

Metres in Tamil Bhakti Literature and the Problem of their (occasional) Description in Treatises (Studies in Tamil Metrics-2)*

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Introduction

The present article is an attempt to give a bird's eye view of the metres found in the Tamil devotional poetry¹ which plays (and has played for many centuries) an impor-

* This article is a token of my gratitude to Mr. R. Varadadesikan, whom I have known for many years, for providing me with inspiration and guidance in at least four domains.

- There was firstly, in the year 2000, the intellectual challenge, not yet answered [but this article might be a first step in that direction], to do for the *Nālāyirat Tivviyappirapantam*, the equivalent of what was being done for the *Tēvāram*, finally published (or “hypostasied”) as a CD-ROM [“*Digital Tēvāram*”] in 2007, on the basis of the unpublished documents prepared by the late V.M. Subrahmanya Ayyar [1905–1981].
- There was, secondly, my admiration for his very long range effort in cataloguing the 1614 bundles of the EFEO palm-leaf manuscripts, an endeavour which was started during the year 2000, when I was the head of the EFEO Pondicherry Centre, and which is still going on, in 2011, having been completed to the extent of 63% (see my announcement in the issue 36 of *Patrika*, the *Bulletin of the French Research Institutes in India*, dated July 2011).
- There was, thirdly, my acknowledgement that during the past twenty years, he has often given precise answers (whenever I came to clear my doubts with him) concerning Vaiṣṇava literature.
- There was, finally, his timely help (in 2010–2011) in explaining with obvious pedagogical skills to the outside world (when external visitors came to visit him), the necessity to preserve the general knowledge concerning the Grantha script (which implied [although he could not say it himself] that the Grantha script had to be included in the forthcoming updates of the Unicode standard). Although Mr. R. Varadadesikan has probably never used a computer himself, his explanations to visitors seeking enlightenment concerning the practicalities of Sanskrit or Maṇipravāḷam books editions in Southern India certainly played an important role in “fluidifying” what might have otherwise appeared as a (politically) blocked situation (see the link: http://nirappirikai.blogspot.com/2010/11/blog-post_1092.html).

¹ This article deals only with the form. The reader who is interested in the content of this lite-

tant role in the life of those who are devotees of Śiva or of Viṣṇu and is often referred to as Tamil Bhakti literature. The element on which my exploration concentrates is the stanza, a term for which I shall try to give a precise definition later,² but which I shall first define in a preliminary way as the basic semantic building brick from which most of those devotional compositions are made. Those elementary bricks are however not all identical in form and I attempt here to enumerate, as exhaustively as possible, the various sets of metrical characterisations under which they have been said to fall by the various editors thanks to whom the text of those compositions is available to us. This presents us with two additional difficulties. The first one is that we occasionally see differences of opinion between editors concerning the metrical category under which a specific stanza (or group of stanzas) falls. The second difficulty lies in the fact that there is no universally agreed upon simple system for referring concisely to all the parts of such a vast ensemble of texts. For that reason, a part of this study had to be devoted to a comparison of the ways in which the data examined is presented in the various editions which have been consulted. An additional remark in this respect is that it has seemed to me impossible to ignore editions which might be described as “popular”. Unlike the ancient classical Tamil literature (often referred to as Sangam [Caṅkam] literature), which does not have many real (living) readers (or interpreters), Tamil devotional literature has a much larger appeal, although some items in the corpus are certainly much more popular than others. Therefore, I have attempted, as far as possible, to provide textual references which are usable also with some of the currently available editions, even though they may not appear as “scholarly”,³ because they are part of the textual reality of Tamil devotional literature.

If we take the case of Śaiva literature and its canonical series of books, the *Panniru Tirumurai* “Twelve Sacred Series”⁴ (henceforth PITM),⁵ one of the popu-

rature can consult Champakalakshmi (2011), Hardy (1983), Gros (1984), Wilden (forthcoming) and many other books.

² See Section 4. “Homogeneous groups of stanzas”.

³ I take as a necessary criterion that a scholarly edition should mention variants. But, at the same time, I acknowledge the fact that the primary (or most frequent) reason for people in Tamil Nadu to acquire the texts which will be discussed in this article is their belonging to a specific religious community. This does not mean however that they will not prefer a good quality edition. But hearing about “variants” is probably not a primary concern for them.

⁴ *Panniru* is “twelve”. Several of the twelve *Tirumurais* are collections of “hymns”, which are, most of them, made up of several “stanzas” (see discussion of the term later). Other *Tirumurais*, such as the eleventh, contain compositions which have a more complex structure than simple hymns. One of the meanings of *urai* is “order (of constituents within a series)” and the use of the prefix *tiru* expresses the sacredness of those collections.

⁵ For the sake of brevity, I may refer to individual *Tirumurais* by adding a number. Thus, the *Tēvāram*, which is traditionally divided in seven parts, which are referred to as “First *Tirumurai*”, “Second *Tirumurai*”, ... (up to “Seventh *Tirumurai*”) may be referred to as PITM-1 to PITM-7.

lar⁶ editions currently available in bookshops is a thick one-volume edition (Cuppiramaniyaṇ 2009a, henceforth PITM-A), which contains in 1320 pages (A4-size), printed on two columns, the source text (*mūlam*) without commentary (*urai*), but with substantial introductory notes, of 921 compositions by twenty-seven poet-saints,⁷ which have been recited or sung in honour of Śiva. If we consider now the Vaiṣṇava corpus, the *Nālāyirat Tivviappirapantam* “Four Thousand Divine Compositions”⁸ (henceforth NATP),⁹ two of the editions which seem to be currently popular and easily available are the LIFCO edition (in two volumes) and the JEKATRAṬCAKAN edition (in one volume), referred to respectively, in what follows, as NATP-3 and NATP-5 (see bibliography). The former contains only the source text of twenty-three compositions by twelve poet-saints, whereas the latter also contains, in addition to that, a modern Tamil commentary and an English translation.

As indicated, none of those editions can be said to be totally scholarly, although they have their roots in earlier editions, some of which were closer to the standards of textual criticism because they had been made on the basis of manuscripts. If we consider first the PITM, and if we limit ourselves to its initial part which is called *Tēvāram* and which occupies the major part of the first 619 pages in the 1320 pages of PITM-A, one of the most scholarly of all existing editions is probably that of T.V. Gopal Iyer (1984, 1985 & 1991) (with a long introduction by François Gros), because it lists all the variants found in all the preceding editions¹⁰ and in a number of

Similarly, the *Tiruvācakam*, which, along with the *Tirukkōvaiyār*, is called Eighth *Tirumurai* will be referred to occasionally as PITM-8, the *Tiruvicaippā Tiruppallāṇṭu* as PITM-9, the *Tiruman-tiram* as PITM-10, the Eleventh *Tirumurai* (*Patinōrān Tirumurai*) as PITM-11 and the *Periapurāṇam* as PITM-12.

⁶ I call this edition “popular” because it was already in its *mūnṛām paṭippu* (third edition or third reprint?) in September 2010, the first edition having appeared in December 2007.

⁷ This count is based on the chart found on pp. 24–25 in PITM-A. There is of course a lot of differences between those compositions because the shortest one, attributed to poet no. 15, contains only one stanza (and is his only composition) whereas the longest one, attributed to poet no. 27 (alias Cēkkilār) contains 4286 stanzas. The vast majority of compositions, however, have only 10 or 11 stanzas, and are referred to by me here as “hymns”. We shall see more about this later.

⁸ *Nālāyiram* is “Four thousand”. *Tivya*, also spelled *tivviya*, is the tamilised form of Sanskrit *divya* “divine”. *Pirapantam* is Sanskrit *pra-bandha*. As we shall see, the precise method for arriving at a count of 4000 varies from edition to edition.

⁹ In this article, for the sake of brevity, I shall refer to the four big subdivisions of NATP as NATP- α , NATP- β , NATP- γ and NATP- δ and I shall occasionally refer to individual compositions in the NATP by adding numbers. For instance, the *Tiruppāvai* can be referred to as NATP- α_3 . Those abbreviations are presented in Charts 9 to 11 (see Section 8) and the main abbreviations are listed in the bibliography.

¹⁰ François Gros (1984: lxvii) mentions “more than twelve hundred emendations supplied to the reference edition”. They are listed and discussed in T.V. Gopal Iyer (1984: lxxxix-clxxii). We also have a list of *pāṭa pētaṅkaḷ* in T.V. Gopal Iyer (1991: 425–536).

manuscripts which had not been consulted by the editors of earlier editions.¹¹ In the case of the NATP, the most scholarly of the editions which I was able to consult is probably the Murray Rajam edition, (in four volumes, NATP-2 in bibliography), which also lists all the variant readings known at the time when it was printed (and all the earlier editions). That edition was started under the leadership of S. Vaiyāpuri Pillai and was continued after his death by the members of his team of collaborators.

1. Metrical text and sandhi-split text

As I have pointed out in Chevillard (2009) at a conference organized by INFITT, neither T.V. Gopal Iyer (1984–1985), nor NATP-2 can be considered as an ultimate answer to the question: which text should a modern edition of Tamil devotional literature provide its reader with? The reason is that the text provided by both those editions is a “sandhi-split text”, whereas the text which has been transmitted over the course of centuries is a “metrical text”. The difference between these two modes of presentation can be explained in a preliminary way by comparing row 1 and row 2 in Chart 1, where one stanza from the *Tēvāram* is taken as an illustration:

Chart 1: *Tēvāram* 2.1.1 (sandhi-split text vs. metrical text)

Lexical level (T.V. Gopal Iyer's text)	<i>cennel am kaḷaṇip paḷaṇattu ayalē celum punṇai veṇ kiḷiyil paḷalam purai pūntarāy tuṇṇi, nal imaiyōr muṭi tōy kaḷalir! colir— pinṇuceṇṇaṭaiyil pīrai pāmpu uṭaṇ vaittatē?</i> ¹²
Metrical Level (Project Madurai text)	<i>cenne laṅkaḷa ṇippaḷa ṇattaya lēcelum punṇai venkili yirpava ḷampurai pūntarāy tuṇṇi, nallimai yōrmuṭi tōykaḷa līrcolir pinṇu ceṇṇaṭai yirpīrai pāmpuṭaṇ vaittatē?</i>

¹¹ Concerning the status of the edition, François Gros writes, in his long introduction, on p. lxvii: “the usual principles of textual criticism are hardly pertinent to a text which is also very much diffused. On the other hand there is, to this day, no mean which would lead to establishing a census of varieties of the *ōtuvār* tradition. In short, we tend to consider this edition as the pre-critical stage, indispensable to the development of a stricter textual study, yet one based on principles other than the codicology and especially on the metrical analysis and formulae [...]”. An important expression in this statement is “pre-critical stage”.

¹² V.M. Subrahmanya Ayyar translates this verse as follows: “Oh Lord with whose feet the crowns of the good *tevar* closely come into contact, in Pūntarāy, where by the sides of the tanks adjacent to the red paddy fields, the flowers of Puṇṇai (mast-wood tree) resemble coral lying on a white cloth! please tell me the reason for having placed the crescent with the cobra in the red and entwining *caṭai*.” (See bibliography: *Digital Tēvāram*).

We see in the upper part of Chart 1 (lexical level) a text divided into four lines and each of those lines contains blank spaces separating words. Meanwhile, we see in the lower part (metrical level) a text consisting of four metrical lines (*aṭi*), each of them containing five metrical units traditionally called *cīr* “metrical feet”. We can read in T.V. Gopal Iyer (1991: 386) that he thinks that the stanza under consideration obeys a set of metrical specifications designated by the technical expression *kali nilait turaṭi* and can be further explained as falling under an iconic formula expressible as “*tēmā kūṇṇam kūṇṇam kūṇṇam kūṇṇam*”, as is made clear by the partial scanning given in Chart 2:

Chart 2: Scanning of lines 1 and 2 in *Tēvāram* 2.1.1

<p><AṬI> <CĪR template=“tēmā”> cenne </CĪR> <CĪR template=“kūṇṇam”> laṅkaḷa </CĪR> <CĪR template=“kūṇṇam”> nippaḷa </CĪR> <CĪR template=“kūṇṇam”> nattaya </CĪR> <CĪR template=“kūṇṇam”> lēceḷum </CĪR> </AṬI></p>
<p><AṬI> <CĪR template=“tēmā”> punṇai </CĪR> <CĪR template=“kūṇṇam”> veṅkiḷi </CĪR> <CĪR template=“kūṇṇam”> yirpava </CĪR> <CĪR template=“kūṇṇam”> ḷampurai </CĪR> <CĪR template=“kūṇṇam”> pūntarāy </CĪR> </AṬI> etc.</p>

The tags <AṬI> and </AṬI> indicate the beginning and the end of a metrical line, whereas the tags <CĪR> and </CĪR> indicate the beginning and the end of a metrical foot (*cīr*). As for the traditional designations *tēmā* and *kūṇṇam*, used as names for the template, they are conventional iconic designations for referring to what is common, in terms of syllabic structure, to the strings “*cenne*” and “*punṇai*” on the one hand, and to “*laṅkaḷa*”, “*nippaḷa*”, “*nattaya*”, “*lēceḷum*”, “*veṅkiḷi*”, “*yirpava*”, “*ḷampurai*” and “*pūntarāy*” on the other hand.

However, in order to have a more complete representation, we must add another layer which is the musical layer, because the stanzas of the *Tēvāram* are intended to be sung, using a particular melody and a particular musical mode (or *paṇ*), which in the case of this stanza is called *intaḷam*. The following chart attempts to capture this complexity.¹³

¹³ Fully understanding this complexity would require exploring the relationship between the

Chart 3: Hierarchy of levels

A	Musical level	<i>Cenne laṅkaḷa nippaḷa nattaya lēcelum / ...</i>	Sung with a melody in <i>intaḷam</i>
B	Metrical level	<i>Cenne laṅkaḷa nippaḷa nattaya lēcelum / ...</i>	Feet recited metrically
C	Lexical level	<i>cennel am kaḷanip paḷanattu ayalē celum / ...</i>	Words read as plain text
D	Semantic level	red-paddy MORPH field tank-OBL adjacent-to fertile	Words understood

The “normal use” for which a hymn such as *Tēvāram* 2.1 was intended was ritual singing.¹⁴ In twentieth-century-India, there still existed schools for professional singers, called *ōtuvār* (see Image 1), where during a period of five years young boys would be trained in the proper way of singing hundreds of hymns. This corresponds to Level A in Chart 3.



Image 1: *ōtuvār pāṭacālai* (“school for chanting/singing performers”) (Dharmapuram, February 2000, photograph by Jean-Luc Chevillard)

metrical level (level B), where a line such as *tōṭuṭaiya ceviyaṇ viṭaiyēriyōr tūveṇ maticūti* [line 1 in *Tēvāram* 1.1.1] is described by T.V. Gopal Iyer (1991: 375) as having five metrical feet and the musical level (level A) where the same line is said by T.V. Gopal Iyer (1991: 95) to follow a template (*kaṭṭaḷai*) which is expressed as “*tāṇa tāṇa taṇa tāṇaṇa tāṇaṇa tāṇā taṇa tāṇā*”. This will not be attempted here.

¹⁴ See the chapter 6 in Champakalakshmi (2011), “*Patikam Pāṭuvār*: Ritual Singing as a Means of Communication in Early Medieval South India.”

In addition to those professional singers, there are also devotees who train themselves to sing the *Tēvāram*, in groups.¹⁵ And in the case of the NATP, I am told that there are also groups of devotees (called *kōṣṭi*) who meet regularly to sing it, although I have not yet observed it directly.

2. Towards a survey of metre in Tamil Bhakti literature

This general presentation being given, I shall now move closer to the current target of my own exploration, within the whole of the landscape which has been sketched in the introduction. That target concerns the status of the level referred to in Chart 3 as level B (i.e. the “metrical level”). I do observe that a number of editions (which we shall examine more in detail in what follows) consider it useful to give a metrical characterisation of the compositions belonging to the NATP and the PITM. On the other hand, other editions do not consider it necessary to make statements concerning metre. To this can be added that several of the technical terms which are currently used by editors for describing Tamil Bhakti literature from a metrical point of view, are also found, as is natural, within metrical treatises and their commentaries. Those treatises and commentaries are however probably posterior to most of the devotional literature itself. It is therefore necessary to scrutinise all those texts, trying to trace, if possible, the progressive development of the descriptive terminological system¹⁶ which may have been standardised by a number of editors, starting in the 19th century (when printed books appeared). Ideally, one should also try to verify how close the descriptive system is to the textual reality, but that can only remain a distant goal for the time being, because:

- the size of the corpus to be examined and scanned is a challenge to any such attempt;
- the nature of the textual reality cannot be apprehended perfectly without any recourse to human interpreters, and without the experience which they bring with them;
- the grammatical corpus, in which one may hope to find many relevant pieces of information, is itself huge.

