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# Tamil *Ilakkaṇam* ('Grammar') and the Interplay between Syllabi, Corpora and Manuscripts

**Abstract:** The field of traditional Tamil grammar (*ilakkaṇam*) offers an ideal case for studying the interplay between syllabi, corpora and manuscripts. The former two categories are reflected in the internal organisation of certain Tamil grammatical texts or listed in a number of Tamil (and Latin) literary sources as subjects of learning and teaching. In turn, manuscripts, in particular multiple-text manuscripts the content of which is pertinent to the field in question, are not just the mere material instantiation of syllabi and corpora, but represent their concrete realisation in educational settings, where abstract lists may be actualised or, quite often, rather approximated.

Then said Ægir: 'In how many ways are the terms of skaldship variously phrased, or how many are the essential elements of the skaldic art?'

Then Bragi answered: 'The elements into which all poesy is divided are two.'

Ægir asked: 'What two?' Bragi said: 'Metaphor and metre'.

*Snorra Edda, Skáldskaparmál*<sup>1</sup>

## 1 Introduction

*Ilakkaṇam* – this is the name by which the traditional field of Tamil grammar is known – has had a long history, spanning over almost two millennia,<sup>2</sup> during which it has constituted a fundamental component of the learning and teaching

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1 Þá mælti Ægir: 'Hversu á marga lund breytið þér orðtökum skáldskapar, eða hversu mörg eru kyn skáldskaparins?' Þá mælti Bragi: 'Tvenn eru kyn, þau er greina skáldskap allan'. Ægir spyr: 'Hver tvenn?' Bragi segir: 'Mál ok hættir'. (*Snorra Edda, Skáldskaparmál*, tr. Brodeur 1916, 96).

2 The oldest treatise is the *Tolkāppiyam* of Tolkāppiyar, allegedly composed some time during the first half of the first millennium CE.

practices of pre-modern and early-modern Tamil scholarship.<sup>3</sup> Throughout its history, *ilakkaṇam* has witnessed vigorous theoretical efforts aimed at defining its own perimeter, the composition of several treatises and the production of numerous grammar-related manuscripts.

In this respect, *ilakkaṇam* represents a suitable field for the study of the interplay between the categories of syllabus, corpus and manuscript.<sup>4</sup> Several Tamil textual sources refer to grammatical syllabi, i.e. lists of topics that a connoisseur of grammar is expected to master. The existence of different syllabi is also reflected in the internal organisation of certain Tamil grammatical texts – one can, for instance, look at the titles of their sections. Furthermore, specific selections of certain grammatical texts, in particular those which deal with one or, at the utmost, two grammatical topics, are mentioned in a number of secondary sources in a way that in fact describes well-defined corpora, which we can find instantiated, or sometimes approximated, in the selection of texts contained in several multiple-text and composite manuscripts.

## 2 *Ilakkaṇam* and its growing syllabus

The term *ilakkaṇam* is usually translated as ‘grammar’, although it in fact encompasses domains of linguistic inquiry that do not only include topics such as speech-sounds, word formation and sentence building, i.e. topics that in modern Western linguistics would fall within the scope of disciplines such as phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax and, to a certain extent, pragmatics. *Ilakkaṇam* also includes domains that deal with matters concerning the poetical usage of Tamil, such as poetic matter (i.e. the list of *topoi* suitable for poetry), metres, rhetorical figures, etc.

In what follows we will encounter these domains as they are listed in Tamil primary sources, many of which are prefatory materials to grammatical treatises. We will thus be able to map the syllabus of Tamil grammar as represented by the indigenous point of view, observing in particular that the number of domains grows in time.

We will start our perusal having a look at relevant texts that are dated to the first millennium. Thanks to these sources, we can identify two kinds of syllabi: a

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<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Ebling 2010, 37–55.

<sup>4</sup> See the introduction of the current section of this volume, where, in particular, the definition of syllabus is discussed in detail. Here it suffices to say that this term is used to indicate any list of topics to study and teach.

threefold one, which enjoyed a long life in the Tamil scholarly domain, and a possible fourfold one, which on the other hand seems to have had an ephemeral destiny. When we enter the second millennium it seems clear that a fivefold syllabus became prominent, representing the standard syllabus until today. Finally, a sixfold syllabus appeared on the nineteenth-century Tamil scholarly horizon, but apparently did not gain enough momentum to become widely accepted.

It is evident that the number of grammatical domains increases in time, although we should not forget that some of these domains do not represent brand new innovations, but rather topics that already existed in the grammatical literature and which were later singled out and elevated to the rank of full-fledged domains.

## 2.1 Threefold *Ilakkaṇam* (*eḷuttu*, *col* and *poruḷ*)

The earliest attestation of a threefold syllabus pertaining to *ilakkaṇam* is exemplified by the *Tolkāppiyam* of Tolkāppiyar, i.e. the earliest extant grammar of Tamil (first half of the first millennium CE). The text is divided into three main sections (*atikārams*) entitled *eḷuttu-atikāram* ('section on sounds and letters'), *col-l-atikāram* ('section on words') and *poruḷ-atikāram* ('section on poetic matter'). The first section covers matters of phonetics, with the description of the articulation of sounds, phonology, in particular external sandhi (i.e. sound-related phenomena that occur to words when these are strung in a sentence) and, marginally, orthography. The second section covers nominal and verbal morphology as well as certain aspects of pragmatics. Finally, the third section investigates the main *topoi* characterising much of the early literary production in Tamil, which are, in turn, subdivided into the two main categories of *akam* and *puṛam* (respectively, interior and exterior themes, i.e. love matters and everything else, in particular war, respectively), metrics and language ornaments (i.e. rhetorical figures).

This tripartite architecture of grammar is explicitly mentioned in the *ciṛappuppāyiram* ('special introduction') of the *Tolkāppiyam*, attributed to Paṇampāraṇār (date uncertain).<sup>5</sup> In lines 5 and 8 of the *ciṛappuppāyiram* we

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<sup>5</sup> Thus, according to Nacciṇārkiṇiyar's commentary. *Ciṛappuppāyirams* are metrical compositions that, despite forming an integral part of the grammatical treatises, are supposed to have been composed not by the author of the treatise in which they are found, but by one of its evaluators. Hence, at times, it cannot be clearly decided whether *ciṛappuppāyirams* are

read that எழுத்துஞ் சொல்லும் பொருளும் நாடிச் [...] புலமந்தொகுத் தோனே போக்கற பனுவ<sup>6</sup> ('after having investigated letters/sounds, words and subject matters [...], he [i.e. *Tolkāppiyar*] knowledgeably composed a faultless treatise').<sup>7</sup>

Much scholarship has maintained this tripartite understanding of the *Tolkāppiyam*, as for instance does Nacciṅārkiṇiyar (c. fourteenth century), one of its most important commentators.<sup>8</sup> However, we will later observe that other sources clearly speak of the *Tolkāppiyam* as a fivefold grammar.<sup>9</sup>

Another grammatical treatise, the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* of Vaittiyanāta Tēcikar (seventeenth century), also contains three main sections bearing the same titles as those of the *Tolkāppiyam*. Not without reason, it is in fact known as *kuṭṭi-tolkāppiyam* ('little *Tolkāppiyam*').<sup>10</sup> Its *ciṟappuppāyiram*, attributed by some to Vaittiyanāta Tēcika's own son, called Catāciva Tēcikar,<sup>11</sup> also confirms that the treatise is about *eḷuttu*, *col* and *poruḷ* (line 8): எழுத்துமுதல் மூன்றையும் யாவரும் தெரியத்<sup>12</sup> ('so that everyone can understand the three [topics] beginning with *eḷuttu*'). As in the case of the *Tolkāppiyam*, we will later observe that some sources refer to the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* as a fivefold grammar.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2 Fourfold *Ilakkaṇam* (*eḷuttu*, *col*, *poruḷ* and *yāppu*)

A fourfold syllabus is indirectly hinted at in Nakkīraṅ's commentary to the *Irāiyaṅār Akapporuḷ* (both dated to the eighth/ninth century). Nakkīraṅ recounts that the king of the Pāṇṭiya country was forced to dismiss all his scholars due to a long-lasting famine. Once the famine ended, the king sent emissaries to

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contemporaneous with the composition of the treatises they are found in, or whether they are later additions.

6 *eḷuttum collum poruḷum nāṭi-c* [...] *pulam tokuttōṅ-ē pōkkaṟu paṇuva*[!] (Iḷavaḷakan 2003, 57).

7 All translations are mine unless differently stated.

8 Nacciṅārkiṇiyar comments as follows about the passage *eḷuttuñ collum poruḷum nāṭi*: அவ்விலக்கணங்களுள் எழுத்தினையும் சொல்லினையும் பொருளினையும் ஆராய்ந்து (*avvilakkaṇaṅkaḷuḷ eḷuttinaiyum collinaiyum poruḷinaiyum āraiyntu*, Iḷavaḷakan 2003, 63; 'having scrutinised sounds/letters, words and subject matters in the [previous] grammars').

9 See Section 2.3.

10 See Tāmōtarampiḷḷai's introduction to his edition of the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* (Tāmōtarampiḷḷai 1889, ed. Tāmaraikkaṇṇaṅ 2004, 93).

11 See Tāmōtarampiḷḷai's introduction to his edition of the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* (Tāmōtarampiḷḷai 1889, ed. Tāmaraikkaṇṇaṅ 2004, 93–94).

12 *eḷuttu-mutal mūṇṇaiyūm yāvarum teriya-t* (Gōpālaiyar 1971, 56).

13 See Section 2.3.

find experts in the various branches of knowledge. As it will emerge from the following passage, *yāppu* ('metre') is added to the three topics of *eḷuttu*, *col* and *poruḷ*:

அக்காலத்துப் பாண்டியனாடு பன்னீரியாண்டு வற்கடஞ் சென்றது. செல்லவே பசுகடுகுதலும், அரசன் சிட்டரையெல்லாங் கூவி, 'வம்மின், யான் உங்களைப் புறந்தரகில்லேன்; என் தேயம் பெரிதும் வருந்துகின்றது. நீயிர் நமக்கு அறிந்தவாறு புக்கு, நாடு நாடாயின ஞான்று என்னை யுள்ளி வம்மின்' என்றான். என, அரசனை விடுத்து எல்லாரும் போயின பின்றைக் கணக்கின்றிப் பன்னீரியாண்டு கழிந்தது. கழிந்த பின்னர், நாடு மலிய மழை பெய்தது. பெய்தபின்னர் அரசன், 'இனி நாடு நாடாயிற்றுகளின், நூல் வல்லாரைக் கொணர்க' என்று எல்லாப்பக்கமும் ஆட்போக்க, எழுத்ததிகாரமும் சொல்லதிகாரமும் யாப்பதிகாரமும் வல்லாரைக் தலைப்பட்டுக் கொணர்ந்து, 'பொருளதிகாரம் வல்லாரை எங்கும் தலைப்பட்டிலேம்' என்று வந்தார். வர அரசனும் புடைபடக்கவன்று, 'என்னை, எழுத்தும் சொல்லும் யாப்பும ஆராய்வது பொருளதிகாரத்தின் பொருட்டன்றே; பொருளதிகாரம் பெறேமெயினிள், இவை பெற்றும் பெற்றிலேம்' என [...].<sup>14</sup>

At that time a famine of twelve years occurred in the land of the Pāṇṭiyas. As this occurred, as soon as the hunger increased, the king summoned all the scholars and said: 'Come, I cannot protect you, my land (*tēyam*) suffers greatly. You go your own way (lit. in the way that is known to you); at the time [this] land will [once again] be a land, remember me and come [back]'. So said, after everyone left the king and departed, an everlasting (*kaṇakk' inri*) twelve years passed. After they passed, the land knew abundant rains. After it rained, the king said: 'Now, since the land is [once again] a land, we should bring together experts of the treatises'. Men went in all directions. They met and gathered experts of the study of *eḷuttu*, *col* and *yāppu*, [but] they returned saying: 'We have not met anywhere experts of the study of *poruḷ*'. As they returned, even the king became greatly distressed and said, 'What? Is not the investigation of *eḷuttu*, *col* and *yāppu* aimed at the study of *poruḷ*? Even if we obtain these [three], but we do not obtain the study of *poruḷ*, we do not obtain [anything]' [...].

