A CRITICAL STUDY OF KURUNTOKAI

C. BALASUBRAMANIAN

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Dedicated to :

Dr. M. V. JAYARAMAN, M A , D.Litt.

Founder, Secretary & Correspondent
Venkatesa Education Society
Bangalore
in appreciation and admiration
of his constant encouragement
for the development of
Tamil Arts, Language, Literature and Culture
with whose help this book sees the
light of the day.

INTRODUCTION

Kuṟuntokai is one of the eight anthologies called Eṭṭú-t-tokai which form part of the earliest extant literary works in Tamil, namely Sangam Literature. According to the ancient commentators and some of the modern eminent scholars, Kuṟuntokai has a very important and significant place among these anthologies. Of the four hundred stanzas in this collection, two hundred and thirty six stanzas have been either quoted or referred to or explained in comparison, in the ancient commentaries of the classical works. This book is a critical study of such an important literary work.

The first chapter deals with the classification of Sangam literature comprising of Pattu-p-pāṭṭu and Eṭṭu-t-tokai and a brief account of each of them has been given therein. The age of Kuṟuntokai has been discussed in detail in the second chapter taking into consideration the different opinions of the scholars in the fields of South Indian History and Tamil Literature who have hitherto thrown light on the Sangam age. The next chapter is an estimate of the literary merit of this anthology and its place of importance in Sangam Literature. Different works that have quoted Kuṟuntokoi as well as the various references found in this anthology have been studied and analysed in this chapter. Kuṟuntokai has also been studied as a representative work of the age and the special features of Sangam literature have been set forth in the fourth chapter.

This collection also serves as a source of early South Indian History as there are thirty four stanzas with interesting historical settings. A critical but brief study of them has been made in the fifth chapter. Chapter VI dwells upon the social life of the people of the age as depicted in

this collection. The life of the people in various regions, their amusements, superstitions, methods of worship, marriage customs, etc., have been studied.

It is a characteristic of ancient Tamil Literature to classify poetry into Akam and Puṟam, dealing mostly with love and warfare respectively. The literary traditions regarding this classification as found in Tolkāppiyam have guided my study of this anthology and these traditions have been set forth in chapter VII. In the next chapter, the stanzas in Kuṟuntokai have been studied and analysed with this point of view. This anthology abounds in descriptions of Nature and most of the poets were highly sensitive to the aesthetic appeal of the landscape, the flora and fauna, the sky, the stars, the clouds, the moon, etc., As this book does not permit elaborate study of all the portrayals of Nature in the anthology, an attempt has been made in Chapter IX to bring out the dominant feature of the poetic treatment of Nature.

In chapter X, the aspects of Kuṟuntokai as pure literature are brought out. A study of the various rhetoric aspects of the poems of this work has been made in the next chapter. The poets who composed these stanzas are 205 in number of whom 10 remain unidentified till now. Of the rest, six are distinguished by their descriptive pictures of Nature and five earned their names by the striking phrases that occur in their poems and thirteen are remembered by the apt similes used by them. Such artistic descriptions, striking phrases and apt figures of speech have been brought in for study in chapter XII. The next chapter explains the didactic elements found in Kuṟuntokai testifying to the high moral standards set up by the ancient Tamils in their private and social life. The last chapter deals with the dramatic monologues that are found in Kuṟuntokai.

I am indebted to the Principal and the Board of Management of Pachaiyappa's College for having given me permission and the facilities to do M. Litt. research in the Pachaiyappa's College, Madras.

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I hope that this publication would be received well and widely.

C. Balasubrsmanian

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND DIACRITICAL MARKS

The system here adopted is the same as in Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras.

Tamil alphapets and their English symbols with diacritical marks :-

VOWELS

அ	a	எ	e
ஆ	ā	ஏ	ē
இ	i	ஐ	ai
ஈ	ī	ஒ	o
உ	u	ஓ	ō
ஊ	ū	ஔ	au

CONSONANTS

க்	k	ம்	m
ங்	ṅ	ய்	y
ச்	c	ர்	r
ஞ்	ñ	ல்	
ட்	ṭ	வ்	v
ண்	ṇ	ழ்	ḻ
த்	t	ள்	ḷ
ந்	n	ற்	ṟ
ப்	p	ன்	ṉ

Āytam ஃ ḵ

To avoid clumsiness, the transliterated words are not indicated by marks of quotation except in the cases of some which need distinction. In all other cases, the diacritical marks easily distinguish them as transliterated words.

Some of the words like Sangam, Madurai, Tondi, Siva, Muruga, Kosars, Nandas, Mauryas and Himalayas which have already found place in many works in English have been given in their familiar forms to avoid confusion.

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I. THE CLASSIFICATION OF SANGAM LITERATURE

PATTU-P-PATTU and ETTU-T-TOKAI

The great literature of Tamilnadu of the early period has been called Sangam Literature. The various poets, poetesses and even the kings or chieftains who have enriched the galleries of Tamil literature of that remote past never thought that they would be called Sangam poets. They were writing prompted by a desire to serve the language and enrich the literature of the land. Incidentally some of them were recipients of land or money grants from kings or chieftains who patronised them. The name "sangam" came to be applied to that literature only during later ages by commentators. There was a great body of literature available which was written in various metres and of varying lengths. The age of the epics was yet to be fixed. By Sangam age, we mean the age before the golden days of the epics. All the available poems of the pre-epic age have been compiled together into anthologies. The shorter verses were grouped together into the "tokai" and the longer verses into the "Pāṭṭu". We find that in tokai and Pāṭṭu some poets are the same persons. (Kapilar and Nakkīrar for example). So, all the poems were written during the centuries preceding the epic age and were later collected into two groups, taking length of the poems as a chief-characteristic. Of course, other aspects of the poems like matter and metre were also taken into consideration in grouping them.

In tokai, we have short verses, the length of them being less than 100 lines. In the Pāṭṭu all the poems are long, the shortest of them running to 103 lines (Mullaippāṭṭu). The longest is Maturaikkāñci with 782 lines. That the Pattu-p-pāṭṭu were ten in number is given to us by an old Veṇpā,[1] whose author is yet unknown to us. The tokai as well as the Pāṭṭu have the same aesthetic and literary value and describe in a manner comparable to the generosity of the patrons of literature, be they kings or chieftains or merchant princes about the culture and civilization of the period, the military exploits of the days, as also the life of the common people in relation to their environment.

Iḷampūraṇar, the first commentator of Tolkāppiyam (the oldest treatise on grammar now extant) lays down rules for the minimum and the maximum number of lines for Aciriyappā or Akavaṟpā. He quotes Pattu-p-pāṭṭu as the example for the maximum length admissible according to the rules laid down by Tolkāppiyaṉār.[2]

Naccinārkkiniyar, the distinguished commentator of a later age, in his commentary on Tolkāppiyam mentions about Pattu-p-pāṭṭu. Further the same commentator refers approvingly to the collections of shorter poems as "tokai" in his commentary on Akattiṇai Iyal and Puṟattiṇai Iyal.

At the end of every Idyll, we find the name of the author of the Idyll and the name of the hero or patron or God in whose praise the work had come into existence.

The Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ which gives the list of the Sangam works does not mention or include any of the Idylls of Pattu-p-pāṭṭu though it mentions Eṭṭu-t-tokai. Only because of this we cannot exclude Pattu-p-pāṭṭu from Sangam

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1. முருகு பொருநாறு பாணிரண்டு முல்லை
பெருகு வளமதுரைக் காஞ்சி - மருவினிய
கோல நெடு நல் வாடை கோல் குறிஞ்சிப் பட்டினப்
பாலை கடாத்தொடும் பத்து.

2. "பெரிய பாட்டு பத்துப்பாட்டினுள்ளும், சிலப்பதிகாரத்துள்ளும், மணிமேகலையுள்ளுங் கண்டு கொள்க"-
Tol : 1413 : Iḷam.

poetry. The following may be put forth to prove that Pattu-p-pāṭṭu should be included in Sangam poetry.