For those reasons, the preliminary task seems to be to make a survey of what editors and grammarians have stated concerning the metrical form of Tamil devotional literature, with a view to, ultimately, when the survey will have been completed,¹⁷ creating a data base (or an electronic edition), which would contain all that

¹⁵ In 1999–2000, I recorded several training sessions conducted by a teacher in Ampalattu Āṭu Aiyar Maṭam Teru (alias Kosakkadai St), in Pondicherry.

¹⁶ The underlying question is: How did the Tamil grammatical tradition develop and what was its domain of application, at different points of time?

¹⁷ There should also be a verification part in that survey, i.e. a comparison of the actual metrical characteristics with what they are theoretically supposed to be.

information, with specific attention being given to the contradictions between the various sources. That data base should ideally contain all the four levels mentioned in Chart 3. For that reason, a great part of the current article will be devoted to an analysis of what is seen in several editions of the NATP and the PITM, concerning the choices made by their editors, because when an editor of Tamil Bhakti texts¹⁸ makes decisions concerning the way he presents the texts to the (future) users of his books, many of that editor's decisions will be based on what he believes the metre to be. These decisions concern the splitting of the textual stream and the meta-data that accompanies it, preceding or following it. They have consequences on the way the reader will receive the text and on the way the text will be further transmitted. Ultimately, the editor's decisions¹⁹ may be rooted in at least five sources:

- what he has seen in earlier printed editions concerning text presentation and meta-data;
- what he has seen in manuscripts;²⁰
- what he knows from real personal practice in the (collective?) recitation of those texts by the community for which these texts are authoritative;
- what he thinks the Tamil Grammarians whose works have been preserved by the tradition "tell" him to do, and how much he believes this is applicable or feasible;
- what the medium he is using allows him to do: as I have just suggested, new possibilities have opened up for the forthcoming electronic editions, with respect to the duality between metrical text and sandhi-split text.

3. *Tēvāram* metres, according to T.V. Gopal Iyer & T.S. Gangadharan

Fortunately, with respect to the research which must be done, in order to do the survey, a great amount of work in this direction has been done by great scholars such as T.V. Gopal Iyer [1926–2007], whose 1991 *Tēvāram Āyvuṭṭunai*, prepared with the help of his brother, T.S. Gangadharan [1929–2009], contains (on pp. 375–421) very precise information on the metres used in the *Tēvāram*. An abridged compilation of all the statements available in that volume concerning the metres used in the 386 hymns by Campantar, the 312 hymns by Appar, and the 101 hymns

¹⁸ This also applies to the creators of on-line E-texts, such as those responsible for what is found on Greta (http://fiindolo.sub.uni-goettingen.de/greta.htm) or on Project Madurai (http://www.projectmadurai.org/).

¹⁹ I do not consider here the possibility of unconscious mistakes, but in the history of the textual transmission those can also of course account for changes.

²⁰ In this presentation, I shall on one occasion take advantage of the fact that the EFEO core collection of (Vaiṣṇava) manuscripts contains 365 bundles (on a total number of 1614) which pertain to the *Nālāyirat Tivviyappirapantam* (NATP), because they either contain the Tamil source text (*mūlam*) or some Sanskrit or Maṇipravāḷam commentary. This will be of course extremely preliminary.

by Cuntarar is found in the following three charts (Charts 4, 5 and 6), where the names of the metrical specifications²¹ provided by them are listed in order of decreasing frequency. They are:

Chart 4: Metres in Campantar's *Tēvāram* [386 hymns, PITM-1 to PITM-3]
(according to T.V. Gopal Iyer and T.S. Gangadharan)

Metrical specifications	Rank	Hymns count	Occurrences
<i>kali viruttam</i>	1	144	1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19, 1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 1.23, 1.24, 1.25, 1.26, 1.27, 1.28, 1.29, 1.30, 1.31, 1.32, 1.33, 1.43, 1.46, 1.80, 1.81, 1.82, 1.83, 1.84, 1.85, 1.86, 1.87, 1.88, 1.89, 1.118, 1.119, 1.120, 1.121, 1.122, 1.123, 1.124, 1.125, 1.127, 1.134, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 2.16, 2.17, 2.18, 2.19, 2.20, 2.21, 2.22, 2.23, 2.24, 2.25, 2.26, 2.27, 2.28, 2.29, 2.30, 2.31, 2.32, 2.33, 2.34, 2.35, 2.36, 2.37, 2.38, 2.76, 2.98, 2.99, 2.100, 2.101, 2.113, 2.114, 2.115, 2.116, 2.117, 2.118, 2.119, 2.120, 2.121, 2.122, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.20, 3.21, 3.22, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25, 3.26, 3.27, 3.28, 3.29, 3.30, 3.31, 3.32, 3.33, 3.34, 3.35, 3.36, 3.37, 3.38, 3.39, 3.43, 3.44, 3.45, 3.46, 3.47, 3.48, 3.49, 3.50, 3.51, 3.52, 3.53, 3.55, 3.56, 3.57, 3.58, 3.59, 3.60, 3.61, 3.62, 3.63, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66, 3.124, 3.125, 3.126, 3.127.
<i>aṟucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	2	56	1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.59, 1.66, 1.67, 1.68, 1.69, 1.70, 1.71, 1.72,

²¹ Those specifications will not be explained here, but later in the article.

			1.73, 1.74, 1.129, 1.130, 1.131, 1.132, 2.65, 2.66, 2.67, 2.68, 2.69, 2.70, 2.71, 2.72, 2.73, 2.74, 2.79, 2.80, 2.89, 2.90, 2.91, 2.92, 2.93, 2.94, 2.95, 2.96, 2.102, 2.103, 2.104, 2.105, 2.106, 2.107, 2.108, 2.109, 2.110, 2.111, 3.42, 3.100, 3.113, 3.114, 3.115, 3.116, 3.AAA. ²²
<i>kalit turai</i>	3	55	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.42, 1.45, 1.64, 1.65, 1.97, 1.98, 1.99, 1.100, 1.101, 1.102, 1.103, 2.5, 2.59, 2.60, 2.61, 2.62, 2.63, 2.64, 2.75, 2.77, 2.78, 3.7, 3.9, 3.67, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71, 3.72, 3.73, 3.74, 3.75, 3.76, 3.77, 3.78, 3.79, 3.80, 3.81, 3.82, 3.83, 3.89, 3.90, 3.91, 3.92, 3.93, 3.101, 3.102, 3.103, 3.104, 3.105, 3.106, 3.107.
<i>taravu koccakam</i>	4	28	1.47, 1.48, 1.49, 1.50, 1.51, 1.52, 1.53, 1.60, 1.61, 1.62, 1.63, 1.133, 2.40, 2.41, 2.42, 2.43, 2.44, 2.45, 2.46, 2.47, 2.48, 2.54, 2.55, 2.56, 2.57, 2.58, 2.81, 2.97.
<i>ācīriya iṇaikkuraṭ turai</i>	5	27	1.39, 1.40, 1.54, 1.55, 1.56, 1.57, 1.58, 1.104, 1.105, 1.106, 1.107, 1.108, 1.135, 2.49, 2.50, 2.51, 2.52, 2.53, 2.112, 3.1, 3.2, 3.94, 3.95, 3.96, 3.97, 3.98, 3.99.
<i>kalinilaiṭ turai</i>	6	19	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.82, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.84, 3.85, 3.86, 3.87, 3.88.
<i>elucīrk kalīneṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	7	14	1.41, 1.44, 2.83, 2.84, 2.85, 2.86, 2.87, 2.88, 3.118, 3.119, 3.120, 3.121, 3.122, 3.123.

²² The reference “3.AAA” designates a hymn which turned out to be an interpolation (See *Digital Tēvāram*).

<i>vañci viruttam</i>	8	13	1.34, 1.35, 1.36, 1.37, 1.38, 1.109, 1.110, 1.111, 1.112, 1.113, 1.114, 1.115, 3.109.
<i>vañcit tālicai</i>	9	9	1.90, 1.91, 1.92, 1.93, 1.94, 1.95, 1.96, 3.40, 3.41.
<i>eñcirk kaḷinēṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	10	8	1.75, 1.76, 1.77, 1.78, 1.79, 1.126, 1.136, 2.39.
<i>kurāṭ ṭālicai</i>	11	3	3.110, 3.111, 3.112.
<i>nālaṭimēl vaippu</i>	12	3	3.3, 3.4, 3.108.
<i>īraṭimēl vaippu</i>	13	2	3.5, 3.6.
<i>kaṭṭalaik kalit turai</i>	14	2	1.116, 1.117.
<i>iṇaikkuraḷ ācīriyam</i>	15	1	1.128.
<i>veṇ centurai</i>	16	1	3.117.
Mixed metre	17	1	3.54.

Chart 5: Metres in Appar's *Tēvāram* [312 hymns, PITM-4 to PITM-6]
(according to T.V. Gopal Iyer and T.S. Gangadharan)

Metrical specifications	Rank	Hymns count	Occurrences
<i>kali viruttam</i>	1	105	4.10, 4.11, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18 and from 5.1 upto 5.100. ²³
<i>eñcirk kaḷinēṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	2	100	4.14 and from 6.1 upto 6.99. ²⁴
<i>aṟucirk kaḷinēṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	3	65	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.15 and from 4.22 upto 4.79. ²⁵

²³ The hymns in the range from 5.1 to 5.100 are traditionally labeled *Tiruk Kuruntokai*.

²⁴ The hymns in the range from 6.1 to 6.99 are traditionally labeled *Tirut Tāṇṭakam*.

²⁵ The hymns in the range from 4.22 to 4.79 are traditionally labeled *Tiru Nēricai*.

<i>kaṭṭalaik kalit turai</i>	4	34	from 4.80 upto 4.113. ²⁶
<i>taravu kockakam</i>	5	4	4.7, 4.12, 4.13, 4.19.
<i>eḷucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	6	1	4.8.
<i>ācīriya iṇaikkuraṭ turai</i>	7	1	4.20.
<i>kalit turai</i>	8	1	4.21.
<i>kalit tāḷicai</i>	9	1	4.9.

Chart 6: Metres in Cuntarar's *Tēvāram* [101 hymns, PITM-7]
(according to T.V. Gopal Iyer and T.S. Gangadharan)

Metrical specifications	Rank	Hymns count	Occurrences
<i>kali viruttam</i>	1	27	7.1, 7.11, 7.13, 7.21, 7.22, 7.23, 7.24, 7.25, 7.26, 7.27, 7.28, 7.29, 7.32, 7.37, 7.50, 7.71, 7.72, 7.78, 7.79, 7.80, 7.82, 7.83, 7.85, 7.91, 7.93, 7.94, 7.96.
<i>eṇcīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	2	27	7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.9, 7.16, 7.38, 7.39, 7.40, 7.46, 7.54, 7.55, 7.56, 7.57, 7.58, 7.59, 7.60, 7.61, 7.62, 7.63, 7.64, 7.65, 7.66, 7.67, 7.68, 7.70, 7.74, 7.84.
<i>aṛucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	3	13	7.7, 7.8, 7.30, 7.42, 7.47, 7.52, 7.53, 7.73, 7.75, 7.77, 7.90, 7.95, 7.101.

²⁶ The hymns in the range from 4.80 to 4.113 are traditionally labeled *Tiru Viruttam*.

<i>elucīrk kalineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	4	12	7.5, 7.6, 7.10, 7.14, 7.15, 7.33, 7.34, 7.35, 7.36, 7.41, 7.48, 7.69.
<i>kaṭṭalaik kalit tuṛai</i>	5	8	7.17, 7.18, 7.19, 7.20, 7.97, 7.98, 7.99, 7.100.
<i>kalinilaṭi tuṛai</i>	6	6	7.12, 7.31, 7.43, 7.44, 7.45, 7.81.
<i>taravu koccakam</i>	7	5	7.51, 7.76, 7.86, 7.89, 7.92.
<i>ācīriya iṇaikkuraṭ tuṛai</i>	8	2	7.87, 7.88.
<i>kalit tālicaṭi</i>	9	1	7.49.

To this must be added that we are also lucky to have T.V. Gopal Iyer's observations, in a set of books published in 2006, on the (sometimes multiple) ways of scanning the stanzas of the *Periyatirumoli* (a component of NATP). Additionally, one of the articles which is contained in the second of his three volumes of *Kaṭṭuraikaḷ* (2007),²⁷ gives concise and lucid remarks on the history of the edition of Tamil devotional literature. These sources of information are, however, for the time being, only available to those who can read them in the original Tamil. The same can be said of the wealth of information contained in volumes 14 and 15, devoted to “*yāppu*” and to “*viruttam & vaṇṇam*”, of the 17-volumes *Tamiḷ Ilakkaṇaṭ Pēraḱarāṭi* (TIPA). An English version of the TIPA has been prepared by T.S. Gangadharan, and an electronic edition is in preparation, but some time will elapse before the reader who is interested in those topics, but cannot read the original data, can make use of this forthcoming reference work.

4. Homogeneous groups of stanzas

On the basis of the charts contained in the preceding section, the reader should now have a nominal preliminary perception of the metrical diversity of Tamil devotional literature, at least as far as the *Tēvāram* is concerned, because if we combine the data found in the three charts, we obtain a list of seventeen Tamil technical designations used for the characterisation of 798 hymns (a 799th hymn being described in Chart 4 as “mixed metre”²⁸). Among those designations, only one, *iṇaikkuraḷācīriyam*,

²⁷ The title of the article is “*cuvaṭip paṭippu varalārriḷ tēvārat tirumuṛaikaḷum tivviyaṭ pirapantamum*” (pp. 3–27).

²⁸ In this exceptional hymn (*Tēvāram* 3.54), stanzas 1 to 3 are in one metre (*kali viruttam*) and stanzas 4 to 12 in another metre (*kalit tuṛai*), as remarked by V.M. Subrahmanya Ayyar (see

which is used for characterizing *Tēvāram* 1.128, has to be set apart because that composition is not made up of stanzas.²⁹ The remaining 797 compositions are all homogenous groups of stanzas, each group being characterised by one among the sixteen designations.³⁰ As for the length of the hymns, taking the stanza as a unit, the most frequent size is “eleven stanzas” (found in 402 hymns) followed by “ten stanzas” (found in 319 hymns), but other sizes are also found, as indicated in the following chart.

Chart 7: distribution of length in *Tēvāram* hymns

Length (in stanzas)	30	20	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Number of hymns	1	1	20	402	319	19	9	8	5	2	2	2	5	4

However, if, going beyond the *Tēvāram*, we examine within the wider picture (i.e. the PITM and the NATP) the remaining compositions by the twenty-four other Śaiva authors and by the twelve Vaiṣṇava authors, we do find that many of them have a much more complex structure, metrically speaking, than the compositions by the three authors of the *Tēvāram*. For instance, among the four compositions attributed to Nammālvār (which are mentioned in Section 8), the longest one, referred to as *Tiruvāymoli* (TVM), is a single composition containing 1102 stanzas, but divided into 100 sub-groups, each of them being homogeneous from a metrical point of view. Each sub-group is also referred to as being a *tiruvāymoli*, and contains eleven stanzas, except for one exceptional group which contains thirteen stanzas.³¹ The metrical specification for the first group of eleven stanzas in the *Tiruvāymoli* (TVM,

Digital Tēvāram). It is added in *Tēvāram Āyvat tuṇai* (p. 399) that stanza 10 follows the specifications of *ācīriya nērtturai*.

²⁹ This composition (*Tiruvēlukūrrirukkai*) is exceptional, consisting of a single verse, having forty-seven lines.

³⁰ In decreasing order of frequency, the metrical characterisations found in the *Tēvāram*, according to T.V. Gopal Iyer and T.S. Gangadharan are: *kali viruttam*: 276 hymns; *eṇcīrk kalīneṭiṭaṭi yācīriya viruttam*: 135 hymns; *arucīrk kalīneṭiṭaṭi yācīriya viruttam*: 134; *kalit tuṇai*: 56; *kaṭṭalaik kalit tuṇai*: 44; *taravu kockakam*: 37; *ācīriya īnaikkuraṭ tuṇai*: 30; *elucīrk kalīneṭiṭaṭi yācīriya viruttam*: 27; *kalinilait tuṇai*: 25; *vañci viruttam*: 13; *vañcit tāḷicai*: 9; *kuraṭ tāḷicai*: 3; *nālaṭimēl vaippu*: 3; *īraṭimēl vaippu*: 2; *kalit tāḷicai*: 2; *veṇcentuṇai*: 1.

³¹ The 100 sub-groups (or *tiruvāymoli*) are further grouped into 10 decades (*pattu*). As an illustration, we can say that the exceptional *tiruvāymoli* which contains 13 stanzas is TVM 2.7, i.e. the 7th *tiruvāymoli* in the 2nd *pattu*. Its stanzas can be referred to as TVM 2.7.1 to 2.7.13. Its incipit is “*kēcavan tamar*” and its metre is *kali nilait tuṇai*.

alias NATP-8) is called *kali viruttam*, whereas the group of eleven stanzas immediately following it is said to be composed according to the specifications of *vañcit turai*. All in all, nine metres are represented in the TVM and the detail will be given in Section 12. The next question a reader might want to ask at this stage is the following: why do we say that the 1102 stanzas found in the TVM are a single composition, whereas we say that the 1037 stanzas contained in the Seventh *Tirumurai* (PITM-7), which contains all the hymns composed by Cuntarar, represents 101 hymns (or *patikams*)?³² The answer lies in the fact that there is an organic link both within and between the various sub-groups of the TVM because their stanzas are linked, and they are themselves connected, in an *antāti* relationship, a feature which will be explained in Section 6. This contrasts with what we see in the *Tēvāram*: its hymns do not appear as being parts of a bigger composition but are simply perceived as individual items within a collection.

