5. On the transmission of Tamil poetical vocabularies, with a special focus on the *Tivākaram* and the *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu*[1]

Jean-Luc Chevillard

When I met for the first time, in January 1995, with Eivind Kahrs, in Paris, on the occasion of the annual meeting of the SHESL[2], and heard him making a presentation on "L'interprétation et la tradition indienne du *Nirukta*"[3] – he was explaining to an audience of historians of linguistics that alongside the well-known domain of *vyākaraṇa*, there was another important branch of language study in India, which would deserve to be better known – little did I suspect at the time that I would myself progressively become more and more absorbed in that very domain and would someday try to swim myself, with the help of XML, the two interconnected semantic oceans that are the two earliest thesauri from Tamil Nadu, known under the names of *Tivākaram* (henceforth **Ti**) and *Piṅkalam* (henceforth **Pi**).[4] Both have their roots inside the *Uriyiyal*, which is the 17th chapter of the *Tolkāppiyam* (henceforth **T**), the most ancient Classical Tamil treatise. I shall try, in the course of this brief presentation, to explain how they are organized and what some of their features are. However, before going into more details, I shall examine in the first section some early modern references to those two texts and the human-textual path which connects us with them. We shall meet on the way with another, more recent, thesaurus, the *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu* (henceforth **CN**), which is often referred to

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1 The BnF MSS images shown in this article have become available to me thanks to my happy involvement in an ANR-DFG project called TST (Texts Surrounding Texts), for which the PI-s are Emmanuel Francis and Eva Wilden.

2 The SHESL (http://shesl.org) is the "Société d'Histoire et d'Épistémologie des Sciences du Langage".

3 See KAHRS 1998b for the published version of that presentation.

4 One can also meet with the longer designations *Cēntaṉṟivākaram* (for Ti) and *Piṅkalantai* (for Pi).

by the shorter name of *Nikaṇṭu*, although that designation also has a generic value and can then be applied to the Ti and to the Pi, as well as to other poetical thesauri.[5]

1. First European encounters with the Tamil *nikaṇṭu*-s

When an object is complex and understudied even in its place of origin, as are the Tamil thesauri nowadays, one cannot expect to easily obtain a reasonably informative summary (for outsiders) of what I shall tentatively call 'the enlightened *opinio communis*'. The fact is that practically everyone is an outsider, and all the available information is of a fragmentary nature. For that reason, I shall try in this section to go back to an earlier period, where the general situation may have been different, by first examining some observations which were made by European missionaries trying, in the 17th and the 18th centuries, to learn and to report on several of the existing varieties of Tamil. The first fragment examined here will be extracted from the (posthumously) printed version of the *Vocabulario Tamulico com a significaçam Portugueza* (henceforth VTCSP). This *Vocabulario* was compiled by Antam de Proença (1625–1666) and printed in 1679 after his death by his colleagues in Ambalacatta. The entry reproduced below in figure 1 and transcribed in 1a–b is entry 166_L_p.
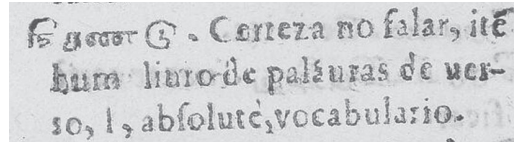

Figure 1: *VTCSP (1679), entry 166_L_p (nikaṇṭu)* [Vatican Library, MS Borg.ind.12, folio 94 v, extract]

(1a) நி க ண டு. **[a]** Certeza no falar, **[b]** itē / / huma liuro de paláuras de uer- / / =so, **[c]** l, abſolutè, vocabulario. [VTCSP, 1679, entry 166_L_p]

(1b) Nikaṇṭu "**[a]** Self-confidence (Authority?) when speaking, **[b]** ADDITION-ALLY a book containing poetical words, **[c]** OR, when used absolutely, a vo-cabulary."

5   The word *nikaṇṭu* is the adaptation of Sanskrit *nighaṇṭu* to the phonology of Tamil. As noted in Kᴀʜʀs 1998a: 29, *nighaṇṭu* can also refer either to a specific text, or to a class of lexicographical works.

This VTCSP entry can be usefully compared with the 4th and 5th entries in the *Bibliotheca Malabarica*, which is the catalogue, in German, of the lost collection of texts gathered by B. Ziegenbalg (1683–1719), from which I shall reproduce two extracts, which are labelled BM4 and BM5 in Sweetman and Ilakkuvan 2012, where they are accompanied by an English translation.

(2a) *Diwagaram*, ein poetisches Buch, so da *copiam verborum* in sich fasset, und am allerersten von der Jugend in ihrem 8. oder 9. Jahre gelernet wird. Der *Autor* dieses Buchs heißt *Diwagaram* und ist einer von der *Schammaner Nation* gewesen, […] Dieses Buch lernen allein diejenigen, so da wollen Gelehrte werden, oder doch solche Leute seyn, die mit Gelehrten umgehen und ihre gelehrte Sprache verstehen wollen. Die gemeinen Malabaren verstehen kein Wort aus selbigen oder doch ganz wenig. (*Bibliotheca Malabarica* [ca. 1706–1708][6], Sweetman and Ilakkuvan 2012: 50, **BM 4** [original text])