The problem caused by the impossibility of finding experts in the field of *poruḷ* will be finally solved thanks to the divine intervention of Śiva, who composed

<sup>14</sup> *Akkālattu-p pāṇṭiya-nāṭu paṇṇīriyāṇṭu varkaṭam ceṇratu. Cellavē, paci kaṭukutalum, aracaṇ ciṭṭaraiyellān kūvi, 'vammiṇ, yāṇ unkaḷai-p puṇantarakillēṇ; eṇ tēyam peritum varuntukiṇṇratu; nīyir numakku aṇṇa-v āru pukku, nāṭu nāṭu āyīṇa ṇāṇṇu eṇṇai-y uḷḷi vammiṇ' eṇṇāṇ. Eṇa, aracaṇai viṭuttu ellārum pōyīṇa piṇṇai-k, kaṇakkiṇṇi-p paṇṇīriyāṇṭu kaḷintatu. Kaḷinta piṇṇar, nāṭu maliya maḷai peytatu. Peyta piṇṇar, aracaṇ, 'iṇi nāṭu nāṭu āyīṇṇakaliṇ, nūl-vallārai-k koṇarka' eṇṇu ellā-p pakkamum āṭ pōkka, eḷuttu-atikāramum coll-atikāramum yāppu-atikāramum vallārai-t talaippaṭṭu-k koṇarntu, 'poruḷatikāram vallārai erikum talaippaṭṭilēm' eṇṇu vantār. Vara aracaṇum puṭaiṇṇa-k kavaṇṇu 'eṇṇai, eḷuttum collum yāppum āṇṇavatu poruḷatikāraṭṭiṇ poruḷṇṇē. Poruḷatikāram peṇṇē-y eṇiṇ, ivai peṇṇum peṇṇilēm' eṇa [...]* (Pāvanantam Piḷḷai 1916, 8).

and made the king receive the verses that constitute the text of the *Iraiyāṇār Akapporuḷ*.

To the best of my knowledge, such a fourfold syllabus – if ever *ilakkaṇam* was actually perceived as such – left no trace in the field of Tamil scholarship.<sup>15</sup>

### 2.3 Fivefold *Ilakkaṇam* (*eḷuttu, col, poruḷ, yāppu* and *aṇi*)

The most overtly addressed conformation of the grammatical syllabus in Tamil sources is without any doubt the fivefold one, which is variously labelled as *ilakkaṇappañcakam*, *aiṅtilakkaṇam* or *pañcalakṣaṇam* ('grammatical quintet' or 'five grammatical topics'). This includes *aṇi* ('ornamentation', also called *alaṅkāram*), which is the study of rhetorical figures.

Its earliest mention is in Puttamittiraṅ's *Viṛacōḷiyam* (c. eleventh century). The third stanza of the *pāyiram* ('introduction') of the *Viṛacōḷiyam* reads:

நாமே வெழுத்துச்சொ னற்பொருள் யாப்பலங் காரமெனும்  
பாமேவு பஞ்ச வதிகார மாம்பரப் பைச்சுருக்கித்  
தேமே வியதொங்கற் றேர்வீர சோழன் நிருப்பெயராற்  
பூமே லுரைப்பன் வடநூன் மரபும் புகன்று கொண்டே<sup>16</sup>

After condensing the beautiful expanse of the five topics which inhabit verse – the letters that dwell on the tongue, words, good subject matter, meter, and ornamentation – he will, after learning the way of the northern treatises, explain [these five topics] upon this earth under the sacred name of *Viṛacōḷaṅ*, whose chariot has festoons dripping with honey.<sup>17</sup>

Later we will discuss the discrepancy between the statement of this verse and the actual internal structure of the *Viṛacōḷiyam*, which contains, at least according to its printed editions, just four *atikārams* ('chapters').<sup>18</sup>

The next attestation in chronological order of the fivefold classification of *ilakkaṇam* is found in the *ciṛappuppāyiram* of another grammatical treatise, namely the *Naṅṅūl* of Pavaṇanti (twelfth–thirteenth century). Possibly the most popular grammar in the history of the Tamil literature of the second

<sup>15</sup> Daringly, one could envisage the *Viṛacōḷiyam* as a fourfold treatise. In this respect, see Section 3.2.

<sup>16</sup> *nā mēvu eḷuttu col nal poruḷ yāppu alaṅkāram eṇum | pā mēvu pañca atikāram ām parappai curukki | tēm mēviya toṅkal tēr viṛacōḷaṅ tiru-p peyarāl | pū mēl uraiṇṇa vaṭa nūl marappu pukaṇru koṇṭu-ē* (Kōvintarāja Mutaliyar 1942, 1).

<sup>17</sup> Tr. D'Avella 2021, 404.

<sup>18</sup> See Section 3.2.

millennium,<sup>19</sup> this text in fact teaches the rules of just two domains, namely *eḷuttu* and *col*. Nonetheless, a passage from its *cīrappuppāyiram* reads (lines 9–10): [இருந்தமிழ்க் கடலுள் அரும்பொரு ளைந்தையும் யாவரு முணரத் [...] தருகெனத் [...]]<sup>20</sup> ('May someone give [us a treatise] so that everyone understands the five difficult topics (*arum poruḷ aintaiyum*) in the vast ocean of Tamil'). Already in the first commentary to the *Naṇṇūl*, which is ascribed to a scholar called Mayilainātar (thirteenth century?), allegedly one of Pavaṇanti's pupils, 'the five difficult topics' are glossed as எழுத்துச் சொற் பொருள் யாப்பு அணியென்னும் அரிய பொருளைந்தையும்<sup>21</sup> ('the five difficult topics are *eḷuttu*, *col*, *poruḷ*, *yāppu* and *aṇi*').

Later we will observe that, as far as the *Naṇṇūl* is concerned, there is not just a discrepancy between the mention of five topics in its *cīrappuppāyiram* and the structure of the text as in the case of the *Viracōliyam*, but between such piece of information and the actual content of the treatise.<sup>22</sup>

From the eighteenth century the genre of fivefold grammars become popular and their *cīrappuppāyirams* often mention that the treatise in question deals with all five grammatical topics. Furthermore, these texts do not present discrepancies between what their *cīrappuppāyirams* state and their internal division, since the latter is always made of five chapters (*atikārams*).

The first in chronological order among these treatises is the *Toṇṇūlviḷakkam* completed by the Italian Jesuit missionary and renowned author of Tamil poetry Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi (1680–1742) in c. 1730.<sup>23</sup> Its *potuppāyiram* ('general introduction') reads நூல் | மேவிய ஐம்பொருள் விளக்கல் உணர்ந்து<sup>24</sup> ('having understood how to illuminate the five topics that pertain to a treatise [about grammar]'). Furthermore, in the *cīrappuppāyiram* it is said: நன்னூல் ஆய்ந்தோர் நவின்ற ஐம்பொருள் | தொன்னூல் விளக்கம் முன் சொல்லுதும் எழுத்தே<sup>25</sup> ('The

<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, Ebeling's remarks on the popularity of the *Naṇṇūl* in the nineteenth century (Ebeling 2009, 244–246).

<sup>20</sup> [i]rum tamiḷ-k kaṭaluḷ arum poruḷ aintaiyum yāvarum uṇara-t [...] taruka eṇa-t [...] (Kaliyāṇa Cuntaraiyar 1946, 1).

<sup>21</sup> *eḷuttu-c cor poruḷ yāppu aṇi-y eṇṇum ariya poruḷ-aintaiyum* (Kaliyāṇa Cuntaraiyar 1946, 15).

<sup>22</sup> See Section 3.3.

<sup>23</sup> First published in 1838 (see Ebeling and Trento 2018, 22).

<sup>24</sup> *nūl | mēviya aiṃporuḷ viḷakkal uṇartu* (Cuppīramaṇiyaṇ 1978, 73).

<sup>25</sup> *naṇṇūl āyntōr navinṇra aiṃporuḷ | toṇṇūl viḷakkam muṇ collutum eḷuttē* (Cuppīramaṇiyaṇ 1978, 74). The copy of the edition that I have consulted, which is held at the library of the École française d'Extrême Orient (Pondicherry branch), actually reads *corrutum* (Cuppīramaṇiyaṇ 1978, 74). However, an anonymous reader, who I suspect must have been the owner of the book, i.e. the late scholar T. V. Gopal Iyer, emended it into *collutum*, which is in fact a more suitable reading.

*Tonṇūlvilakkam* will first speak of sounds/letters [among] the five topics that those learned in the good treatises have mastered’).<sup>26</sup> Finally, in rule 370 the five topics are named: எழுத்துச் சொல் பொருள் யாப்பு அணி என இவண் வழத்திய ஐம்பொருள் வழக்கம் சுருக்கி<sup>27</sup> (‘having summarised the usage of the five topics that are extolled in this world as *eḷuttu*, *col*, *poruḷ*, *yāppu* and *aṇi*’).

Another of Beschi’s works, namely the *Grammatica latino-tamulica ubi de elegantiori linguæ tamulicæ dialecto செந்தமிழ் [centamiḷ] dicta* was completed in 1730 as the *Tonṇūlvilakkam*.<sup>28</sup> Although it represents an exception compared the other grammars composed from the eighteenth century onwards, not only because it is composed in Latin, but also because it is not divided according to the Tamil fivefold model, it nevertheless lists the five topics by their names in its introduction.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, in the same passage, Beschi adds the remark, which is not always met with in the treatises, that *akam* and *puṛam* are two distinguished subtopics of *poruḷ*.<sup>30</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the *Cuvāminātam* of Cuvāmikavirāyar deals with all five grammatical topics. In this respect, the son of the author, called Civacuppīraṇṇiyan, says in the *ciṛappuppāyiram* that his father, who followed the tradition of the preceding grammatical treatises, dealt with five topics in a metre called *akaval-viruttam* (verse 2, lines 2–3, 5, 8) [...] தமிழ் ழியல்ழந்தும் அகவல்வி ருத்தமதால் | ஆ(ம்)முன்னூல் வழியாய் [...] சுவாமிநாதம் பகர்ந்தான் [...] சுவாமி கவிராசன் ளனுநூல்வல் லோனே<sup>31</sup> (‘the expert of treatises called Cuvāmikavirāyar [uttered (*pakartān*)] the five topics of Tamil in *akaval-*

**26** Note that the term *naṇṇūl* is ambiguous. Literally, it means ‘good treatise’, but it could also be understood as the title of Pavaṇanti’s above-mentioned work. The latter option can be, however, safely ruled out on the basis of the fact that Beschi himself discusses in another of his works, the *Grammatica latino-tamulica ubi de elegantiori linguæ tamulicæ dialecto செந்தமிழ் [centamiḷ] dicta*, the fact that the *Naṇṇūl* deals with only two grammatical domains (see Section 4).

**27** *eḷuttu-c col poruḷ yāppu aṇi eṇa ivan vaḷuttiya aimporuḷ vaḷakkam curukki* (Cuppīraṇṇiyan 1978, 170).

**28** The original Latin version of the *Grammatica* was published much later in 1917, edited by L. Besse. Instead, an English translation by B. G. Babington was already published in 1822 with the title *A Grammar of the High Dialect of the Tamil Language, Termed Shen-Tamil*.

**29** See Beschi 1730, ed. Basse 1917, xii and Babington 1822, ix–x.

**30** See Section 4 for further details on the corpus that according to Beschi is associated with the study of the five grammatical topics.

**31** *tamiḷ iyal aintum akaval-viruttam atāl ā(m)-muṇ-nūl | vaḷiy āy [...] cuvāminātam pakartān [...] cuvāmikavirācaṇ eṇum nūl vallōṇ-ē* (Caṇmukam 1975, 2).

*viruttam* metre and composed (*pakartāṇ*) the *Cuvāminātam*, following the way of the preceding treatises').<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, another nineteenth-century treatise, which was apparently composed directly for the press, namely the *Muttuvīriyam* of Muttuvīra Upāttiyāyar, reads in its *ciṟappuppāyiram* (lines 7–8) எழுத்தொடு சொற்பொருளியாப்பணியைந்தும் | எளிதிற்புலப்படவியற்றித் தருகென<sup>33</sup> ('may one compose so that the five [topics of] *eḷuttu*, *col*, *poruḷ*, *yāppu* and *aṇi* fall under the scope of something easy [to grasp]').<sup>34</sup>

Finally, flipping through John Murdoch's ever useful 1865 *Catalogue of Tamil Printed Books*, it appears that at least a couple of new treatises were composed in the nineteenth century, which addressed all 'five parts of Grammar'. These are the *Ilakkaṇac Curukka Viṇāviṭai* of Tiruttaṇikai Vicākapperumālaiyar Āyyar,<sup>35</sup> and the *Pañcalaṭcaṇac Curukka Viṇāviṭai* of P. S. Rājagōpāla Mudaliyār.<sup>36</sup> Both texts are in the genre of *viṇā-viṭai* ('question and answer'). Unfortunately, I could not access these texts directly and, to the best of my knowledge, one cannot exclude that manuscript copies produced before the printed editions may have in fact existed.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The understanding that the phrase *tamiḷ iyal aintum akaval-viruttam atāl* depends on a supplied *pakartāṇ* is based on the explanation of the text provided by its editor, Ce. Vai. Caṇmukam (Caṇmukam 1975, 2–3). I thank Jean-Luc Chevillard for pointing out to me this source.