I shall now try to make a few more precise statements concerning the word “stanza” which I have been using, until now, in what may have appeared as a non-technical manner.

- as should be clear from the preceding discussion, the items concerned are not only the components in the “hymns” referred to in Section 3, but also to the elements in the homogeneous sub-units (called *tirumoli* or *tiruvāymoli*)³³ which are constitutive of the longer compositions, such as the TVM (see the footnotes attached to Chart 13, for more details);
- we shall say, in a preliminary fashion, that a verse is a stanza if it is part of a homogeneous group (be it a hymn, or a sub-group in a longer composition);
- that logic can however be subverted, as we shall see in Section 7;
- also, it must be said that stanzas are the natural unit for recitation and are, most of the time, made up of four lines (*aṭi*), although this is not the only possibility;³⁴
- concerning the terminology to be used in Tamil, I should add that when I say that a hymn (such as *Tēvāram* 1.1) consists of eleven stanzas, what I call a “hymn” would normally be referred to nowadays in (modern academic) Tamil as a *patikam* and what I call a “stanza” would normally be referred to by modern experts of devotional literature either as a *pācuram*, or as a *pāṭal*, or as a *pāṭṭu*;³⁵

³² This count is based on the 1985 volume which is part of T.V. Gopal Iyer’s edition.

³³ For Nammālvār’s TVM, the sub-units are, as already said, called *tiruvāymoli*. For other authors, such as Tirumaṅkai Ālvār or Periyālvār, the sub-units are called *tirumoli*.

³⁴ Although most stanzas possess 4 lines, there are exceptions such as:

- the stanzas in the *Tiruppāvai* (NATP- α_3) and in the *Tiruvempāvai* (PITM-8-7), which have 8 lines each;
- the stanzas in the *Tiruponṇūcal* (PITM-8-16) and the *Tiruvammānai* (PITM-8-8), which have 6 lines each;
- the stanzas in the *Tiruvuntiyār* (PITM-8-14), which have 3 lines each;
- etc.

³⁵ Taking our examples from T.V. Gopal Iyer’s work, we can see that he uses the word *pācuram*

- however, it should be kept in mind that those experts would also, following the Tamil grammatical tradition, refer to most of the poems belonging to Caṅkam literature too as *pāṭal* or as *pāṭṭu*,³⁶ giving those words quite a different meaning, although they would probably not use the word *pācuram* for that purpose;³⁷
- it is only in borderline cases that we do find compositions containing only one stanza;
- an additional but more elusive feature is that the elements in a group appear as different ways of “saying the same thing”. See for instance T.V. Gopal Iyer (1991: 383)’s commentary on *Tēvāram* 1.90 (also applicable upto 1.96): *oru poruḷ mēl patinonru aṭukki vantavāru* “[see] how eleven [stanzas] are piled on the same single meaning”.

What is then the main difference between Caṅkam literature and Bhakti literature, which makes me want to use a specific term, such as “stanza”? The difference is visible in the homogeneous character of the elementary building blocks which are found in the devotional compositions. The homogeneity lies for instance in the number of lines (*aṭi*) which are found to be the same in all the stanzas belonging to one homogenous group. For instance, in the *Tēvāram*, if a hymn is described as being composed in *kali viruttam* (which is the most frequent metrical specification, and concerns 276 hymns), it means, among other things,³⁸ that all its stanzas will consist of four lines (*aṭi*), each line being further subdivided into four metrical

in T.V. Gopal Iyer (2007: *kaṭṭuraikal*-2, p. 19), that he uses the word *pāṭal* in T.V. Gopal Iyer (1991: 143) and that he uses the word *pāṭṭu* in T.V. Gopal Iyer (1984: xciv). Those references are simply intended to show that the usage exists but I have not tried to examine the frequency of those words in modern Tamil scholarly and/or religious usage. It should be noted that the expression *pā-curam* is probably (in theory) specific to *icaippā*, because “*curam*” seems to be the tamilised form of Skt. *svara*, but I have not tried to verify whether it has regularly been used by modern authors in the context of the description of *iyarpā*. And I see, as a counterexample, that in NATP-1, the expression is used indiscriminately for both *iyarpā* and *icaippā*. See for instance (on pages 17–56, in the first section) the catalogue (*aṭṭavaṇai*) which links the 108 sacred places (*tiruppati*) and the stanzas that refer to them: the title for the 4th column is *pācuraṅkaḷiṇ talaippu*.

³⁶ The grammar which describes the earlier literary Caṅkam corpus, the *Tolkāppiyam*, uses the word *pāṭṭu* “song/verse”, and sometimes *pāṭal* (as in TP3i), in order to refer to what we now call the “poems” of Caṅkam literature. *Pāṭṭu* is said to be one of the *Eḷu Nilam* “seven loci” (see Chevillard 2011). To this must be added that some components in compositions using one of the varieties of what is called *Kali* metre are also called “*pāṭṭu*” (See: TP457i).

³⁷ As far as *pācuram* is concerned, Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi uses it to refer to Campantar’s compositions. This usage is seen in the eighty-third *kaṇṇi* “(alliterating) pair of lines” in the *Āḷuṭaiya Piḷḷaiyār Tiruvulā Mālai* (PITM-11). I have not found earlier attestations.

³⁸ There is of course much more to be said. See for instance the entry “*kali viruttam eṭṭu vakai*” in TIP-14, p. 214–215, where eight possible patterns for *kali viruttam* are presented, starting with “*mā, kūviḷam, kūviḷam, kūviḷam*” (see Chart 2, for an illustration of another pattern of that type, within *kalinilait turai*).

feet (*cīr*).³⁹ An additional constraint is that there will be an alliterative relationship (see Section 5) between the four initial *cīrs* of each line (as illustrated by the grey patches in Figure A, just below). On the other hand, if the hymn is composed either in *kalinilait tūrai*, or in *kaṭṭalaik kalit tūrai* (or in *kalit tūrai*), we know that each stanza will also consist of four lines, with alliterative relationships between the initials, but that this time the lines will be subdivided into five *cīrs* (as illustrated by Figure B), additional constraints allowing us to distinguish between those three metres.⁴⁰

1a	1b	1c	1d
2a	2b	2c	2d
3a	3b	3c	3d
4a	4b	4c	4d

Fig. A: Template for *kali viruttam*
(alliteration between *cīrs* is indicated by grey colour)

1a	1b	1c	1d	1e
2a	2b	2c	2d	2e
3a	3b	3c	3d	3e
4a	4b	4c	4d	4e

Fig. B: Common template for *kalit tūrai*, *kalinilait tūrai* and *kaṭṭalaik kalit tūrai*

³⁹ Generally speaking, the *cīrs*, in a Tamil poem, are themselves combinations of two or three still smaller units, called *acai*. The *acais* themselves are combinations of smaller constituents called *eḷuttus*. An additional complication is that in ancient classical Tamil poetry, there were four distinct types of *acai*, called *nēr*, *nirai*, *nēṟpu* and *niraipu* (see Chevillard 2011) whereas in the post-classical and in the Bhakti and medieval poetry, only two distinct types of *acai* are recognised (see YK5 in Niklas 1993: 40–47), namely *nēr* and *nirai* (except in the case of the last foot of a *veṇṇā* stanza).

⁴⁰ I shall come back to that point in the final section (Section 18).

Compared with the earlier strata of Tamil literature, the inner homogeneity of the groups of stanzas that we have described [in the case of *Tēvāram*] as *patikams* (or shall describe in the case of NATP as *tirumolis* or *tiruvāymolis*) is both an innovation and a simplification. Such a situation can be compared first of all with the situation in the corpus of Caṅkam literature. We do find for instance in the anthology called *Aiṅkurunūru*, groups of ten verses, or “decades” (*pattu*) addressing a common topic, but most of them are not homogeneous from the point of view of length (i.e. the number of lines), although they are all composed in a metre called *ācīriyam* by the *Tolkāppiyam* (T).⁴¹ On the total of fifty decades found in the *Aiṅkurunūru*, only eleven are homogeneous in length,⁴² but there are thirty-one decades for which the length oscillates between two values,⁴³ seven decades in which it oscillates between three values, and one decade in which there are verses of four different lengths.⁴⁴

5. Systematisation of the alliterative feature called *etukai*

Another sign of standardisation is the fact that in a great part of the Bhakti corpus, be it NATP or PITM, there is systematic use of the alliterative feature, which experts in metrics call *etukai*, a technical term introduced by the *Tolkāppiyam*, where it is presented as one of the varieties of *toṭai* “stringing”.⁴⁵ That feature already existed in the *ācīriyam* metre of Caṅkam literature but its use was sporadic and not at all compulsory.⁴⁶ We see it developing and becoming systematic first of all in the *tālica* components (also called “*iṭainilaip pāṭṭu*” [cf. TP437i]) of the *Kalittokai* poems that fall under the specification called “*ottālicaik kali*” by *sūtra* TP435i of the *Ceyyūḷiyal* of the *Tolkāppiyam*. Interestingly, those *tālicais* come in triplets, and all the *tālicais* within the triplet must have the same length (measured in number of lines). For instance, *Kalittokai*-1 contains a triplet of 3-lines *tālicais*, *Kalittokai*-2 a triplet of 4-lines *tālicais* and *Kalittokai*-5 a triplet of 2-lines *tālicais*, etc. If we view those *tālicais* as the predecessors (in Tamil literature) of the notion of “stanza” which we are currently discussing, we see that in each one of those “proto-stanzas”, if I may be allowed to refer to them in that way, the initial *cīrs* of all the lines are in allitera-

⁴¹ See Chevillard (2011: figure 2). Another anthology which contains decades of poems is the *Patirruppattu*, but as in the case of the *Aiṅkurunūru*, we do not have homogeneity of length between the various poems composing the decades. Interestingly, however, the fourth decade in the *Patirruppattu* (containing poems numbered from 31 to 40) is an *antāti*, a metrical category which will be discussed later.

⁴² In decades 13, 14, 15, 35 and 44, all verses have three lines. In decades 2, 18 and 43, all verses have four lines. In decades 16 and 48, all verses have five lines. In decade 1, all verses have 6 lines.

⁴³ In twenty-nine decades, the oscillation is between 4-line verses and 5-line verses.

⁴⁴ This is decade 22: it contains 3-liners, 4-liners, 5-liners and 6-liners.

⁴⁵ See Chevillard (2011: chart 3, limb 9).

⁴⁶ For a detailed (traditional) presentation in English of what *toṭai* and *etukai* are, see YK16 to YK20 in Niklas (1993: 104–131).

tive relationship: for instance, in *Kalittokai-2*, where the three *tāḷicai*s have four lines each, there is alliteration between *tolaiivāki*, *malaiyirantu*, *nilaiyiya* and *mulaiyākam*, for the first *tāḷicai*, between *illēṇa*, *kallirantu*, *tolliyal* and *pullākam*, for the second *tāḷicai*, and, between *iṭaṇinri*, *kaṭaṇirantu*, *vaṭamīṇpōl* and *taṭameṇrōl* for the third *tāḷicai*.

The *etukai* feature is also prominent in the literary corpus which stands chronologically between Caṅkam poetry and Bhakti poetry, and which contains such works as the *Kuraḷ* and the *Nāḷaṭiyār*, both being part of what is called the *Patineṇ Kīlkaṇakku*. The verses contained in it are (mostly) composed in a metre called *veṇṇpā*, the development of which has been studied in a seminal article by V.S. Rajam (1992). We find for instance in the *Nāḷaṭiyār*, which contains four hundred quatrains, that these fall, from a metrical point of view, under two main patterns, one of them being called *nēricai veṇṇpā* (and found in three hundred quatrains), the other one being called *innicai veṇṇpā* (and found in the remaining hundred quatrains).⁴⁷ Both can be illustrated, from the point of view of *etukai*, by the following templates (See Figure C and Figure D):

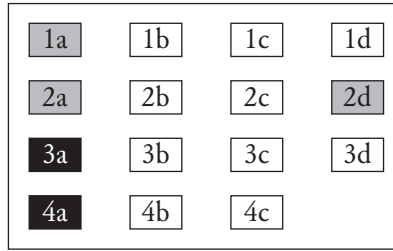


Fig. C: Alliteration (*etukai*) in the four lines and the fifteen *cīrs* of a *nēricai veṇṇpā* stanza

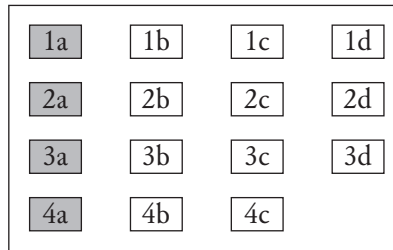


Fig. D: Alliteration (*etukai*) in the four lines and the fifteen *cīrs* of an *innicai veṇṇpā* stanza

⁴⁷ See G.U. Pope (1893).

In those two figures (Figure C and Figure D), the alliterative relationships between some *cīrs* have been indicated using some black, white and grey markings:

- in Figure D, the four *cīrs* which are in grey (namely 1a, 2a, 3a and 4a) all stand in alliterative relationship;⁴⁸
- in Figure C, there are two groups of items standing in alliterative relationship. The first group involves *cīrs* 1a, 2a and 2d, whereas the second group involves 3a and 4a.⁴⁹ It should also be said, for the sake of completion, that in both *nēricai veṇṇpā* and *innicai veṇṇpā*, as indicated on Figure C and Figure D, we have four lines, but the fourth (and last) line is shorter than the first three, having only three *cīrs*. In addition to this, the last *cīr* (i.e. *cīr* 4c on Figures C and D) belongs to a special category, and contains only one *acai*, unlike the other *cīrs*. This particular treatment of the last line is one of the general characteristics of the metre called *veṇṇpā*, of which *nēricai veṇṇpā* and *innicai veṇṇpā* are sub-categories (see Chart 8, in Section 6).

6. Two types of *antāti* (*nēricai veṇṇpā* vs. *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai*)

As can be seen in Charts 4, 5 and 6, neither *nēricai veṇṇpā* nor *innicai veṇṇpā* are found among the metres used in the *Tēvāram*. There are, however, several contributors to the Śaiva corpus (PITM) from whom we have relatively long compositions that are purely in *innicai veṇṇpā*. Those compositions illustrate a technique of linking the successive stanzas together which is called *antāti*. The *antāti* feature consists in having quasi-lexical identity⁵⁰ between the word which stands in the last *cīr* of one stanza (i.e. 4c) and the word found in the first *cīr* of the next stanza (i.e. 1a, see Figure C).

Those Śaiva poets, whose work is found in the Eleventh *Tirumurai* (PITM-11), are:

- Kāraikkālammaiṃ, who composed the *Arputat Tiruvantāti* (101 stanzas);

⁴⁸ This can be illustrated by *Nālaṭṭiyār* 115.

⁴⁹ This can be illustrated by the *Periya Tiruvantāti* (NATP-γ₇) composed by Nammālvār, which consists of 87 stanzas. For instance, in the second stanza, the *cīrs* 1a, 2a and 2d are, respectively, *muyarri* (1a), *iyaṛruvāy* (2a) and *nayappuṭaiya* (2d) and stand in *etukai* relationship (as shown by triple occurrence of the (boldface) syllabic element *ya*). Similarly, the *cīrs* 3a and 4a are *nāvin* (3a) and *pūvinṇa* (4a) and stand in another (distinct) *etukai* relationship because of the double occurrence of the (boldface) syllabic element *vi*.

⁵⁰ Most of the time, the same lexical item is used but sometimes we simply have the same word-form, with two different meanings. For instance, in the *Mutarṛiruvantāti* (NATP-γ₁), composed by Poṅkai Ālvār, which contains 100 stanzas in *nēricai veṇṇpā*, the successive words which occur in *cīr* 4c of one stanza and in *cīr* 1a of the following stanza are: *eṇṇu* (“thinking that” [1–4c] and “on which day?” [2–1a]), *pār* “earth” (2–4c and 3–1a), *neri* “way” (3–4c and 4–1a), Araṇ “Śiva” (4–4c and 5–1a), ..., *vai/vaiyam* (“place!” [100–4c] and “earth” [1–1a]), this last item being found both as the last word and the first word of the poem, making a full circle.

- Nakkīra Tēva Nāyaṇār, who composed the *Kayilai pāti kālatti pātir Tiruvantāti* (100 stanzas);
- Kapila Tēva Nāyaṇār, who composed a *Civaperumāṇ Tiruvantāti* (100 stanzas);
- Paraṇa Tēva Nāyaṇār, who also composed a *Civaperumāṇ Tiruvantāti* (100 stanzas in circle, plus an extraneous one).