First, the distinguished authors of the short poems of Eṭṭu-t-tokai like Kapilar, Nakkīrar and Māṅkuṭi Marutaṉār have sung Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu, Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai, Neṭunalvāṭai and Maturaikkāñci in the pattu-p-pāṭṭu. Secondly, the kings and patrons mentioned in pattu-p-pāṭṭu like Karikālaṉ, Iḷantiraiyaṉ and Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ are also patrons of other Sangam poets who have sung other poems of the Sangam age. Thirdly, the themes treated by the poets in Pattu-p-pāṭṭu are similar to those of the Eṭṭu-t-tokai collections, namely Akam and Puṟam. Further the poems conform to the rules laid down by the ancient grammarian Tolkāppiyaṉār in subject-matter, metre and length of the poems. Moreover, they elaborately deal with the description of nature and the five tiṇais, the special distinctive features of the Sangam age. Lastly, the high literary merit, the classical style, the metre and the tone of the age that permeate these works justifies the inclusion of pattu-p-pāṭṭu in Sangam literature.

Under pattu-p-pāṭṭu, Mullaippāṭṭu, Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu and Paṭṭiṉap-pālai come under the category of Akam while the remaining seven works deal mainly with Puṟam themes. Some critics consider Neṭunalvāṭai as not belonging to Akam group[1] although it elaborately deals with the love-aspect since the spear of pāṇṭiyaṉ Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ is mentioned with his appropriate garland.[2]

Five out of ten Idylls in Pattu-p-pāṭṭu bear the name of 'āṟṟuppaṭai'. Āṟṟuppaṭai is "a form of panegyric poem generally in akaval metre in which one who has been rewarded with gifts directs another to the presence of the chief from whom the latter may also receive similar reward".[3]

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1. 'பாண்டியனது அடையாளப்பூ கூறினமையின் அகம் ஆகாததாயிற்று' – Pattu : Nac.
2. வேம்பு தலையாழ்த்த நோன்காழ் எஃகம். – Neṭu : 176.
3. Tamil Lexicon, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 257.

Tolkāppiyaṉār in a 'cūttiram' in Puṟattiṇai Iyal which begins with the word 'Tāviṉallicai' (தாவினல்லிசை) states and explains this feature.[1] These poems provide an opportunity to exhibit the various talents of the poets. These āṟṟuppaṭais come under the category of Pāṭāṉ, the praise of a patron under the Puṟam aspect.

Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai

This Idyll by Nakkīrar in akaval metre contains 317 lines. The different manifestations of God Muruga, the war-god of the Tamils and His abodes in sacred places are elaborately dealt with in this work. It has unique place in the 'āṟṟuppaṭais' of Pattu-p-pāṭṭu. One great quality about this āṟṟuppatai is that it is not named after any particular kind of artist as we find in other āṟṟuppaṭais of pattu-p-pāṭṭu. The reason attributed for this is the desire of attaining eternal bliss of God Muruga. Hence it is that this work is named after the patron i.e., God Muruga. Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, on the west side of Madura, Tirucciralaivāy, a sea-shore shrine, now called Tiruchendur. Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi, now called Paḻaṉi, Tiruvēraka m, Kuṉṟutōṟāṭal or all the hills where Muruga takes His abode joyfully and Paḻamutircōlai are the six places where Lord Muruga resides, are beautifully described in this poem.

The description of nature, especially of the waterfalls towards the end of the poem is a veritable feast to the ears and the mind's eye of the reader.

Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai has been classified as an invocatory poem in praise of God in pattu-p-pāṭṭu, as there is no other invocatory poem.

Porunarāṟṟuppaṭai

The poetess of the Sangam age, Muṭattāmakkaṇṇiyār composed this poem in honour of Karikālān. It comprises 248

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1. கூத்தரும் பாணரும் பொருநரும் விறலியும்
ஆற்றிடைக் காட்சி யுறழத் தோன்றிப்
பெற்ற பெருவளம் பெறாஅர்க் கறிவுறீஇச்
சென்று பயனெதிரச் சொன்ன பக்கமும் –Tol : 1037.

lines in Akavaṟpā here and there mixed up with Vañcippā. The poem opens with a description of the desolate poverty of a wandering minstrel and his wife. We get an accurate description of the physical features of her beautiful frame. The poetess dwells at length in describing the glories of the king, his military prowess, his peaceful rule noted for justice, and the fertility of the lands, the happy and peaceful life of the people. The four kinds of regions kuṟiñci, mullai, marutam and neytal are beautifully described in their appropriate setting. The detailed description of *yāḻ* which was used in those days is found in this poem. The highway robbers are said to renounce their robbery for a while when they hear the music of the *yāḻ*. The poem is of inestimable value to construct the political history of ancient Tamilnad.

Ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai

Iṭaikkaḷināṭṭu-nallūr-Nattattaṉār is the author of this poem in akaval metre of 269 lines. This poem is in praise of the chieftain Nalliyakkōṭaṉ of Oymānāṭu, belonging to Oviyarkuṭi. The Oymānāṭu is a place, now identified with the suburbs of Tindivanam.

The Pāṇaṉ who is mentioned in this poem is ciṟupāṇaṉ and hence this poem is named after him. The difference in epithets 'ciṟu and peru' is the difference between different kinds of *yāḻ*. Ciṟu-pāṇāṟṟuppaṭai refers to the smaller *yāḻ*.[1]

The commentator of Takkayākapparani commends this poem as 'ciṟappuṭaittāṉa ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai'.

The poem opens with a melancholy note on the poverty of the once prosperous cities like Vañci, Maturai and Uṟantai. The seven liberal patrons namely Pēkaṉ, Pāri, Kāri, Āy, Atikaṉ Naḷḷi and Ori are mentioned in this poem. Naḷḷiyakkōṭan, the hero of this poem is described as excelling them all because of his munificence and liberality. The ciṟupāṇaṉ pays glowing tributes to his valour, unbounded generosity and affectionate attitude towards the minstrels.

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1. இன்குரற் சீறியாழ் இடவயிற் றழீஇ - ciṟupāṇ : 35.

Eyiṟpaṭṭiṉam which is referred to in the poem has been identified with the present Marakkāṇam. Vēlūr and Āmūr the villages now situated in South Arcot District are also mentioned in this work.

The description of Viṟali (விறலி) from head to foot is the beginning of the poem. Ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai gives a detailed picture of the heart rending sufferings caused by poverty.

Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai

Since a Pāṇaṉ who is having a larger *yāḻ* (பேரியாழ்) in his hand has been described in this poem, it is called Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai.[1] The length of the poem is 500 lines, composed in Aciriyappā metre by Kaṭiyalūr Uruttiraṅkaṇṇaṉār. He is also the author of Paṭṭiṉappālai. The poem is composed in praise of the noble king Toṇṭaimāṉ Iḷantiraiyaṉ whose principality was situated near Kāñcipuram. Iḷantiraiyaṉ was himself a poet and it is noted with zest that he is the author of some poems in Naṟṟiṇai[2] and Puṟanāṉūṟu.[3]

The poet describes the five kinds of regions through which the Perumpāṇaṉ has to pass through to reach the palace of Iḷantiraiyaṉ. Nīrppāyal, the sea-port town of the Kingdom and Tiruvēkkai, a suburb of the capital Kāñci are also mentioned by the poet. The poet, through the mouth of the Pāṇaṉ describes the kind of food of the various - classes of the people. The portrayal of the life of the people living in various kinds of regions is clear and vivid. The landscape painting by the poet is remarkable.

Pāṇāṟu is another name given to this poem.

Mullaippāṭṭu

This poem of 103 lines in akaval metre is attributed to Nappūtaṉār of Kavirippūmpaṭṭiṉam, son of a merchant-prince. We find the akam and puṟam aspects of life being

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1. இடனுடைப் பேரியாழ் முறையுழிக் கழிப்பி - - Perumpāṇ : 462.
2. Naṟ : 94, 99, 106. 3. Puṟa : 185.

intermingled in this poem with great skill. We read about omens, the water-clock and Yavanas. There is also the term 'Milechas' which was used by Sangam poets to denote all the foreigners. The three distinguished characteristic features of the Akam poetry, i.e., the primary object (முதற் பொருள்), the object of environment (கருப்பொருள்) and the appropriate object (உரிப்பொருள்) are clearly brought out in this poem. Beautiful similes are employed in the description of pastoral regions.

The commentator on Takkayākapparaṇi calls this poem as 'mullai'.

Maturaikkāñci

It is said that this long poem of 782 lines deals with Kāñci or transitory aspect of life. The poet Māṅkuṭi Marutaṉār addresses king Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ in this poem. This poem is mostly in vañci metre with an admixture of āciriyam here and there. Māṅkuṭi Marutaṉār is the chief among the court poets of Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ.[1] He has also composed three poems in Kuṟuntokai.[2] The historical importance of this poem is that it gives details about Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ's victory at Talaiyālaṅkāṉam where he defeated the Cērā and Cōḻa monarchs and at Cāliyūr, the great sea-port town of those days.