<sup>33</sup> *eḷuttoṭu col poruḷ iyāppu aṇi-y aintum | eḷitir pulappaṭa-v iyarri-t taruka eṇa* (Pulney Andy 1889, 1).

<sup>34</sup> An observation worth recording about the appreciation of late-nineteenth century scholars for fivefold grammatical texts can be read in the first complete edition of the *Muttuvīriyam* dated 1889. In the publisher's note S. Pulney Andy writes (Muttuvīra Upāttiyāyar 1889, unnumbered page): 'The first two parts of this Grammar were published in 1881, by the kind aid of Mr. Pattabīram Pillay, a deputy Collector in Government service. It will be admitted that a complete Tamil Grammar, treating of the 5 parts in a style like that of the present work, is a desideratum amongst the present scholars; and I have therefore ventured to publish the "Muthuviriyam" in full, by obtaining the work in manuscript from the author.'

<sup>35</sup> Murdoch 1865, 212.

<sup>36</sup> Murdoch 1865, 213.

<sup>37</sup> More texts are bearing titles such as *Ilakkaṇac Curukkam*, *Ilakkaṇa Viṇāviṭai* and the like are found in the list of nineteenth century publications given by Vēṅkaṭacāmi 1962, 148–154. However, contrary to Murdoch's 1865 *Catalogue*, Vēṅkaṭacāmi does not provide us with a summary of the contents of these books, thus we cannot say whether or not they cover more than one field of Tamil grammar.

## 2.4 In search for a sixfold *ilakkaṇam*

The emergence of a sixth *ilakkaṇam* is a process that never reached mainstream Tamil scholarship, in the sense that a sixfold *ilakkaṇam* never became, for instance, a *topos* like the fivefold one. However, its emergence was clearly a process *in fieri*, at least during the nineteenth century. This is witnessed by a few textual sources analysed in this section and, above all, by the selection of texts found in certain multiple-text and composite manuscripts (see Section 5.3 below).

This is particularly true for the topic of *poruttam* ('appropriateness'), which loosely speaking deals with some features that literary compositions should have in order to be considered an appropriate piece of literature, such as auspicious words with which a composition should begin. This topic is presented, among others, in the subsection of the *atikāram* on *poruḷ* of the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* entitled *pāṭṭiyal* or in several texts belonging to the *Pāṭṭiyal* genre, the oldest of which, namely the *Pannirupāṭṭiyal*, possibly dates back to c. the tenth century.<sup>38</sup> Despite the fact that – to the best of my knowledge – there is no *ilakkaṇam* list that includes *poruttam* as its sixth item, there are hints that in fact at least some scholars considered it as a grammatical topic per se.<sup>39</sup>

For instance, U. Vē. Cāmiṇātaiyar (1855–1942), often referred to as *tamiḷ tāttā* ('grandfather of Tamil') for his epoch-making contribution to Tamil studies, mentions in his autobiography, *Eṇ Carittiram*, that he studied the *Navanītapāṭṭiyal*,<sup>40</sup> which he says is one of the *porutta-nūls* ('treatises on appropriateness') and which Zvelebil decided to render in his translation with the Tamil expression *porutta ilakkaṇam*: கஸ்தூரி ஐயங்காரிடம் நவநீதப் பாட்டியல் முதலிய பொருத்த நூல்கள் சில இருந்தன. எனக்கு அவற்றிலும் சிறிது பழக்கம் உண்டாயிற்று<sup>41</sup> ('Kastūri Aiyaṅkāra also had in his possession *porutta ilakkaṇam* texts like *Navanītapāṭṭiyal*. I got acquainted with them to some extent.').<sup>42</sup>

38 See Zvelebil 1995, 518.

39 Explicit mention of both *pāṭṭiyal* and *poruttam* as two separate *ilakkaṇams* is found in one of A. Tirumalaimuttucāmi's works (Tirumalaimuttucāmi 1959, 191). However, such a claim is not discussed in detail nor supported with further evidence, and thus has to be taken as the personal opinion of that author.

40 For more details, see Section 4.

41 *kastūri aiyaṅkāriṭam navanīta-p pāṭṭiyal mutaliya porutta nūlkaḷ cila iruntaṇa. Eṇakku avarilum ciṭitu paḷakkam uṇṭāyirru* (Kaliyāṇacuntariyar 1950, 152).

42 Tr. Zvelebil 1990, 75.

In addition, there is a short treatise called *Poruttavilakkam*, composed by a certain Kulām Kāṭiṟu Nāvalar of Nākūr in 1880 (but published in 1900). However, if the *poruttam* treatise mentioned by Cāmiṇātaiyar, namely the *Navanītapāṭṭiyal*, is a Pāṭṭiyal that deals with quite a large gamut of topics, the *Poruttavilakkam* is only concerned with the so-called *pattu-p poruttan̄kal* ('ten *poruttams*').<sup>43</sup>

As it will be shown later,<sup>44</sup> the inclusion of Pāṭṭiyal texts in the selection of certain multiple-text and composite manuscripts offers the most convincing piece of evidence for arguing in favour of a *poruttam à la Cāmiṇātaiyar* – rather than its more restricted understanding witnessed in the *Poruttavilakkam* – as a sixth independent grammatical topic.

Finally, a brief mention ought to be made of another project that envisaged a sixfold grammar. The *Aṟuvakaiyilakkaṇam* ('Grammar in Six Parts') of Taṇṭapāṇi Cuvāmikaḷ (1839–1898) explicitly mentions a sixth grammatical topic in combination with the other five we previously discussed. The new topic is here called *pulamai* ('scholarship', or 'genius' according to Zvelebil's translation<sup>45</sup>) and it appears to be a combination of skills that an ideal Tamil scholar should possess.<sup>46</sup> *Pulamai* is mentioned in the *ciṟappuppāyiram* and the text is consistently divided into six chapters.<sup>47</sup>

### 3 Discrepancy between the lists of topics and the internal architecture of the grammatical texts

Discrepancies between what the prefatory materials of some of the grammatical treatises and their subdivision into chapters have already been mentioned in

<sup>43</sup> For more details about the ten *poruttams* and the Pāṭṭiyals in general, see Clare 2011, 59–83.

<sup>44</sup> See Section 5.

<sup>45</sup> Zvelebil 1995, 651.

<sup>46</sup> தேற்றம் தவறு மரபு செயல்வகை | எனும்நால் வகைத்தாய் இயம்புதும் புலமையே || (*tērram tavaru marapu ceyalvakai* | *eṇum nāl-vakaittu āy iyamputum pulamaiyē*, Venkaṭṭarāmarāja 1893, 96; 'Scholarship is said to have four components: clarity/knowledge, [absence of] error, tradition and action.')

<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Taṇṭapāṇi Cuvāmikaḷ also composed one more treatise, entitled *Ēlām-ilakkaṇam* ('The Seventh Grammar'). Here, he introduces *tava-v-iyalpu* ('the nature of penance') as a seventh discipline. It is clear that Taṇṭapāṇi Cuvāmikaḷ's agenda aimed at including within the same scholarly domain, namely *ilakkaṇam*, fields that are not, or at least not immediately, related to language and its use in literature.

the previous section. Here, we will discuss some of the sources from which such discrepancies emerge.

### 3.1 Three vs five

We have seen that the *ciṛappuppāyirams* of both the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* tell us that these are threefold grammars.<sup>48</sup> The subdivision into *atikārams* ('chapters') of these texts, as it has been transmitted to us, confirms such a configuration. However, there are sources that state that these two texts are in fact fivefold grammars.

For instance, stanza 60 from the *Pāṇṭimaṅṭalacatakam* of Aiyamperumāḷ Piḷḷai (seventeenth–eighteenth century?) states that the *Tolkāppiyam* is *pañcalaṭcaṇam āṇa* ('fivefold'):

கரைபெற்ற தோர்பஞ்சு லட்சண மானதொல் காப்பியமுந்  
தரைமுற்றும் போற்றிய சிந்தா மணியுந் தமிழ்ச்சங்கத்தின்  
னிரைபெற் றுயர்பத்துப் பாட்டும் விளங்க நசிவுரையை  
வரைநச்சி னூர்க்கினி யார்வாழ்வு பாண்டியன் மண்டலமே<sup>49</sup>

The Pāṇṭiya land is the residence of Nacciṇārkkīṇiyan, who has obtained the [other] shore [of the ocean of knowledge], [and] who wrote his own commentaries so that the *Tolkāppiyam*, which is a fivefold treatise, the *Cintāmaṇi*, praised by the whole earth, and the excellent *Pattuppāṭṭu*, which has entered the system (*nirai perṛu* ?) of the Tamil Caṅkam [corpus], became clear (*viḷaṅka*).<sup>50</sup>

Concerning the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam*, the editor of its first printed edition dated 1889, namely Ci. Vai. Tāmōtarampiḷḷai (1832–1901) – also one of the most

<sup>48</sup> See Section 2.1.

<sup>49</sup> *karai perṛat' ōr pañcalaṭcaṇamāṇa tolkāppiyamum | tarai muṛṛum pōṛṛiya cintāmaṇiyum tamiḷ caṅkattil | nirai perṛ' uyar pattuppāṭṭum viḷaṅka nica-v uraiyai | varai nacciṇārkkīṇiyar vāḷvu pāṇṭiya maṅṭalamē* (n.n. 1932, consulted online).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Wilden's translation of the same verse printed in U. Vē. Cāmiṇātaiyar's edition of the *Pattuppāṭṭu* (Wilden 2017, 189 n. 20), which however contains a minor variant in the fourth line. Note that the expression *nirai perṛu* is particularly problematic both grammatically (should *perṛu* 'having obtained' be read as *perṛa* 'which obtained?') and semantically (could *nirai* mean 'corpus?'). Wilden refers to the original text in which the verse is found as *Pāṇṭi Nāṭu Catakam*. On the other hand, Zvelebil (1974, 204) refers to it as *Pāṇṭimaṅṭalacatakam*, which is tantamount to the former in meaning and is also the one found in the 1932 edition (of which I could consult the retyped online version available on [projectmadurai.org](http://projectmadurai.org)). Neither Wilden nor Zvelebil attempt to date the text, however all the other *Catakams* mentioned by Zvelebil are dated between the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

influential Tamil scholars of the nineteenth century – argues that the text is the only one to offer a full-fledged instruction into the five grammatical topics. The same status is also implicitly attributed to the *Tolkāppiyam*, since – we are told – the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* is called the 'Small *Tolkāppiyam*':

[...] சிறுவர் முதலியோர் இலக்கணம் பயிற்ற்கு உபயோகமாகப் பவணந்தியாதியோர் பலரும் நன்னூல் சின்னூல் காரிகை என்றின்னன சிற்றிலக்கண நூல்கள் பல செய்வாராயினர். அவை பெரும்பாலும் தமிழ் நன்கறிதற்கு இன்றியமையாத ஐந்து இலக்கணங்களையும் முற்றக் கூறுது ஒன்றென்று ஒன்றிரண்டு மாத்திரம் உணர்த்தா நின்றன. சிறுபான்மை வீரசோழியம் போன்றன ஐந்தும் எடுத்துக் கூறினவேனும் மிகச் சுருங்கியவாய்க் கற்போர்க்கு வேண்டிய அளவு இலக்கண நூலனங் கொடாமையிற் பெரும்பயன் தருவனவல்லவாயின. இவ்விரு திறத்தனவும் போலாது பஞ்சலக்ஷணமும் மாணக்கர்க்குப் போதுமான அளவு செறிந்தது[.] இலக்கண விளக்க மொன்றே. இதன் மகிமை இதற்குச் சான்றோரால் வழங்கி வரும் “குட்டித் தொல்காப்பியம்” என்னும் பெயரானே இனிது விளங்கும்.<sup>51</sup>

[...] many, such as Pavaṇanti, composed several short grammatical treatises, such as the *Naṇṇūl*, the *Čiṇṇūl* [i.e. the *Nēminātam*] and the *Kārikai* [i.e. *Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai*], as they are useful to children and the like for learning grammar.<sup>52</sup> For the most part, they just teach either one or two [grammatical topics], without fully expanding the fivefold grammar (*aintu ilakkaṇaṅkaḷaiyūm*) that is essential for understanding Tamil well. The minority [of texts], such as the *Viṛacōḷiyam*, as they are very succinct, even if they take up all five [topics], do not yield great fruit, since they do not offer the grammatical knowledge to the extent that is required for scholars. Contrary to those two kinds, a fivefold grammar (*paṅcalakṣaṇam*) is complete as far as it is sufficient for the students. The *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* is precisely that one [kind of grammar]. Its fame nicely appears through the name “Small *Tolkāppiyam*”, which is current among the learned (*cāṇṇōrāl*).