There are also five *antātis* in *nēricai veṇpā* in the NATP: they seem to be the most ancient parts of that corpus.⁵¹

Interestingly, we also find *antātis* composed in *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai*, both in the PITM and the NATP, but the *cīrs* which are connected are, in this case, *cīr* 4e in one stanza and *cīr* 1a in the following stanza (see Figure B). For the NATP, the example is the *Tiruviruttam*, which contains one hundred stanzas and is one of the four compositions attributed to Nammālvār. In the case of the Śaiva corpus (PITM), four authors are concerned, whose work is in PITM-8 or PITM-11. They are:

- Cēramāṇ Perumāl who composed the *Ponvaṇṇat Tiruvantāti*, containing one hundred stanzas making a full circle, followed by a 101st stanza giving the author's name;
- Paṭṭinattup Pillaiyār, who composed the *Tiruvēkampamuṭaiyār Tiruvantāti* (100 stanzas);
- Nampī Āṇṭār Nampī who composed two such *antātis*:
 - The *Tiruttonṭar Tiruvantāti* (89 stanzas)
 - The *Āluṭaiyappillaiyār Tiruvantāti* (100 stanzas in *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai*, followed by a *nēricai veṇpā*)
- Māṇikkavācakar, but only partially as far as *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* is concerned, because he is the author of an *antāti* (*Tiruccatakam*, PITM-8A-5), in which ten stanzas out of one hundred (see Chart 24) are in that metre.

At this stage, it is necessary to provide additional information concerning the structure of the two types of stanzas, *nēricai veṇpā* and *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai*, which occur in these two types of *antātis*. In addition to the line division and the *etukai* (alliterative) features which are illustrated by Figure B⁵² and Figure C, a very important feature of these two types of stanzas is *talai* (lit. “fetters, binding”). The *talai*

⁵¹ These compositions are included in the part of NATP called *Iyarpā* (NATP-γ). Three, composed respectively by Poykai Ālvār, Pēy Ālvār and Pūtattālvār, contain hundred stanzas each. One, composed by Tirumalīcai Ālvār, contains ninety-six stanzas and one, composed by Nammālvār, contains eighty-seven stanzas.

⁵² As already said, this can be illustrated by the *Tiruviruttam* (NATP-γ_s) composed by Nammālvār, which consists of 100 stanzas. To give one more example, in the third stanza, the first *cīrs* of the four lines are *kuḷarḱō* (1a), *niḷarḱōl* (1b), *aḷarḱō* (1c) and *talarḱōr* (1d), and they all stand in an alliterative relationship of the *etukai* type, because in all the four lines the kernels of the second syllabic components are identical and are preceded by (first) syllabic component having the same duration.

feature consists in there being restrictions on the permissible sequences consisting of the last *acai* in one *cīr* and the first *acai* in the following *cīr*.⁵³ And finally, it should be said that in the *kaṭṭalaik kalitturai* model there is still another constraint, pertaining to the number of *eluttus*,⁵⁴ which are the ultimate elements from which *acais* are made:

- if the first *acai* in *cīr* 1a is a *nēr*,⁵⁵ then the number of *eluttus* in each line has to be sixteen;
- if the first *acai* in *cīr* 1a is a *nirai*, then the number of *eluttus* in each line has to be seventeen.

The resemblance and the differences between *nēricai veṇṇā* and *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* are summarised in the following chart (Chart 8), which also contains the characterisation of *innicai veṇṇā*.

Chart 8: *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* compared with two types of *veṇṇā*

	lines	<i>cīrs</i> per line	<i>etukai</i> template	<i>taḷai</i>	Fixed number of <i>eluttus</i>
<i>nēricai veṇṇā</i>	FOUR	Four <i>cīrs</i> in the first three lines, the fourth line having only three <i>cīrs</i> , of which the third is short (containing only one <i>acai</i>)	See Figure C	<i>veṇṇāḷai</i>	NO ⁵⁶
<i>innicai veṇṇā</i>	FOUR	Same as <i>nēricai veṇṇā</i>	See Figure D	<i>veṇṇāḷai</i>	NO
<i>kaṭṭalaik kalit turai</i>	FOUR	Five <i>cīrs</i> in every line	See Figure B	<i>veṇṇāḷai</i>	YES

⁵³ Concerning *taḷai*, see YK10 and YK11 in Niklas (1993: 72–83). Among the seven possible *taḷais*, the two *taḷais* appropriate for both *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* and *nēricai veṇṇā* are called *iyaṛcīrveṇṇāḷai* and *veṇṇācīrveṇṇāḷai*.

⁵⁴ Not every *eluttu* is counted. Consonants without vowel are not counted. See Chevillard (2011: 133, chart 5).

⁵⁵ For the definition of *nēr* (and or *nirai*, which appears in the next item), see Chevillard (2011: 136).

It can be argued that the creation of the *veṇṇā* metre itself may have partly resulted from an attempt to stabilise the number of *eḷuttu* in a line, which was quite variable in the *ācīriyam* metre,⁵⁷ recited with an *akaval* diction, in which each line (except the penultimate) usually had four *cīrs*. The presence of the *taḷai* constraint greatly reduces the variability, because of the compensatory effect which it produces.⁵⁸ If this was indeed one of the intentions, the invention of *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai*, where the initial *etukai* constraint reinforces the stabilising effect of the *taḷai* constraint, to which must be added the suppression of the anomalous condition of the fourth line, takes the effort one step further. This may explain why it became quite popular⁵⁹ and was used in *Kōvai* works such as the *Pāṇṭikkōvai* and also the *Tirukkōvaiyār*, by Māṇikkavācakar, which is included in PITM-8, and which is comparable to Nammālvār's *Tiruviruttam*, although, unlike the *Tiruviruttam*, the *Tirukkōvaiyār* does not have the *antāti* feature. Among the other authors from the Tamil Bhakti corpus, who have made a rather frequent use of the *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* metre in their compositions, one may also mention Appar (See Chart 5), who uses it in thirty-four hymns (referred to as "*tiru viruttam*"), whereas Campantar uses it only two times.

Finally, concerning the *antāti* feature, it must be said, parenthetically, that its use is not restricted to groups of stanzas in *nēricai veṇṇā* or in *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai*. It is also found in some of the bigger ensembles, such as Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruccatakam* (cf. Chart 24) and such as the *Tiruvāymoli* (TVM), already mentioned, where many other metres are also used.

7. Mixed groups of stanzas

Interestingly, if the currently received chronology of the Tamil Bhakti corpus is not wrong, the first occurrence in the PITM of the *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* metre takes place in a composition in mixed metre by Kāraikkālammai, the *Iraṭṭai maṇi mālai* "double garland of gems", in which the twenty stanzas alternate between two sets of metrical specifications: (A) *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* for the ten odd-numbered stanzas and (B) *nēricai veṇṇā* for the ten even-numbered stanzas. She was imitated later by other poets, whose compositions are also found in the PITM-11. They are:

⁵⁶ There are however special cases, where *veṇṇās* have been composed with a fixed number of *eḷuttu* (in the first three lines). These are called *kaṭṭalai veṇṇā*. See YV-1998 (pp. 530–531) where examples of such *veṇṇās* are provided, with the count of *eḷuttu* in the first three lines being thirteen (three examples), fourteen (one example) or twelve (one example).

⁵⁷ See Chevillard (2011: chart 7 and 8) for a statistics of the number of *eḷuttu* per line, in the *Kuruntokai*.

⁵⁸ See Chevillard (2013).

⁵⁹ It was even used for composing grammatical treatises such as the *Yāpparuṅkalak Kārikai* and the *Viracōliyam*.

- Kapila Tēva Nāyaṇār, who composed two *iraṭṭai maṇi mālai*:
 - The *Mūṭta Nāyaṇār Tiruviraṭṭai maṇi mālai* (twenty alternating stanzas, the first one being a *veṇṇpā*)
 - The *Civaperumāṇ Tiruviraṭṭai maṇi mālai* (thirty-seven alternating stanzas, starting with a *veṇṇpā*)
- Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi, who composed the *Tirunāraiṇṇ Vināyakar Tiruviraṭṭai maṇi mālai* (twenty alternating stanzas, starting with a *veṇṇpā*).

Deciding to combine two metres in a composition was however only a first step because, as a next step, another poet invented another poetic form in which three metrical characterisations were used in a cyclic fashion: the new form is seen in seven compositions by six poets, all preserved in PITM-11. The model is called *mummaṇṇik kōvai* “necklace of three gems”, and it combines, in cyclic succession:

- a verse in *akaval* metre, without a predefined number of lines;
- a stanza which is a *nēricai veṇṇpā*;
- a stanza in *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* metre.

The poets who have used this format are:

- Cēramāṇ Perumāḷ, author of the *Tiruvārūr Mummaṇṇikkōvai*, containing thirty items;⁶⁰
- Nakkīra Tēva Nāyaṇār, author of the *Tiruvālaṇṇuḷi Mummaṇṇikkōvai*, containing fifteen items;
- Iḷamperumāṇ Aṭikaḷ, author of the *Civaperumāṇ Mummaṇṇikkōvai*, containing thirty items;
- Atirāvaṭikaḷ, author of the *Mūṭta Piḷḷaiyār Mummaṇṇikkōvai*, containing twenty-three items;
- Paṭṭiṇattup Piḷḷaiyār, who composed two distinct *Mummaṇṇikkōvais*:
 - The *Tirukkalumala Mummaṇṇikkōvai* (containing 12 items)
 - The *Tiruvīṭaimarutūr Mummaṇṇikkōvai* (containing 30 items)
- Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi, author of the *Āḷuṭaiyapiḷḷaiyār Mummaṇṇikkōvai* (containing 30 items).

Later, another form was invented, combining four types of verses. It was called *nāṇ maṇi mālai* “garland of four gems”. We have only one example of it in the Bhakti corpus, which was composed by Paṭṭiṇattup Piḷḷaiyār: it is called *Kōyil Nāṇ maṇimālai* and contains forty items. To the three types of verse contained in the *Mummaṇṇikkōvai*, it adds a fourth type, which is *ācīriya viruttam*, a cover term for several types of stanzaic metre.⁶¹ But, of course, it is always possible to create more

⁶⁰ The lengths (in lines) of the ten *akaval* verses are: 20, 18, 16, 16, 18, 18, 18, 18, 17 and 17. The ten *veṇṇpās* and the ten *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* stanzas have of course four lines each.

⁶¹ It does make use of several distinct types of *ācīriya viruttam*. See PITM-A, pp. 1006–1012, for the detail.

complex structures, and this is what we see in the penultimate composition by Nampī Āṇṭār Nampī contained in PITM-11, namely the *Āḷuṭaiyapillaiyār Tirukkalampakam* (PITM-11–12–8), characterized by the PITM-A editor as representing the *orupōku kockakak kalippā* category: it contains a bewildering variety of metres, as if it had been composed in order to be a manual for students.

8. *iyaṛpā* and *icaippā* in the *Nālāyirat Tivvyappirapantam* (NATP)

I shall now examine the metres in the NATP, but before being able to do that, a number of explanations are required, in order to facilitate the navigation of the reader between the various editions consulted, some of which are currently available. I must preliminarily state that the Vaiṣṇava corpus is traditionally divided into four ensembles (α , β , γ and δ), further subdivided into twenty-four subsets⁶² (α_1 to α_{10} ; β_1 to β_3 ; γ_1 to γ_{10} ; δ). Three of those four ensembles (α , β and δ) fall under the label *icaippā* “musical verse”, the compositions which they contain being traditionally associated with (the names of) melodies (or *paṇs*) on the basis of which they must have been sung, although the current practice for both categories is probably not representative of what the original usage may have been.⁶³ In contradistinction to this, the compositions contained in the remaining ensemble (γ) are not supposed to have been originally sung, and this is why this ensemble is labeled *iyaṛpā* “natural verse”.⁶⁴ Among the twelve authors who are said to have composed the poems contained in the NATP, three have used both *icaippā* and *iyaṛpā*. They are:

Chart 9: (intermediate chronological layer)

Authors	<i>iyaṛpā</i> “natural verse” [older layer]	<i>icaippā</i> “musical verse” [modern layer]
Nammālvār	(γ_5) <i>Tiruviruttam</i> (TV) [100 stanzas]	(δ) <i>Tiruvāymoli</i> (TVM) [1102 stanzas]

⁶² See for instance the detail given on pages 9 to 15 of the edition referred to as NATP-1 (in the bibliography). F. Hardy (1983: 249) divides the corpus into 23 subsets, because he has merged the first two subsets (*Tiruppallāṇṭu* and *Periyālvār Tirumoli*) into one single subset. This is also the case with the LIFCO edition.

⁶³ In the symmetrical case of the melodies to be used for the *Tēvāram*, see for instance the remarks, with reference to U.Vē. Cāminātaiyar (1954: 121), made by F. Gros (1984: lx–lxi).

⁶⁴ In the PITM, the distinction also exists, as evidenced by the title of PITM-9: *Tiruvicaippā Tiruppallāṇṭu*. Most of the *Tēvāram* seems to fall within *icaippā* (although part of Appar’s compositions might fall under *iyaṛpā*). We have already, in the introduction, met with the *paṇ* called *intaḷam*. For more detail, see the list of 24 *paṇs* in the *Digital Tēvāram*.

	(γ_6) <i>Tiruvācīriyam</i> (TĀ) [71 lines] ⁶⁵ (γ_7) <i>Periya Tiruvantāti</i> (PTA) [87 stanzas]	
Tirumaṅkai Ālvār	(γ_8) <i>Tiruvelukūrṛirukkai</i> (TEKI) [46 lines] (γ_9) <i>Cīriya Tirumaṭal</i> (CTMa) [155 lines] ⁶⁶ (γ_{10}) <i>Periya Tirumaṭal</i> (PTMa) [297 lines]	(β_1) <i>Periyatirumoli</i> (PTM) [1084 stanzas] (β_2) <i>Tirukuruntāṇṭakam</i> (TKT) [20 stanzas] (β_3) <i>Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam</i> (TNT) [30 stanzas]
Tirumalīcai Ālvār	(γ_4) <i>Nāṇmukan Tiruvantāti</i> (NTA) [96 stanzas]	(α_6) <i>Tiruccantaviruttam</i> (TCV) (120 stanzas)

The remaining nine authors have used either exclusively *iyarpā*⁶⁷ or exclusively *icaippā*. They are:

Chart 10: (older chronological layer)

Author	Exclusively <i>iyarpā</i> “natural verse”.
Poykai Ālvār	(γ_1) <i>Mutal Tiruvantāti</i> (1TA) [100 stanzas]
Pūtattālvār	(γ_2) <i>Iraṇṭām Tiruvantāti</i> (2TA) [100 stanzas]
Pēy Ālvār	(γ_3) <i>Mūṇṛām Tiruvantāti</i> (3TA) [100 stanzas]

⁶⁵ This composition, which is not stanzaic, consists of 7 verses, of various lengths (15, 9, 9, 9, 10, 10 and 9 lines), connected through *antāti*, a device which has already been presented in Section 6.

⁶⁶ The natural unit of division for the CTM and the PTM is the “couplet” (or *kaṇṇi*), if we decide to give this name to the pairs of lines (linked by the *toṭai* called *etukai*). Jointly, CTM and PTM amount to 226 couplets. They are in fact formally similar to two poems found in the (Śaiva) PTIM-11, namely the *Tirukkailāya Nāna Ulā*, composed by Cēramāṇ Perumāl, and the *Āḷutaiyapiḷḷāiyār Tiruvulāmālai*, composed by Nampī Āṇṭār Nampī. The former contains 197 couplets. The latter contains 143 couplets. See Pi. Rā. Naṭarācaṇ’s edition, p. 150 and p. 846.

⁶⁷ At some point, while commenting on Chart 12, we shall see that *iyarpā* is in fact an archaic layer.

Chart 11: (more recent chronological layer)

Author	Exclusively <i>icaippā</i> “musical verse”
Periyālvār	(α_1) <i>Tiruppallāṇṭu</i> (TPĀ) [12 stanzas] (α_2) <i>Periyālvār Tirumōli</i> (PĀTM) [461 stanzas]
Āṇṭāl	(α_3) <i>Tiruppāvai</i> (TP) [30 stanzas] (α_4) <i>Nācciyārtirumōli</i> (NTM) [143 stanzas]
Kulacēkara Ālvār	(α_5) <i>Perumāḷ Tirumōli</i> (PMTM) [105 stanzas]
Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi	(α_7) <i>Tirumālai</i> (TM) [45 stanzas] (α_8) <i>Tiruppalliyelucci</i> (TPE) [10 stanzas]
Tiruppāṇ Ālvār	(α_9) <i>Amalan Ātip Pirāṇ</i> (AĀP) [10 stanzas]
Maturakavi Ālvār	(α_{10}) <i>Kaṇṇi Nuṇ Cīrut Tāmpu</i> (KNCT) [11 stanzas]

It can be said on the basis of those three charts⁶⁸ that the fourteen compositions that fall under *icaippā* “musical verse” are all made of stanzas, the complete count being 3183 stanzas for the ensembles α , β and δ . On the other hand, in the *iyarpā* collection (γ), we have six subsets totaling 583 stanzas (which can be subdivided into 483 *nēricai veṇpās* and 100 *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* stanzas) and 4 remaining subsets⁶⁹ consisting of poems which cannot be considered as made up of stanzas, but which have nevertheless been incorporated in various ways in the (seemingly precise) count of 4000 which is implied for many people⁷⁰ by the designation NATP.⁷¹ The total number of “real” stanzas in the NATP is thus 3766.

