



# लृ and लृ in Sanskrit Lexicography

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<http://www.cceh.uni-koeln.de/lazarus>  
<http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/>

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## 1 Introduction

This report documents the graphematic representation of the vocalic L (Devanagari: ल/ ISO 15919: ɭ) and the combination of consonantal L with vocalic R (Devanagari: लृ/ ISO 15919: lṛ) in Sanskrit lexicography.

## 2 ल ɭ and लृ lṛ

Vocalic L is represented by a simple vowel letter ल in Devanagari, while the combination of consonantal L with vocalic R is represented by the akṣara लृ. Although these two are clearly distinct entities, they were conflated in the original digitisation of the Cologne Sanskrit Lexicon (CSL).<sup>1</sup> However, a closer look shows that problems of inconsistent treatment of ल ɭ and लृ lṛ have a long and distinguished tradition in the writing systems used in modern Sanskrit lexicography. The relevant writing systems in this context are Devanagari and Latin script. Of the various Latin-based transliteration systems, four are considered in this report: The ISO standard ISO 15919:2001, the transliteration used in Monier-Williams (1872, 1899), the Sanskrit Library Phonetic Basic encoding scheme (SLP1), and the popular Harvard-Kyoto transliteration system.

### 2.1 The vowel ल ɭ

Vocalic L ल ɭ belongs to a group of linguistically controversial graphemes (and ultimately phonemes) of Sanskrit. This controversial group of graphemes in Sanskrit scripts consists of the long vocalic R ऋ ṛ, the vocalic L ल ɭ, and in particular the long vocalic L लृ lṛ. Indologists have treated these graphemes with suspicion. Böhtlingk and Roth avoided ऋ ṛ, लृ lṛ, and ल ɭ in verbal forms by replacing them with their guṇa forms *ar*, *ār*, and *al* in the entries of the *Großes Petersburger Wörterbuch* (Böhtlingk and Roth, 1855-1875). Monier-Williams (1872) groups these three graphemes in one section “ऋ ल लृ” and prefixes this section with the following paragraph:

No Sanskrit word begins with any of these vowels; ṛ [ऋ ṛ] appears only in the Gen[itive] plur[al] of nouns terminating in ṛi [ऋ ṛi], in the acc[usative] plur[al] of fem[inine] nouns of relationship, and in the nom[inative] and acc[usative] plur[al] of neuter nouns in ṛi. As to the vowel lṛi [लृ lṛi] it occurs only in some forms of the root क्लृप् [क्लृप् kḷip]. The long lṛi [लृ lṛi] is a mere invention of grammarians.

This text is missing from Monier-Williams (1899) where each of the three letters has its own section. As Monier-Williams (1872) states, vocalic L ल ɭ is rare in Sanskrit words and nearly exclusively occurs in forms of the root क्लृप् kḷip ‘to be well ordered’. Other occurrences are doubtful or artificial. The only possible occurrence is in the root क्लृब् kḷib ‘accomplishment’ which is suspiciously close to क्लृप् kḷip. Several dictionaries list the proper name लतक ɭtaka. However, this form is generally considered to be a mispronunciation of ऋतक ṛtaka by these lexicographers. The lemma ल ɭ ‘the earth, the mother of the gods’ is secondary lemma from tantric texts derived from the vowel ल ɭ. Other entries containing ल ɭ concern the letter and sound ल ɭ itself and derivations of it: लकार ɭkāra and लवर्ण ɭvarṇa both meaning ‘the sound ल ɭ’.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/>

## 2.2 The akṣara लृ

The akṣara लृ – the combination of the consonant ल with the vowel ऋ — is even less common. The only well-attested entries that contain लृ are not for lexemes in the strict sense, but for technical terms derived from inflectional affixes. Monier-Williams (1872) gives the following definitions:

लृङ् लृन् ‘a technical term or symbol for the terminations of the Conditional or for that Mood itself.’

लृट् लृट् ‘a technical term or symbol for the terminations of the Second Future or for that Tense itself.’

The various dictionaries differ slightly in their treatment of these technical terms from Pāṇini. The dictionnaire sanscrit-français (Stchoupak et al., 1932) has both लृङ् लृन् and लृट् लृट् in romanisation and Apte’s Sanskrit English Dictionary (Apte, 1890) lists लृङ् लृन् and लृट् लृट् in Devanagari. Cappeler (1887, 1891) and Macdonnell (1893) only have an entry for लृट् लृट्. In contrast to Monier-Williams (1872), Monier-Williams (1899) has an entry for लृट् लृट्, but instead of लृङ् लृन्, the Monier-Williams (1899) edition gives लृ लृ ‘N[ame] of the terminations of the Conditional Mood or N[ame] of that Mood itself’ as an entry, although he lists लृङ् लृन् and लृट् लृट् – not लृ लृ – under the entry ल la.

Apte in his Sanskrit English Dictionary (1890) is particularly inconsistent in his treatment of लृ and लृ. Under the entry लृ, he states that “No Sanskrit word begins with लृ or लृ, except some of the technical names of Pāṇini for tenses and moods; e. g. लृङ् लृङ् and लृट् लृट्.” However, लृङ् लृङ् and लृट् लृट् are clearly instances of लृ लृ with a consonantal onset and Apte (1890) himself lists them correctly under the consonant ल l in the same dictionary.