Furthermore, S. Pulney Andy, the publisher of the first full edition of the *Muttuvīriyam*, justifies the composition and publication of the *Muttuvīriyam* as the attempt to meet the demand of scholars, who at the time were eager to have

51 [...] *ciṅṅvar mutaliyōr ilakkaṇam payiṛarṅku upayōkamāka-p pavaṇantiyātiyōr palarum naṇṇūl čiṇṇūl kārikai eṇru inṇaṇa ciṅṅ-ilaṅkaṇa-nūlkaḷ pala ceyvārāyiṇār. Avai perumpālum tamil naṅku aṛitarṅku inṇiyamaiyāta aintu ilakkaṇaṅkaḷaiyūm muṛṅa-k kūṛātu onṇu-onṇu onṇu-iraṅṅtu mātṭiram uṇarttā niṇṇaṇa. Čiṅṅpāṅmai viṛacōḷiyam pōṇṇaṇa aintum eṭuttu-k kūṛiṇa-v eṇum miṅka-c curuṅkiya-v āy-k karpōrṅku vēṅṅiya aḷavu ilakkaṇa ṅāṇaṅ koṭāmaiyiṇ perumpayaṅ taruvaṇa-v alla-v āyiṇa. Ivv-iru-tiṛattanaṇum pōlātu paṅcalakṣaṇamum māṅākkarkṅku-p pōtumāṇa aḷavu ceṛintatu[.] Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam onṇē. Itaṅ makimai itarṅku-c cāṇṇōrāl vaḷaṅki varum “kuṭṭi-t tolkāppiyam” eṇṇum peyarāṅē inṇitu viḷaṅkum* (Tāmōtarampiḷai 1889, ed. Tāmaraikkaṇṇam 2004, 92–93).

52 The *Nēminātam* is a twelfth- or thirteenth-century grammar that, like the *Naṇṇūl*, deals with *eḷuttu* and *col*; the *Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai* is a tenth-century treatise exclusively focused on the topic of *yāppu*.

access to a fivefold grammatical treatises that included developments in theory, although fivefold treatises had already been composed: அகத்தியம், தொல்காப்பிய முதலிய முன்னூல்களும், இலக்கணவிலக்க முதலிய பின்னூல்களும், ஐந்திலக்கணத் தனவாயினும் [...]’<sup>53</sup> (‘Although both the early treatises, such as the *Akattiyam* and the *Tolkāppiyam*, and the late[r] treatises, such as the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam*, are fivefold grammars [...]’).<sup>54</sup>

One could argue that understanding the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* as fivefold can be justified in light of the fact that the last chapter of both works, namely the *poruḷ-atikāram*, deals with topics that do not only concern *poruḷ* (‘poetic matter’), but also *yāppu* (‘metrics’) and *aṇi* (‘[language] ornamentation’, i.e. rhetorical figures). In both chapters, in fact, we find among others a subsection entitled *ceyyuḷ-iyal* (‘nature of stanzas/poems’) as well as one called *uvamai-y-iyal* (‘nature of the simile’) in the *Tolkāppiyam* and one called *aṇi-y-iyal* (‘nature of the [language] ornamentation’) in the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam*.

In this respect, we could assume that scholars of the nineteenth century did not perceive the discrepancy between what is stated in the *ciṛappuppāyirams* of the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam* and their subdivision into *atikārams* as the result of a tension, possibly because they did not deem necessary a one-to-one correspondence between the two.

### 3.2 Five vs four

Another case of discrepancy concerns the *Viṛacōḷiyam*. The verse discussed in Section 2.3 states that this is a fivefold grammar, but its internal structure is in fact divided into four main sections. As D’Avella observes:

[...] none of the editions print *alaṅkāra atikāram* or the like as a name for the final section, simply *alaṅkārap-paṭalam*, in contradistinction to the other chapters which are clearly labeled as *atikārams*, e.g., *poruḷatikāram* [...]. One wonders whether these divisions were original to the VC [*Viṛacōḷiyam*] or perhaps later additions once the idea of the *aintu ilakkaṇam* ‘five characterizations (of poetic language)’ had taken deeper root [...]. Additional manuscripts might reveal a different picture of the situation.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *akattiyam, tolkāppiya mutaliya muṇ-nūlkaḷum, ilakkaṇaviḷakkam mutaliya piṇ-nūlkaḷum, aintilakkaṇattaṇa-v āyinuṁ* [...] (Pulney Andy 1889, v).

<sup>54</sup> Muttuvira Upāttiyāyar 1889, unnumbered page. Allegedly, the *Akattiyam* of Akattiyāṇ is the first grammar of Tamil, which survives today only in fragments.

<sup>55</sup> D’Avella 2021, 335.

For the mere sake of speculation, one could think about the *Vīracōḷiyam* as a fourfold grammatical treatise, in which *aṇi* (here called *alaṅkāram*), has not yet risen to the status of independent discipline and is still considered part of *yāppu*. In this respect, the chapter structure of the *Vīracōḷiyam* would be the closest instantiation of the syllabus hinted at in Nakkīraṇ's story about Śiva's composition of the *Iraiyāṇār Akapporuḷ*, in which the Pāṇṭiya king sent for experts in the topics of *eḷuttu*, *col*, *poruḷ* and *yāppu*.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.3 Five vs two

The case of the *Naṇṇūl* of Pavaṇanti is even more extreme. Its *ciṟappuppāyiram* mentions five topics, but the text clearly deals with just two of them, namely *eḷuttu* and *col*.

This discrepancy was noted, for instance, by Beschi, who was of the opinion that Pavaṇanti did not complete the *Naṇṇūl* and that other authors composed other treatises on single topics (poetic matter, metrics and rhetorical figures) in order to create an exhaustive grammatical anthology.<sup>57</sup>

Another source presents a different interpretation of the textual history of the *Naṇṇūl*. This is the commentary to one of the *tāṇiyaṅs* ('stray verses') added as an invocation to the *Periya Tirumōli* of Tirumaṅkai Ālvār,<sup>58</sup> which seems to be of the opinion that the *Naṇṇūl* was originally a full-fledged fivefold treatise, thus evidently assuming that part of it went lost. The *tāṇiyaṅ* reads:

நெஞ்சுக்கிருள்கடிதீபம் அடங்கா நெடும் பிறவி  
நஞ்சுக்கு நல்லவமுதம் தமிழ்நன்னூல் துறைகள்  
அஞ்சுக் கிலக்கியம் ஆரணசாரம் பரசமயப்  
பஞ்சுக்கனலின்பொறி பரகாலன் பனுவல்களே<sup>59</sup>

A torch that drives off the darkness/ignorance from the heart, good ambrosia against the poison (*nañcukku*) that is unending rebirth (*aṭaṅkā neṭum pīṟati*, lit. non-shortening long birth), literature/exemplification of the five [that are] the topics (*tūṟaikaḷ*) of the good

<sup>56</sup> See Section 2.2.

<sup>57</sup> Beschi 1730, ed. Basse 1917, xii-xiii. This passage is discussed in detail in Section 4.

<sup>58</sup> As far as dating is concerned, not much can be said about this stray verse, apart from the fact that it most probably post-dates Tirumaṅkai Ālvār (ninth century?). I would like to thank G. Vijayavenugopal for bringing this source to my attention.

<sup>59</sup> *neñcukk' iruḷ kaṭi tīpam aṭaṅkā neṭum pīṟati | nañcukku nalla-v-amutam taṁiḷ-naṅ-ṇūl tūṟaikaḷ | añcukk' ilakkiyam āraṇa-cāram paracamaya-p | pañcukk' aṇaliṅ porī parakālaṅ paṇuvalkaḷ-ē* (Rāmanujācāryar and Muttukruṣṇanāyūtu 1904, 4).

treatise about Tamil,<sup>60</sup> the essence of the *Āraṇam* [i.e. the Veda], a spark of fire (*aṇalin porī*) that burns (lit. for) the cotton [thread] of other schools of thought (*paracamaya-p-paiṇcukku*): [these are] the treatises of Parakālan [i.e. Tirumaṅkai Ālvār].

The commentary to this verse composed by the Śrīvaiṣṇava scholar Piḷḷai Lōkam Jiyar (seventeenth century?) reads as follows:<sup>61</sup>

திராவிடசாஸ்த்ரம், எழுத்து, சொல், பொருள், யாப்பு, அலங்காரம் என்கிற விலக்கணமான பஞ்சலக்ஷணத்தோடே கூடியிறே யிருப்பது. அன்றிக்கே, தமிழுக்கு எழுத்து முதலான அஞ்சலக்ஷணத்தையும் அறுதியிடுவதான, நன்னூலென்று - ஒரு சாஸ்த்ரமுண்டு [...].<sup>62</sup>

A Tamil treatise (*tirāviṭa-cāstram*) includes the diverse five grammatical topics (*lakṣaṇam*), namely *eḷuttu*, *col*, *poruḷ*, *yāppu* and *alankāram*. In fact, there is one treatise called *Naṇṇūl* that fully treats (*arutiṅṅuvāt' āṇa*, lit. brings to completion) the five grammatical topics (*añcu-lakṣaṇattai-y-um*), [i.e.] *eḷuttu*, etc., for Tamil.

Interestingly, in this passage it is clear that Piḷḷailōkam Jiyar understands the compound *tamiḷ-nāṇ-ṇūl* as corresponding to Pavaṇanti's work, which is thus believed to have, at least originally, been a text that covered all five domains of grammar. On the other hand, the editor of the 1904 printed edition of the *Periya Tirumoli*, Māṭapūci Rāmānujāryar of Ciṅkapperumaḷkōyil, understood in his word-by-word glosses *naṇ* as meaning *vilakṣaṇam* ('special') and *nūl* as part of the compound *tamiḷ-nūl-tuṛaikaḷ* meaning *trāviṭa-cāstra-mārkkam-āṇa* ('that is the way of the Tamil treatises').<sup>63</sup>

**60** Or of the Tamil *Naṇṇūl* (see below).

**61** I would like to thank Erin McCann for helping me clarify the identity of Piḷḷailōkam Jiyar.

**62** *tirāviṭa-cāstram*, *eḷuttu*, *col*, *poruḷ*, *yāppu*, *alankāram enkiṛa vilakṣaṇam āṇa pañca-lakṣaṇattōṭē kūṭi-y-iṛē y-iruppatu. aṇrikk'-ē, tamiḷukku eḷuttu mutal āṇa añcu-lakṣaṇattai-y-um arutiṅṅuvātāṇa, naṇṇūl eṇṇu - oru cāstram uṇṭu, [...]* (Rāmānujācāryar and Muttukruṣṇanāyūtu 1904, 4–5).

**63** Another treatise that is considered by some to have been in its original redaction a full-fledged fivefold grammar like the *Naṇṇūl* is the *Tamiḷneriṅṅilakkam*, which, as we know it, in fact deals only with the *akam* sub-topic of *poruḷ*. The earliest source I have been able to trace that argues in this direction is the introduction to a 1972 edition of the *Muttuvīriyam*: தமிழ்நெறி விளக்கம் என்பது முழுமையாகக் கிடைத்திலது (*tamiḷ-neri-ṅṅilakkam eṇṇpatu muḷumai-y-āka-k kiṅṅaittilatu*; 'the *Tamiḷneriṅṅilakkam* is not available in its entirety'; Cuntaramūrṭti 1972, 1). Unfortunately, the editor, Ku. Cuntaramūrṭti, does not bring any argument in support of his claim. However, I strongly suspect that there may be earlier sources that share the same idea about the history of the *Tamiḷneriṅṅilakkam*.