The poem describes the king's generosity. As the name of the poem implies, it describes the city of Madura with its fortified gates, the soaring mansions, the broad streets, the noisy market places and the cheerful inhabitants.

Neṭunalvāṭai

Nakkīrar has given us the poem in 188 lines in akaval metre. Neṭunalvāṭai means 'the long, good north wind'. The poem describes the pining of the Pāṇṭiyā queen for the king who was engaged in the battlefield. She is consoled

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1. Puṟa : 72.
2. Kuṟu : 164, 173, 302.

by her mate (lady-companion) who says that her lord will return with victory. The king, on the other hand is in his war camp inspecting the wounded men and animals and consoling them. Thus we find that both the Akam and Puṟam aspects have been interspersed beautifully in this poem.

Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu

This poem, comprises 261 lines by the great Kapilar, is in akaval metre. It elaborately deals with Kuṟiñcit-tiṇai which relates to love at first sight and the various stages leading to the union of lovers. This poem is otherwise called 'Peruṅkuṟiñci' or the lengthy love song of the hill in order to distinguish it from the other short lyrics of Sangam literature. It is a beautiful story-poem, giving a description of as many as ninety nine varieties of flowers.

Paṭṭiṉappālai

The poet Kaṭiyalūr Uruttiraṅkaṇṇaṉār praises the classical Cōḷā monarch Karikālāṉ in this poem of 301 lines mostly in Vañci metre.

The poet says that the hero would prefer to stay by the side of his young and lovely partner in life who may pine away in his absence if he were to go to the great and glorious city of Karikālāṉ, i.e., Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam. A few lines[1] refer to the Akam aspect while the rest of the poem deals with the Puṟam aspect.

It is stated in Kaliṅkattupparaṇi that the poet got a reward of sixteen lakhs of gold coin for the composition of this poem.[2]

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1. முட்டாச் சிறப்பின் பட்டினம் பெறினும்
வாரிருங் கூந்தல் வயங்கிழை யொழிய
வாரேன் வாழிய நெஞ்சே— Paṭṭiṉap : 218-220.

2. தத்தி நீர்வரால் குருமி வென்றதுந்
தழுவு செந்தமிழ்ப் பரிசில் வாணர்பொன்
பத்தொ டாறுநூ றாயி ரம்பெறப்
பண்டு பட்டினப் பாலை கொண்டதும்—
—K. Paraṇi : Rācapārampariyam, 21.

Malaipaṭukaṭām

Malaipaṭukaṭām, otherwise known as Kuttarāṟṟuppaṭai of 583 lines was by Iraṇiya-muṭṭattup Peruṅkuṉṟūr Peruṅkaucikaṉār. The poet praises the chieftain, Naṉṉaṉ Cēy Naṉṉan. The meaning of the title of the poem is "the sound oozing from the hill". Incidentally we get a good description of the hilly kingdom of Naṉṉaṉ, its trees, flowers and fruits, the multicoloured birds and animals. Of course, Naṉṉaṉ comes in for a good content of priase for his virtues, his wealth, administrative efficiency, hospitality, patronage of arts and letters. The poem also gives us an idea of the difficulties of travel and of the social life of the people. The capital city of Naṉṉaṉ has been identified with caṅkam in the North Arcot District.

Eṭṭu-t-tokai or the eight anthologies

An old Veṇpā[1] gives all the names of the eight anthologies (eṭṭu-t-tokai) and an ancient commentary on Naṉṉūl of the 14th century mentions it. Of these eight anthologies Naṟṟiṇai, Kuṟuntokai, Aiṅkuṟunūṟu, Kalittokai and Akanāṉūṟu are akam poetry and Patiṟṟuppattu and Puṟanāṉūṟu are puṟam poetry. The Paripāṭal is a mixture of both these aspects since some of the poems are in praise of God while others treat about the subjective element, i.e., love. The poems dealing with love have been arranged in three anthologies. The length of the poems have been taken as the principle for the compilation. Thus the shortest ones (ranging from four to eight lines) have been brought together as Kuṟuntokai. The medium one (ranging from nine to twelve lines) have been put together as Naṟṟiṇai. The slightly longer poems (ranging from thirteen to thirtyone lines) have been compiled as Akanāṉūṟu. Each of these three anthologies are four hundred in number. We do not yet know how the compilers got the exact number four hundred.

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1. நற்றிணை நல்ல குறுந்தொகை ஐங்குறுநூறு
ஒத்த பதிற்றுப்பத்து ஓங்குபரிபாடல்-கற்றறிந்தார்
ஏத்தும் கலியோ டகம்புற மென்று
இத்திறத்த எட்டுத் தொகை.

Naṟṟiṇai

This poem is otherwise called 'Naṟṟiṇai Nāṉūṟu' may perhaps be the older name as the commentator on Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ calls this work by that name.[1] The work contains 401 poems in akaval metre by 192 poets. The authorship of 56 poems is yet unknown. The poems which deal with the five tiṇais are 130, 28, 32, 193, 107 respectively. Paṉṉāṭu tanta Pāṇṭiyaṉ Māṟaṉ Vaḻuti ordered its compilation. The king himself is the author of two poems in Naṟṟiṇai[2] and one in Kuṟuntokai.[3] 234th stanza of this collection has been lost for ever due to the ravages of time.

An invocatory song has been composed by Pāratam pāṭiya Peruntēvaṉār and it is in praise of 'Māyōṉ' or 'Tirumāl'.

The poems are gems in themselves and are noted for their brevity combined with beauty of expression. Some of the poets have been named after the beautiful expressions or imagery that they used. Tēypurippaḻaṅkayiṟṟiṉār' is so called after the beautiful simile 'Tēypurippaḻaṅkayiṟu-pōla' found in a poem[4] in Naṟṟiṇai.

Kuṟuntokai

This collection by Pūrikkō comprises poems by 205 poets in akaval metre. We do not know the names of ten of the poets. Peruntēvaṉār's invocatory poem on Lord Muruga prefaces the collection. All the 401 poems deal with the five aspects of love.

Crisp similes and beautiful metaphors and fascinating epigrams hold the reader of these poems in great mental exultation. Eighteen poets have been named after the striking figure of speech or phrase used by them. The Kuṟuntokai has been profusely quoted by later-day writers (Only 168 poems have escaped from them). It is believed that Pērāciriyar and Naccinārkkiniyar have written commentaries on these poems but they have been lost to posterity.

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1. Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ : p. 6.
2. Naṟ : 97, 301.
3. Naṟ ; 284.
4. Kuṟu : 270.

Aiṅkuṟunūṟu

This collection by Kūṭalūr Kiḻār contains 500 poems all in akaval metre which range from 3 lines to 6 lines. 100 poems are devoted for each of the five tiṇais and this collection is hence called Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. The authors of marutam, neytal, kuṟiñci, pālai and mullai hundreds are Orampōkiyār, Ammūvaṉār, Kapilar, Otalāntaiyār and Pēyaṉār respectively. The prayer song on God Siva in this collection is from the pen of Pāratam Pāṭiya Peruntēvaṉār. Yāṉaikkaṭcēy Māntarañcēral Irumpoṟai patronised this collection. Two poems[1] have been lost to us while two poems[2] are incomplete. The clue given under the poems perhaps belongs to an earlier age than the compilation itself. There is available an old but incomplete commentary on this work upto the first 469 poems only.

We find in this work splendid images, implied metaphors and compressed similes which naturally have deep inner-meaning.

Patiṟṟuppattu

Ten poets have composed these poems, each composing ten songs about the Cērā kings. Since the total is 100 songs, the collection goes by the name Patiṟṟuppattu or 'ten tens'. The first and the last ten have been lost to us. All these poems come under the category of Puṟattiṇai. The anthology is of great value to the student of history of Tamilnad since it contains tangible information about the exploits and achievements of the Cērā monarchs of the Sangam age.

All the tens except the fourth one which is in antāti metre are composed in akaval metre. The prayer song of this collection perhaps has gone the way of the first and the last ten. The note worthy peculiarity of these poems is that each poem is named after an apt and appropriate meaningful phrase in each poem. There is an old commentary available for this work.

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1. Aiṅ : 129, 130. 2. Ibid ; 416, 490.

The following tabular column indicates the names of the poets who composed the eight tens (Nos. 2 to 9) that are extant now along with the Cērā monarchs whose exploits have been eulogized.