⁶⁸ See the list of abbreviations in footnote 82.

⁶⁹ They are the *Tiruvāciriyam* (TĀ), the *Tiruvēlukūrrirukkai* (TEKI), the *Cīriya Tirumaṭal* (CTMa) and the *Periya Tirumaṭal* (PTMa), totaling 569 lines.

⁷⁰ There are also those who believe that a “Thousand” must not necessarily contain 1000 stanzas, because the *Mutalāyiram* “First Thousand” (i.e. NATP- α) contains in fact 947 stanzas.

⁷¹ Two strategies are used. The first strategy counts the TĀ as 7 items, the TEKI as 1 item, the CTMa as 77 ½ items (which are *kaṇṇis*, or pairs of lines) and the PTMa as 148 ½ items. The second strategy divides CTMa and PTMa into 40 and 78 items (or sometimes into 38 and 80 items) in order to include into the count of 4000 an additional composition (*irāmānuca nūrrantāti*), which contains 108 stanzas, in *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* metre, and honours Rāmānuja, the Vaiṣṇava theologian who is said to have died in 1137.

9. Chronological layers

To those preliminary elements of description, we may add that there seems to exist a correlation between the period to which a particular Ālvār belongs and the types of metres he (or she) has used. If we take for instance the tentative chronology proposed in Hardy (1983: 269, table XIV), and link it with the information given in Charts 9, 10 and 11, we obtain the following:

Chart 12: Metres in the light of the chronology proposed by F. Hardy

Poykai Ālvār	6 th (or early 7 th) century	<i>iyarpā</i>
Pūtattālvār	6 th (or early 7 th) century	<i>iyarpā</i>
Pēy Ālvār	6 th (or early 7 th) century	<i>iyarpā</i>
Tirumaḷicai Ālvār	6 th (or early 7 th) century	<i>iyarpā</i> & <i>icaippā</i>
Nammālvār	7 th or early 8 th c.	<i>iyarpā</i> & <i>icaippā</i>
Tirumaṅkai Ālvār	second half of 8 th c.	<i>iyarpā</i> & <i>icaippā</i>
Periyālvār	9 th century	<i>icaippā</i>
Āṇṭāl	9 th century	<i>icaippā</i>
Kulacēkara Ālvār	9 th century	<i>icaippā</i>
Tiruppāṇ Ālvār	9 th or early 10 th c.	<i>icaippā</i>
Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi Ālvār	9 th or early 10 th c.	<i>icaippā</i>
Maturakavi Ālvār	(9 th or) 10 th c.	<i>icaippā</i>

If this chronology is correct, it might mean that the first three Ālvārs, who have made exclusive use of *nēricai veṇpā*, were living in a time when the new metres which would be developed later in order to accommodate singing were not yet current. It also means that Tirumaḷicai Ālvār lived in an age of experimentation. On the one hand, his *iyarpā* composition makes use of *nēricai veṇpā*, in an *antāti* of 96 stanzas just as the first three Ālvārs do. On the other hand, he is said to have composed the *Tiruccantaviruttam* (TCV), a composition containing 120 stanzas. According to the LIFCO edition, the metre used in the TCV is *cantak kali viruttam*, but according to the 1937 edition published by B. Irattiṇa Nāyakar Sans

(henceforth NATP-1), the metre is *eḷucīr kalineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam*. As a consequence, the LIFCO edition prints the text of the first stanza with four *cīrs* per line as:

- (1) *pūnilāya vaintumāyp punarkaṇṇinra nāṇkumāy*
tīnilāya mūṇrumāyc cīrantakā liraṇṭumāy
mīnilāya toṇrumāki vēruvēru taṇmaiyyāy
nīnilāya vaṇṇaniṇṇai yārniṇaikka vallarē

whereas the NATP-1 edition prints it differently, without however making it clear where the seven *cīrs* which the text should contain are to be seen. It seems however to me, that it is possibly an illusion to try to divide those lines into *cīrs* and that if we print them as continuous strings, applying the sandhi rules, we do obtain four strings which seem to be successions of alternating heavy (Skt. *guru*, G) and light (Skt. *laghu*, L) syllables. In other words, each of the four strings contains fifteen syllables and follows a very definite pattern, which is:

- (2) GLGLGLGLGLGLGLG

as can be seen in:

- (3) *pūnilāyavaintumāyppunarkaṇṇinraṇāṇkumāy*
tīnilāyamūṇrumāyccīrantakāliraṇṭumāy
mīnilāyatoṇrumākivēruvērutanmaiyyāy
nīnilāyavaṇṇaniṇṇaiyārniṇaikkavallarē

In other words, it is quite possible that Tirumaḷicai Āḷvār, when composing the *Tiruccantaviruttam* (TCV), was not following the rules of traditional Tamil poetry but was in fact following some rules of Sanskrit versification, and this might be the reason why the title of his poem contains the word *cantam* (Skt. *chandas*). There is indeed a Sanskrit metre (of the *samavṛtta* type, with fifteen *akṣaras* in a *pāda*) which corresponds to the pattern GLGLGLGLGLGLGLG. It is called *tūṇaka* and described in Apte's Practical dictionary, in the Appendix I (on p. 1039).⁷² The following ten stanzas in the TCV follow exactly the same pattern, but the stanza 12, which starts with a light syllable, and in which the lines contain 16 syllables, has a different pattern. Space and time do not allow me to continue this exploration further. Before continuing our exploration of the metres used by the other authors represented in the Vaiṣṇava corpus, we must tackle the difficult technical question: how to navigate within the NATP?

⁷² The edition consulted is the 2010 reprint (see bibliography). A search on the Internet provides an example of a Sanskrit verse following this pattern: *kuṅkumākta-kāñcanābja-garva-bāri-gaurabbā / pītanāñcitābja-gandha-kīrti-nīndi-saurabbā / vallaveśa-sūnu-sarva-vāñchitārtha-sādbikā / mahyam ātma-pāda-padma-dāsyadāstu rādbikā*. (see <http://www.granthamandira.com>)

10. How to refer to a stanza in the *Nālāyirat Tivvyappirapantam*?

In order to refer to a specific stanza, several methods can be used. One of them consists in making use of an overall numbering scheme for the whole of the 4000 TP but its users will be confronted with the inescapable difficulty that existing editions have differing overall numbering schemes and that no edition can currently be considered as a reference edition. For instance, we find the following organization of the 4000 TP in the following modern editions (or E-texts), several of which have been used in this study in order to determine whether there is a modern consensus concerning the metres used in the 4000 TP. They are:

- NATP-1: the 1937 edition by B. Irattina Nāyakar Saṅs in 1 volume, with the order $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$, but with no overall numbering scheme;
- NATP-2: the 1955 Murray Rajam edition in 4 volumes: α [1–946],⁷³ β [948–2081], γ [2082–2898]⁷⁴ and δ [2899–4000];
- NATP-3: the LIFCO edition (in 2 volumes: 1st vol. α [1–947], β [948–2081], γ [2082–2674]; 2nd vol. δ [2675–3776]);⁷⁵
- NATP-4: the Mullai Nilaiyam edition⁷⁶ (in 4 volumes: α [1–947], β [948–2081], δ [2082–3183] and γ [3184–??]);⁷⁷

⁷³ NATP-2 differs from all the other editions with overall numbering in not assigning a number to what is considered as the first stanza in the *Tiruppallāṇṭu* (α_1). Number 1 is assigned to the stanza starting with “*aṭiyōmōṭum niṇṇōṭum* [...]”. As a consequence, the last stanza in the *Mutalāyiram* (α) is numbered as 946. However, the numbering in the second volume (β) starts with 948, strangely leaving a gap. If we except the *Mutalāyiram* (α), the numbering of NATP-2 is identical with the numbering of NATP-5, and the sandhi-split text seems identical, although NATP-5 does not provide the variant readings, as NATP-2 does (in appendices).

⁷⁴ This count includes the *Irāmānuca Nūṛrantāti* (2791–2898), the *Cīriya Tirumaṭal* and the *Periya Tirumaṭal* being counted for 38 units [2763–2710] and 80 units [2711–2790].

⁷⁵ NATP-3 refers here to the 2010 reprint (*maṛu accu*) of the 2005 (second) edition (*iraṇṭām patippu*), in two volumes, published by *ti liṭṭal pḷavar kampēni* (LIFCO), the first edition having come out in 1984. The book covers indicate: *nālāyira tivviyaṭ pirapantam*.

⁷⁶ NATP-4 refers here to the 2008 *maṛupaṭippu* of the 4-volume *Nālāyira tivya pirapantam*, *mūlamum teḷivuraṭiyum*, containing the commentary by Nārāyaṇa Vēlup Pillai (Mullai Nilaiyam, Ceṇṇai), the first edition having come out in 2000.

⁷⁷ The overall numbering for the fourth volume seems to become inconsistent or invisible when we reach the *Cīriya Tirumaṭal* (γ_9) and the *Periya Tirumaṭal* (γ_{10}), which are not clearly numbered. However, the editors’ intention was probably to number them with 3892 as the last item number, because we find as an appendix the *Irāmānuca Nūṛrantāti*, which is not part of the 4000 TP, numbered from 3893 to 4000. See Hardy (1983: 249) for a comparison of two numbering strategies.

- NATP-5: the S. Jekatraṭcakan edition, published by Ālvārkaḷ Āyvu Maiyam⁷⁸ (in 1 volume: α [1–947], β [948–2081], γ [2082–2790], δ [2899–4000]);⁷⁹
- NATP-6: the text available on the site “www.ramanuja.org” ($\alpha\beta\delta\gamma/\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$);⁸⁰
- NATP-7: the text available on the site of the Project Madurai (α [1–947], β [948–2081], γ [2032–2790],⁸¹ δ [2791–3892]).

The other, more realistic, method consists in using a local numbering scheme, in which the constituents of each composition are numbered separately. Such a scheme is available in most of the editions described (a notable exception being NATP-5). Making use of the abbreviation already proposed,⁸² the following chart indicates how many levels of numbering are required for the various components of NATP.

Chart 13: Local numbering schemes

Triple level numbering ⁸³ : P#.T#.S#	PĀTM ($\alpha 2$) <i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> [461 stanzas], PTM ($\beta 1$) <i>Periyatirumoli</i> [1084 st.], TVM (δ) <i>Tiruvāymoli</i> [1102 st.],
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⁷⁸ This edition contains an English translation and a Tamil commentary. *Nālāyiram Tivyap Pirapantam, Aintām Vētam*, Nayavurai Vaiṇavac Cemmāl Tākṭar Es. Jekatraṭcakan, Ālvārkaḷ āyvu maiyam, Ceṇṇai, 2009 (*aintām paṭippu*).

⁷⁹ There is a gap in this edition between the numberings of γ and δ , because numbers 2791 to 2898 have been used for numbering the stanzas of the *Irāmānuca Nūṟrantāti*. This makes the numbering of this edition totally identical with the numbering seen in NATP-2, as far as β , γ and δ are concerned. There is however a difference of 1 unit between NATP-2 and NATP-5 in the case of α (cf. footnote 73).

⁸⁰ In August 2011, the constituent elements of the 4000 TP are found on the page <http://www.ramanuja.org/sv/prabandham/index.html> in the order $\alpha\beta\delta\gamma$. Surprisingly, the elements in α are numbered from 1 to 947; those in β are numbered from 948 to 2081; those in δ from 2791 to 3892; those in γ from 2082 to 2790. In addition to that, the *antāti* for Ramanuja is numbered from 3893 to 4000.

⁸¹ Inconsistencies are seen in the numbering of the *Cīriya Tirumaṭal* (γ_9) for which no overall numbering is given.

⁸² The whole alphabetical list of abbreviations is as follows: 1TA ($\gamma 1$) *Mutal Tiruvantāti*, 2TA ($\gamma 2$) *Iranṭām Tiruvantāti*, 3TA ($\gamma 3$) *Mūṇṛām Tiruvantāti*, AĀP ($\alpha 9$) *Amalaṅ Ātip Pirān*, CTMa ($\gamma 9$) *Cīriya Tirumaṭal*, KNCT ($\alpha 10$) *Kaṇṇi Nuṇ Cīrut Tāmpu*, NTA ($\gamma 4$) *Nāṇmukan Tiruvantāti*, NTM ($\alpha 4$) *Nācciyārtirumoli*, PĀTM ($\alpha 2$) *Periyālvār Tirumoli*, PMTM ($\alpha 5$) *Perumāl Tirumoli*, PTA ($\gamma 7$) *Periya Tiruvantāti*, PTM ($\beta 1$) *Periyatirumoli*, PTMa ($\gamma 10$) *Periya Tirumaṭal*, TĀ ($\gamma 6$) *Tiruvācīriyam*, TCV ($\alpha 6$) *Tiruccantaviruttam*, TEKI ($\gamma 8$) *Tiruvēlukūṟṟirukkai*, TKT ($\beta 2$) *Tirukuruntāṇṭakam*, TM ($\alpha 7$) *Tirumālai*, TNT ($\beta 3$) *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*, TP ($\alpha 3$) *Tiruppāvai*, TPĀ ($\alpha 1$) *Tiruppallāṇṭu*, TPE ($\alpha 8$) *Tiruppalliyelucci*, TV ($\gamma 5$) *Tiruviruttam*, TVM (δ) *Tiruvāymoli*.

⁸³ Compositions requiring three levels of numeration are divided into top-level groups called *pattu*, themselves divided into middle-level groups called *tirumoli* (for PĀTM or for PTM) or *tiruvāymoli* (for TVM). Middle level groups are divided into stanzas.

Double level numbering ⁸⁴ : T#.S#	NTM (α 4) <i>Nācciyārtirumoli</i> [143 stanzas], PMTM (α 5) <i>Perumāḷ Tirumoli</i> [105 st.].
Single level numbering (<i>icaippā</i>): S#	AĀP (α 9) <i>Amalaṇ Ātip Pirāṇ</i> [10 stanzas], KNCT (α 10) <i>Kaṇṇi Nuṇ Cīrut Tāmpu</i> [11 st.], TCV (α 6) <i>Tiruccantaviruttam</i> [120 st.], TKT (β 2) <i>Tirukuruntāṇṭakam</i> [20 st.], TM (α 7) <i>Tirumālai</i> [45 st.], TNT (β 3) <i>Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam</i> [30 st.], TP (α 3) <i>Tiruppāvai</i> [30 st.], TPĀ (α 1) <i>Tiruppallāṇṭu</i> [12 st.], TPE (α 8) <i>Tiruppallīyelucci</i> [10 st.].
Single level numbering	
(<i>iyarpā</i>) [Stanzaic] S#	1TA (γ 1) <i>Mutal Tiruvantāti</i> [100 stanzas], 2TA (γ 2) <i>Iraṇṭām Tiruvantāti</i> [100 st.], 3TA (γ 3) <i>Mūṇṇām Tiruvantāti</i> [100 st.], NTA (γ 4) <i>Nāṇmukaṇ Tiruvantāti</i> [96 st.], PTA (γ 7) <i>Periya Tiruvantāti</i> [87 st.], TV (γ 5) <i>Tiruviruttam</i> [100 st.].
Single level numbering (<i>iyarpā</i>) [Non-Stanzaic] L# (or K#)	CTMa (γ 9) <i>Cīriya Tirumaṭal</i> [155 lines] ⁸⁵ , PTMa (γ 10) <i>Periya Tirumaṭal</i> [297 lines], TĀ (γ 6) <i>Tiruvācīriyam</i> [71 lines], TEKI (γ 8) <i>Tiruvelukūṇṇirukkai</i> [46 lines].

11. Metre specifications in the NATP editions

This long preliminary section being over, we now switch to the task we have set for ourselves, namely providing statistics for the metres which are used in the 3766 stanzas of the NATP. It must first be observed that in several of the editions currently available for the NATP, we find, in the blocks of text which precede the various groups of stanzas, short statements which can be described as providing metrical and musical information.⁸⁶ For instance, the 1937 edition of the NATP by

⁸⁴ Compositions which require 2 levels of numeration are divided into groups called *tirumoli*, which are themselves divided into stanzas.

⁸⁵ See however footnote 66, for another possibility, using the subdivisions called *kaṇṇi* “couplet, pair of lines”.