(2b) "*Tivākaram*, a poetic book containing *copiam verborum*, and studied by the youth at the earliest in their eighth or ninth year. The author of this book is called Tivākaraṉ and was one of the *camaṇar* nation. […] This book is studied only by those who wish to become scholars, or those who interact with scholars and wish to understand their language. The common Malabarians understand not a word of it, or at least very little." (*Bibliotheca Malabarica,* Sweetman and Ilakkuvan 2012: 50, **BM 4** [translation])

(3a) *Negendu*, ein poetisches Buch, so gleichfalls *copiam verborum* in sich fasset, als wie Diwagaram, ist aber heirinnen (Sic) von jenen unterschieden, weil es in lauter Versen besteht, jenes aber nur in Prosa geschrieben ist. […] (*Bibliotheca Malabarica,* Sweetman and Ilakkuvan 2012: 50, **BM 5** [original text])

(3b) "*Nikaṇṭu*, a poetic book which like *Tivākaram* contains *copiam verborum* but differs from it in that it consists only of verses, while the other is written in prose. […]" (*Bibliotheca Malabarica,* Sweetman and Ilakkuvan 2012: 51, **BM 5** [translation])

It can be seen from these two citations that in the 17th and 18th centuries, at the times when Proença and, later, Ziegenbalg were in India, the term *Nikaṇṭu* could be used for referring to a specific book, which was a poetical thesaurus, as attested by point [b] in (1a) and (1b) and as confirmed by (3a) and (3b). The same term

6   For the dating, see Sweetman and Ilakkuvan 2012: 1.

could also be used in a general manner for referring to other poetical vocabularies. Another important point is the statement by Ziegenbalg in (2a) and (2b) that some people in Tamil Nadu started to memorize the *Tivākaram* when they were 8 or 9 years old. This conforms with what we read in some accounts written by Tamil scholars, as seen in the following section. Finally, another notable element is the distinction made by Ziegenbalg between a text that "consists only of verses" and a text "written in prose". We shall come back to that point later.

2. What traditional Tamil scholars tell us about the use of *nikaṇṭu*-s

We can read for instance in the introductory section of the 1968 edition of the Pi, the following:

(4a) *ilakkaṇa ilakkiya nūlkaḷaik kaṟṟup pulamait tiṟamaṭaiya virumpuvōr mutaṟkaṇ nikaṇṭu nūlkaḷai aiyantiriparak kaṟṟu nalla payiṟciyaip peṟṟirukka vēṇṭum eṉṉuṅ kaṭṭāyat tiṭṭam paṇṭaikkālak kaṇakkāyarkaḷiṭattē iruntu vantatu. it tiṭṭam aṇmaik kālam varaiyil naṭaimuṟaiyil iruntatu.* (1968, *Piṅkalam*, kaḻaka veḷiyīṭu, patippurai, p.5)

(4b) "Under the scheme followed by the ancient teachers of Tamil, those who had the desire to study with them in order to master the ancient literary compositions and grammars, were required as a preliminary condition to memorize the *Nikaṇṭu*-s. This scheme was still followed in recent times." (My translation)

However, even though the passage reproduced in (4a) is found in a book printed in 1968, how far in time was the golden period of *Nikaṇṭu* use is difficult to ascertain with precision. We can, for instance, read inside the 27th chapter of *Eṉ Carittiram*, which is the autobiography of U. Vē. Cāminātaiyar (1855–1942) (henceforth UVS), the most well-known Tamil philologist, the following statements, extracted from his first dialogue with the most famous among his several successive teachers, Mīṉāṭcicuntarampiḷḷai (1815–1876), which seems to have taken place in 1871, at a time when he was 15 or 16:

(5a) *"nikaṇṭu pāṭam uṇṭō?" eṉṟu avar kēṭṭār. nāṉ "paṉṉiraṇṭu tokutiyum pāṭam uṇṭu" eṉṟu kūṟavē cila cila pāṭaṅkaḷaic collac collik kēṭṭu viṭṭu. "nikaṇṭai maṉaṉam ceyvatu nallatē. ikkālattil atai neṭṭurup paṇṇum vaḻakkamē pōy viṭṭatu. coṉṉāl yārum kēṭpatillai" eṉṟār.* (Cāminātaiyar 1962, chap. 27, p. 162)

(5b) "'It seems that you have studied the Nikaṇṭu?' 'All the twelve parts I have studied,' and as I said it he asked me to recite a few poems from that compendium and when I did so he said, 'It is good to learn the *Nikaṇṭu* by heart. Nowadays this hoary art is lost. No one listens to my advice.'" (Translation: CĀMINĀTAIYAR 1990/1994: 113)

As to the time when U.Vē. Cāminātaiyar had learnt the Nikaṇṭu, we find information about that point inside an earlier chapter of his autobiography, namely Chapter 14, where he talks about his first Tamil teacher, Caṭakōpaiyaṅkār, with whom he studied when his family was living in Ariyilūr, where they had moved in 1861.

