Tiruvācariyam</i> (title of the work)	– first folio: <i>kācinīyōr</i> ( <i>taṇiyaṇ</i> on Tirumaṅkai Ālvār) + <i>ālvār tiruvatikaḷē caraṇam</i> ('The Ālvār's feet are the refuge') – last folio (after the work): <i>ālvār tiruvatikaḷē caraṇam</i>
5	<i>arccāvatāravipavam tiruppatikaḷ</i>	first folio: <i>hariḥ om</i> <sup>35</sup> <i>arccāvatāravipavam tiruppatikaḷ</i> (descriptive title of the work)	– last folio (after the work): <i>cīmatē rāmāṇucāya nama</i> (Skt <i>śrīmate rāmānujāya namaḥ</i> 'Obeisances to Rāmānuja')
6	Lokācārya, <i>Prapannapari-trāṇam</i>	–	– last folio (before the next work starts immediately after, on the same line): <i>vāliṇ ulakācīriyaṇ</i> ('May Lokācāryar prosper') + <i>iruppu</i> ('presence') <sup>36</sup>
7	Lokācārya, <i>Navarattiṇa-mālai</i>	first folio: <i>Navarattiṇamālai</i> (title of the work)	– see the colophon for previous work, which could have been intended as the beginning of this work, too – last folio (after the work): <i>vāliṇ ulakā + iruppu</i> ('May Lokā + prosper' + 'presence')

On the one hand, the copyist has inscribed three of Lokācārya's works (2, 6, 7), but only one of Deśikaṇ's (3). On the other, Deśikaṇ's work is preceded by traditional invocations (two *taṇiyaṇs*) and the salutation *tēcikaṇ tiruvatikaḷē caraṇam* ('Deśikaṇ's feet are the refuge') occurs at the end, both of which correspond to the practices of writing/reciting texts that were deemed sacred, especially the ones composed by Deśikaṇ himself. Now, the absence of such reverence

<sup>33</sup> These are self-contained invocation verses that precede the recitation of a work and were not composed by its author. For more on the *taṇiyaṇs*, see Ananda-kichenin 2020.

<sup>34</sup> This is an *aide-mémoire* for those who are seeking to learn the verses by heart. It is a fairly common practice among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas to give the *aṭivaravu* in manuscripts, a practice that found its way into printed editions.

<sup>35</sup> This is a benediction often found in the margins at the beginning of manuscripts.

<sup>36</sup> This seems like a short form of *iruppu uṇṭāka* ('May there be presence'), I would like to thank Giovanni Ciotti for this information. It may mean the presence of auspiciousness, for example.

towards Lokācārya seems glaring to me: 2 begins and ends abruptly, while 6 (with no *taṇiyaṇ* at the beginning) and 7 are clubbed together rather unceremoniously, with only *vāliṇ yulakācīriyaṇ* ('May Lokācārya prosper!') separating them. The words *vāliṇ yulakācīriyaṇ* mark the beginning of a *taṇiyaṇ* in praise of Pillai Lokācārya, which is not quoted in full, as if the scribe cannot be bothered to. The end of 7 is even more interesting, as the same expression is used again, except that Lokācārya's name is abbreviated rather irreverently, with a '+' sign<sup>37</sup> indicating the abbreviation. Even though the '+' sign, almost used like 'etc.', is very common in this field, it still seems to me that cutting an Ācārya's name in half and not bothering to mention the rest of it shows a certain lack of respect towards

<sup>37</sup> I would like to thank Giovanni Ciotti once again for pointing out to me that this sign is a very common one in Tamil manuscripts, 'a placeholder for something well-known' (personal communication, September 2019).

him – either a conscious statement in itself or an unconscious slip.<sup>38</sup> These are, of course, my own hypotheses. It seems to me that Lokācārya's works were copied for the sake of reference here and not for any other purposes such as ritual recitation. Scholars would want to know their opponents' points of view, which explains why they would keep a copy of works that they did not revere as much as they did others (that belonged to their own school, for example).

#### 4. Conclusions

This deceptively small manuscript is packed with rich content, ranging from early medieval Ālvār poetry (approximately ninth century) to Deśikaṇ's fifteenth-century poetry in Tamil, from a (relatively) lengthy commentary to minor esoteric works in Manipravalam (and from two rival schools at that), not to mention what seems like a personal list of sacred places that includes an abundance of details. The lack of colophons giving personal information on the scribe and other missing details such as the date and place of composition are significant hurdles for researchers wishing to know more about the manuscript's origins (especially if the MS did not belong to an original, somewhat integral collection, which thankfully it does). However, the choice of inscribed works and the (albeit meagre) paratextual material that it contains do give us an idea about the sort of person who wrote and owned this work. It seems to me this very careful choice of including (or not including) invocations to some Ācāryas indicates that this was not a manuscript that was commissioned, but one that was written for personal use by an erudite Vaṭakalai Śrīvaiṣṇava scholar, which confirms our understanding of the identity of the owners of the Kallīṭaikuṛicci collection.

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<sup>38</sup> Ācāryas are revered almost as much as God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism. *Taṇiyāṇs* invariably appear in the Teṅkalai copies of works by Lokācārya, and so do final statements of devotion.



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