ल ॢ ḷ and ल ॣ ḹ in Sanskrit Lexicography

Felix Rau

University of Cologne – Lazarus Project

ऌ ḷ and ॡ lṛ in Sanskrit Lexicography
Lazarus Project (Cologne Sanskrit Lexicon) Project Documentation 1

1 ऌ l̥ and ॡ l̥r̥

This report documents the graphematic representation of the vocalic L (Devanagari: ऌ/ ISO 15919: l̥) and the combination of consonantal L with vocalic R (Devanagari: ॡ/ ISO 15919: l̥r̥) in Sanskrit lexicography.

Vocalic L is represented by a simple vowel letter ऌ in Devanagari, while the combination of consonantal L with vocalic R is represented by the akṣara ॡ. Although these two are clearly distinct entities, they were conflated in the original digitisation of the Cologne Sanskrit Lexicon (CSL).[1] However, a closer look shows that problems of inconsistent treatment of ऌ l̥ and ॡ l̥r̥ have a long and distinguished tradition in the writing systems used of 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.

1.1 The vowel ऌ l̥

Vocalic L ऌ l̥ 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 ॠ r̥̄, the vocalic L ऌ l̥, and in particularly the long vocalic L ॡ l̥̄. Indologists have treated these graphemes with suspicion. Böhtlingk and Roth avoided ऋ r̥, ॠ r̥̄, and ऌ l̥ 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 "ॠ ऌ ॡ" and prefixes this section with the following paragraph:

> No Sanskrit word begins with any of these vowels; r̥̄ [ॠ r̥̄] appears only in the Gen[itive] plur[al] of nouns terminating in r̥i [ऋ r̥], in the 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 r̥i. As to the vowel l̥ri [ऌ l̥] it occurs only in some forms of the root kl̥rip [कॢप् kl̥p]. The long l̥rī [ॡ l̥̄] is a mere invention of grammarians.

As Monier-Williams (1899) states, vocalic L ऌ l̥ is rare in Sanskrit words and and nearly exclusively occurs in forms of the root कॢप् kl̥p 'to be well ordered'. Other occurrences are doubtful or artificial. The only possible occurrence is in the root कॢब् kl̥b 'accomplishment' which is suspiciously close to कॢप् kl̥p. Several dictionaries list the proper name ऌतक l̥-taka. However, this form is generally considered to be a mispronunciation of ऋतक r̥taka by these lexicographers. The lemma ऌ l̥ 'the earth, the mother of the gods' is secondary lemma from tantric texts derived from the vowel ऌ l̥. Other entries containing ऌ l̥ concern the letter and sound ऌ l̥ itself and derivations of it: ऌकार l̥kāra and ऌवर्ण l̥varṇa both meaning 'the sound ऌ l̥'.

1.2 The akṣara ॡ l̥r̥

The akṣara ॡ l̥r̥ – the combination of the consonant ल l with the vowel ऋ r̥ — is even less common. The only well-attested entries that contain ॡ l̥r̥ are not for lexemes in the strict

---

[1]http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/

sense, but for technical terms derived from inflectional affixes. Monier-Williams (1872) gives the following definitions:

> लृङ् lṛṅ 'a technical term or symbol for the terminations of the Conditional or for that Mood itself.'

> लृट् lṛṭ '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 lṛṅ and लृट् lṛṭ in romanisation and Apte's Sanskrit English Dictionary (Apte, 1890) lists लृङ् lṛṅ and लृट् lṛṭ in Devanagari. Cappeler (1887, 1891) and Macdonnell (1893) only have an entry for लृट् lṛṭ. In contrast to Monier-Williams (1872), Monier-Williams (1899) has an entry for लृट् lṛṭ, but instead of लृङ् lṛṅ, the Monier-Williams (1899) edition gives लृ lṛ 'N[ame]. of the terminations of the Conditional Mood or N[ame] of that Mood itself' as an entry, although he lists लृङ् lṛṅ and लृट् lṛṭ – not लृ lṛ – under the entry ल la.

Apte in his Sanskrit English Dictionary (1890) is particularly inconsistent in his treatment of ऌ ḷ and लृ lṛ. Under the entry ऌ ḷ, he states that "No Sanskrit word begins with ḷ or ḹ, except some of the technical names of Pâṇini for tenses and moods; e. g. ḷṅ [ḻṅ] and ḷṭ [ḻṭ]." However, लृङ् lṛṅ and लृट् lṛṭ are clearly instances of लृ lṛ 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 lṛ is absent from all major lexicographic works such as the Große Petersburger Wörterbuch (Böhtlingk and Roth, 1855-1875) and citetmw72,mw. However, Wilson (1832), Yates (1846), and the Vidyāsāgara (1900) contain an entry for a root लृञ्च lṛñc with the meaning 'to put away'. All three dictionaries give the additional form लृञ्चति lṛñcati. 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 lṛñc or a guṇa form (presumably लर्ञ्च 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. Wether 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.