(6a) *caṭakōpaiyaṅkāriṭattil vēṟupala kīrttaṉaṅkaḷaiyum kaṟṟuk koṇṭēṉ. tamiḻil tiruvēṅkaṭattantāti, tiruvēṅkaṭamālai mutaliyavaṟṟaik kēṭṭēṉ. antap pāṭaṅkaḷai yaṉṟi vīṭṭil cūṭāmaṇi nikaṇṭu paṉṉiraṇṭu tokutikaḷaiyum, [...] , naṉṉūr cūttiraṅkaḷaiyum maṉappāṭam ceytu tantaiyāriṭam oppiṭṭu vantēṉ.* (CĀMINĀTAIYAR 1962, chap. 14, p. 79)

(6b) "I have also learned a number of other compositions from Caṭakōpaiyaṅkār. I learned Tiruvēṅkaṭattantāti, Tiruvēṅkaṭamālai and many other texts. Besides these lessons, I learned by heart the twelve volumes of Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu, various catakam poems [...], as well as the aphorisms of Naṉṉūl and recited them to my father." (Translation: CĀMINĀTAIYAR 1990/1994: 55)

This memorizing of the *Nikaṇṭu*, and also of the *Naṉṉūl*, a well-known grammatical treatise, when he was living in Ariyilūr, took place at a young age because the following chapter in UVS's autobiography, namely chapter 15, describes events taking place when he was in his "seventh year"[7] and narrates the preparation for UVS's *upanayaṉam* ceremony which took place in the month of Āṉi (June/July) of 1862. The same chapter also describes the decision to move to another village, namely Kuṉṉam. All this seems to indicate that the information given by Ziegenbalg, and reproduced in (2ab), concerning the age at which children were memorizing versified vocabularies in the early 18th century, is in conformity with what we can infer from UVS's testimony. But that the practice was already dying in the second half of the 19th century, as is clear from the remark made by UVS's most illustrious teacher, reproduced in (5a–b). This somehow clarifies the degree to which the statement reproduced in (4a–b) and extracted from a book printed in 1968 is an idealized view of the past because the requirement evoked seems to have been already in decline a hundred years earlier, even though it was prob-

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7   The date of birth of UVS is 19th February 1855.

ably still satisfied 150 years earlier, in the first half of the 19th century.[8] Regarding the practice of memorization, it will be useful to add here, as a conclusion for this section, another citation extracted from Chapter 19, which describes UVS's life in a village called Kārkuṭi, where he studied, under the guidance of Kastūri Aiyaṅkār, the grammatical treatise called *Naṉṉūl* along with the commentary by Vicākap Perumāḷaiyar. The most characteristic passage is probably the following:

(7a) *naṉṉūl mutaliya ilakkaṇaṅkaḷait toṭarntu kēṭka vēṇṭumeṉṟa viruppam eṉakku iruntu vantatu. ataṉāl mutal mutal avariṭam naṉṉūl pāṭaṅ kēṭkalāṉēṉ. vicākap perumāḷaiyar iyaṟṟiya kāṇṭikaiyuraiyai oruvāṟu pāṭam colli ataṉ karutturai, vicēṣa urai mutaliyavaṟṟai eṉakkup pāṭam paṇṇi vaittuviṭṭār. tiṉantōṟum naṉṉūl muḻuvataiyum orumuṟai nāṉ pārāmaṟ colli vantēṉ. nilavil poruḷkaḷ kāṇappaṭuvatu pōl naṉṉūliluḷḷa ilakkaṇaṅkaḷ eṉakkut tōṉṟiṉa; aṉṉūlaic cikkaṟat teḷintu koḷḷavillai.* (CĀMINĀTAIYAR 1962, chap. 19, p. 105)

(7b) "I had a keen desire to study systematically *Naṉṉūl* and other grammars. Hence the very first text Aiyaṅkār taught me was *Naṉṉūl* with its brief commentary written by Vicākap Perumāḷaiyar and the gloss and exegesis pertaining to it. I used to repeat from memory the whole of *Naṉṉūl* once every day. The grammatical rules of *Naṉṉūl* appeared to me like objects in moonlight; but I did not understand the text clearly." (Translation: CĀMINĀTAIYAR 1990/1994: 74)

Before moving to the next section, where we shall get closer to discussing the actual content of the Tamil *Nikaṇṭu*-s, I shall add as a final comment to the citation (7a–b) that UVS may have been 12 or 13 when these events took place because the following chapter (Chapter 20) describes the first plans for his marriage. That marriage is described in chapter 22 and took place when he was 14.

3. What is the (duration) size of the Tamil *nikaṇṭu*-s?

I shall start this section with a rough estimation of the time it might take for performing a full recitation of the *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu* or of the *Naṉṉūl* or of the *Tivākaram*, since the practice of memorizing those three texts has been mentioned

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8   We can also read in the first volume of Mīṉāṭcicuntarampiḷḷai's biography, written by
     UVS, that Mīṉāṭcicuntarampiḷḷai had started his own study at the age of 5 and that
     "Nikaṇṭu" was part of the list of texts he had to memorize as a child. See CĀMINĀTAIYAR
     1986/1938, vol. 1: 9.

in several of the previous citations, namely (2a–b), (4a–b), (5a–b), (6a–b) and (7a–b). This will also be the occasion for giving a preliminary, purely quantitative, description of those texts, compared with two other texts, namely the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Piṅkalam*, and to place all the five in a global chronology. In making these estimations, I rely on some numerical figures drawn from another article of mine (Chevillard 2017), which was centred on the *Piṅkalam*, and where I tried to calculate the amount of time it would take to recite the *Piṅkalam*, based on the duration of a published recording of the *Tolkāppiyam*, on DVD, by the CICT.