S. No.	Name of the King		Name of the poet
2nd Ten	Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ	—	Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār.
3rd Ten	Imayavarampaṉ's brother Palyāṉai Celkeḻu Kuṭṭuvaṉ	—	Pālaikkautamaṉār.
4th Ten	Kaḷaṅkāykkaṇṇi Nārmuṭic Cēral	—	Kāppiyāṟṟuk-kāppiyaṉār.
5th Ten	Kaṭalpiṟakkōṭṭiya Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ	—	Paraṇar.
6th Ten	Āṭukōṭpāṭṭuc Cēralātaṉ	—	Kākkaippāṭiṉiyār-Nacceḷḷaiyar.
7th Ten	Celvakkaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ	—	Kapilar.
8th Ten	Takaṭūr eṟinta Peruñcēral Irumpoṟai	—	Aricilkiḻār.
9th Ten	Kuṭakkō Ilañcēral Irumpoṟai	—	Peruṅkuṉṟūr Kiḻār.

Paripāṭal

The work is named after the metre in which it is composed. Paripāṭal means a song mediates or intercedes. The objects of life, virtue, wea th, love and bliss, particularly love has been portrayed in these poems. This collection contained seventy songs according to an old verse. It contained according to this verse, 8 stanzas on Tirumāl, 31 on Muruga, one on Kāṭu-Kiḻāḷ or Kāḷi, 26 on the river Vaikai and four about the city of Maturai. Of these, 22 poems only have survived. Six poems are in praise of Tirumāl'[1] eight poems of Muruga[2] and the remaining eight poems relate to

1. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 15.
2. Nos. 5, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21.

the river Vaikai.[1] Two of the songs now extant are culled from commentaries, one relating to Tirumāl and the other to river Vaikai.

The songs go by another name 'Paripāṭṭu'. The songs range from 25 to 40 lines in length. The existing songs on the river Vaikai show that the predominant theme in them is love, while the river and its floods are made to serve as the background. The poets who composed these poems, the musicians who put tunes for these songs, the particular melody (paṇ) in which each song has been composed, on whom it is sung are all described in detail. There is an old and beautiful commentary available now on this work by the well-known commentator Parimēlaḻakar.

Kalittokai

It consists of 150 stanzas inclusive of the invocatory song by Peruntēvaṉār. The metre employed in these stanzas is known as 'kali' one of the important four metres existing in Tamil. This work was composed by different authors.

Pālaipāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō composed 35 stanzas on Pālai-t-tiṇai, Kapilar composed 29 stanzas on Kuṟiñci-t-tiṇai, Marutam Iḷanākaṉār composed 35 stanzas on Marutam-tiṇai, Cōḻaṉ Nalluruttiraṉ composed 17 stanzas on mullai-t-tiṇai and Nallantuvaṉār composed 33 stanzas on neytal–tiṇai.

The stanzas are noted for their melodious description of Nature, apt and appropriate similes and metaphors along with the seven phases of love.

Nallantuvaṉār undertook the collection of this work according to Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar's commentary. But Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai opines that Nallantuvaṉār might have been the author of the entire work.[2]

Akanāṉūṟu

The work is divided into three sections-Kaḷiṟṟiyāṉainirai, Maṇimiṭaipavaḷam and Nittilakkōvai. Kaḷiṟṟiyāṉainirai which

1. Nos. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 16, 20, 22.
2. History of Tamil Language and Literature, p. 27.

means an array of male elephants, comprises the first 120 poems. The second section Maṇimiṭaipavaḷam which means a string of corals interspersed with gems, consists of 180 poems (121 to 300) while the remaining 100 poems are called Nittilakkōvai which means a necklace of pearls. Since the poems compared to the other poems relating to love, are longer and they are rightly called as 'Neṭuntokai' or 'the longer anthology'. It goes by other names also, viz., Neṭuntokai Nāṉūṟu, Akam and-Akappāṭṭu.

This work by 145 poets has been compiled by Uruttiracanmaṉ, son of Uppūrikkuṭikkiḻār of Madura, under the patronage of the Pāṇṭiyaṉ King Ukkirapperuvaḻuti. The names of the authors of three of the poems are not known.[1]

There is available a very good commentary upto the first 90 poems of this collection. Although this is a work mainly on the theme of love, historical allusions are available and as such very useful to the student of history; Further this work is noted for its vivid description of Nature, the poignant pictures of love-themes and for the apt similes, metaphors laden with hidden meaning.

The poems are arranged in accordance with a definite scheme which is followed throughout this work. All the stanzas bearing odd numbers from 1 to 399 deal with Pālai, 4 to 394 progressing in an arithmetical progression by 10 refer to mullai, 6 to 396 progressing likewise attributed to marutam, 2 to 298 rising alternately by 4 to 6, i.e., 2,8,12,18 etc., treat the theme on Kuṟiñci and the multiples of 10 deal with neytal.

Puṟanāṉūṟu

It is a most valuable work in constructing the political, social, cultural and economic history of the Sangam age. As the title of the work indicates, it is all objective poetry. All the 400 poems are all in akaval metre. An invocatory song

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1. Aka : 114, 117, 165.

in praise of God Siva is from the pen of Pāratam Pāṭiya Peruntēvaṉār. Two poems (267 and 268) are totally missing now. There is an old commentary available upto the poem 266. Thereafter the text itself is in some places corrupt and incomplete. The colophons are missing to some poems. The poets mentioned in this work are 157 in number and the number of kings and chieftains who are referred to in it are round about 128.

The military exploits of the kings and chieftains, their benign and just rule, their kindness towards the artists of the day, the gifts they lavished, the great self-respect and nobility of mind and character of the poets, the praiseworthy and the important role that they played in the royal courts, the customs and manners of the life of the people are all vividly, beautifully, artistically and faithfully portrayed in Puṟanāṉūṟu and hence it is of great help in the field of historical research.

Dr. Pope, finding the greatness of the work has translated some of the poems into English.

It is appropriate in this place to quote a few lines of a Professor of Tamil.

"In general, the method of the Sangam poets, especially in love poetry, is photographic. They trust to the effectiveness of visual impression. They do not generally deal with violent passions... Their is a chaste, subdued, classical way of recording memorable events in human life. They are fastidious in their selection of vignettes from life, against a background of Nature, for poetic exposition. Their efficient system of convention, while it restraints their imagination, provides an admirable model on which to give it shape. The poem may be from the long Pattu-p-pāṭṭu, or from the very concise Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. But the method remains essentially the same."[1]

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1. Jesudasan, C. History of Tamil Literature pp. 35-36.

II. THE AGE OF KURUNTOKAI

It is generally accepted that the term 'Sangam Literature includes 'Tokai' and 'Pāṭṭu'. 'Tokai' means a collection of shorter poems while 'Pāṭṭu' refers to 'the longer poems' called the 'Ten Idylls'. As Kuṟuntokai is one among the eight anthologies, the age of Kuṟuntokai must be obviously the age of Sangam Literarure, since most of the poets of the Kuṟuntokai collection invariably are the authors of many of the poems in the other anthologies also.

The date of the Sangam cannot be easily determined since scholars of repute differ about it. The tradition about the Sangam occurs fully in the commentary on Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ and it is the earliest source of information. The phrase 'they say' occurring in very many places in this commentary clearly shows that this account need not be taken to imply a continuous and correct tradition. If we are to take this information as historically true and give credence to the account contained in it, then the Sangam must be taken back to 9000 B.C.

First of all, there are severe criticisms of this tradition. Prof. P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar points out "that the length of the period of each Sangam is a multiple of 37, and the total duration is 37 (120+100+50). This shows how artificial the figures are".[1] Obviously this calculation is only the result of poetic imagination.

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1. History of the Tamils, p. 232.