⁸⁶ A preliminary and cursory examination of some palm-leaf manuscripts preserved in the EFEO library seems to indicate that some manuscripts also contain metrical and musical information, but that the practice was to put that information after the stanzas concerned. For instance, in the

the editor B. Irattiṇa Nāyakaṛ Saṅs (NATP-1) states on p. 15 in its fourth section (TVM), that the hymn starting with the words “*uṇarvāra vuyarnalam*”, which is the first “*tiruvāymoli*” in the first “*pattu*” and consists of eleven 4-line stanzas, is composed in a metre called *kali viruttam*, and must be sung in a melody (*paṇ*) called *mutirnta kuriñci*, with a time signature (*tālam*) called *ēlottu*, before adding that the modern equivalents for these last two are the raga *kamās* and the time signature *āti tālam*. The providing of metrical information, however, is not present in all editions and the four-volume edition published in 1955 and 1956 by S. Rajam, alias Murray Rajam (henceforth NATP-2), states only that the melody and the time signature are, respectively, *mutirnta kuriñci* and *ēlottu*. We even find a modern edition, currently available and published by the Ālvārkaḷ Āyvu Maiyam (henceforth NATP-5), in which metrical and musical information are totally absent,⁸⁷ although two other currently available editions, NATP-3 (published by LIFCO) and NATP-4 (published by Mullai Nilaiyam) provide us with still other configurations, as seen in the following chart, which summarises what has been said.

Chart 14: A few editions of the NATP (*Nālāyirat Tivviyappirapantam*)

<i>Nālāyirat Tivviyappira- pantam</i> editions	metre	<i>paṇ</i> (melody)	<i>tālam</i> (classical)	<i>rāga</i>	<i>tālam</i> (modern equivalent)	local numbering	global numbering
NATP-1 (1937)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
NATP-2 (1955–1956)	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES
NATP-3 ([1984] 2010) ⁸⁸	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES

EFEO manuscript EO-0132, the stanzas TVM 1.1.1 to 1.1.11 are located on both sides of leaf 1 (San Marga Trust image: EO-0132–005.jpg) and are followed by a short description, located on line 6 of leaf 1 (verso) which reads: பாக கலி விருத்தம்—பண முதிரந்த குறிஞ்சி தாளமெழுத்தது. [*pāk kali viruttam—paṇ mutirnta kuriñci tālamēlottu*].

⁸⁷ The edition NATP-5 does not even provide a local numbering system, the 11 stanzas of the hymn being only identifiable by an overall number, from 2899 for the first stanza to 2909 for the eleventh stanza, whereas the standard (and most reliable) mode of reference would be to number the stanzas with a 3-level numbering system, from TVM 1.1.1 to TVM 1.1.11 (see Chart 13). As far as the reliability of overall numbering schemes for the NATP is concerned, we have seen that no two editions or E-text (from the 7 examined) coincide.

⁸⁸ Numbers between square brackets are dates of first edition. Other numbers are dates of the copy used.

NATP-4 ([1993] 2009)	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
NATP-5 ([2000] 2008)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

12. Metres in the *Tiruvāymoli* (TVM)

I shall now provide the result of my examination of the metres in the NATP, starting with the TVM and the PTM (to which are added the TKT and the TNT),⁸⁹ treated separately, because each of them represents a sort of critical mass, with which the collections of stanzas contained in the *Mutalāyiram* (NATP- α) can usefully be compared. And, because the editions which were available to me sometimes differ, my charts will represent the metre attributions as given by one of them, namely NATP-1.⁹⁰ The nine distinct metres are enumerated in decreasing order of frequency, those occurring most often being mentioned first.

Chart 15: Metres in the *Tiruvāymoli* [TVM]

Full Name	Abbreviation	Stanza count	NATP-1 Location (inside TVM)	NATP-2 & NATP-5 Location (starting position) ⁹¹
<i>kali viruttam</i>	KaVi	319	1.1, 1.7, 1.10, 2.2, 2.3, 2.9, 2.10, 3.2, 3.3, 3.8, 4.2, 5.3, 5.4, ⁹² 6.6, 7.4, 7.8, 7.9, 8.6, 8.7, 9.3, 9.4, 9.6, 9.8, 9.10, 10.2, 10.4, 10.6, 10.8, 10.9	2899, 2965, 2998, 3020, 3031, 3099, 3110, 3132, 3143, 3198, 3242, 3363, 3374, 3506, 3594, 3638, 3649, 3726, 3737, 3803, 3814, 3836, 3858, 3880, 3902, 3924, 3946, 3968, 3979

⁸⁹ This corresponds to the ensemble β (*Iranṭāmāyiram* “second thousand”), i.e. PTM, along with TKT and TNT.

⁹⁰ I had initially planned to give systematically the variant opinions which I had seen in other editions but time did not permit me to accomplish that within a reasonable period.

⁹¹ The metre specified is applicable to 11 stanzas, starting from that position, except in the case of 3075, for which the specification “*kali nilait turai*” is applicable to a group of 13 stanzas (alias TVM 2.7).

⁹² For TVM 5.4, a footnote specifies: “*perumpālum veṇṭalaiyāl vantatu*”.

<i>kali nilait tuṟai</i>	KaNiTu	233	1.3, 2.7, 3.7, 3.9, 4.1, 4.5, 4.6, 5.1, 5.9, 6.1, 6.3, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 8.3, 9.5, 10.1, 10.10	2921, 3075, 3187, 3209, 3231, 3275, 3286, 3341, 3429, 3451, 3473, 3517, 3528, 3539, 3605, 3616, 3627, 3693, 3825, 3891, 3990
<i>aṟucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_6c	231	1.5, 1.9, 3.4, 3.5, 3.10, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.10, 5.2, 5.5, 5.8, 6.4, 6.10, 7.10, 8.5, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10, 9.1, 10.7.	2943, 2987, 3154, 3165, 3220, 3253, 3264, 3297, 3330, 3352, 3385, 3418, 3484, 3550, 3660, 3715, 3748, 3759, 3770, 3781, 3957.
<i>taravu koccakak kalippā</i>	TaKoKa	88	1.4, 2.1, 2.5, 2.8, 3.1, 4.8, 4.9, 9.7	2932, 3009, 3053, 3088, 3121, 3308, 3319, 3847
<i>eḷucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_7c	66	3.6, 6.5, 7.2, 8.1, 8.4, 9.2	3176, 3495, 3572, 3671, 3704, 3792
<i>eṇcīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_8c	55	5.6, 7.3, 8.2, 9.9, 10.3	3396, 3583, 3682, 3869, 3913
<i>ācīriyat tuṟai</i>	AciTū	55	2.6, 5.7, 5.10, 6.2, 7.1	3064, 3407, 3440, 3462, 3561
<i>vañcit tuṟai</i>	VaTū	33	1.2, 1.8, 10.5	2910, 2976, 3935
<i>vañci viruttam</i>	VaVi	22	1.6, 2.4	2954, 3042

I shall now provide some illustration, in order to explain (very roughly) what those metrical categories tell us about the poem concerned. The 9 metres mentioned by the editor of NATP-1 for the 1102 stanzas of TVM fall under 3 groups:

- a group of “regular metre” stanzas (VaTū, VaVi, KaVi, KaNiTu, AcVi_6c, AcVi_7c, AcVi_8c), which covers 959 stanzas;
- a group of “irregular metre” stanzas (AciTū), which concerns 55 stanzas;
- a group of “archaic metre” stanzas (TaKoKa), which concerns 88 stanzas.

I call the last group “archaic” because, among the nine metres, *taravu koccakak kalippā* is the only one mentioned by the *Tolkāppiyam* and its commentators.⁹³ The

⁹³ Verse TP435i (“ottā ḷicaikkali kaliveṇ pāṭṭē // koccaka muṟaloṭu kalināl vakaittē”) in *Tolkāppiyam*

other eight types belong to *iṭaik kāla yāppu* (“medieval metrics”) and are mentioned only by treatises such as *Yāpparuṅkalam* (YA), *Yāpparuṅkalak Kārikai* (YK) and by commentaries such as YV (*Yāpparuṅkala Virutti*).

Concerning the “regular metre” stanzas, if what the editors tell us when they assign these metrical labels to the stanzas corresponds to the terminology of the YA and the YV, we have to conclude that the stanzas associated with, respectively, *vañcit turai* (VaTu), *vañci viruttam* (VaVi), *kali viruttam* (KaVi), *kali nilait turai* (KaNiTu), *aṟucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yāciriya viruttam* (AciVi_6c), *elucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yāciriya viruttam* (AciVi_7c), and *eṇcīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yāciriya viruttam* (AciVi_8c), are 4-line stanzas in which the lines are made up of, respectively, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 *cīrs* (“metrical foot”). In other words, the distribution in the TVM is the following:

Chart 16: Regular “new” metres in the *Tiruvāymōḷi* [TVM]

Number of metrical feet (<i>cīr</i>) per line	2 <i>cīrs</i> (VaTu)	3 <i>cīrs</i> (VaVi)	4 <i>cīrs</i> (KaVi)	5 <i>cīrs</i> (KaNiTu)	6 <i>cīrs</i> (AciVi_6c)	7 <i>cīrs</i> (AciVi_7c)	8 <i>cīrs</i> (AciVi_8c)
Number of stanzas in TVM	33	22	319	233	231	66	55

The stanzas with the shortest lines should be found among those labelled as *vañcit turai* (VaTu) and indeed, if we examine for instance TVM 1.8 (which is numbered from 2976 to 2986 in NATP-5), we find 11 short stanzas, the first one (TVM 1.8.1) being:

- (4) *ōṭumpuḷ lēri*
cūṭuntaṇṭuḷāy
nīṭuniṇṟavai
āṭumammāṇē (TVM 1.8.1) [Overall numbering 2976]

This could be compared with a sample from each group but it is probably sufficient at this stage to give a sample of *kali nilait turai* and a sample of *eṇcīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yāciriya viruttam*, as in the two following stanzas:

- (5) *pattuṭai aṭiyavark keḷiyavan, pīrarkaḷuk kariya*
vittakan, malarṁakaḷ virumpu(m)na marumpeṛa laṭikaḷ
matturu kaṭaivenṇey kaḷaviṇi luraviṭai yāppuṇ
ṭettiṛa muraliṇō ṭiṇaintirun tēṅkiya veḷivē! (TVM 1.3.1) [Overall numbering 2921]

Poruḷatikāram (see Va.U. Citamparam Piḷḷai edition) says that there exist 4 types of *Kali* metre, the 3rd one being *koccakak kali*.

- (6) *vellaic curicaṅko tāli ēnti tāmaraik kaṇṇa nenṇēnci nūṭē*
pullaik kaṭākinra vārraik kāṇir encollic collu kēṇannai mīrkāl?
vellaic cukamavaṇ vīrrirunta—vēta oliyum, vīlā oliyum,
pillaiḱ kulā vīlaiyāṭṭu oliyum arā—tiruppēreyil cēvaṇ nāṇē. (TVM 7.3.1)
 [Overall numbering 3583]

13. Metres in the *Periyatirumoli* (PTM)

I shall now, as previously mentioned, examine the metres found in PTM (to which are added TKT and TNT), according to the point of view of the editor of NATP-1. There are 10 of them, partly coinciding with those found in the TVM. As in the case of Chart 15, I list them in descending order of frequency:

Chart 17: Metres in PTM, TKT and TNT

Full Name	Abbreviation	Stanza count	NATP-1 Location (inside PTM, TKT or TNT)	NATP-2 & NATP-5 Location (starting position) ⁹⁴
<i>arucīrk kaḷiṇēṭiḷaṭi</i> <i>yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_6c	280	1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.8, 3.1, 3.3, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.9, 5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 5.9, 6.7, 6.10, 7.4, 7.5, 8.1, 8.5, 8.6, 8.8, 9.5, 10.3, 10.4, 11.6, TKT	958, 968, 988, 1118, 1148, 1168, 1258, 1288, 1298, 1328, 1348, 1368, 1388, 1428, 1508, 1538, 1578, 1588, 1648, 1688, 1698, 1718, 1788, 1868, 1878, 2002, 2032
<i>eṇcīrk kaḷiṇēṭiḷaṭi</i> <i>yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_8c	250	2.4, 2.5, 2.10, 3.2, 3.4, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 4.4, 4.8, 5.8, 5.10, 6.6, 7.3, 7.7, 7.8, 7.10, 9.2, 9.7, 10.2, 10.6, 11.4, TNT	1078, 1088, 1138, 1158, 1178, 1218, 1228, 1238, 1278, 1318, 1418, 1438, 1498, 1568, 1608, 1618, 1638, 1758, 1808, 1858, 1898, 1982, 2052

⁹⁴ The metre specified is applicable to 10 stanzas, starting from that position, except in the case of 1908, for which the specification “*eḷucīrk kaḷiṇēṭiḷaṭi yācīriya viruttam*” is applicable to a group of 14 stanzas (alias PTM 10.7), in the case of 2032, for which the specification “*arucīrk kaḷiṇēṭiḷaṭi yācīriya viruttam*” is applicable to a group of 20 stanzas (alias *Tirukkuruntāṇṭakam* [TKT]), in the case of 2052, for which the specification “*eṇcīrk kaḷiṇēṭiḷaṭi yācīriya viruttam*” is applicable to a group of 30 stanzas (alias *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam* [TNT])

<i>kali nilait tuṛai</i>	KaNiTu	150	1.7, 1.9, 2.2, 3.7, 5.4, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 7.2, 7.6, 9.3, 9.6, 9.9, 11.2	1008, 1028, 1058, 1208, 1378, 1458, 1468, 1478, 1488, 1558, 1598, 1768, 1798, 1828, 1962
<i>Eḷucirk kaḷiṇēṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcīVi_7c	144	1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.3, 2.7, 2.9, 4.3, 4.10, 5.7, 9.1, 9.8, 10.7, 10.9	948, 978, 998, 1018, 1068, 1108, 1128, 1268, 1338, 1408, 1748, 1818, 1908, 1932
<i>taravu koccakak kalippā</i>	TaKoKa	140	2.6, 3.6, 4.1, ⁹⁵ 6.8, 6.9, 8.2, ⁹⁶ 8.3, 8.4, 8.9, 8.10, 9.4, 11.3, 11.5, 11.7	1098, 1198, 1248, 1518, 1528, 1658, 1668, 1678, 1728, 1738, 1778, 1972, 1992, 2012
<i>kali viruttam</i>	KaVi	110	1.10, 4.7, 5.2, 5.6, 7.1, 7.9, 8.7, 10.1, 10.8, 11.1, 11.8	1038, 1308, 1358, 1398, 1548, 1628, 1708, 1848, 1922, 1952, 2022
<i>ācīriyat tuṛai</i>	AcīTu	30	2.1, 3.5, 9.10	1048, 1188, 1838
<i>vañci viruttam</i>	VaVi	10	6.1	1448
<i>veṇṭuṛai</i>	VeTu	10	10.10	1942
<i>kalit tāḷicai</i>	KaTa	10	10.5	1888

As in the case of TVM, the 10 metres mentioned by the editor of NATP-1 for the 1134 stanzas of the group constituted of PTM, TKT and TNT fall under 3 groups:

- a group of “regular metre” stanzas (VaVi, KaVi, KaNiTu, AcīVi_6c, AcīVi_7c, AcīVi_8c), which covers 944 stanzas;
- a group of “irregular metre” stanzas (AcīTu, KaTa, VeTu), which concerns 50 stanzas;
- a group of “archaic metre” stanzas (TaKoKa), which concerns 140 stanzas.

⁹⁵ NATP-1 mentions the metre in PTM 4.1 as simply being *koccakak kalippā* (instead of *taravu koccakak kalippā*, as mentioned in NATP-4).

⁹⁶ NATP-1 specifies “*veṇṭaḷaiyāl vanta taravu koccakak kalippā*”.

The distribution of the “regular metre” stanzas in terms of length is as follows:

Chart 18: Regular metres in PTM, TKT and TNT

Number of metrical feet (<i>cīr</i>) per line	2 <i>cīrs</i> (VaTu)	3 <i>cīrs</i> (VaVi)	4 <i>cīrs</i> (KaVi)	5 <i>cīrs</i> (KaNiTu)	6 <i>cīrs</i> (AciVi_6c)	7 <i>cīrs</i> (AciVi_7c)	8 <i>cīrs</i> (AciVi_8c)
Number of stanzas in TVM	0	10	110	150	280	144	250

One notices, when comparing this data with that seen in the TVM, a shift towards long metres.⁹⁷ It should also be added that although the names used for the “regular” metres are the same, there might exist a difference in nature between the TVM and the PTM because the latter represents a more constrained type of metre, governed by precise patterns, called *cantakkulippu*, but an exact description of the phenomenon is beyond the scope of this article.⁹⁸

14. Metres in the “First Thousand” (*Mutalāyiram*) [First three authors]

We shall now list the metres that are seen in the stanzas composed by Periyālvār, by Āṇṭāl and by Kulacēkara Ālvār. They are given in the following charts:

Chart 19: Periyālvār

Full Name	Abbreviation	Stanza count	Location in NATP-1	Start location in NATP-5
<i>arucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_6C	136	<i>Tiruppallāṇṭu</i> (2.12), <i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> : 1.7, 2.4, 2.7, 2.8, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.7, 4.9, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4	2, 86, 152, 182, 192, 286, 297, 328, 391, 412, 443, 453, 463.