Table 1: Information concerning two grammars and three poetical vocabularies

Title	Postulated Period	Number of lines	Fast (902 l/h)	Average speed (784 lines/hour)	Slow (531 l/h)
Tolkāppiyam	1st half of 1st millennium	4,013 lines		**5h 7 min**.	
Tivākaram	9th century	4,365 lines		5h 34 min.	
Piṅkalam	10th century	6,782 lines	7h 31 min	8h 39 min	12h 46 min
Naṉṉūl	13th century	1,150 lines	1h 16 min	1h 28 min	2h 10 min
Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu (alias *Nikaṇṭu*)	16th century	4,780 lines		C x (6h 6 min) [C=1.5]	

As explained in Chevillard 2017, the duration, singled out inside the chart by the use of **boldface**, which corresponds to an existing recording, and on the basis of which all the other durations are extrapolated, is the one provided for the *Tolkāppiyam* as 'average speed', and specified as allowing the recitation of 784 metrical lines in one hour. However, because the complete recitation,[9] published as a set of CDs, was not performed by a single person but by a group of nine veteran scholars taking turns, some of whom recited faster than others, the 'average speed' provided by me is an abstraction. In reality, the fastest scholar recited at a speed of 902 metrical lines per hour, whereas the slowest scholar recited 531 metrical lines per hour. In view of the statement contained in the citation (7ab) where UVS declares that he "used to repeat from memory the whole of *Naṉṉūl* once every day", one could conclude that he devoted more than one hour of his time to this task every day, at a time when his age may have been 12 or 13. However, he may have used a faster mode of recitation if we extrapolate on the basis of some of the statements found

9   I use the word 'recitation' but, in the case of the CICT CD-s, the text may in fact have been read from a book, since the practice of memorizing the *Tolkāppiyam* is extremely rare, although this was true of the late Ti. Vē. Kōpālaiyar. See Chevillard 2017: 36 n. 2.

inside Mangal Deva Shastri (1937), which are applicable to Sanskrit recitation but should also be relevant for the recitation of texts in Classical Tamil.

(8a) (The teachers) prescribe three modes (VṚTTIḤ) of speech: the delayed, moderate, and hurried. (RVP XIII-46, Mangal Deva Shastri 1937)

(8b) They prescribe different sacrificial acts (to be performed) in different modes. (RVP XIII-47, ibid.)

(8c) An increase of measure belongs to each (successive) mode. (RVP XIII-48, ibid.)

(8d) One should employ the hurried mode for the sake of study, the moderate in ordinary use, and the delayed in the instruction of pupils. (RVP XIII-49, ibid.)

Regarding the *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu*, which had also been memorized by UVS, when he was in his "seventh year", as we saw in 6a–b, and which he was capable of reciting to the great satisfaction of his main teacher, at the age of 15 or 16, as we saw in 5a–b, I have indicated inside Table 1 that the duration would be, if using an average speed in public recitation, approximately (C × 6 h 6 min), where C is a multiplicator coefficient for which I have given an estimated value of 1.5. The reason for the presence of this coefficient is that the *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu* is very different, from a metrical point of view from the other four works mentioned in Table 1, a fact which was duly noted by Ziegenbalg in 3a–b, although his technical explication, when he says, opposing *Tivākaram* and *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu* that the latter "consists only of verses, while the other is written in prose", is not rooted in the native terminology, according to which the *Tivākaram* has been composed in a metrical form usually referred to as *nūṟpā*, and falling under the *pā* called *āciriyappā*, whereas the *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu* is composed in what is called the *viruttam* meter, and falls under the general label *pāviṉam*, as is the case with all the long compositions which can be sung with music. As for the mode of recitation used for the *Tivākaram*, even though it is not sung, it is nevertheless not read as prose either. It should rather be considered as a form of declamation.

I have not yet provided an explanation for the value of the multiplicator C. My reason for proposing a value of 1.5, is that the metrical lines seen in the *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu*, contain six metrical feet, and therefore each of them requires more time for recitation than the metrical lines used in the four other texts mentioned in table 1, which each contain four metrical feet. Pushing the calculation to its ultimate conclusion, it would take roughly nine hours to sing the whole of the 12 sections

of the *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu*, which means that each of the twelve sections would take, as an average, 45 minutes. To which I shall add as a final remark for this section that a number of students were probably satisfied with memorizing only the 11th section of the *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu*, which deals with polysemic words, and which was the most popular section, according to François Gros (1980).[10]

4. When was the *Piṅkalam* popular and was it called a *Nikaṇṭu*?

We shall now move from the evocation of individual testimonies, as was done in section two, to the exploration of more indirect types of evidence, in order to obtain information on the actual use of the *Piṅkalam*. We start by reproducing a small extract from the review of Dhamotharan (1978), *Tamil Dictionaries. A Bibliography*, by Gros (1980), which reads:

> **(9)** "Dans cette série de 96 entrées, 44 sont réservées aux éditions du *Cūṭāmaṇi*, 15 à celles du *Tivākaram* (la première partie seulement, le plus souvent), 6 à l'*Uriccol nikaṇṭu*, 2 seulement au *Piṅkalantai*, et 29 divers. Ce n'est pas un hasard : le Catalogue des manuscrits tamouls de la Saraswati Mahal Library à Tanjore (non cité par M.D.) révèle une proportion analogue (28 *Cūṭ.*, 14 *Tiv.*, 3 *Piṅk.*, 1 *Uriccol*, 3 *Akarāti*). En revanche la Bibliothèque Swaminathaiyar à Adyar (cf. D. n° 41) fait exception par sa diversité […]" (Gros 1980: 347–348)