Mr. K.N. Sivaraja Pillai doubts the very existence of the Sangam. He sums up the grounds to establish his doubt as follows : "(1) The tradition regarding the Sangam is not the popular one. (2) The so-called Sangam works do not contain any internal evidence as to the name Sangam. (3) The political and social conditions of the period reflected in Sangam Literature were not at all favourable for the existence and maintainance of any such Sangam. (4) The facts and figures are artificial..... and 'faked' throughout. (5) There are mythical characters and members drawn from Aryan community which itself a proof of its later origin. (6) The period of the Sangam, 9990 years distributed among 197 Pandya kings certainly is an impossible figure. (7) There is no authentic source of information regarding the first two Sangams. (8) The late origin of the name 'Madura' instead of 'Kutal', purely of Tamilian origin. (9) The absence of the works of the first two academies. (10) The whole scheme is against the course of natural events and hence is unscientific in its character".[1]

Further, the word 'Sangam' denotes in some places the council of Buddhist priests who had renounced the world. It is also said by historians that a Jaina Sangha was established in the Tamil country at Maturai for the first time in 470 A.D. Further it is said that Vajranandi, the disciple of Sri Pujyapada founded the above Sangha.[2]

First of all, we come across the word 'Sangam' in one of the hymns of Tēvāram by Tirunāvukkaracar, otherwise known as Saint Appar.[3]

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1. The chronoloy of the early Tamils, pp. 24-46.
2. History of the Tamils, p. 247.
3. நன்பாட்டுப் புலவனாய்ச் சங்கமேறி
நற்கலைகக்கிழி தருமிக் கருளினோன் காண்
(திருப்புத்தூர்த் திருத்தாண்டகம், 2;1,2)

After his time, the word 'Sangam' gains currency and occurs frequently in the later works, such as Nālāyirap-prapantam,[1] Kamparāmāyaṇam[2] and others.[3] Saint Gñāṉacampantar used the word 'tokai' in his poems to denote the Sangam poems.[4]

Although we have no direct evidence to prove that there existed any Sangam in those days, we can safely infer from the fragments of the poems, the message contained in them regarding the existence of a Sangam if not by particularly using the word 'Sangam'. There must have been some literary censors who 'took great care to separate the wheat from the tares among poetical compositions and preserved the dignity of literature'.[5]

While Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar refutes vehemently the legend of three Sangams,[6] Prof. K A. Nilankanta Sastri accepts 'that a college (Sangam) of Tamil poets flourished for a time under royal patronage in Madura may well be a fact';[7] but he rejects the information given in the Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ as purely fictitious and assigns the first three or four centuries after christ as the period of Tamil Saṉgams.[8] Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai attributes 'the period

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1. (i) 'சங்கமுகத் தமிழ்மாலை பத்து' - Periya Tirumoḻi : iii, 4, 10,
   (ii) 'சங்கமலி தமிழ்மாலை பத்து' - Ibid : iii, 9, 10.
   (iii) கோதை சொன்ன சங்கத் தமிழ்மாலை முப்பது - Tiruppāvai : 30 : 1, 5
2. தென்தமிழ் நாட்டகன் பொதியில் திருமுனிவன் தமிழ்ச் சங்கம் - Kampa : Nāṭaviṭṭapaṭalam, 8.
3. சங்கம் வளர்ந்திட நின்ற பெலன் கொடி - Mīṉāṭciyammai piḷḷai t-tamiḻ, 31.
4. மதுரைத் தொகை யாக்கினாலும் - Tēvāram : 3382.
5. Purnalingam Pillai, M.S. Tamil Literature, p.18.
6. Some contributions of South India to Indian Culture, p. 11.
7. History of South India, p. 111.
8. Ibid, p. 110.

between the second century B. C. to the end of the second or third century A. D.' as the age of the Sangam works.[1]

There are many literary evidences[2] that may be cited, to establish that there existed a Sangam in the Tamil country, although nobody is quite sure how it was called in those days.

While the earlier inscriptions of eighth century A.D., the Veḷvikkuṭi grant and cīvaramaṅkalam plates do not refer to any Sangam, the smaller cinnamanūr plates of tenth century A.D. mention the Sangam or academy at Maturai as having been founded by one of the ancestors of the Pāṇṭiyā line who came to occupy the throne after Neṭuñceḻiyan the victor of Talaiyālaṅkāṉam.[3]

Prof. Sundaram Pillai also is in favour of the theory that there existed a Sangam or an academy. "It is of course open to doubt" wrote Professor Sundaram Pillai, "whether there existed a regularly constituted body of pundits and poets, which may be called a college in our modern sense of the word; but that a number of - brilliant men of genius rose and flourished soon after the memorable victory of Talaiyalankanam, and at intervals from one another so short that in the perspective of posterity they appear to have formed but one grand galaxy - one single group or college, it would be the height of scepticism to question."[4]

Most of the Sangam poets seem to have belonged to Maturai or its neighbourhood since before their names, the epithet 'Maturai' is used and they were under the royal

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1. The Tamil Plutarch, p. 6.
2. (i) Puṟa : 58 : 12-13
   (ii) Ibid : 72 : 13-16
   (iii) Kali : 35
   (iv) Ibid : 65
   (v) Maturaik : 761-63
3. 'மஹாபாரதந் தமிழ்ப்படுத்தும் மதுரைபுரிச் சங்கம் வைத்தும்'.
4. Purnalingam Pillai, M.S., Tamil Literature, pp. 14-15.

patronage of the Pāṇṭiyā kings.[1] Poets are compared to birds which seek fruits ripened in the treas themselves.[2] The poets usually assembled at the courts of kings or chieftains who were ready to patronise them. Sangam poetry abounds in the names of a very large number of poets and the existence of such large numbers is a proof of the existence of a Sangam at Maturai under royal patronage.

The post-Sangam works also associate Tamil with Maturai in several instances.[3]

It is quite probable that some portions of the literature of the Sangam age might have been lost in sea-erosion.

Another school of thought regarding the date of the Sangam Age may now be referred to. Dr. Caldwell suggests that this Sangam period is to be placed somewhere between the ninth or tenth century and thirteenth centry A.D.[4] During the days of Dr. Caldwell tools for investigating details of dates of poets etc., were very meagre and hence his opinion has now to be revised in the light of new facts that have come up. In the eighteenth century, most of the Sangam works were not in print and hence not available to all scholars but they were preserved in the form of manuscripts. Tolkāppiyam, the first grammar that is extant

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1. A few of the examples :
   மதுரை அளக்கர் ஞாழார் மகனார் மள்ளனார்
   மதுரை அறுவை வாணிகன் இளவேட்டனார்
   மதுரை ஆசிரியர் நல்லந்துவனார்
   மதுரை ஆசிரியர் கோடங்கொற்றனார்
   மதுரை இளங்கண்ணிக் கௌசிகனார்
   மதுரைக் கண்டடையத்தூர் மகன் வெண்ணாகன்
   மதுரைக் கண்டரத்தனார்
   மதுரைக் கணக்காயனார் மகனார் நக்கீரனார்
   மதுரைக் கூலவாணிகன் சீத்தலைச் சாத்தனார்
2. 'பழுமரம் உள்ளிய பறவையின்' - Porun : 64.
3. (i) 'தென்தமிழ் நாட்டுத் தீதுதீர் மதுரை' - Cilap : 10, 58.
   (ii) 'தென்தமிழ் மதுரைச் செழுங்கலைப் பாவாய்' - Mani : 25, 139.
4. Encyclopaedia Brittannica.

in Tamil was not available to Dr. Caldwell to guide him in his research. In spite of erudition he could not fix the date of the Sangam correctly due to paucity of data. Professor Sundaram Pillai firmly established the date of the Saiva hymnists, Gñāṉacampantar and Tirunāvukkaracar as the contemporaries of the great Pallava Narasimhavarman I, the destroyer of Vātāpi, after conquerring the Chalukya monarch Puliḳesin II[2] and as Tirunāvukkaracar refers to the Sangam in his poem, the theory of Dr. Caldwell as to the date of the Sangam collapses.

There is another theory which was put forward by the late Mr. L D Swamikannu Pillai based on astronomical data. He says that the age of Sangam must be taken as seventh or eighth century A.D. He gathered together all the astronomical data relating to the time when Kōvalaṉ left Kaviripp̄umpaṭṭiṉam along with his wife Kaṇṇaki for Maturai and to the time when the city was consumed by fire and at last, he arrived at the conclusion that 756 A D. was the one year which would satisfy all the above mentioned data. But a careful study of the political, religious, social and literary conditions of the age, i.e., seventh or eighth centuries proves the untenable nature of the contention of Mr. L.D. Swamikannu Pillai. Simhavishnu, the founder of the Imperial line of Pallavas is assigned to 570-600 A.D. by historians. Simhavishnu's son, Mahendravarman I, was a Jain at first but was subsequently converted to Saivism by the Tamil Saint Tirunāvukkaracar. This is corroborated by an inscription of Kuṭimiyāmalai. Further it is said that Kūṉ-Pāṇṭiyā alias Niṉracīr Neṭumāṟaṉ was also converted to Saivism from Jainism at the same period by Gñāṉacampantar. It is also interesting to see the part played by Maṅkayarkkaraci, the queen of the Pāṇṭiyā king and Kulacciṟaiyār, the wise minister of the same king. The Vēḷvikkuṭi plates clearly reveal that the Pāṇṭiyaṉ Mutukuṭumi of the Sangam epoch as

2. The Tamilian antiquary, 'Some mile-stones in Tamil literature.'

a remote ancestor of Niṉṟacīr Neṭumāṟaṉ who is mentioned in the grant as 'Māṟavarmaṉ, the victor of Nelvēli'. He won the battle over Kaṭuṅkōṉ, who is said to be the last monarch of the Kalabras. Thus it is said that Niṉṟacīr Neṭumāṟaṉ established a Pāṇṭiyaṉ empire defeating the enemies, the Kalabras who appear to have ruled over large portions of Tamil country during the period 250-400 A.D.