## 4 Corpora

The history of Tamil grammatical literature knows many texts that do not cover all the topics of the syllabus (or syllabi), but rather focus on one, or maybe two of them. For instance, a popular text such as the *Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai* deals exclusively with *yāppu*, whereas the above-mentioned *Nannūl* describes the domains of *eḷuttu* and *col* only.

In this respect, it can be easily imagined that one can conjure up a corpus that selects enough of these texts to be able to cover the whole grammatical syllabus. And this seems to have in fact been the case. Evidence of this scholarly phenomenon are found in secondary sources, as well as in manuscripts and to a limited extent in printed books.<sup>64</sup>

The oldest attestation of a grammatical corpus is given in Beschi's 1730 *Grammatica latino-tamulica ubi de elegantiori linguæ tamulicæ dialecto செந்தமிழ் [centamil] dicta*. In his introduction, Beschi provides a list of texts that are to be studied to engage with the five grammatical topics. These are the *Nannūl* for *eḷuttu* and *col*, the *Akapporuḷvīlakkam* for *poruḷ* (note that the text is not mentioned by its title but by the name of its author, namely Nāṅkavirāca Nampi), the *Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai* for *yāppu* and the *Taṅṅiyalaṅkāram* for *aṇi*. It is interesting to note that, according to Beschi's understanding of the history of Tamil grammatical literature, these texts were composed one after the other in a multigenerational attempt at devising a complete fivefold grammar – the historiographical value of this observation being rather debatable:

The term Panjavilaccaṇam, which we here used, is the general expression for these five heads.

Pavanānti not having completed his design, his *Nannūl* comprises only the two first heads, viz. *Letters* and *Words*; on each of which he has treated at considerable length. On his death, a person named Nārccavirāja Nambi took up the subject and wrote on the third head, or *matter*.<sup>65</sup> A devotee called Amirdasāgaren (sea of nectar) composed a treatise on

<sup>64</sup> For the latter two categories, see Sections 5 and 6, respectively.

<sup>65</sup> From this passage one has the impression that Beschi thought that the *Akapporuḷvīlakkam* deals with the whole topic of *poruḷ*, including both its subtopics *akam* and *puṇam*. This not being the case since, as the title itself reveals, the text deals only with *akam*, one can assume that Beschi simply deemed unnecessary to provide more details about this grammar of *poruḷ* in the context of the introduction to his grammar of Tamil. Margherita Trento, who is currently engaged in the study of Beschi's *Tonnūlvīlakkam*, has confirmed to me (email exchange dated 05.10.2018) that a close reading of the *poruḷ* section of the text makes clear that Beschi was familiar, among other texts, with the *Akapporuḷvīlakkam*. I thus here correct an observation

the fourth head, or *Versification*, which he entitled *Cârigei*; and lastly, a person named Tandî wrote on the fifth head, or *Embellishment*: his work was called from him *Tandiyalancâram*; the word *Alancâram* being the same as *Añi*.<sup>66</sup>

Interestingly, at the end of another of his works, namely the *Clavis humaniorum litterarum sublimioris tamulici idiomatis* composed in c. 1735,<sup>67</sup> Beschi mentions a corpus of seven grammatical works:

Dear reader, you now have that promised key (*clavem*) and thanks to that you have those five systems (*opes*) of the Tamil language unfolded. The Tamilians have transmitted diffusely and confusedly those rules, which I have transmitted, spread across seven works (*libris*): 1. *Naññûl*, 2. *Akapporuḷ*, 3. *Puṟapporuḷ*, 4. *Kârikai*, 5. *Yâpparuñkalam*, 6. *Pâtṭiyal*, 7. *Tañṭiyalañkâram*.<sup>68</sup>

There are two main points of interest in this passage that concern us. First, it explicitly mentions the *Puṟapporuḷvenṇpâmālai*, i.e. the treatise (with illustrative stanzas and commentary) that deals with the *puṟam* matters of *poruḷ*, the *akam* matters being dealt with in the *Akapporuḷviḷakkam*. Second, despite the fact that Beschi still openly connects this alternative corpus to the fivefold syllabus, which, as we have seen, he also presents in the *Tonñûlviḷakkam* and in the *Grammatica*, we can observe the inclusion of an unspecified *Pâtṭiyal* text, which we can interpret as a hint towards (the emergence of?) a sixfold syllabus.

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I made elsewhere (Buchholz and Ciotti 2017, 135 n. 21) on the fact that it could have seemed possible that Beschi was not familiar with the *Akapporuḷviḷakkam*, given for instance that this is the only work in the list to which he refers by mentioning the name of its author, rather than its title. The *Grammatica* and the *Tonñûlviḷakkam* were in fact completed in the same year 1730.

66 Tr. Babington (1822, x). The Latin original reads (Beschi 1730, ed. Basse 1917, xii-xiii): 'Hæc quinque sunt quæ பஞ்சவிலக்கணம் vocant. Ex his, dictus பவணந்தி in quo நன்னூல் de litteris ac vocibus tantum diffuse scripsit; coque morte absumpto, alter cui nomen நாராகவிராசநம்பி, extense quae ad பொருள் spectant tradidit. அமிர்தசாகரன் autem, et ipse monachus, cujus nomen Ambrosiæ more interpretatur, de யாப்பு sive de versibus scripsit librum quem காரிகை nominavit. Tandem de அணி seu figuris egit quidam nomine தெண்டி, unde et liber vocatur தெண்டியலங்காரம், அலங்காரம் enim idem est ac அணி.'

67 The date of completion of the *Clavis* can only be approximated on the basis of indirect evidence, since the manuscript does not contain a date (see Chevillard 1992, 78) and it was only published for the first time in 1876. The *Clavis* is a sort of adaptation, rather than a direct translation, of the *Tonñûlviḷakkam* into Latin.

68 The Latin original reads (Beschi 1876, 159): 'Habes jam, amice lector, quam promiseram clavem, eaque reseratas habes quinque Tamulici sermonis opes. Has, quas tradidi regulas, Septem libris dispersas fuse et confuse tradidere Tamulenses: 1. நன்னூல், 2. அகப்பொருள், 3. புறப்பொருள், 4. காரிகை, 5. யாப்பருங்கலம், 6. பாட்டியல், 7. தண்டியலங்காரம்.' I would like to thank Margherita Trento for drawing my attention to this particular passage.

A little more than a century later, a document written by the well-known Tamil Sri Lankan scholar and reformer Ārumuka Nāvalar (1822–1879) in 1860 and entitled *Tamilppulamai* ('Knowledge of Tamil') is witness of a sixfold corpus.<sup>69</sup> Here, Ārumuka Nāvalar lays down a – rather ambitious – list of texts that students of Tamil, in particular those who adhere to Śaivism (*caiva-camayika!*), should be familiar with. As far as grammatical education is concerned, he mentions a basic knowledge (*ilakkaṇa-c-curukka[m]*), which should be attained by young pupils, followed by a first list of texts to be studied, presumably by intermediate students.<sup>70</sup> The list reads:

நன்னூல் விருத்தியுரை, அகப்பொருள்விளக்கவுரை, புறப்பொருள்வெண்பாமாலையுரை, காரிகையுரை, வெண்பாப்பாட்டியலுரை, தண்டியலங்காரவுரை என்னும் இலக்கணங்களைக் கற்றறிந்து, தாம் கற்ற இலக்கியங்களில் இவ்விலக்கணவிதிகளை அமைத்துப் பழகுக.<sup>71</sup>

'*Naṅṅūl* with *Viruttiyurai*, *Akapporuḷviḷakkam* with commentary, *Puṟapporuḷvenpāmālai* with commentary, [*Yāpparuṅkalak*]*kārikai* with commentary, *Venpāppāṭṭiyal* with commentary, *Taṅṭiyalaṅkāram* with commentary. Once these grammars are learned, they [i.e. the students] should practice applying the rules of these grammars in the literary works that they studied'.

A couple of aspects of this list are particularly important. First, it mentions not just the *Naṅṅūl*, but one of its commentaries, namely the *Naṅṅūl Viruttiyurai*.<sup>72</sup> Second, contrary to Beschi's *Clavis* a specific *Pāṭṭiyal* work is mentioned, namely the *Venpāppāṭṭiyal* – curiously even before the *Taṅṭiyalaṅkāram*.

<sup>69</sup> The document of Ārumuka Nāvalar that is here under investigation dates October–November 1860 (the original date is: Jovian year Rauttiri, month of Aippaci, Kali year 4962). It has been reprinted together with several other writings of Ārumuka Nāvalar in a volume entitled *Ārumukanāvalar Pirapantattiraṭṭu* and edited by Ta. Kailāca Piḷḷai of Nallūr, which I could access in its 1922 edition (pp. 25–28). I would like to thank Krissy Rogahn for drawing my attention to this particular source.

<sup>70</sup> Ārumuka Nāvalar 1860 [1922], 25.

<sup>71</sup> *Naṅṅūl viruttii-urai, akapporuḷviḷakkav-urai, puṟapporuḷvenpāmālaiy-urai, kārikaiy-urai, venpāppāṭṭiyal-urai, taṅṭiyalaṅkārav-urai eṇṇum ilakkaṇaṅkaḷai-k kaṟṟarintu, tām kaṟṟa ilakkiyaṅkaḷil ivv-ilakkaṇa-vitikaḷai amaittu-p palakuka* (Ārumuka Nāvalar 1860 [1922], 25).

<sup>72</sup> I assume that the *Naṅṅūl Viruttiyurai* in question is the one authored by Civañāṇa Cuvāmikal (alias Civañāṇa Muṇivar), possibly the most renowned Tamil intellectual of the eighteenth century, which is in turn a revised edition of the commentary by Caṅkaranamaccivāyar (seventeenth century). This text was in fact edited in printed form by Ārumuka Nāvalar himself a few years before in 1851 (according to Zvelebil 1995, 175; or in 1854 according to Ebeling 2009, 245). Alternatively, but less likely, Ārumuka Nāvalar could be referring to another *Naṅṅūl Viruttiyurai*, which was composed by the *ingenium perfervidum* (according to George Uglow Pope) of Mukavai Irāmānucakavirāyar and published in 1846 (see Zvelebil 1995, 266).

It is worth noting that a further list follows (Ārumuka Nāvalar 1860 [1922], 26) with more grammatical texts to study. However, these are clearly regarded as non-essential, since it is explicitly stated that students should engage with them only ‘if time allows’ (*kālam uḷatāyin*).<sup>73</sup>

It should be remarked, however, that the lists of texts made by Beschi and Ārumuka Nāvalar may represent some sort of ideal corpora. The actual sequence in which those texts were taught and studied was most probably not always so linear, but might have had gaps or included other texts, too. This state of affairs can be deduced, for instance, from *En Carittiram*, the autobiography of U. Vē. Cāmiṇātaiyar. In Chapter 19, Cāmiṇātaiyar narrates that he learned the *Naṇṇūl* as well as part of the *Navanītappāṭṭiyal* from Kastūri Aiyaṅkār. Later in Chapter 65 he devotes a few sections to reminisce about the grammars, among several other texts, that he studied under the guidance of Cuppiramaṇiya Tēcikar, his teacher at the *Tiruvāvaṭuturai mutt* (‘monastery’) after the demise of his beloved teacher Miṇaṭcicutaram Piḷḷai in 1876. First, Cāmiṇātaiyar mentions his desire, at the time, to study the *Naṇṇūl Viruttiyurai* (see above). He also mentions that he studied the commentaries of Iḷampūraṇar and Cēṇāvraiyaṇar to the *eḷuttu* and *col* sections of the *Tolkāppiyam*. In this respect, it must be said that, at that point of his life, Cāmiṇātaiyar was not anymore a beginner – he was, for instance, already given teaching duties at the *mutt*, while perfecting his studies. Thus, he reached a level of scholarship that allowed him to engage with more complex texts and study grammar through different sources at the same time. Furthermore, Cāmiṇātaiyar refers to the fact that he studied both the *Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai* and the *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram*. Finally, and most interestingly, he remarks that he studied the whole fivefold syllabus, but that, as far as *poruḷ* is concerned, on the one hand, he studied *akam* only through a commentary to a particular poem and not as a distinct topic and, on the other hand, that he did not study *puram* at all.<sup>74</sup>

73 The list reads: *tolkāppiyam iḷampūraṇarurai, cēṇāvraiyaṇarurai, nacciṇārkkīṇiyarurai, pirayōkavivēkavurai, ilakkaṇakkotturai, tolkāppiyaccūttiravirutti, iraiyaṇārakapporuḷurai* (‘*Tolkāppiyam* with Iḷampūraṇar’s commentary, Cēṇāvraiyaṇar’s commentary, [and] Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar’s commentary, *Pirayōkavivēkam* with commentary, *Ilakkaṇakkottu* with commentary, *Tolkāppiyaccūttiravirutti*, *Iraiyaṇārakapporuḷ* with commentary’).