⁹⁷ More precisely a weighted sum for Chart 18 indicates an average length of 6,26 *cīrs* per line, whereas the same calculation for Chart 16 gives an average length of 5,07 *cīrs* per line for the TVM.

⁹⁸ The *cantak kulippu* can be seen in the edition of the 2006 edition of the PTM, with commentary by T.V. Gopal Iyer. For instance, he gives “*tāṇaṇa tāṇa tāṇaṇa tāṇaṇa tāṇaṇa tāṇaṇa*” as the one seen in PTM 1.1.

<i>eṇcīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_8C	84	<i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> : 1.5, 2.9, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.5, 4.10, 5.1	64, 202, 254, 264, 275, 371, 423, 433.
<i>kalit tāḷicai</i>	Ka_Taa	65	<i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> : 1.3, 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, 2.10, 3.9	44, 97, 118, 162, 172, 213, 307.
<i>veṇṭalaṭiyāl vanta kalit tāḷicai</i>	Ka_Taa (VT)	39	<i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> : 1.2 [1–20], 1.6 [1–10], 1.9 [1–9].	23, 75, 108.
<i>eḷucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_7C	45	<i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> : 2.3, 3.1, 3.3, 4.4.	139, 223, 244, 360.
<i>kalinilaṭi tuṛai</i>	KaNiTu	42	<i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> : 1.4, 3.2, 4.2, 4.3.	54, 234, 338, 349.
<i>kali viruttam</i>	KaVi	31	<i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> : 1.1, 2.2, 3.10.	13, 128, 318.
<i>taravu koccakak kalippā</i>	TaKoKa	20	<i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> : 1.2 (last), 1.3 (last), 1.6 (last), 1.8 (last), 1.9 (last), 2.1 (last), 2.5 (last), 2.6 (last), 2.10 (last), 3.9 (last), 4.8 (all).	43, 53, 85, 107, 117, 127, 171, 181, 222, 317, 402.
<i>talit tuṛai</i>	KaTu	10	<i>Periyālvār Tirumoli</i> : 4.6	381.
<i>kuṛaḷ veṇ centuṛai</i>	KuVeCe	1	<i>Tiruppallāṇṭu</i> (1).	1

Chart 20: Āṇṭāḷ

Full Name	Abbreviation	Stanza count	Location in NATP-1	Start location in NATP-5
<i>aṛucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_6C	40	NT: 1, 3, 13, 14.	504, 524, 627, 637.
<i>eḷucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_7C	21	NT: 2, 5.	514, 545.
<i>eṇcīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_8C	10	NT: 12.	617.
<i>eṭṭaṭi nārcīr oruvikarpak koccakak kalippā</i>	8a4cO-VKoKa	30	TP	474.

<i>kalinilaiṭ turai</i>	KaNiTu	20	NT: 9, 10.	587, 597.
<i>kali viruttam</i>	KaVi	22	NT: 4, 6.	534, 556.
<i>taravu koccakak kalippā</i>	TaKoKa	30	NT: 7, 8, 11.	567, 577, 607.

Chart 21: Kulacēkara Ālvār

Full Name	Abbreviation	Stanza count	Location in NATP-1	Start location in NATP-5
<i>aṟucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_6C	11	9	730
<i>eḷucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_7C	10	2	658
<i>eṇcīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	AcVi_8C	43	1, 6, 7, 10.	647, 698, 708, 741.
<i>kali viruttam</i>	KaVi	9	3	668
<i>taravu koccakak kalippā</i>	TaKoKa	32	4, 5, 8.	677, 688, 719.

15. Metres in the “First Thousand” (*Mutalāyiram*) [Overall statistics]

The first set of statistics given here will concern that part of the 4000 TP which is called *Mutalāyiram*. It contains 947 stanzas (in both NATP-1 and NATP-2), which are attributed to seven poets and in which thirteen (or possibly fourteen)⁹⁹ different metres are represented. The metres are (according to NATP-2):

Chart 22: Metres in the “First Thousand”

	Number of stanzas	Name of metre	Number of poets
a	221	<i>ācīriya viruttam</i> , <i>aṟucīr</i>	4 poets (ABCE)
b1	66	<i>ācīriya viruttam</i> , <i>eḷucīr</i>	3 poets (ABCE)
b2	120	<i>ācīriya viruttam</i> , <i>eḷucīr</i> (CANTAVIRUTTAM)	1 poet (D)
c	157	<i>ācīriya viruttam</i> , <i>eṇcīr</i>	4 poets (ABCD)

⁹⁹ I mention this hesitation here, in anticipation of a possible future discussion concerning the difference to be made between *viruttam* and *canta viruttam*.

d1	95	<i>kalit tāḷicai</i>	1 poet (A)
d2	9	<i>veṇṭaḷaik kalit tāḷicai</i> (5 lines)	1 poet (A)
e1	84	<i>kali viruttam</i>	5 poets (ABCFG)
e2	11	<i>cantak kali viruttam</i>	1 poet (A)
f	72	<i>taravu koccakak kalippā</i>	3 poets (ABC)
g1	62	<i>kalinilait turai</i>	2 poets (AB)
g2	10	<i>kalit turai</i>	1 poet (A)
h	30	<i>eṭṭaṭi nārcir oruvikarṇak koccakak kalippā</i> (8 lines)	1 poet (B)
h	9	<i>āciriyat turai</i>	1 poet (F)
i	1	<i>kuṛaḷ veṇ centurāi</i>	1 poet (A)
	947 stanzas	TOTAL	7 poets (ABCDEFG)

And the poets are:

Chart 23: Poets in the “First Thousand”

	Poet	Number of stanzas	Number of metres represented
A	Periyālvār	473	11 {a,b1,c,d1,d2,e1,e2,f,g1,g2, i}
B	Āṇṭāl	173	7 {a,b1,c,e1,d,g1,h}
C	Kulaçēkara Ālvār	105	5 {a,b1,c,e1,f}
D	Tirumaḷicai Ālvār	120	1 {c}
E	Toṇṭaraṭippoti	55	2 {a,b1}
F	Tiruppāṇ Ālvār	10	2 {e1, h}
G	Maturakavi Ālvār	11	1 {e1}
	TOTAL	947	13 distinct metres

16. Metres in the Eighth *Tirumurai* (Māṇikkavācakar)

We have now finished examining the metres in the NATP and before trying to give the bird eye’s view of Tamil Bhakti literature which was announced at the beginning, we still have one major author, belonging to the Śaiva part of the corpus, to examine. The name given to him by tradition, as author, is Māṇikkavācakar and the two

main components of his work are (A) the *Tiruvācakam*, which is considered as a collection of 51 distinct compositions, one of them (the *Tiruccatakam*) being a metrically heterogeneous *antāti* (see Section 6), and (B) the *Tirukkōvaiyār*, already mentioned (also in Section 6), which is a single homogeneous composition comprising 400 stanzas in *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai* metre, but does not, unlike Nammālvār's *Tiruviruttam*, make use of the *antāti* feature. From a descriptive point of view, the case of the *Tirukkōvaiyār*, which shall be referred to here as PITM-8B, is much simpler than that of the *Tiruvācakam*, which we shall consider as consisting of 51 subsets, numbered from PITM-8A-1 to PITM-8A-51, all of them being metrically homogeneous, except PITM-8A-5, which must be divided into ten metrically homogeneous subsets, numbered from PITM-8A-5.1 to PITM-8A-5.10, which brings the count of metrically homogeneous parts in the *Tiruvācakam* to sixty. Finally, among those sixty subsets, we must distinguish between fifty-six which are stanzaic and four which are non-stanzaic and make use of the old *ācīriyam* and *kali veṇṇā* metres. Those non-stanzaic four (totaling 646 lines) are named:

- *Civapurāṇam* (PITM-8A-1), containing 95 lines in *kali veṇṇā* metre;¹⁰⁰
- *Kīrtittiruvakaval* (PITM-8A-2), containing 146 lines in *nilaimaṇṭila ācīriyappā* metre;
- *Tiruvaṇṭappakuti* (PITM-8A-3), containing 182 lines in *inaik kuṛaḷ ācīriyappā* metre;
- *Pōṛṛittiruvakaval* (PITM-81.4), containing 225 lines in *nilaimaṇṭila ācīriyappā* metre.

As for the stanzaic fifty-six components, they contain, all in all, 652 stanzas and their characterisations are given in the following chart, by decreasing frequencies.

Chart 24: Metres used in the 652 stanzaic components of *Tiruvācakam* (PITM-8A) and in the *Tirukkōvaiyār* (PITM-8B)

Metrical specification	stanzas	groups	Rank	Occurrences (the numerical references which follow the designations must be prefixed by "PITM-8A-")
<i>aṟuṭirk kaḷiṇēṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	164	16	1	<i>Tiruccatakam</i> (5.4, 5.6, 5.7), <i>Tirupporcuṇṇam</i> (9), <i>Kuyirpattu</i> (18), <i>Kōyīnmūttatiruppatikam</i> (21), <i>Ācāippattu</i> (25), <i>Aticayappattu</i> (26), <i>Pirārttaṇaippattu</i> (32), <i>Kuḷaitappattu</i> (33), <i>Accappattu</i> (35), <i>Arputappattu</i> (41), <i>Tiruvārttai</i> (43), <i>Eṇṇappatikam</i> (44), <i>Yāttiraippattu</i> (45), <i>Āṇantamālai</i> (50).

¹⁰⁰ For all the sections of *Tiruvācakam*, metrical characterisations are given after G.U. Pope (1900).

<i>nālaṭit taravu koccakak kalippā</i>	136	10	2	<i>Tiruccatakam</i> (5.2), <i>Tirukkōttumpi</i> (10), <i>Tirutteḷḷēṇam</i> (11), <i>Tiruccālal</i> (12), <i>Tiruppūvalli</i> (13) [*19* or 20 stanzas], <i>Tiruttōṇōkkam</i> (15), <i>Kaṇṭapattu</i> (31), <i>Tiruvēcaravu</i> (38), <i>Tiruppulampal</i> (39), <i>Kulāppattu</i> (40).
<i>ēḷucīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	77	8	3	<i>Tiruccatakam</i> (5.8), <i>Kōyirṛiruppatikam</i> (22), <i>Puṇarccippattu</i> (27), <i>Vālāppattu</i> (28), <i>Arutpattu</i> (29), <i>Tirukkalukkunṛappatikam</i> (30), <i>Piṭṭipattu</i> (37), <i>Cennippattu</i> (42).
<i>kaṭṭalaik kalit tuṛai</i>	70 + 400	3	4	<i>Tiruccatakam</i> (5.1), <i>Nittalviṇṇappam</i> (6), <i>Tiruppāṇṭippatikam</i> (36), (to which are added the 400 stanzas in <i>Tirukkōvaiyār</i>)
<i>kali viruttam</i>	41	5	5	<i>Tiruccatakam</i> (5.5), <i>Anṇaippattu</i> (17), <i>Uyirunṇippattu</i> (34), <i>Tiruppaṭaiyeḷucci</i> (46), <i>Accōppatikam</i> [*9*/12 stanzas] (51).
<i>eṇcīrk kaḷineṭilaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	40	4	6	<i>Tiruccatakam</i> (5.3), <i>Tiruccatakam</i> (5.10), <i>Tiruppalliyēḷucci</i> (20), <i>Cettilāppattu</i> (23).
<i>āraṭit taravu koccakak kalippā</i>	29	2	7	<i>Tiru Ammānai</i> (8), <i>Tirupponṇūcal</i> (16).
<i>nēricai veṇpā</i>	28	3	8	<i>Tiruttacāṅkam</i> (19), <i>Tiruvenpā</i> (47), <i>Paṇṭāyanāṇmarai</i> (48).
<i>veṇṭalaiyāṇ vanta iyarṛaraviṇaik koccakak kalippā</i>	20	1	9	<i>Tiruvempāvai</i> (7)
<i>kalit tāḷicai</i>	19	1	10	<i>Tiruvuntiyār</i> (14) [*19*/20 stanzas]
<i>kalavaip pāṭṭu</i>	10	1	11	<i>Aṭaikkalāppattu</i> (24).
<i>kalinilait tuṛai</i>	10	1	12	<i>Tiruccatakam</i> (5.9).
<i>paṇṇirucīr viruttam</i>	8	1	13	<i>Tiruppaṭaiyāṭci</i> (49)
TOTAL	652	56		

17. Synthetic view of all the stanzaic metres enumerated

I shall now try to provide the reader with an overall view of all the data covered so far, before attempting to draw a few conclusions in the final section. The nine charts reexamined are:

- Chart 4: Campantar [PITM-1 to PITM-3], 386 hymns (4157 stanzas and 47 lines);
- Chart 5: Appar [PITM-4 to PITM-6], 312 hymns (or 3066 stanzas);
- Chart 6: Cuntarar [PITM-7], 101 hymns (or 1026 stanzas);
- Chart 15: Nammālvār [NATP-δ & NATP-γ], 1102 stanzas (*icaippā*), 187 stanzas (*iyaṛpā*) [and 71 lines (*iyaṛpā*)];
- Chart 17: Tirumaṅkai Ālvār [NATP-β & NATP-γ], 1134 stanzas (*icaippā*) [and 498 lines (*iyaṛpā*)];
- Chart 19: Periyālvār [NATP-α], 473 stanzas;
- Chart 20: Āṇṭāl [NATP-α], 173 stanzas;
- Chart 21: Kulacēkara Ālvār [NATP-α], 105 stanzas;
- Chart 24: Māṇikkavācakar [PITM-8 (A & B)], 652 (+400) stanzas [and 646 lines].

An important consideration is that, since the data provided in those nine charts is based on the usage of several editors, it is not homogeneous. Some editors use long analytical designations while other editors use shorter designations. For that reason, the preliminary list of designations which we can compile on the basis of those nine charts, will be longer than the number of categories actually to be distinguished (the current chart distinguishes between twenty-seven categories, but some of the distinctions are simply “provisional”). On the other hand, some categories may appear as covering several sub-categories which should in fact be distinguished.¹⁰¹ I shall first include in the following cumulative general chart those metres which are the most frequent and which have been used by all or most of those nine authors (their names will be abbreviated to three letters in the chart). It is to be noted that the figures in columns 2 to 4 refer to the number of hymns concerned whereas the figures in the other columns refer to the numbers of stanzas.

¹⁰¹ I have for instance stated in Chart 4, following T.V. Gopal Iyer (1991: 378), that *Tēvāram* 1.31 is a *patikam* illustrating the *kali viruttam* metre but the 1885 treatise called *Viruttappāviyaḷ* and composed by T. Virabhadra Mudaliar [1855–1910] tells us (on p. 22) that this is a special type of *kali viruttam*, which can be more precisely described as *cantak kali viruttam*, because of its superior form of regularity, which is also commented on in detail by T.V. Gopal Iyer (loc. cit.). This article being long enough already, I shall not comment further. Another label which should be similarly investigated is the label *tiruvirākam* which is found applied to several *patikams* in the edition of the *Tēvāram* by T.V. Gopal Iyer: see the *patikams* 1.20, 1.21 and 1.22, on pp. 21–23 in the 1984 volume of the PIFI edition.

Chart 25: Comparison between nine authors¹⁰² (PITM & NATP)

	Metre	CAM (hymns)	APP (h.)	CUN (h.)	NAM (stanzas)	TIR (st.)	PER (st.)	ĀṆṬ (st.)	KUL (st.)	MĀṆ (st.)
	Chart number	Ch.4	Ch.5	Ch.6	Ch.15	Ch.17	Ch.19	Ch.20	Ch.21	Ch.24
	Number of metrical categories	17 cat.	9	9	9 (+2) (+1)	10 (+2)	10	7	5	13+2
1	<i>kalī viruttam</i>	144 h. + 3 st. ¹⁰³	105	27	319	110	31	22	9	41
2	<i>eṇṇīrk kalīṇēṭīlaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	8	100	27	55	250	84	10	43	40
3	<i>eḷucīrk kalīṇēṭīlaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	14	1	12	66	144	45	21	10	77
4	<i>aṟucīrk kalīṇēṭīlaṭi yācīriya viruttam</i>	56	65	13	231	280	136	40	11	164
5	<i>paṇṇīrucīr viruttam</i>									8
6	<i>kaṭṭālaik kalit tuṟai</i>	2	34	8	100					70 + 400
7	<i>kalit tuṟai</i>	55 h. + 9 st. ¹⁰⁴	1				10			
8	<i>kalinilait tuṟai</i>	19		6	233	150	42	20		10

¹⁰² The nine authors are: APP (Appar), ĀṆṬ (Āṇṭāl), CAM (Campantar), CUN (Cuntarar), KUL (Kulacēkara Āḷvār), MĀṆ (Māṇikkavācakar), NAM (Nammāḷvār), PER (Periyāḷvār), TIR (Tirumaṅkai Āḷvār).