Tēvāram hymns refer to the Cōḻā king Ceṅkaṇāṉ as devout and the Tiruvālaṅkāṭu plates of Rajendra Cōḻa I, state that Karikāla Cōḻā 'of extensive glory' was an ancestor of the 'emperor' kōc-ceṅkaṇāṉ.

An important and noteworthy point to remember is that in no work of the Sangam period, the Pallavas of Kāñci are mentioned. Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai refers to Toṇṭaimāṉ Iḷantiraiyaṉ of Kāñci but he has no connection at all with the Imperial Pallavas who held sway over the whole of Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam from the sixth to the tenth century.

Further, religious intolerance appears to have been the order of the day during this period. The Jains engaged in religious quarrels with the Saivites and Vice Versa. On the contrary, the Sangam works reveal a perfect toleration of all religions. Sangam poets belong to various religions. For example, Iḷampōtiyār is a Buddhist name while Ulōccaṉār and Tērataraṉ are believed to be the names of Jains. We see the vigourous growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism under the inspired guidance of Nāyaṉmārs and Āḻwārs who showed no tolerance to Buddhism and Jainism. But in Sangam literature, there was religious toleration and peace. Secondly, while the Sangam works speak frequently the glory of the three crowned monarchs and a number of minor chieftains, the Pallavas in tha north and Pāṇṭiyās in the far south held sway during this period.

In the Paripāṭal, Nallantuvaṉār praises the glory of the Vaikai river after the commencement of the rainy season. The position of planets given by Nallantuvaṉār is taken by

Mr. L.D. Swamikannu Pillai to indicate a lunar eclipse; That must have occurred either in A.D. 17 or in A.D. 634. On the basis of the inference, he comes to the conclusion that the Sangam must have existed in the seventh or eighth-centuries A.D.

But against this view, Mr. Ponnuswami Pillai remarks that "it is risky to build up a theory on the position of the planets-described by a poet". He adds that the position might have been invented by the poet to give the planets suitable positions so that there might be copious rainfall. Further it is stated that the astronomical data given in the commentary of Aṭiyārkkunallār need not be taken at its face value. So we may say that the result arrived at, based on astronomical data need not be taken seriously, and we may pass over the theory of Mr. Swamikannu Pillai about the date of the Sangam.

The fifth century has been suggested as the probable date of the Sangam age by the late Tamil scholar, Mahavidwan M. Raghava Iyengar in his scholarly monograph on Cēraṉ-Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ. This view is based on the interpretation of Samudragupta's pillar inscription. Mantaraja of this inscription has been identified with Māntaram Cēral of the Sangam age. The current reading of the inscription indicates that Samudragupta's expedition was confined to the region, north of Kāñci and that he did not go as far as the west coast. Hence, Māntaram Cēral of the Sangam age cannot be taken to identify with the Mantaraja of Samudragupta's Pillar inscription. Further, his interpretation of the expression 'Vampa Mōriyar' as 'new Mauryas' or 'Guptas' which is found in a poem in Akanāṉūṟu[1], cannot be accepted as Professor J. Dubrevil is of the opinion that Samudragupta did not advance south of the Krishna. Hence the view of Raghava Iyengar also falls to the ground.

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1. Aka : 251.

The general theory which has gained support from many scholars is that which assigns the Sangam to the first three centuries of the Christian era. This theory rests upon the sound foundation of the synchronism of the Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ with Gajabahu of Ceylon. King Gajabahu was present when Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ installed the image of Pattiṉitēvi or Kaṇṇaki in his capital city, Vañci after a successful expedition to the north defeating Kaṉaka Vijayā of north India.[1]

Gajabahu is assigned to the later half of the second century A.D. Another Gajabahu is assigned to the twelfth century A.D. Among the two, Gajabahu I ruled over Ceylon from 171 A.D. upto 193 A.D.[2] Gajabahu II is said to have ruled Ceylon between 1137 A.D. and 1153 A.D. Since Kulothunga Cōḷā II was ruling during the twelfth century, Gajabahu I is therefore the contemporary of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ. Further, Paraṇar sang the glory of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ in the fifth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu. "Thus twenty sixth Adi (171 A.C.) will fit in exactly for the fire at Madura; and if 171 be accepted as the date of the fire, then Sen-Kuttuva Cera must be taken to be living at that time". Thus observes the learned scholar Mr. K.G. Sesha Aiyar.[3]

In addition to this, Nūṟṟuvar Kaṉṉar are mentioned in Cilappatikāram as having been of great help to the Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ in crossing the river Ganges.[4] These Nūṟṟuvar-Kaṉṉar is now identified with Satakarni who is said to have been the emperor of Magadha from A.D. 77 to A D. 133 according to the Matsya Purana.[5]

There are also many records both literary and epigraphical which bear testimony to the invasions of the south by

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1. Cilap : XXX; 160-164.
2. Ramachandra Dikshitar, V.R., The Silappadikaram, p. 15.
3. Cera kings of the Sangam period, p. 112.
4. Cilap : XXVI : 149.
5. Kanakasabhai Pillai, V., The Tamils eighteen hundred years ago, pp. 7-8.

Nandas and Mauryas An Akam poem of Māmūlaṉār refers to the wealth of the Nandas.[1] An equally important passage in Kuṟuntokai concurring with this poem says that the city of Pāṭali lay on the banks of the River Son and it was rich in gold.[2]

Nandas preceded Mōriyar and their period is roughly between B.C. 413 to B C. 322.[3] In another poem in Akanāṉūṟu, the very same poet Māmūlaṉār refers to an invasion of the Mōriyars into the south by the help of Vaṭukars.[4] But this does not refer to in any way to the invasion of the south by Samudragupta, since the poem itself denotes clearly that only Mōriyar had invaded the South with the help of the Vaṭukars, and there is no mention of Guptas.

Samudragupta belongs to Gupta's dynasty which reigned the north between 320 A.D. and 455 A.D., thereby comes roughly about five hundred years after the Mauryas.[5] Further, there is also a reference to the Mauryas in a Puṟam poem[6] besides an Akam poem[7] by Umaṭṭūr Kiḷār-Makaṉār Paraṅkoṟṟaṉār. The facts contained in this poem further strengthen our idea that the Maurya:n invasion of the south took place before the fourth century of the christian era.

The Tamils had a closer trading relationship with the Romans and Greeks round about the beginnings of the

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1. புல்புகழ் நிறைந்த வெல்போர் நந்தர்
சீர்மிகு பாடலிக் குழீஇக் கங்கை
நீர்முதல் கரந்த நிதியங் கொல்லோ —Aka : 265.
2. வெண்கோட் டியானை சோணை படியும்
பொன்மலி பாடலி பெறினியர் —Kuṟu : 75.
3. Vincent Smith, The early History of South India, p. 51.
4. முரண்மிகு வடுகர் முன்னுற மோரியர்
தென்றிசை மாதிர முன்னிய வரவிற்கு
விண்ணுற வோங்கிய பனியிருங் குன்றத்
தொண்கதிர்த் திகிரி யுருளிய குறைத்த —Aka : 281.
5. Vincent Smith, The early History of South India, pp. 206, 207 and 295.
6. Puṟa : 175. 7. Aka : 69.