74 எழுந்து, சொல், பொருள், யாப்பு, அணி என்னும் இலக்கண நூல்களைத்தான் பாடம் கேட்போம். அகப்பொருள் இலக்கணத்தைக் கேட்கவில்லை. திருச்சிறும்பலக் கோவையாரை உரையுடன் கேட்டபோது அவ்விலக்கியத்திலிருந்தே இலக்கணத்தை அறிந்துகொண்டோமே யன்றித் தனியே அகப்பொருள் இலக்கண நூலைப் பாடம் கேட்கவில்லை. அக்காலத்தில் அவ்விலக்கணத்தைத் தனியே படிப்பார் மிகக் குறைவு. பொருளிலக்கணத்தின் மற்றொரு பிரிவாகிய புறப்பொருளைப்பற்றிய ஆராய்ச்சியே இல்லை (*Eḷuttu, col, poruḷ, yāppu, aṇi eṇṇum*

In conclusion, it would be hasty to cast a judgement over the corpora described by Beschi and Ārumuka Nāvalar, whether they represent an alternative model to the more well-rounded texts, such as the *Tolkāppiyam* or the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam*, or they are to be understood as complementary to them, possibly offering a more beginner friendly way into *ilakkaṇam*.<sup>75</sup> Certainly, selecting texts and building up a corpus offers a more flexible way of tackling the grammatical syllabus, given that one can add, subtract and substitute texts according to what, for instance, may have been local and personal educational strategies. Cāmiṇātaiyar's case further shows us how the engagement with such corpora may be an activity made over several years. In this respect, multiple-text and composite manuscripts are witnesses of such a malleable modularity.<sup>76</sup>

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*ilakkaṇa nūlkaḷaittāṅ pāṭam kēṭpōm. Akapporuḷ ilakkaṇattaik kēṭkavillai. Tiruccir̥rampalak kōvaiyārai uraiyuṭaṅ kēṭṭapōtu avvilakkiyattiliruntē ilakkaṇattai arintukoṅṭōmē yaṅṅrit taṅiyē akapporuḷ ilakkaṇa nūlaiṭ pāṭam kēṭkavillai. Akkālattil avvilakkaṇattait taṅiyē paṭippār mikak kuṅaiṅ. Poruḷilakkaṇattin maṅṅoru pīrivākiya puṅṅapporuḷaiṅpaṅṅiya āṅycciyē illai,* Kaliyāṅacuntaraiyar 1950, 560; 'Thus we studied all parts of grammar: phonetics and phonology, morphology, literary convention, prosody and rhetoric. However, we did not study grammars of love-poetry akam. While studying the commentary on Tiruccir̥rampalak kōvaiyār, we learnt the akam conventions – grammar of love poetry. But we haven't studied any akam grammar separately. At that time there were only very few who would make a specific study of it. There was also no study at all of the other great division of the subject puṅṅapporuḷ of poruḷilakkaṇam – puṅṅam literary conventions'; tr. Zvelebil 1994, 281. *Sic rebus stantibus*, it is quite remarkable that Cāmiṇātaiyar will be the editor of the second ever printed edition of the *Puṅṅapporuḷveṅṅpāmālai* in 1895 – the first edition being that prepared by Tāṅṅavarāya Mutaliyār together with Mānēcar A. Muttuccāmiṅṅiḷḷai in 1835 (see below, Section 6). Another example of a flexible syllabus that includes some of the texts mentioned so far is that followed by Tāṅṅavarāya Mutaliyār (1790–1850), one of the most important Tamil headmasters at the Madras College of Fort St George (see Venkatachalapathy 2009, 120–121).

**75** The latter interpretation seems to emerge from reading Ārumuka Nāvalar, who ascribes the *Tolkāppiyam*, among other works, to a later stage of education.

**76** See Section 5 below. It goes without saying that flexibility can be reached also with a text that deals with all topics of grammar, simply by selecting only certain passages from it during, for instance, a teaching section. However, the intellectual impulse to realise a more stable source of knowledge, such as the corpora that are mentioned here, should not be underestimated.

## 5 Grammatical corpora as they emerge from manuscripts

In this section we will explore what could be labelled as the *material* realisation of the *ilakkaṇam* syllabi and corpora in multiple-text and composite manuscripts. In particular, we will investigate twenty such palm-leaf manuscripts that were selected on the basis of both direct inspection (either personal or through digital reproductions) and the information gathered from library catalogues.<sup>77</sup> Evidently, the list is not exhaustive.

The artefacts analysed here surely have their own idiosyncrasies – hardly ever two manuscripts are the same – but they do help outline certain patterns in the production of grammar-related manuscripts, in particular the extent to which the selection of the texts that they contain matches or approximates the classification of *ilakkaṇam* as three-, five-, or sixfold. The resulting grouping of the manuscripts should thus be understood as a way to highlight the interplay between syllabi, corpora and manuscripts, rather than the application of definitive descriptive categories.<sup>78</sup>

Other patterns will also emerge such as, for instance, the apparent approach to *poruḷ*, which one may want to think of as complete only in those manuscripts that include copies of both the *Akapporuḷvīlakkam* and the *Puṟapporuḷvenṇpāmālai*, i.e. the treatises that deal with the sub-topics of *akam* and *puṟam*, respectively. A further, particularly important pattern consists of the inclusion of a literary text along with a selection of grammatical treatises. Asking whether the literary texts are there to exemplify the teachings of theoretical texts, or the latter are there to help understand the former would probably be a pointless question. What is in fact evident is the educational purpose of these manuscripts, which showcase the synergy between grammar (*ilakkaṇam*) and literature (*ilakkiyam*), in particular the texts of the *Patīṇenkiḷkkaṇakku* corpus and the *Cīvakacintāmaṇi*.<sup>79</sup> Mastering both these domains used to be the

<sup>77</sup> In what follows, I will specify when the information concerning the description of a particular manuscript was obtained from the catalogues. In all other cases, even if catalogue descriptions are available, the information provided is based on my direct inspection.

<sup>78</sup> The main inspiration for such kind of investigation comes from the idea of applying the concept of multiple-text manuscripts as corpus-organisers laid out by Bausi 2010. See the introduction to the current subsection of this volume (in particular n. 17) for more details.

<sup>79</sup> The *Patīṇenkiḷkkaṇakku* is a corpus of eighteen texts that deal with the topics of *akam*, *puṟam* and *niti* ('moral conduct'). The *Cīvakacintāmaṇi* is one of the Tamil *peruṅkāppiyams* ('great poems') narrating the life and adventures of prince Cīvaṅkaṇ.

bread and butter of a certain kind of traditional Tamil scholars at the time in which the manuscripts that we still have were in fact produced and used.<sup>80</sup>

## 5.1 The threefold syllabus

So far, I could find just one manuscript that matches the threefold syllabus constituted by *eḷuttu*, *col* and *poruḷ*.

- MS no. 438 of the U.V. Swaminatha Iyer Library of Chennai (UVSL): *Naṇṇūl* (438, fols 1<sup>r</sup>–21<sup>v</sup>) and *Akapporuḷviḷakkam* (438a, fols 22<sup>r</sup>–44<sup>r</sup>).

While inspecting the manuscript, I noticed that the left margin of fol. 22<sup>r</sup>, l. 5–7 reads அகப்பொருண்மூலமும் புறப்பொருட்கிலக்கியத்தோடு வெண்பாமாலைமூலமும்<sup>81</sup> ('the root-text of the *Akapporuḷviḷakkam* and the root-text of the [*Purapporuḷ*] *veṇpāmālai* with the literature of the *poruḷ* topic of *puṛam*'. This seems to suggest that the original, but unfulfilled, intention of the scribe was that of copying the *Purapporuḷveṇpāmālai*, too, so to encompass the full scope of *poruḷ*.<sup>82</sup>

## 5.2 The fivefold syllabus

A first group of four manuscripts presents selections of texts that are very close to that recorded by Beschi's 1730 *Grammatica*,<sup>83</sup> thus arguably representing an understanding of *ilakkaṇam* as a fivefold field of study.

- MS no. 639 of the Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswathi Mahal Library of Thanjavur (SSMLT): *Naṇṇūl* (639a), *Akapporuḷviḷakkam* (639b), *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai* (639c) and *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram* (639d).<sup>84</sup>

This is arguably the closest instantiation of Beschi's 1730 corpus that I came across.

- MS no. 67 of the UVSL: *Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai* with a commentary (67), *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram* (67b),<sup>85</sup> and *Naṇṇūl* (67c).<sup>86</sup>

**80** Concerning the education of Tamil scholars (*pulavars*), see e.g. Ebeling 2010, 37–55.

**81** *akapporuṇmūlamum puṛapporuṭkilakkiyattōṭu veṇpāmālimūlamum*.

**82** Note that *Puṛapporuṭkilakkiyattōṭu Veṇpāmālimūlam* is the title by which the *Puṛapporuḷveṇpāmālai* is also mentioned in its first ever edition dated 1835 (see Section 6).

**83** See Section 4.

**84** Information obtained from the *Catalogue of the Tamil Manuscripts in the Tanjore Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswathi Mahal Library* (Olaganatha Pillay 1925, entries nos 90–93).

This manuscript, a composite one,<sup>87</sup> presents us with a deficient approximation of Beschi's 1730 corpus; only the *Akapporuḷṅṅaḷakkam* is missing.

- MS no. 601 of the UVSL: *Tirukkuṟaḷ* (601a, recorded in the catalogue as 601, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-23<sup>v</sup>), *Cūṭāmaṇinikaṇṭu* (601a2, not recorded in the catalogue, fols 23<sup>v</sup>-62<sup>v</sup>), *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai* (601b, fols 62<sup>v</sup>-92<sup>v</sup>), *Nāṇmaṇikkaṭikai* (601c1, not recorded in the catalogue, fols 93<sup>r</sup>-101<sup>r</sup>), *Tirikaṭukam* (601c2, not recorded in the catalogue, fols 101<sup>v</sup>-109<sup>v</sup>), *Nālaṭiyār* (601d, fols 109<sup>v</sup>-147<sup>r</sup>), *Nanṇūḷ* (601e, fols 147<sup>v</sup>-162<sup>v</sup>) and *Akapporuḷṅṅaḷakkam* (601f, not recorded in catalogue, fol. 162<sup>v</sup>, incomplete copy).<sup>88</sup>

This manuscript is a deficient approximation of the corpus found in Beschi, given the absence of the *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram*. UVSL601 also contains a lexicographical work, namely the *Cūṭāmaṇinikaṇṭu* and, furthermore, three *Patīṇṅkīḷkkaṇakku* works dealing with ethics, namely the *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, the *Tirikaṭukam* and the *Nālaṭiyār*. In this respect, the manuscript represents a platform for the combination of grammars and literary texts, similarly to UVSL589 (see below).

- MSS nos 5549-5552 of the Government Oriental Manuscript Library of Chennai (GOML) constitute in fact a single codicological unit. They contain: *Nanṇūḷ* (5549, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-3[.]<sup>v</sup>),<sup>89</sup> *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai* (5550, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-8<sup>v</sup>), *Akapporuḷṅṅaḷakkam* (5551, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-34<sup>v</sup>) and an incomplete copy of the *Purapporuḷṅṅaḷakkam* (5552, fols 35<sup>r</sup>-44<sup>v</sup>), which stops abruptly in the middle of the text.

Although the number of texts in the manuscripts could have been originally larger, their extant corpus approximates the one presented by Beschi, with the exclusion of the *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram*. A peculiarity to be noted is the inclusion, instead, of the *Purapporuḷṅṅaḷakkam* along with the *Akapporuḷṅṅaḷakkam*, so that the whole topic of *poruḷ* is fully treated, since both *akam* and *puṟam* are covered.