The only proper lexeme reported to contain the combination लृ लृ is absent from all major lexicographic works such as the Große Petersburger Wörterbuch (Böhtlingk and Roth, 1855-1875) and Monier-Williams (1872, 1899). However, Wilson (1832), Yates (1846), and the Vidyāsāgara (1900) contain an entry for a root लृञ्च लृञ्च with the meaning ‘to put away’. All three dictionaries give the additional form लृञ्चति लृञ्चति. Neither of these dictionaries give references to occurrences and it is unclear where and in which particular form or forms this lexeme is attested. In particular, whether the lexeme is attested in its base form लृञ्च लृञ्च or a guṇa form (presumably लृञ्च larñc) would be relevant. The three entries read as follows:

लृञ्च r. 1st cl. (लृञ्चति ) To put away. (Wilson, 1832, p. 722)

लृञ्च लृञ्चति 1. a. To put away. (Yates, 1846, p. 646)

लृञ्च r. 1st cl. (लृञ्चति ) To put away. (Vidyāsāgara, 1900, p. 619)

Vidyāsāgara (1900) is based on Wilson (1832). So the fact that it occurs in both works with an identical entry is no surprise. Whether Yates has also taken this lemma from Wilson or whether he did verify it independently is unknown. The lack of entries for this lexeme in later works and especially in Böhtlingk and Roth (1855-1875) and Monier-Williams (1899) is suspicious and suggests that it only occurs in late varieties of Sanskrit, if it is genuine at all.

### 3 Conflating लृ and लृ

#### 3.1 Conflating लृ and लृ in Devanagari

The confusion or conflation of लृ and लृ occurs throughout Sanskrit lexicography and probably beyond that throughout the whole philological tradition. The two glyphs लृ and लृ are very similar in shape in Devanagari script, with लृ looking very much like a frozen combination of ल and ृ, the diacritical form of ऋ. Some cuts of Devanagari typefaces seem to make no distinction in shape between लृ and लृ or at least the distinction was blurred in the usage of these typefaces. Apte's discussion of लृ and लृ under लृ (see above) is a clear instance of this confusion.

The similarity in shape between लृ and लृ is particularly striking in Devanagari. Other Brahmi-derived scripts display far less or virtually no likeness between the two graphemes as the Table 1 shows.

	लृ	लृ
Devanagari	लृ	लृ
Bengali	লৃ	লৃ
Oriya	ଲୃ	ଲୃ
Telugu	లృ	లృ

Table 1: लृ and लृ in different Indic scripts

#### 3.2 Conflating लृ and लृ in Latin script

The ISO standard 15919:2001 clearly distinguishes between the two and transliterates लृ as लृ and लृ as लृ (ल for ल and रृ for ऋ). The romanisation used in Monier-Williams (1872, 1899) conflates the two. The combination लृ is transliterated as लृ – as a combination of ल for ल and रृ for ऋ. The vowel लृ is represented by the complex sequence लृ, unfortunately identical to the juxtaposition of ल and रृ. The *Sanskrit Library Phonetic Basic encoding scheme* (SLP1) as defined in Scharf and Hyman (2011) treats Sanskrit Sounds – and by that Devanagari characters – very consistently. The combination लृ is encoded as लृ – as a combination of ल for ल and रृ for ऋ – while the simple vowel लृ is encoded by the simplex x. The very popular romanisation system Harvard-Kyoto conflates लृ and लृ. In the Harvard-Kyoto system, लृ is transliterated as लृ – as a combination of ल for ल and R for ऋ. The vowel लृ is represented by the combined लृ, unfortunately again identical to the juxtaposition of ल and R. All four transliteration systems are given in Table 2.

### 4 Conclusion

The vocalic L लृ and akṣara or grapheme combination लृ are marginal to the Sanskrit language and entries containing the two graphemes are of questionable status. However, both लृ and लृ are part of Sanskrit or at least of the traditional and modern analysis and representation of the Sanskrit language. Lexicographic works that aim at representing

	लृ	लृ
ISO	l̥	l̥
MW	l̥i	l̥i
SLP1	x	lf
HK	lR	lR

Table 2: l̥ and l̥ in different transliterations

the complete lexical knowledge concerning the Sanskrit language have to distinguish the two consistently to be faithful to this tradition.

For Sanskrit lexicography this means that systems used to represent Sanskrit have to encode the difference between the लृ and लृ unambiguously. While Indic writing systems such as Devanagari fulfill this requirement, some Latin-based systems fail in this regard. In particular the transliteration employed in the most widely used Sanskrit-English dictionary (Monier-Williams, 1899) conflates लृ and लृ, as does the most popular Latin-based transliteration, Harvard-Kyoto. SLP 1 (Scharf and Hyman, 2011) and ISO 15919 accomplish an unequivocal transliteration of Sanskrit and are much better suited for lexicographical work.

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