Christian Era. There are ten references altogether in Sangam. poems to the 'Yavanas' which is the name given to the Greeks and Romans. In Mullaippāṭṭu[2] they are referred to in a generic appellation as 'Milechas', as, also in Neṭunalvāṭai[3] and in Puṟanāṉūṟu.[4] These clearly indicate that they were the people referred to in the poems above mentioned. That the Yavanas served as bodyguards to kings is known from Mullaippāṭṭu.[5] The same poem refers to them as the palace-guards in the nights.[6] They decorated themselves with gaiety and they enjoyed their leisure time to the maximum extent in drinking wine and roaming about the streets of the cities during the evenings, sometimes even ignoring slight drizzling.[7] In addition to courage and loyalty that had a keen sense of trading and merchandise. The Yavanas were sea-faring people and took keen interest in commerce. They brought with them from their native land the swanshaped[8] and woman-shaped lamps[9] of fine workmanship. They brought gold and wine[10] and exchanged them with pepper, which had a very good market in their land.

An Akam stanza describes Muciṟi as the thriving sea-port.[11] Another stanza of the same collection mentions the flourishing sea-port Muciṟi where the Yavanas come in their fine and good looking vessels loaded with gold and returned with pepper.[12] A poem in Puṟanāṉūṟu also refers to the pepper trade which was flourishing at the sea-port of Muciṟi.[13]

Another port which is mentioned twenty four times in the Sangam poems is Tondi. It shows that Tondi was a flourishing Cērā sea-port on the west coast.

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1. Aka : 57, 149; Puṟa : 56, 343; Patiṟ : II Patikam; Perumpāṇ : 316; Mullai : 61, 66; Neṭunal : 31-5; 101-2;
2. Mullai : 66. 3. Neṭunal : 31-5. 4. Puṟa : 343.
5. Mullai : 66. 6. Ibid : 61. 7. Neṭunal : 31-5.
8. 'யவனர் ஒதிம விளக்கு'— Perumpāṇ : 316-317.
9. Neṭunal : 101-2; Mullai : 85.
10. Aka : 149; Puṟa : 56, 343. 11. Aka : 57.
12. Aka : 149. 13. Puṟa : 343.

The classical writers of the Greeks, Strabo, the anonymous author of the Periplus of the Erythraean sea, Pliny and Ptolemy give full details about the commercial contact of the west with the Tamil land and the details contained in their work prove beyond any shadow of doubt that the information contained in the Sangam poems about the commercial contact of the west with the east was real and historical and not mere poetic exaggeration.

The author of Periplus who is considered to have lived in 75 A.D. gives valuable information about the trade that existed between the Roman Empire and the Tamil country. He mentions some leading sea-ports of those times viz., Noura (Cannanore); Tyndis (Tondi); Muziris (Cranganore) and Nelcynda (very near to Kottayam).

Strabo, an Asiatic Greek who lived in the first century A.D. mentions an embassy sent to Augustus on his accession by an important king called Porus by some and Pāṇṭiyaṉ by others.

Pliny who lived about 77 A.D. in his Natural History makes several observations which reveal the existence of active commercial relations between the Greeks and Tamils. "Pliny complained in 70 A.D. that India drained gold to the value of nearly a million pounds a year, giving back her own wares, which are sold among us at fully a hundred times their first cost".[1]

The Greek geographer Ptolemy mentions the chieftain Āy as ruling over the portion of the country which surrounded the Potiyil hills, situated in the southern-most end of the western ghats and including cape comerin and Mount Bettigo.

Koṟkai, the sea-port of the Pāṇṭiyā Kingdom where pearl fishery was the predominant occupation is mentioned by these writers along with camara (Kavirippūmpaṭṭiṉam), Poduca (Pondicherry) and Sopatma (modern Marakkāṇam).

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1. Srinivasa Iyengar, P.T., History of the Tamils, p.305.

The existence of pure Tamil words like kaṭal, paravai, puṇari, ārkali and munnīr in the Tamil language which denote the sea and of words like kalam, marakkalam, mitavai, ampi and kappal all of which refer to the ship clearly shows that Ancient Tamils were sea-faring race who braved the perils of the deep.

Further "from Pentingerian Tables (225 A.D.), we learn that the Romans had in this (Musiri) city, a force of about 2000 men to protect their trade and that a temple was erected in hononr of Augustus. There was a Grecian colony of Byzantium on the Malabar coast.".[1]

The comparatively recent excavations of Ariccamedu near Pondicherry throw much interesting light on the intercourse between Tamil land and the Greeks.

The surprisingly large number of gold and silver coins struck by all the Roman emperors, including that of Nero A D. 54-68 found at Kottayam near Tellicherry, Pollachi, Karuvur and Vellalur in the Coimbatore district, Kaliyamputhu in the Madura district, in Pudukkottai and at other places of interior Tamilnadu testify to the presence of Roman settlers here and the periods of the rise, zenith and decline of the active commerce between these two countries. This is corroborated by the Sangam poems. This corroboration comes in as a valuable evidence to assess the age of Sangam poetry. All these coins belong to the first three centuries of the Christian Era, it follows that the Sangam poems which detail about our trade with Rome must belong to the same period or a bit earlier and definitely not later. It is therefore clear according to Prof. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar that the Sangam period begins from the fifth century B.C. and ends about the fourth century A.D.,[2] and the poems of Kuruntokai may be considered to belong to this age

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1. Sesha Iyengar, T.R., The Ancient Dravidians, pp. 79-80.
2. The Silappadikaram, p.8.
   c.f. Dikshitar, V.R.R., Studies in Tamil Literature, p.21.

III. THE PLACE OF KURUNTOKAI IN SANGAM LITERATURE

In this chapter an attempt has been made to show clearly some of the noteworthy and predominant features of Kuṟuntokai which specially establishes the position of Kuṟuntokai in Sangam literature as example of the excellance of poetic composition.

Kuṟuntokai is a collection of 400 poems in Akaval metre, the length of the poem varying from four to eight lines. Pāratam pāṭiya Peruntēvaṉār has composed an invocation in praise of Lord Muruga, who is the God of the mountainous region, and associated with the beauty of Nature.[1] This invocation is acclaimed as a superb piece by the Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai.[2]

The Kuṟuntokai poets are noted for their vivid pen-pictures. The poems are very good examples of the meaning of the dictum : "Art lies in concealing art" since they are distinguished by freshness, forcefulness in their expression and the minimum of conscious embellishment. Although the poems of the collection are very short, their poetical value is very great. They are looked upon as examples of completeness in all aspects.

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1. Kalyanasundaranar, T.V., Murukan allatu Aḻaku p.I. c.f. Srinivasa Iyengar, P.T., Pre-Aryan Tamil culture, p.21.
2. 'இஃது எல்லாக் குற்றமுந் தீர்ந்த செய்யுள்'.

Commending the greatness of Kuṟuntokai one modern scholar remarks : "It is doubtful whether any short stanzas in English, French, Italian or Latin have realised such perfect poem as those of the Kuṟuntokai in Tamil, if we were to judge them by the vividness of their sentiments and the consummate manner of their expression in such few words. In conciseness they wie with Tacitus, in depth with Milton's sonnets, in force of sentiment with Shakespheare's, in felicity of expression with Wordsworths".[1]

Each poem in Kuṟuntokai is a miniature portrait complete in itself. The treatment of love-themes relating fo Aintiṇai is more varied and interesting than any other collection in Eṭṭu-t-tokai. They contain many references to the ancient Tamil ideas and institutions[2] and hence establish their relative antiquity.

Four essential elements of work according to Winchester are, emotion, imagination, thought and form.[3] "Poetry is the - expression of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds". This is what Shelley speaks about the speciality of poetry.[4] Sangam poets possess all these great qualities to a remarkable extent. Kumara-kuruparar, the greatest Tamil poet of the seventeenth century remarks that poets are even greater than Brahma, the creator himself, because all creation is bound to perish one day or other but not the poets since their poems survive all ravages of time and clime.[5]

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1. David, S. The Tamil culture, Vol. VII; No.4. Oct. 1958.
2. Srinivasa Iyengar, P.T., History of the Tamils, P.157.
3. Principles of Literary Criticism, p.61.
4. A Defence of Poetry.
5. *கலைமகள் வாழ்க்கை முகத்தது எனினும்*
   மலரவன் வண்டமிழோர்க்கு ஒவ்வான் – மலரவன் செய்
   வெற்றுடம்பு மாய்வனபோல் மாயா புகழ்கொண்டு
   மற்றிவர் செய்யும் உடம்பு.

   —Nītineṟiviḷakkam, 7.

One of the necessary qualifications of the greatest poetry is that its appeal is eternal. Sangam poems are still in vogue even after a gap of about two thousand years. It shows their permanent nature.