<sup>85</sup> Notably, the left margin of fol. 168<sup>r</sup> reads ஐந்தாவது | இலக்கணம் | யணி (*aintāvatu | ilakkaṇam | yaṇi*; 'aṇi is the fifth [topic of] grammar'). This points to the fact that the manuscript indeed suits the concept of a fivefold syllabus.

<sup>86</sup> The numbering of the texts follows *Descriptive Catalogue* 1956, entries nos 82, 119 and 177.

<sup>87</sup> The fact that UVSL67 is a composite can be inferred by the fact that the last text to be found in the manuscript, i.e. the *Nanṇūḷ*, was copied (from Aug. 1838 to Sept./Oct. 1838) before the copy of the *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram* was completed (May 1839) and, furthermore, its foliation begins anew. I thank Marco Franceschini for checking with me the colophons of this manuscript.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. the information recorded in *Descriptive Catalogue* 1956, entries nos 118, 169, 252 and 287.

<sup>89</sup> Unfortunately, the margins of the manuscript are sometimes heavily damaged and the folio number of the last folio containing the end of the *Nanṇūḷ* can only be partially read.

- MS no. 589 of the UVSL is a rather unique artefact containing not only grammatical treatises, but also a large number of excerpts or full copies of numerous literary texts, such as the *akam* works of the *Paṭiṇeṅkiḷkkaṇakku* corpus, the *Cīvakacintāmaṇi*, the *Tirumurukārruppaṭai*, the *Kallāṭam*, etc.<sup>90</sup> As far as grammatical texts are concerned, UVSL589 has copies of the *Naṇṇūl*, the *Akapporuḷviḷakkam*, the *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai* and the *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram*. Furthermore, it quotes in three sections of the bundle stanzas from the *Purapporuḷvenpāmālai*, which is the only one among the *ilakkaṇam* texts to include stanzas that illustrate its rules.<sup>91</sup> In this respect, not only this manuscript matches Beschi's 1730 corpus, but puts it in dialogue with literary texts.
- MS no. 13 of the Tavattiru Cāntaliṅka Aṭikaḷār Kalai Ariviyaḷ Tamilk Kallūri Nūlakam of Perur (TKNP): *Naṇṇūl* (fols 1–25), *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai* (fols 26–87) and *Akapporuḷviḷakkam* (fols 88–102). To these three works, which show a continuous foliation, two more texts are added on unnumbered folios: *Nēminātam* (eight leaves) and *Kēcātipātavupamāṇam* (one leaf).

As the manuscript stands now, the topics of *eḷuttu* and *col* are reduplicated given the inclusion of both the *Naṇṇūl* and the *Nēminātam*. However, since the folios containing the latter text are unnumbered, it is plausible to assume that this was a later addition to the original plan of the manuscript. Similarly, the addition of the very short text called *Kēcātipātavupamāṇam* on an unnumbered folio suggests that at a certain point someone must have wanted to extend the scope of the content of the manuscript. The term *kēcātipātavupamāṇam* indicates a particular convention of describing a person from head to foot through a series of similes.<sup>92</sup> Although this is a topic dealt with in some *Pāṭṭiyal* texts, there are a few texts specifically devoted to it, which secondary literature ascribes to the domain of *aṇi*. The text of the *Kēcātipātavupamāṇam* found in TKNP13 corresponds to the third section of one of these texts, namely the *Uvamāṇacaṅkirakam*.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> A detailed study of this manuscript is found in Buchholz and Ciotti 2017.

<sup>91</sup> As for the other *ilakkaṇam* texts, illustrative stanzas are usually found in their commentaries.

<sup>92</sup> See *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam*, *Poruḷatikāram*, *Pāṭṭiyal* 111 (Kōpālaiyar 1974, 253–254).

<sup>93</sup> See Cuppiramaṇiyaṅ 2009, 580–581.

### 5.3 The sixfold syllabus

Several manuscripts contain not only the texts mentioned in Beschi's 1730 *Grammatica*, but also at least one Pāṭṭiyal text. In this respect, these manuscripts are the best witnesses of the sixfold syllabus of Tamil *ilakkaṇam*, which, as it was shown before, primary sources only marginally refer to.<sup>94</sup> As a matter of fact, the selection of texts in these manuscripts can be compared to the kind of corpus mentioned by Beschi's c. 1735 *Clavis* and by Ārumuka Nāvalar's 1860 *Tamilppulamai*.<sup>95</sup>

- MS no. 127 of the Madurai Tamil Sangam of Madurai has three sections. One contains in continuous foliation the texts mentioned in Beschi's 1730 corpus: *Nannūl* (fols 1<sup>r</sup>–25<sup>v</sup>), *Akapporuḷṭakkam* (fols 25<sup>r</sup>–51<sup>r</sup>, with double fols 25 and 39), *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai* (fols 51<sup>r</sup>–58<sup>v</sup>) and *Taṅṭiyalaṅkāram* (fols 59<sup>r</sup>–67<sup>v</sup>). Two more sections are added, containing respectively copies of the *Purapporuḷveṅpāmālai* (fols 1<sup>r</sup>–7<sup>r</sup>; only rules, no illustrative stanzas) and the *Navanītappāṭṭiyal* (fols 1<sup>r</sup>–?).<sup>96</sup>

Interestingly, the first section of the manuscript ends with the following statement: எழுத்து - சொல் - பொருள் - யாப்பு - அலங்காரம் - அரு - இலக்கணமுற்று (fol. 67<sup>v</sup>, lines 4–5) (*eluttu - col - poruḷ - yāppu - alaṅkāram - {āka} 5 - ilakkaṇamuṟṟum*; 'sounds/letters, words, poetic matter, metres, ornamentation: in total 5 - grammar is completed') (see Fig. 1).<sup>97</sup>

Such a statement clearly shows that the original project of the manuscript was to represent a fivefold grammar through the corpus described by Beschi 1730. Furthermore, the addition at a later stage in the life of the manuscript of the *Purapporuḷveṅpāmālai* (only rules without illustrative stanzas) and the *Navanītappāṭṭiyal* shows the influence of a broader understanding of the grammatical syllabus, with the inclusion of *puram* in order to complete *poruḷ* and a Pāṭṭiyal text in order to include *poruttam*.

- MS Indien no. 187 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris: *Akapporuḷṭakkam* (fols 56<sup>r</sup>–66<sup>v</sup>), *Purapporuḷveṅpāmālai* (fols 67<sup>r</sup>–75<sup>v</sup>; only

<sup>94</sup> See Section 2.4.

<sup>95</sup> See Section 4.

<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately, the section of the manuscript occupied by the *Navanītappāṭṭiyal* is heavily damaged and only a few folio numbers are left to read (the highest digit being 11). It is thus unclear how many folios were used in total for reproducing this copy of the text.

<sup>97</sup> What is probably a second hand has added for each *ilakkaṇam* the number of rules found in its corresponding text, the total number of rules found in the five texts combined (the computation is however problematic) and an invocation.

rules, no illustrative stanzas), a text entitled *Alaṅkāraṇūl* (fols 76<sup>r</sup>–82<sup>r</sup>; in fact, corresponding to the *Taṅṭiyalaṅkāram*) and *Veṅṇāppāṭṭiyal* (fols 83<sup>r</sup>–87<sup>r</sup>).

This manuscript presents some remarkable codicological features. The recto of the first folio of the manuscript reads *tirukkurukūr - cuppiramaṇiya tiḱṣitar cetya pirayōkavivēkamūlamum uraiyum* ('text and commentary of the *Pirayōkavivēkam* composed by Cuppiramaṇiya Tiḱṣitar of Tirukkurukūr'). Since the first 55 leaves of the manuscript are missing, one can assume that it originally contained a copy of the *Pirayōkavivēkam* – a seventeenth century text that covers *col* in a Sanskritic fashion – that was removed from the bundle and never put back.<sup>98</sup> In this respect, most probably, the manuscript originally represented a deficient approximation of a corpus befitting the six-fold syllabus, with the curious inclusion of the *Pirayōkavivēkam*, which does not deal with *eḷuttu*, and the odd exclusion of metrics.<sup>99</sup>

- MS no. 6368 of the Oriental Research Institute and Manuscript Library of Thiruvananthapuram (ORI): *Taṅṭiyalaṅkāram* (6368a, fols 1<sup>r</sup>–75<sup>r</sup>), *Tol-kāppiyam* (6368b, fols 77<sup>r</sup>–98, removed), *Nēminātam* (6368c, fols 99<sup>r</sup>–112<sup>r</sup>), *Naṅṅūl* and *Veṅṇāppāṭṭiyal* (6368d and 6368e, fols 113<sup>r</sup>–140<sup>v</sup>),<sup>100</sup> and

<sup>98</sup> For a rough estimate of how many palm-leaves would a copy of the *Pirayōkavivēkam* occupy, one can compare MS no. 47 of the Centamiḷk Kallūri - Tamīḷc Caṅkam (Madurai), an incomplete copy containing 45 folios (c. 14 lines per folio) and MS no. 316 of the Tiruvāvaṭuturai Āṭiṇa Caracuvati Makāl Nūlkaḷ (Thiruvavadhurai), a complete copy of 34 folios (c. 16 lines per folio). The latter manuscript was presumably part of a multiple-text manuscript, since its foliation is 95<sup>r</sup>–129<sup>r</sup>. We can thus assume that the 55 missing leaves of Indien 187 (c. 14 lines per folio) could have contained an entire copy of the *Pirayōkavivēkam*.

<sup>99</sup> Notably, the manuscript contains a double foliation. This was probably added by a second hand: the numbers are, in fact, visibly larger than those of the first foliation, which are instead of the same size of the characters used to write the texts. According to this second foliation, the texts are distributed in the manuscript as follows: *Akapporuḷviḷakkam* (fols 161<sup>r</sup>–171<sup>r</sup>), *Puṟapporuḷveṅṇāmālai* (fols 172<sup>r</sup>–180<sup>v</sup>), *Alaṅkāraṇūl* (fols 184<sup>r</sup>–187<sup>r</sup>) and *Veṅṇāppāṭṭiyal* (fols 188<sup>r</sup>–192<sup>r</sup>). If our estimate that the copy of the *Pirayōkavivēkam* occupied c. 50 folios (see n. 98 above), it is clear that, at a certain stage of the life of the manuscript, more or less a hundred more leaves were added to the bundle. Was a further codicological unit added and, consequently, all the leaves renumbered? Or, was the present bundle part of a multi-volume manuscript (possibly even from its original production plan)? Finally, was this extra section occupied by a text on metrics?

<sup>100</sup> Unfortunately, due to time constraints at the time of my inspection of this manuscript (7 Sept. 2016), I could not carefully check on which folios the *Naṅṅūl* ends and the *Veṅṇāppāṭṭiyal* begins. The *Index of Tamil Manuscripts* (Padmakumari 2009) does not record this detail.

*Akapporuḷvīlakkam* (not mentioned in the *Index*, fols 141<sup>r</sup>–143<sup>v</sup>, probably incomplete).<sup>101</sup>

This manuscript presents the reduplication of *eḷuttu* and *col* with inclusion of both the *Nēminātam* and the *Nanṇūl*. It however excludes *yāppu*, unless of course one considers the section on metre within the *Poruḷatikāram* of the *Tolkāppiyam* – allegedly included in this artefact but missing at the time of my assessment (7 Sept. 2016).

- MS no. 636 of the SSMLT: *Nanṇūl* (636a), *Akapporuḷvīlakkam* (636b), two *Yāpparuṅkalams* (636c,d), *Citamparappāṭṭiyal* (636e), *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāra* (636f) and *Nālaṭiyār* (636g).<sup>102</sup>

Note that in this manuscript the *Yāpparuṅkalam* is preferred to the *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai*. Furthermore, note also the inclusion of the *Nālaṭiyār*, one of the ‘didactic’ poems of the *Paṭiṇeṅkīlkkāṇakku* corpus.

- MS no. 631 of the SSMLT: *Nanṇūl* (631a), *Irāiyanār Poruḷ* (631b),<sup>103</sup> *Akapporuḷvīlakkam* (631c), *Yāpparuṅkalam* (631d), *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai* (631e), *Citamparappāṭṭiyal* (631f), *Veṅpāppāṭṭiyal* (631g), *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram* (631h), *Tolkāppiyam* (631i), *Nēminātam* (631j) and *Cīvakacintāmaṇi* (631k).<sup>104</sup>

This manuscript represents an anthology of a good deal of the grammatical literature in Tamil with 11 grammatical works. In addition, it also contains a copy of the *Cīvakacintāmaṇi*, which however seems to be contained in a different codicological unit. If confirmed, this feature would imply that SSMLT631 is a composite manuscript and not a multiple-text one.