As can be seen in this citation, which compares the popularity of Tamil poetical vocabularies, as seen through a catalogue of printed books and as seen through a catalogue of MS, the *Piṅkalam* does not seem to have been a widely circulated text in the early modern period. This must be the reason why Ziegenbalg did not possess a copy of it at the time when he compiled his *Bibliotheca Malabarica,* whereas he had a copy both of the *Tivākaram* and of the *(Cūṭāmaṇi) Nikaṇṭu*, as seen in 2a–b and 3a–b. The situation would probably have been different in the 13th century at the time of *Naṉṉūl*, because we have a reference to the *Piṅkalam* inside the *Naṉṉūl* sūtra N459m, which reads:

> **(10)** *iṉṉa tiṉṉuḷi yiṉṉaṉa miyalum*
> *eṉṟicai nūluṭ kuṇikuṇap peyarkaḷ*

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10   François Gros (1980: 347) writes: "il n'y a qu'un *nikaṇṭu* réellement populaire (le *Cūṭāmaṇi*, et, plus spécialement sa onzième partie aussi souvent éditée seule que le texte intégral) […]."

collām parattaliṟ piṅkala mutalā
*nallō ruriccoli ṉayantaṉar koḷalē.* (N459m)

"Inside the [grammatical] treatises which proclaim that 'This Here Thus Behaves',
we shall not mention the names of the quality-possessors and of the qualities,
since that would overflow; [therefore] one is to enjoy [information about them]
from the [treatises called] *Uri-c-col*, [composed by] the good ones, whose list
starts with *Piṅkalam*." (My translation)[11]

The last remark which I shall make in this section, in connection with citation ten,
is that the term *Nikaṇṭu*, which we have been using since the beginning of this
presentation, either for referring to a poetical vocabulary in general, in conform-
ity with the usage recorded in Proença (1679), as shown in 1a–b, meaning [c], or
for referring to the 16th-century *Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu*, which is the text which UVS
memorized as a child, was not in use in Tamil at an earlier period. The term used
was *Uri-c-col*, that usage having its roots in the *Tolkāppiyam*, and more precisely
in its seventeenth chapter, which is called *Uriyiyal*.

5. From the age of memorizing to the age of editing

We shall now examine some of the events which had been taking place dur-
ing the half-century which precedes the birth of UVS with respect to the Ti and
the CN. Some of those events can, however, be related indirectly to him by the
fact that they are mentioned in the biography which he wrote of his teacher, *Śrī
Mīṉāṭcicuntarampiḷḷaiyavarkaḷ Carittiram*, published in 1938, in which mention is
made of many 19th-century Tamil scholars, including the important Tāṇṭavarāya
Mutaliyār (d. 1850), who was in 1839 the editor for the first eight sections of the
Tivākaram, and who had asked one of his students, Pu. Nayaṉappa Mutaliyār

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11   If this appears too literal, an anonymous translation of the Naṉṉūl (by 'A Tamil Gradu-
      ate') published in Chennai in 1878 reads: "In a treatise which professes to give (only)
      the particular *grammatical* significations of a particular word in a particular place
      (such as the three Persons and two Usages), we are not obliged to describe at length
      all (the meanings of) the Abstract and Concrete Names; to do so would be to enlarge
      this work unnecessarily; and therefore, those desirous of knowing these meanings
      would do well to consult such sections of the *Pingalam* and other (Dictionaries) of the
      learned, as treat of Quality-names."

Figure 2: *Tivākaram* (1839 edition)
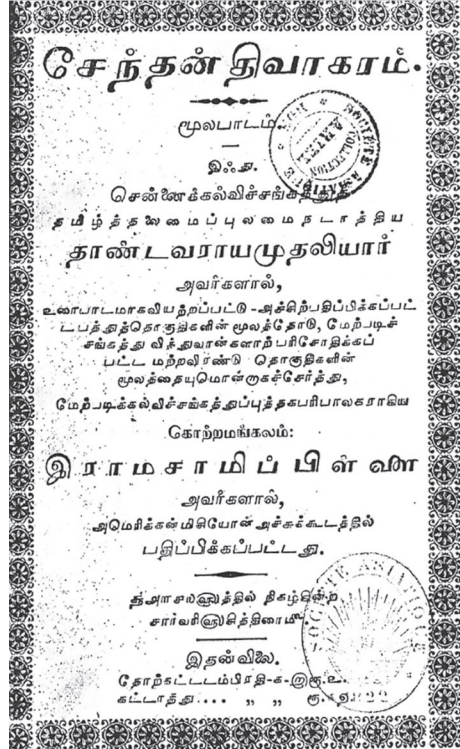
Figure 3: *Tivākaram* (1840 edition)

(1779–1845),[12] to take responsibility for editing sections nine and ten.[13] In the case of this particular book, which was printed in 1839, those inhabitants of Paris who happen to be members of the Société Asiatique, are lucky because they can examine a printed copy of it. They can see on its title page (see figure 2) the two names which have just been mentioned, accompanied by the name of Koṟṟamaṅkalam Irāmacāmip Piḷḷai, who was the librarian (*puttaka paripālakar*) of the *Ceṉṉaik Kalvic Caṅkam* and who was in charge of the actual printing. That title page ends with a promise that the last two sections, namely chapters eleven and twelve, will be soon published.