2 Conflating ऌ ḷ and लृ lṛ

2.1 Conflating ऌ ḷ and लृ lṛ in Devanagari

The confusion or conflation of ऌ ḷ and लृ lṛ occurs through out Sanskrit lexicography and probably beyond that through out the whole philological tradition. The two glyphs लृ and

ळ are very similar in shape in Devanagari script, with ऴ ḷ looking very much like a frozen combination of ल l and ृ, the diacritical form of ऋ ṛ. Some cuts of Devanagari typefaces seem to make no distinction in shape between ऌ lṛ and ऴ ḷ or at least the distinction was blurred in the usage of these typefaces. Apte's discussion of लृट lṛṭ and लृङ lṛṅ under ऴ ḷ (see above) is a clear instance of this confusion.

The similarity is shape between ऴ ḷ and ऌ lṛ 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.

	ḷ	lṛ
Devanagari	ऴ	ऌ
Bengali	ঌ	ৠ
Oriya	ଌ	ୡ
Telugu	ఌ	ౡ

Table 1: ḷ and lṛ in different Indic scripts

2.2 Conflating ऴ ḷ and ऌ lṛ in Latin script

The ISO standard 15919:2001 clearly distinguishes between the two and transliterates ऴ as ḷ and ऌ as lṛ (l for ल and ṛ for ऋ). The romanisation used in Monier-Williams (1872, 1899) conflates the two. The combination ऌ lṛ is transliterated as lṛi – as a combination of l for ल l and ṛi for ऋ ṛ. The vowel ऴ ḷ is represented by the complex sequence lṛi, unfortunately identical to the juxtaposition of l and ṛi. 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 ऌ lṛ is encoded as lf – as a combination of l for ल l and f for ऋ ṛ – while the simple vowel ऴ ḷ is encoded by the simplex x. The very popular romanisation system Harvard-Kyoto conflates ऌ lṛ and ऴ ḷ. In the Harvard-Kyoto system, ऌ lṛ is transliterated as lR – as a combination of l for ल l and R for ऋ ṛ. The vowel ऴ ḷ is represented by the combined lR, unfortunately again identical to the juxtaposition of l and R. All four transliteration systems are given in Table 2.

	ऴ	ऌ
ISO	ḷ	lṛ
MW	lṛi	lṛi
SLP1	x	lf
HK	lR	lR

Table 2: ḷ and lṛ in different transliterations

3 Conclusion

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

References

Apte, Vaman Shivaram. 1890. *The practical Sanskrit-English dictionary*. Poona: Shiralkar.

Böhtlingk, Otto von, and Rudolf Roth. 1855-1875. *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*. St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Cappeler, Carl. 1887. *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*. Straßburg: Trübner.

Cappeler, Carl. 1891. *Sanskrit-English dictionary*. Straßburg: Trübner.

Macdonnell, Arthur Anthony. 1893. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. London: Longmans.

Monier-Williams, Monier. 1872. *A Sanskrit-English dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Monier-Williams, Monier. 1899. *A Sanskrit-English dictionary, new edition.*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Scharf, Peter M., and Malcolm D. Hyman. 2011. *Linguistic issues in encoding Sanskrit*. Providence: The Sanskrit Library. URL `sanskrit1.ccv.brown.edu/tomcat/sl/–/pub/lies_sl.pdf`.

Stchoupak, Nadine, Luigia Nitti-Dolchi, and Louis Renou. 1932. *Dictionnaire sanskrit-français*. Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne. Paris: Maisonneuve.

Vidyāsāgara, Jīvānanda. 1900. *Shabda-sagara, or a comprehensive Sanskrit-English lexicon : chiefly based on professor Horace Hayman Wilsons Sanskrit-English dictionary and compiled from various recent authorities for the use of schools and colleges*. Calcutta: Calcutta Press.

Wilson, Horace H. 1832. *A dictionary in Sanscrit and English*. Calcutta: Education Press, 2. ed., greatly extended edition.

Yates, William. 1846. *A dictionary in Sanscrit and English, designed for the use of private students and of indian colleges and schools*. Calcutta: The Baptist Mission Press.