- MS no. 40 of the UVSL: *Taṅcai-vāṇaṅ-kōvai* (40), *Tēvāram-akattiyar-tirattu* (40b), *Varaiyaruttappāṭṭiyal* (40c), *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram* (40d), *Veṅpāppāṭṭiyal* (40e), *Akāratinikaṇṭu* (40f), *Irattinaṅcurukkam* (40g) and *Nēminātam* (40h).<sup>105</sup>

In this manuscript, two literary works, namely the *Taṅcai-vāṇaṅ-kōvai* and the *Tēvāram-akattiyar-tirattu*, are accompanied by a series of grammars that cover all fields of the sixfold syllabus, with the odd exclusion of *yāppu*.

**101** The numbering of the texts follows the *Index of Tamil Manuscripts* (Padmakumari 2009, entries nos 1632, 2085, 2152, 2289 and 3248).

**102** Information obtained from the *Catalogue of Tamil Manuscripts* (Olaganatha Pillay 1925, entries nos 83–89).

**103** Concerning the unique edition of the *Irāiyanār Poruḷ* (aka *Irāiyanār Akapporuḷ*) found in this manuscript, see Wilden in this volume.

**104** Information obtained from the *Catalogue of Tamil Manuscripts* (Olaganatha Pillay 1925, entries nos 72–82).

**105** Information obtained from *Descriptive Catalogue* 1956, entries nos 3, 40, 80, 140, 181 and 186, 1961, entry no. 924 and 1962, entry no. 1399.

Noteworthy is the presence of the *Irattiṇaccurukkam*, a text possibly by Pukaḷēnti (twelfth–thirteenth century?) or Villiputtūr Vēṅkaṭaiyar (unknown date)<sup>106</sup> that deals with similes. This is one of those few short treatises devoted to *aṇi* that were mentioned above while discussing manuscript TKNP13 and its copy of the *Kēcātipātavupamāṇam*. Furthermore, UVSL40 also contains a lexicon, entitled *Akāratinikaṇṭu*. Lexicons are as essential to the understanding of literature as grammars are, but are seldom included in multiple-text manuscripts, possibly due to their bulkiness.

## 5.4 Alternative projects

A few manuscripts contain selections of texts in which more than two fields are left uncovered and no pattern seems to emerge that conforms to those outlined in the previous sections. Hence, these artefacts were probably produced in order to meet scholarly needs that, for the time being, cannot be fully ascertained. For instance, they may have been simply produced to fill the gaps in the collection of manuscripts of certain libraries.

En passant, it is worth noting that the *Nēminātam* seems to have been chosen in place of the *Naṇṇūl* in three occurrences, namely UVSL40, SSMLT645 and ORI6361, and the *Yāpparuṅkalam* in place of the *Yapparuṅgalakkārikai* in GOML R 1200, SSMLT170 and SSMLT645 (cf. SSMLT636 in Section 5.3).

- MS no. 45 of the UVSL: *Akapporuḷviḷakkam* (45) and *Puṟapporuḷvenṇpāmālai* (45a).<sup>107</sup>

This manuscript has a clear focus on the topic of *poruḷ*.

- MS no. 4/34 of the TKNP: *Akapporuḷviḷakkam* (fols 1r–23r) and *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram* (fols 24r–25v; incomplete).
- MS no. R1200 of the GOML: *Yapparuṅgalakkārikai* with commentary (1200a) and *Nitappāṭṭiyal* (1200b).<sup>108</sup>
- MS no. 170 of the SSMLT: *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram* (170a), *Yāpparuṅkalam* (170b) and *Kucalavar Katai* (170c).<sup>109</sup>
- MS no. 645 of the SSMLT: *Veṇṇpāppāṭṭiyal* with commentary (645a), *Yāpparuṅkalam* (645b) and *Nēminātam* with commentary (645c).<sup>110</sup>

<sup>106</sup> See *Descriptive Catalogue* 1956, 57.

<sup>107</sup> The numbering of the texts follows *Descriptive Catalogue* 1956, entries nos 31 and 155.

<sup>108</sup> Information obtained from *A Triennial Catalogue of Tamil Manuscripts* (Bahadur and Chandrasekharan 1949, 2133–2134).

<sup>109</sup> Information obtained from the *Catalogue of Tamil Manuscripts* (Olaganatha Pillay 1925, entries nos 114–116).

- MS no. 8068 of the ORI: *Yapparuṅgalakkārikai* (8068), a *tuti* ('eulogy') entitled *Pañcātaccappirakaraṇam* (8068a) and *Naṇṇūl Eluttatikāram (kaṇṭikai)* (8068b).<sup>111</sup>
- MS no. 6361 of the ORI: *Nēminātam* with commentary (6361a) and *Veṅṅāppāṭṭiyal* (6361b).<sup>112</sup>

## 6 Multiple-text printed books

At the time when most of the manuscripts discussed in the previous section were produced, print culture was consolidating its presence in the Tamil scholarly world. A few early printed books seem to be the result of an attempt at assembling corpora that represent specific grammatical syllabi.

One such book is the *Ilakkaṇappañcakaṅkaḷil Naṇṇūnmūlamum Akapporuṅmūlamum Puṟapporuṭkilakkiyattōṭu Veṅṅāmālamūlamum* published in 1835 by Tāṇṭavarāya Mutaliyār together with Mānēcar A. Muttuccāmiṭṭai – who, at different times, will both hold the position of head Tamil pundit at College of Fort St. George of Madras/Chennai.<sup>113</sup> The title of this publication interestingly seems to indicate that the editors made a conscious choice in assembling a selection of texts that represented a threefold understanding of *ilakkaṇam*, i.e. the one including *eḷuttu*, *col* and *poruḷ* (*akam* as well as *puṟam*), but aware that this represents a subset of a fivefold grammar, which is explicitly mentioned in the title (*ilakkaṇappañcakaṅkaḷil* 'among the five grammars').

Another book entitled *Naṇṇūl mūlam, Nampī Akapporuḷ mūlam, Puṟapporuḷ Veṅṅā Mālai mūlam, Yāpparuṅkalam mūlam, Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai mūlam, Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram mūlam* and edited by one Naraciṅkapuram Vīrācāmi Mutaliyār in 1864 seems to have contained copies of the six grammars mentioned in the title itself.<sup>114</sup> Here all topics of fivefold *ilakkaṇam* are covered through the texts

<sup>110</sup> Information obtained from the *Catalogue of Tamil Manuscripts* (Olaganatha Pillay 1925, entries nso 99–101).

<sup>111</sup> Information obtained from the *Index of Tamil Manuscripts* (Padmakumari 2009, entries nos 2159, 2323 and 3000).

<sup>112</sup> Information obtained from the *Index of Tamil Manuscripts* (Padmakumari 2009, entries nos 2288 and 3249).

<sup>113</sup> I consulted a copy at the Roja Muthiah Research Library of Chennai, item no. 100503. Another copy is also held at the British Library according to the online catalogue. About the two editors, see, for instance, Zvelebil 1992, 159 n. 36 and Blackburn 2003, 96–102.

<sup>114</sup> I was unable to find a record of any library holding a copy of this book. Thus, I completely rely upon the information provided about it by Vēṅkaṭacāmi 1962, 151.

that we know from Beschi's 1730 list, with the peculiarity that the topic of *yāppu* is treated twice with inclusion not only of the *Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai*, but also of the *Yāpparuṅkalam*.

Interestingly, a major discrepancy between manuscripts and printed books that have been taken here into consideration seems to be the fact that the latter do not include Pāṭṭiyal texts.

## 7 Towards an integrated approach to the study of Tamil grammar

Studying the interplay between syllabi, corpora and manuscripts – through the combination of philological and codicological observations – has the potential to help us reach a better understanding of premodern and early-modern Tamil scholarship. In the previous sections, I have tried to specifically apply this method to the study of *ilakkaṇam*, the traditional field of Tamil grammar.

What has emerged is that knowing the history of *ilakkaṇam* as it is represented in the primary sources allows us to make sense of certain collections of texts found in multiple-text and composite manuscripts and, at the same time, investigating manuscripts allows us to obtain a more precise picture of the history of Tamil grammar. In this respect, one of the most interesting results of the present perusal is that it was possible to trace the marked emergence of a sixfold syllabus during the nineteenth century – the century in which most of the extant manuscripts were produced, thus including those examined in this article. This syllabus and its corpus, which saw the inclusion of Pāṭṭiyal texts, were very rarely referred to in the literature, but are manifest in the selection of texts of several manuscripts.<sup>115</sup>

Notably, the first comprehensive grammatical treatise to include the topics that were found in Pāṭṭiyal texts is the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam*, which places it as a sub-topic of its section on *poruḷ*. However, these topics were not included in the following comprehensive grammars, i.e. the *Toṇṇūlvilakkam* of C. G. Beschi (1730), the *Cuvāminātam* of Cuvāmikavirāyar (nineteenth century) and the *Muttuvīriyam* of Muttuvīra Upāṭṭiyāyar (nineteenth century). We can thus

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115 See Section 5.3.

observe a divergence in the syllabus between these treatises and certain manuscripts that include *Pāṭṭiyal* texts in their selection of texts.<sup>116</sup>

On a more general level, a consideration that emerges from the materials that have been here taken under analysis pertains to the way one may narrate the history of Tamil grammar, in particular the way in which grammatical knowledge was passed down through generations. A possible historiography would see in the field of *ilakkaṇam* a constant tension between the composition of comprehensive treatises that aimed at covering the whole gamut of grammatical topics – whether they were thought to be three, five, or else – and corpora of treatises dealing in-depth with one or maximum two topics at the time. Such a view seems to be supported by certain multiple-text and composite manuscripts, which just contain the ‘monographic’ treatises that we find, for instance, in the list of texts compiled by Beschi in his 1730 *Grammatica*.<sup>117</sup> However, there are also other manuscripts, namely ORI6368 and SSMLT631, that include both the ‘monographic’ treatises and, for instance, copies of the *Tolkāppiyam*, which steadily enjoyed the status of the paragon of Tamil grammars.<sup>118</sup>

This latter configuration clearly points to the direction that already emerged, for instance, from Cāmiṇātaiyar’s autobiography, where a flexible account of the way in which grammatical treatises were studied and taught is depicted.<sup>119</sup> Scholars were freely roaming through all available grammars, according to their level of proficiency and competence in the field of *cen-tamiḷ* (‘Classical Tamil’), thus in fact contributing to the constant reshaping of the boundaries of both syllabi and corpora. At the same time, one should not forget the obvious, i.e. that manuscript hardly existed in isolation, but were parts of larger collections, where, it is not hard to imagine, a manuscript containing the *Naṇṇūl*, the *Akapporuḷviḷakkam*, the *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai* and the *Taṇṭiyalaṅkāram* – or a manuscript containing just a selection of them<sup>120</sup> – lied next to another manuscript containing, for instance, a copy of the *Tolkāppiyam*.

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**116** It is also interesting to observe the great variety in the selection of *Pāṭṭiyals* that are copied in the manuscripts. None in particular seems in fact to have emerged as the most popular or authoritative.

**117** See Section 5.2.

**118** This was not the case, for instance, for the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam*, which was harshly criticised by Civaṇṇa Cuvāmikal in his *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkaccuṟāvaḷi* (‘Cyclone on the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam*’). Is it just a case that so far we could not find any multiple-text or composite manuscripts including a copy of the *Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam*?

**119** See Section 4.

**120** See Section 5.

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## Abbreviations

GOML	Government Oriental Manuscript Library (Chennai).
ORI	Oriental Research Institute and Manuscript Library (Thiruvananthapuram).
SSMLT	Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswathi Mahal Library (Thanjavur).
TKNP	Tavattiru Cāntaliṅka Aṭikaḷār Kalai Ariviyal Tamiḷk Kallūri Nūlakam (Perur).
UVSL	U.V. Swaminatha Iyer Library (Chennai).

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**Fig. 1:** MS no. 127 of the Madurai Tamil Sangam (fol. 67v, lines 4–5) reads: *eḷuttu - col - poruḷ - yāppu - alaṅkāram - {āka} 5 - ilakkaṇamurum.*