The members of the Paris Société Asiatique are also in a position to examine, as part of the same collection, a printed copy of a second edition of the *Tivākaram*,

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12 Dates are provided on the basis of a Tamil Wikipedia entry (https://ta.wikipedia.org/s/30pv), where the full name is given as *Putuvai Nayaṉappa Mutaliyār*.
13 See Cāmiṉātaiyar 1986/1938, vol. 1: 55–57, long footnote.

which appeared in 1840, where all the 12 chapters of the *Tivākaram* are indeed found. Only two names appear in big size on the title page (see figure 3), namely those of Tāṇṭavarāya Mutaliyār and of Irāmacāmip Piḷḷai, and it can be seen by examining the 1840 book that its content, as far as the first ten chapters are concerned, is a simplification of the content of the 1839 book, because, as we shall see in the next section, it does not contain the *peyarp pirivu* component.

Before going more into the details, however, I shall finally mention that another important witness for the study of the *Tivākaram* is also found in Paris, as part of the BnF collection, namely the palm-leaf MS Indien 239, which contains, on 162 folios (see figure 4), the text of the *Tivākaram*, identified in the catalogue by means of the first words in its invocatory verse to the god Ganesh, namely *Tantimukaṭṭentai* "Our father who is Tusk-faced". Interestingly, an examination of the 11th chapter, dedicated to polysemic words, reveals that the book printed in 1840 and the palm-leaf MSS Indien 239 do not belong to the same stratum in the transmission history of the *Tivākaram*, the printed book being a witness of an attempted reorganization of the content of the *Tivākaram*, in which the 11th chapter takes the form of two twin alphabetic sections (called *Āti* and *Antam*), probably under the influence of the *Piṅkalam*, as we shall see in the next section.

6. Organization of the *Tivākaram* and of the *Piṅkalam*

Before continuing this direct examination of the existing artifacts, which are part of the actual basis for all we believe we know about Tamil poetical vocabularies,
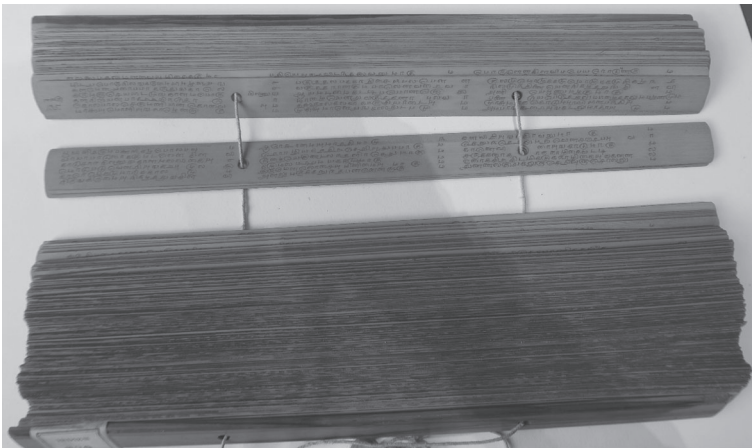

Figure 4: Indien 239 (BnF)

I shall provide the reader with a summary of the content of the Ti and of the Pi. Briefly stated, and as illustrated by Chart 1,

- (A) 75% of the volume of the Ti (and 72% of the volume of the Pi) is occupied by an encyclopaedic collection of sūtra-s, which are enumerations of quasi-synonyms,
- (B) while 13% of the Ti (and 23% of the Pi) is dedicated to providing information on polysemy.
- (C) To these two types of sūtra groups must be added a third type of section, which is also encyclopaedic. That third type deals with "collections" (*pal-poruṭ-kūṭṭatt-oru-peyar*) which are symbolically associated with numbers. Those third groups occupy 12% of Ti and 5% of Pi.

Table 2: Structural Differences between the *Tivākaram* and *Piṅkalam* tables of contents

		Tivākaram (1840 ed.)		*Piṅkalam* (1968 edition)	
Encyclo-paedic sections	(A)	pp. 1–182	75%	pp. 6–384 (minus pp. 60–84)	72% (354 p.)
	(C) [collections]	pp. 215–242	12%	pp. 60–84	5% (25 p.)
Polysemy sections	(B)	pp. 183–199 (āti)	13%	pp. 385–495 (alphabetical order)	23% (111 p.)
		pp. 200–214 (antam)			
	Total	242 pp.			490 p.

I shall now provide the example of a *Tivākaram* sūtra belonging to the (A) type. The sūtra chosen is the first sūtra in the third chapter, that chapter being called *Vilaṅkiṉpeyart tokuti*, which is "collection of the names of animals". The first sūtra, for which the title given in the 1839 and 1840 editions, as shown in figure 5 and figure 6, is *ciṅkattiṉpeyar* "names of the Lion", is an enumeration of 11 quasi-synonyms which could be represented by the formula

(11a) T1 T2 T3 T4 T5 T6 T7 T8 T9 T10 T11 *mēviya ciṅkam eṉa viḷampiṉarē*, where T1 = *āḷi*, T2 = *maṭaṅkal*, T3 = *ari*, T4 = *kaṇṭīravam*, T5 = *kēcari*, T6 = *mirukapati*, T7 = *vayappōṭṭu*, T8 = *cīyam*, T9 = *vayappuli*, T10 = *pañcāṉaṉam* & T11 = *vayamā*. It can be approximately translated by:

(11b) They proclaim T1 to T11 as the [meaning of] "Lion" in which [those eleven words] reside.