¹⁰³ See footnote 28.

¹⁰⁴ See footnote 28.

9	<i>taravu koccakam</i> ¹⁰⁵	28	4	5	88	140	20	30	32	136
10	<i>eṭṭaṭi nārcir oruvikarpak koccakak kalippā</i> ¹⁰⁶							30		20
11	<i>āraṭit taravu koccakak kalippā</i>									29
12	<i>vañci viruttam</i>	13			22	10				
13	<i>vañcit tuṟai</i>				33					
14	<i>ācīriyat tuṟai</i>				55	30				
15	<i>ācīriya nērttuṟai</i>	1 st. ¹⁰⁷								
16	<i>ācīriya iṇaikkuraṭ tuṟai</i>	27	1	2						
17	<i>veṇṭuṟai</i>					10				
18	<i>veṇ centuṟai</i>	1								
19	<i>kuraḷ veṇ centuṟai</i>						1			
20	<i>kalit tāḷicai</i>		1	1		10	65			19
21	<i>veṇṭalaiyāl vanta kalit tāḷicai</i>						39			
22	<i>vañcit tāḷicai</i>	9								

¹⁰⁵ In Charts 15, 17, 19, 20 and 21, this appears as “*taravuk koccakak kalippā*” and in Chart 24 as “*nālaṭit taravu koccakak kalippā*”.

¹⁰⁶ In Chart 24, a designation which probably corresponds to the same metre (if the *Tiruppāvai* and the *Tiruvempāvai* do use the same metre) is *veṇṭalaiyāṇ vanta iyaṟṟaraviṇaik koccakak kalippā*.

¹⁰⁷ See footnote 28.

23	<i>kuṛaṭ ṭāḷicai</i>	3							
24	<i>kalavaip pāṭṭu</i>								10
25	<i>nāḷaṭimēl vaippu</i>	3							
26	<i>īraṭimēl vaippu</i>	2							
27	<i>nēricai veṇṇā</i>				87				28
X	Non-stanzaic metres used	<i>ācīriyam</i> [fn.29] 47 l.			<i>ācīriyam</i> Chart 9 71 l.	Chart 9 46 l. 226 k.			2 cat. (sect. 16)

18. A few observations, in the guise of a conclusion of the survey

I am now left with the task of stating what has been accomplished in this presentation, concerning the survey of Tamil metres, and what remains to be done. The truth is that we are still at the beginning of the enquiry. What has been presented in this article is simply statistics of what some of the editors of the PITM and NATP have stated concerning their metres. And although I have tried in a few cases to explain what those statements mean, for instance by showing, as in Chart 8, what distinguishes *kaṭṭalaik kalitturai* and *nēricai veṇṇā* or by making in Section 12 a preliminary classification of the various metres used in the TVM, I have certainly not explained clearly what all the twenty-seven distinct preliminary categories enumerated in Chart 25 are. This is something which I am undertaking in additional studies which are part of the same series of “Studies in Tamil Metrics”. Also, as I hope to have shown at the end of Section 9, when discussing the case of the TCV, using the sample given in (1), (2) and (3), we must often be careful when using the categories given by experts in metrics. They must be seen for what they are, i.e. attempts at bringing order to what appears as partly chaotic, when seen outside of its proper context, which is, however, for the most part beyond our reach. There is indeed a great deal of variation (and even hesitation) in the terminological usage, as illustrated for instance by the cluster of technical terms which has its centre in the basic expression *kalit tuṛai*. That cluster was first mentioned in Section 4 (see Figure B). Earlier, in Section 1, I had mentioned T.V. Gopal Iyer’s statement that *Tēvāram* 2.1 is in *kali nilait tuṛai*. Slightly later, in Section 3, I have stated in a footnote to Chart 5 that the traditional designation for thirty-four of Appar’s hymns is “*Tīruviruttam*”, while stating in the chart itself that those hymns are in *kaṭṭalaik kalit tuṛai* metre. Such statements are puzzling if we remember that the *Yāpparuṅkalam* (YA) and the *Yāpparuṅkalak Kārikai* (YK), two of the basic metrical

treatises, have, as the core of their classification system, a dichotomy between the “four *pā*-s” and the “twelve *pā-v-inam*-s”, the elements of the latter group being named by combining in every possible way the three elements “-*tāḷicai*”, “-*tuṟai*” and “-*viruttam*”, with four prefixed elements which echo the names of the four *pās* (*veṇṇpā*, *āciriyaṇṇpā*, *kalippā* and *vañciṇṇpā*). The twelve combinations thus obtained are presented in the following chart, where I have put between brackets the three combinations which do not appear in Chart 25 and where the references indicate the YA verse in which a specific *pāvinam* is characterised.

Chart 26: The twelve *pāvinams*, “auxiliary metres”, as defined in *Yāpparuṇkalam* (YA)

(<i>veṇ tāḷicai</i>) [YA66]	(<i>āciriyaṇṇ tāḷicai</i>) [YA75]	<i>kalit tāḷicai</i> [YA87]	<i>vañcit tāḷicai</i> [YA91]
<i>veṇ tuṟai</i> [YA67]	<i>āciriyaṇṇ tuṟai</i> [YA76]	<i>kalit tuṟai</i> YA88]	<i>vañcit tuṟai</i> [YA91]
(<i>veḷi viruttam</i>) [YA68]	<i>āciriyaṇṇ viruttam</i> [YA77]	<i>kali viruttam</i> [YA89]	<i>vañci viruttam</i> [YA92]

I have already indicated in Section 12 while discussing the “regular metres” seen in the TVM, the use which is made of five of those terms, one of them (*āciriya viruttam*) being further subdivided into three, according to the number of *cīrs* (see Chart 16), in order to have distinct designations for seven different lengths of line. That some of them have *tūrai* in their name while others have *viruttam*, seems rather arbitrary. It might indicate that at some stage, a naming convention which had its own logic was (in good faith) “misused” and that existing designations were re-interpreted in a different way. Among the three terms, *tāḷicai*, *tuṟai* and *viruttam*, only the first two are seen in the *Tolkāppiyam*. The term *tāḷicai* is used to refer to some components in the *ottāḷicaik kali* (see Section 5), and those may have initially been perceived as small song-like components embedded in a poem with complex structure. As for *tuṟai*, it has a number of uses in the *Tolkāppiyam*, but the one which comes closest to the later usages which we discuss here might be seen in the expression *centuṟai* which appears in one *sūtra* (TP80i) of the *pātāṇ* section of the *Purattinaṇṇaiyāl*, and which seems to belong to the vocabulary of *icait tamil* “musical Tamil”.¹⁰⁸ If *tāḷicai* and *tuṟai* are terms originally belonging to the vocabulary of

¹⁰⁸ See Ḥampūṇar’s explanations on TP80i and see the usage of *centuṟai* and *veṇṇuṟai* in Aṭiyārkkunallār’s commentary on *Cilappatikāram*. See also P.S. Subramanya Sastri’s translation (p. 59) of that verse (which he numbers TP79).

musicology which were borrowed by metrical experts, that explains why a number of designations do not seem really to fit into a logical system. The first occurrence of the word *viruttam* seems to be found in Campantar's *Tēvāram*, in a reference to stories/songs called *kīḷi viruttam* "viruttam of the parrot" and *eli viruttam* "viruttam of the rat" and Campantar accuses the Jains of using them for seducing credulous people.¹⁰⁹ It is probable that Campantar did not suspect that his own compositions would come to be categorised and named by a variety of terms having *viruttam* as a component! Coming back to the cluster of terms that is centered on *kalit tuṛai*, we can see in YA88, that the definition given for *kalit tuṛai* is extremely imprecise, because the verse simply says:

(4) *neṭilaṭi nāṅkāy nikaḷvatu kalittuṛai*

"that which occurs as four long lines is [called] *kalittuṛai*" (YA88)

While explaining and illustrating this statement, the commentator, however, introduces a distinction between two varieties, a (marginal) one which he calls *kali maṇṭilat tuṛai*,¹¹⁰ in which the lines may undergo a permutation, without consequences to the meaning (because each line is a complete sentence), and what looks like the main variety, which he calls *kalinilaṭ tuṛai*, in which the order of lines is fixed. However, strangely, if we look for a definition of *kaṭṭalaik kalit tuṛai* in YV, we won't find one, although YV contains many verses (cited from YK) which obey that specification, and which are referred to as *kārikais*. We must go to the commentary of YK in order to find a characterisation of what a *kārikai* is, and we see there the expression *kalittuṛai* in that characterisation.¹¹¹ There is however still scope for additional disambiguation efforts because the *Vīracōliyam* commentator finds it necessary to warn us (under VC123) that two varieties of *kalit tuṛai* must be distinguished,¹¹² which are called *kōvaik kalit tuṛai* and *kāppiyak kalit tuṛai*. Summing up those explanations, it seems that we can temporarily conclude that:

- what is nowadays referred to as *kaṭṭalaik kalit tuṛai* has also been referred to, historically, as *kōvaik kalit tuṛai*, as *kārikai* and as *tiruviruttam*;

¹⁰⁹ See *Digital Tēvāram*: *kūṭṭiṇ ār kīḷiyiṇ viruttam, _uraittatu _ōr _eliyiṇ toḷil, pāṭṭu mey colī, pakkamē celum _ekkartan̄kaḷai* "by the proud and haughty people who move by the side of good people, adding to literature *kīḷiviruttam* and *eliviruttam*, making people believe them to be truth" (*Tēvāram*, 3.39.5).

¹¹⁰ See YV-1998 (p. 369) and see TIPA14 (p. 211).

¹¹¹ See p. 4 in U.Vē. Cāminātaiyār edition: [*aṭiyaṭi tōru maiṇcī rāki*] // *mutar̄cīr nāṅkum venṭalaip pīlaiyāk* // *kaṭaiyōru cīrum viḷaṅkā yāki* // *nērpai nārē niraipai nēlen* // *rōtiṇar kalittuṛai yōraṭik keḷuttē*.

¹¹² VC123: *iṇik kalittuṛaiyāik kōvaik kalittuṛai _eṇṇum, kāppiyak kalittuṛai _eṇṇum _iraṇṭākkuvār eṇak koḷka*. [p. 457, in T.V. Gopal Iyer edition].

- what is nowadays referred to as *kalinilait turai*¹¹³ has also been referred to, historically, as *kāppiyak kalit turai* and *viruttak kalit turai*.¹¹⁴

In the light of all this, it must be clear that precisely understanding what the grammarians/experts in metrics “tell” us is not always easy. It is no wonder that C.J. Beschi [1680–1747] was quite proud to have discovered what the word “*viruttam*” means. His work¹¹⁵ and the work of G.U. Pope [1820–1908],¹¹⁶ among many others who immersed themselves in the study of Tamil literature were probably partly responsible for native scholars (such as the influential author of *viruttap*

¹¹³ T.V. Gopal Iyer (1991) himself uses three distinct expressions: *kaṭṭalaik kalit turai*, *kalit turai* and *kalinilait turai* (see Chart 4). He seems to make use of the expression *kalit turai* in order to refer to stanzas in which the number of *eluttu* per line is fixed but is not equal to sixteen or seventeen (as per the rule enunciated in Section 6). See his explanations on p. 375 concerning the *Tēvāram* 1.1 poem: *aṭitōrum nēracaiyil toṭaṅkiṇ 18 eluttum, nīracaiyil toṭaṅkiṇ 19 eluttum nīkalum kaṭṭalai neṭilaṭi* (“this (*Tēvāram* 1.1 poem) is [composed in] *kaṭṭalai* neṭilaṭi, for which, in every line, if the first *acai* is *nēr*, there are 18 *eluttus* and, if the first *acai* is *nīrai*, there are 19 *eluttus*.”)

¹¹⁴ See the usage on p. 40 in U.Vē. Cāminātaiyār edition of YK, in the commentary to YK12. The designation “*viruttak kalitturai*” is applied to a citation from *Cūḷamaṇi*, starting with *venṛāṇ vinaiyīn*

¹¹⁵ Beschi, who is known in Tamil under the name of “Vīramāmuṇivar” and who lived in an age, the early 18th century, when manuscripts were much more common than printed books in Tamil Nadu, has written several books which are highly pertinent to the subject of Tamil poetry. They are: (A) His grammar of *Centamil*, which was written in Latin in 1730, circulated in manuscript form, translated into English and printed in 1822 (the original Latin was printed only in 1917). This grammar contains very interesting original observations on the metres used in Tamil poetry (Some of those observations are incorporated in the description of *viruttam* by Kamil Zvelebil 1989: 79); (B) His *Tonṇūl Viḷakkam*, a grammar composed in Tamil, in verse form, which contains even more precise information than the Latin grammar. It was printed for the first time in 1838; (C) His *Tēmpāvaṇi*, a Christian devotional poem, the composition of which emulates the metres found in the Tamil version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* composed by Kampan (see the pages 9 to 16 in the 1956 edition of *Tēmpāvaṇi*); (D) His *Caturakarāti*, a dictionary in four parts, the last section (*toṭaiyakarāti*) being organised on the basis of *etukai*, which could be defined approximately as a kind of “second syllable rhyme” and is one of the most prominent and regular features of Tamil devotional poetry (In Inṇāci 1989, the 1st section [*peyar akarāti* “dictionary of names”] occupies pp. 1–183, the 2nd section [*poruḷ akarāti* “dictionary of things”] occupies pp. 184–261, the 3rd section [*tokai akarāti* “dictionary of collections/groups/totals”] occupies pp. 262–296, and the 4th section [*toṭaiyakarāti* “dictionary of alliterations”, litt. “stringing”] occupies pp. 297–413. That last section is divided into two main parts, (A.) *kurirkiḷ etukai* [pp. 297–376] and (B.) *neṭirkiḷ etukai* [pp. 377–411], followed by a small appendix).

¹¹⁶ G.U. Pope has given us in 1900 a beautiful edition (with translation and indices) of the *Tiruvācakam*, in which the metres used are explained, with additional references being given to another, earlier, publication (dated 1858), which presented the native grammarians’ opinions on metre.

pāviyal in the 19th century) composing even more metrical treatises and making more explicit for others the features of Tamil poetry.

ABBREVIATIONS

NATP	<i>Nālāyirat Tivvyappirapantam</i> (see Vaiṣṇava sources)
PITM	<i>Paṇṇiru Tirumurai</i> (see Śaiva sources)
PITM-A	See <i>Paṇṇiru Tirumurai</i> : Cuppiramaṇiyaṇ, Ca. Vē. (Patippācīriyar), 2009a. (general edition).
PITM-1 to PITM-7	<i>Tēvāram</i>
PITM-8	<i>Tiruvācakam</i> and <i>Tirukkōvaiyār</i>
PITM-9	<i>Tiruvicaippā—Tiruppallāṇṭu</i> (<i>Onpatān tirumurai</i>)
PITM-10	<i>Tirumantiram</i>
PITM-11	<i>Paṭiṇōrān tirumurai</i>
PITM-12	<i>Periyapurāṇam</i>
T	<i>Tolkāppiyam</i>
TC	<i>Tolkāppiyam, Collatikāram</i>
TE	<i>Tolkāppiyam, Eluttatikāram</i>
TIPA	See T.V.Gopal Iyer (2005) (in secondary literature)
TP	<i>Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷatikāram</i>
TPi	<i>Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷatikāram</i> (with Iḷampūraṇar's commentary)
TPp	<i>Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷatikāram</i> (with Pērācīriyar's commentary)
TPn	<i>Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷatikāram</i> (with Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar's commentary)
YA	<i>Yāpparuṅkalam</i> (see YV-1998)
YK	<i>Yāpparuṅkalak Kārikai</i> (Niklas [1993] in secondary literature)
YV	<i>Yāpparuṅkala Virutti</i> (see YV-1998)
YV-1998	<i>Yāpparuṅkalam</i> (<i>palaiya viruttiyuraiyuṭaṇ</i>)
VC	<i>Viracōḷiyam</i>

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¹¹⁷ The date 1937 appears on the last page of the sixth section. It is earlier than the dates given in T.V. Gopal Iyer (2007, vol. 2, p. 19) for this (series of) editions, namely “1938, 1952, 1959”. The volume edited by Vaiyapuri Pillai in 1955 for the Murray Rajam series also mentions the date of 1938 for the “paḷaiya patippu” of the *Mutalāyiram* (Irattiṇa nāyakar sāṇs), and the date of 1952 for another edition of the same.

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¹¹⁸ This volume contains two short sections on metrics. *Viruttaṇkaḷaiyalakiṭaṛku ariyattakka viparam* (pp. 9–10) and *cantaṇkaḷiṇaṭṭavaṇai* (pp. 10–16). Those could be usefully compared with the lists found in Dakshayani (1979) and Tirumurukaṇ (2000).

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¹¹⁹ A PDF file of the presentation is available on the INFITT web site at: “http://www.infitt.org/ti2009/papers/presentations/Infitt_Koeln_2009J-L_Chevillard_final.pdf”.

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