This book required an extensive amount of research and reading, both from Dr Ambedkar’s own copious output, and from the vast amounts of diligent scholarship that has been undertaken on his life and work. The task of writing a short, accessible, and yet sufficiently thorough biography would have been impossible to undertake were it not for the invaluable assistance rendered to me by two friends who doubled as researchers, Katherine Abraham and Sheeba Thattil. Prof. Thattil dug up digital copies of many volumes by and on Ambedkar that I might not otherwise have been able to access. Katherine not only identified additional resources but undertook considerable research on her own, including into ancillary subjects ranging beyond the original scope of my own reading, and suggested specific lines of enquiry. Her diligent support in meticulously checking and revising my footnotes and endnotes, and helping me compile the bibliography, make hers an indispensable role in the preparation of this book for a worldwide readership. My vocabulary is inadequate to express the extent of my profound thanks to both of them.

My gratitude also goes, as always, to my brilliant publisher and editor at Aleph, David Davidar, to my diligent and meticulous editor, Aienla Ozukum, and Karishma Koshal, who stewarded this volume to publication. My thanks, too, to Bena Sareen for another terrific cover and Vasundhara Raj Baigra who, with her usual cheerful efficiency, is responsible for the book’s marketing and publicity campaign.

Nonetheless, as the author, I remain solely responsible for the contents of the book, and any errors of fact or interpretation should be laid exclusively at my door.