The point on which I wish to draw the attention of the reader is, however, the typographical difference between:

- the form of this sūtra in the 1839 book (see figure 5)
- the form of this sūtra in the 1840 book (see figure 6)
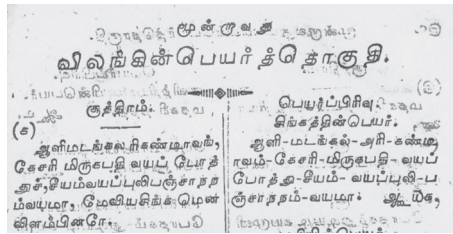- the form of this sūtra in the palm leaf MS preserved in the BnF (Indien 239) (see figure 7)
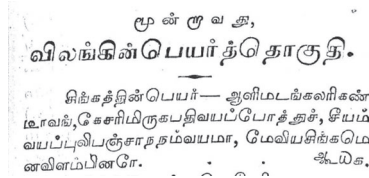

Figure 5: 1839 edition of *Tivākaram*

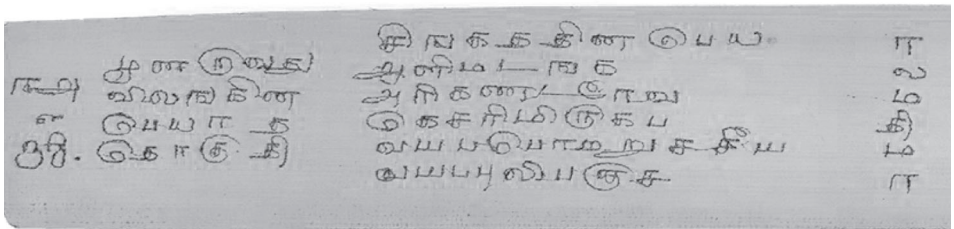Figure 6: 1840 edition of *Tivākaram*

Figure 7: extract from BnF Indien 239 (folio 38 r)

It appears from this comparison that the main difference between figure 6 and figure 7 is the presence or absence of *puḷḷi* on the consonants which do not have an

inherent vowel, whereas, inside figure 5, we see that the text of the *sūtra* appears in metrical form on the left (where it is similar to the content of figure 6 and 7), but is duplicated on the right by a version (called *peyarppirivu* "separation of names") in which the *sandhi* has been undone between the enumerated synonyms and a numeral, which is here "ய௬" (i.e., 11, which is the number of synonyms of *ciṅkam*), has been explicitly provided.

7. Ongoing reorganization of the Polysemic section

After these brief remarks, I shall now provide examples taken from the 11th chapter of the *Tivākaram*, starting with an extract from the text as it stands at the beginning of that chapter, which is found on the recto side of folio 131 inside the BnF palm-leaf MS Indien 239.
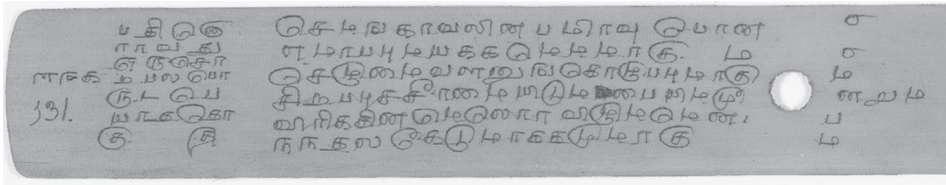

Figure 8: folio 131r (Indien 239, BnF)

In the image of folio 131r which is available in figure 8, we can see a folio number on the extreme left column. After that comes the title in the left margin, which possesses seven lines. Then comes the left column, which is written on six lines (with a visible string hole). If we were to transcribe the content, we could verify that it contains, making use of the numbering in the two-volume critical edition published by the Madras University (see Ti, ed. Caṇmukam Piḷḷai and Cuntaramūrtti 1990–1993), the text of the following four *sūtras*:

- Sūtra Ti-1902 on lines 1–2, enumerating 7 meanings for the (polysemic) word *ēmam*
- Sūtra Ti-1903 on line 3, enumerating 2 meanings for the word *ceḻumai*
- Sūtra Ti-1904 on lines 4–5, enumerating 3 meanings for the word *viḻumam*
- Sūtra Ti-1905 on line 6, enumerating 2 meanings for the word *nantal*

However, if we now examine the initial section of chapter eleven inside the 1840 edition of *Tivākaram*, as it can be seen below inside figure 9, what we can see is a completely different text, if we disregard the identical chapter title (*patinoṉṟāvatu,*

orucoṟ palporuṭ peyart tokuti "Eleventh [chapter]: collection of nouns [falling under the formula] 'ONE word SEVERAL meanings'").
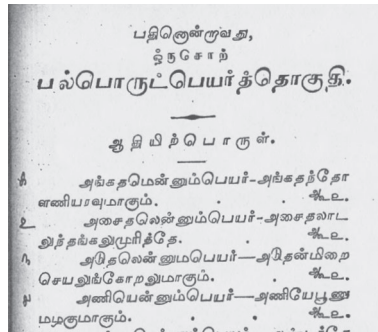

Figure 9: Beginning of Chapter 11 inside the 1840 edition of *Tivākaram*

After a sub-title *ātiyiṟporuḷ* "meanings [for words] in [sūtra]-INITIAL [position]" on which I shall comment later, we see on this extract the text of four sūtras, each of them occupying two lines. They are:

- a sūtra giving 2 meanings for *aṅkatam*, which is sūtra Ti-2265 inside the Madras university 1990–1993 edition
- a sūtra giving 2 meanings for *acaital*, which is Ti-2197 (with a **variant**)
- a sūtra giving 2 meanings for *aṭutal*, which is Ti-2257
- a sūtra giving 2 meanings for *aṇi*, which is Ti-2003

This difference is the consequence of a reorganization, as might be suspected by the reader who notices that the headwords *aṅkatam*, *acaital*, *aṭutal*, and *aṇi* appear here in alphabetical order. More precisely, the content of the 11th chapter of the *Tivākaram*, which consists of 383 sūtras, enumerating the meanings of 381 polysemic words (with an average of 3.07 meanings per word) has been divided into two alphabetized sets, called *ātiyiṟporuḷ* (A group) and *antaṭṭupporuḷ* (B group). More precisely,

- group A contains those sūtra-s in which the head word is at the beginning (*āti*) of the sūtra and is followed by the words explaining its meanings.
- group B contains those sūtra-s in which the head word is at the end (*antam*) of the sūtra and is preceded by the words explaining its meanings.

8. When did alphabetic order become a feature in Tamil poetic vocabularies?

We have now reached a point when it is almost time to conclude the current exploration. However, since the feature described in the preceding section concerns, in fact, a major reorganization of a crucial component of the most ancient known Tamil poetical vocabulary, it appears essential to state as explicitly as possible what was happening during the first half of the 19th century, when the first two editions of the *Tivākaram* were prepared, and what was the preceding context for those events. For that purpose, figure 10 tries to summarize the reorganization which has been described in the preceding section. The left side, which is based on the content of the BnF MS Indien 239, also corresponds, in my opinion, to the form of the text that would have been transmitted through memorization by children, if we trust the information given by Ziegenbalg in 2a–b. The right side, on the other hand, describes the content of the 11th chapter, as it is printed in the 1840 edition, which is the first book to contain it because the 1839 edition contained only the first ten chapters.

As can be seen in this diagram, all the sūtra-s visible on the left side have been labelled either as **A** or as **B**, depending on the position of the headword inside each sūtra. Additionally, for each item, a line connects the sūtra with its new position in one of the two subgroups, **A** (*āti*) and **B** (*antam*), which together constitute Chapter 11 inside the 1840 edition. The reorganization is, of course, more complex than a simple division in two parts because inside each of the two parts, the items are ordered following the Tamil alphabetical order. This feature will therefore be the
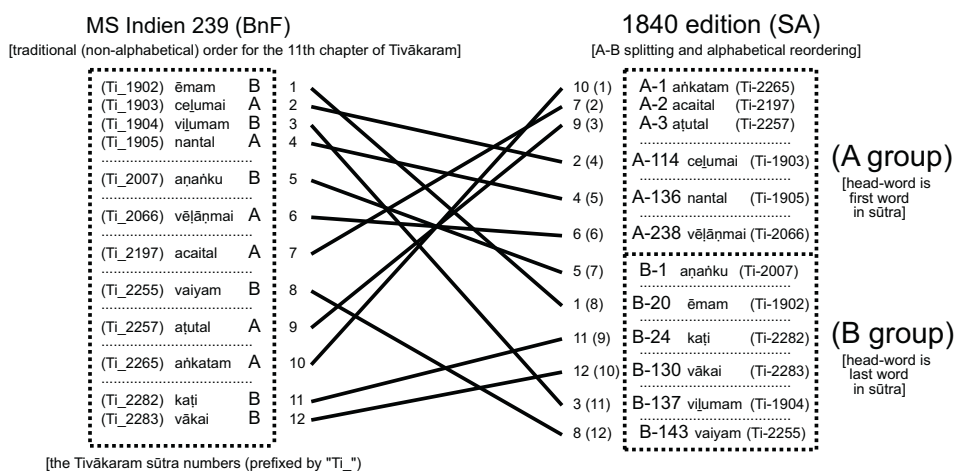

Figure 10: Reorganization of the 11th chapter of *Tivākaram* as seen when comparing the text in a MS and the first printed version

focus of the following questions, which will now stand, jointly, as an open and inconclusive conclusion:

- Did the fact that Tāṇṭapāṇi Mutaliyār had been deeply involved in the edition work for Beschi's *Caturakarāti*, in which all the sections are alphabetized, play a role in his decision to publish the 11th chapter of *Tivākaram* in the way he did?
- Should we rather think that the attempt to reorganize the content of the *Tivākaram* is more ancient, given the fact that the polysemic section of the *Piṅkalam*, which contains 1091 items, is alphabetized in all the printed copies known to exist?
- What are the practical consequences for a living tradition, in which transmission is based on memorization, when a section of a basic text is reorganized?
- If Tāṇṭavarāya Mutaliyār had not been very busy in his appointment as a judge in Vicākappaṭṭaṇam, at the end of his career, and had put as much effort into the final section of the 1840 *Tivākaram* edition as had been done for the 1839 edition, would the face of Tamil lexicography have been different?

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