How far the Kuṟuntokai poems satisfy the rules and theories of western critics on literature, may now be looked into.

Emotion

"We are not mere intellectuals. Things affect us as creatures of feeling and imagination as well as of understanding".[1]

The fundamental feelings, such as love, heroism, terror, sorrow, anxiety, hunger are always the same during all ages.

Wordsworth said : "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". Therefore sensations and feelings felt in the blood; and felt along the heart, give rise to poetry when imagination bodies forth in images these sensations and feelings.

The poet expresses his own feelings through his poems. Sometimes he even feels for inanimate things and imaginatively lives out those experiences which belong to others.

For example, Miḷaipperuṅkantaṉ, a poet ably pictures the affliction of a heroine waiting for her lover who promised to return before the rainy season set in. The heroine, on seeing that her lover had not returned though the rains had begun, cries out in her loneliness and desolate condition thus : "Only the people who have no proper understanding would say that evening comes on when the sun sets and the mullai buds blossom; but for lovers even the morn and noon take on the colour of the evenings."

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1. Brown, S.J. The Realm of Poetry, p.54.

"Cuṭarcel vāṉam cēppa paṭarkūrntu
eḷḷuṟu poḷutiṉ mullai malarum
mālai eṉṉmaṉār mayaṅki yōrē
kuṭumik koḷḷi neṭunakar iyampum
perumpular viṭiyalum māḷai
pakalum mālai tuṇaiyil lorkkē."[1]

Veḷḷivīṭiyār, a poetess expresses the mental agony of a lover in her poem. A hero meets a lady and falls in love with her and becomes love-sick. His bosom friend asked him what ails him. The lover replies he is unable to control his passion getting out of bounds. He compares his uncontrollable feeling to melting butter which cannot be stopped by a man who is dumb and lame, in the terrific heat of the sun on the hill.

"Itikkum kēḷir nuṅkuṟai yāka
niṟukka laṟṟiṉō naṉṟumaṉ ṟilla
ñāyiṟu kāyum vevvaṟai maruṅkil
kaiyi lūman kaṇṇiṟ kākkum
veṇṇe yuṇaṅkal pōḷap
parantaṉ ṟinnōy nōṉṟukoḷaṟ karitē".[2]

The examples cited above, show that Kuṟuntokai poets were very sensitive and were experts in describing the emotions.

Imagination

The element of ardent imagination in sangam poems is noteworthy. Sangam poets not only pictured 'life as it was-but also imagined how it should be'.[3] This broughtforth inspiring poetry.

The rainy season has just set in; but the hero who promised to return by that time is yet to return. So his wife expresses her maid that the kār season laughs at her loneliness and disappointment with its teeth in the fresh buds.

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1. Kuṟu : 234.
2. Ibid : 58.
3. Abercrombie, L. Principles of Literary Criticism, p.87.

"Iḷamai pārār vaḷaṉacāiyīc ceṉṟār
ivaṇum vārā revana rōveṉap
peyalpuṟan tanta pūṅkoṭi mullait
tokumukai yilaṅkeyi ṟāka
nakumē tōḷi naṟuntaṇ kārē."[1]

"Imagination thus fushes the familiar and the strange, the thing I feel and the thing I see, the world within and the world without, into one that interprets both".[2]

This type of imagination where an inanimate object has been described as speaking with a human being is allowed even in the poems of the west. Tolkāppiyaṉār explains this kind of poetic convention in his grammar.[3]

Empathy also adds to the beauty of poety, Human qualities are attributed to non-human things; then Nature will bring into the picture the sentiments, passions and actions of men and women. Tolkāppiyaṉār provides for this in his grammar. Western authors also agree in employing empathy in the poems.[4]

It has been pointed somewhere else in this thesis that the poem 69 of Kuṟuntokai is the best example in expressing the full significance of empathy.

Thought

Though emotion is the basis of poetry; yet it is to be measured by the amount and quality of thought in the poem.

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1. Kuṟu : 126.
2. Lowes, J.L., Convention and Revolt in poetry, p.10
3. "ஞாயிறு திங்கள் அறிவே நாணே
கடலே கானல் விலங்கே மரனே
புலம்புறு பொழுதே புள்ளே நெஞ்சே
அவையல பிறவும் நுவலிய நெறியால்
சொல்லுந போலவும் கேட்குந போலவும்
சொல்லியாங்கு அமையும் என்மனார் புலவர்—
Tol : 1456
4. Moll, E.G. The appreciation of poetry, p.116.

A great poet is capable of expressing his emotions in a single line or in a single epithet which will give a correct picture to the imagination of any reader.[1]

Kapilar had seen a huge rock which reminded him of a huge elephant. After a heavy rain, the huge rocks appeared without any dust on them since the rain washed away all the dust. So the poet brought out both the objects in a beautiful and apt comparison.

''mācaṟak kaḷīyiya yāṉai pōlap
perumpeyal uḷanta irumpinart tuṟukal
paital orutalai cēkkum''.[2]

Within the three lines and by using aptly the two words 'uḷanta and cēkkum' in an appropriate place, the poet has provided us a good picture by mingling his feelings, imagination and as well as his thoughts.

Form

''The sum of all the means by which the writer strives to convey his combined thought and emotion to the reader, we may call Literary Form''.[3]

Kuṟuntokai poems are in Akaval metre and this metre is not suitable to provide various kinds of rhythm. But within this limitation of Akaval metre the Kuṟuntokai poets have shown great talents in bringing out the beauties of Form, such as alliteration, rhyme etc.,

''உறைபதி அன்றித் துறைகெழு சிறுகுடி
கானலஞ் சேர்ப்பன் கொடுமை எற்றி
ஆனாத் துயரமொடு வருந்திப் பானாள்
துஞ்சா துறைநரொ டுசாவாத்
துயில்கள் மாக்களொடு நெட்டிராஉடைத்தே.''[4]

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1. Winchester, C.T., Principles of Literary Criticism, p.135.
2. Kuṟu : 13.
3. Winchester, G.T., Some Principles of Literary Criticism, p.183.
4. Kuṟu : 145.

There is rhyme in the first and third feet of the first line (உறை - துறை) and in the first and last feet of the third line (ஆனா - பானாள்).

Alliteration can also be seen in Kuṟuntokai.

(i) வைகல் வைகல் வைகவும் வாரார்[1]

(ii) புலப்பில் போலப் புல்லென்று
அலப்பென் தோழி யவரகன்ற ஞான்றே.[2]

(iii) விழுத்தலைப் பெண்ணை விளையல் மாமடல்
மணியணி பெருந்தார் மரபிற் பூட்டி.[3]

(iv) புகரி புழுங்கிய புயல்நீங்கு புறவில்.[4]

The last line quoted above is a very good example for perfect alliteration (முற்றுமோனை).

While a western author does not give any prominence to this alliteration,[5] another author of the west says that 'rhyme is no vain thing,'.[6]

Kuṟuntokai can therefore be considered as a good example of literature possessing all the main characteristics of great poetry.

In Akattiṇai in general and specially in Kuṟuntokai, the lady-love is the central figure and as such is described as the embodiment of the noblest qualities of womenhood. After association with a hero, the lady-love seldom lives for herself; but mainly for him. For his sake, she is prepared even to discard her parents and face calamities and hard -ships. A lady-love, at the time of elopement, tells her companion that her mother had given her enough trouble, hearing the scandals of the village. She, therefore, wishes

1. Kuṟu : 285 : 1
2. Ibid : 41 : 5-6
3 Ibid : 181 : 1-2
4. Ibid : 391 : 2
5. Winchester, C.T., Some Principles of Literary Criticism, p. 268.
6. Tucker, T.G., The Judgment and appreciation of Literature, p. 59.

in her anger that her mother should live alone in her house and goes on to say that she would prefer to drink the water collected in puddles made by the trampling elephants on the way to a distant country through mountainous terrain if her lord was by her side.[1] This is an example of excessive love out of bounds.

The heroine is impatient during the short interval between wooing and marriage. Her companion advises her that she should not lament. Then the heroine compares her husband to the sun and herself to a cowthorn (ஞெருஞ்சி). The idea behind this is that the cowthorn will always turn to the direction of the sun, So also, the heroine says that she is ever steady, faithful and ardent in her love to her lord.[2]

The lady-companion tells the hero who is preparing for a journey to a far-off land for earning more for a short interval of time before the marriage that the lady-love is always at his mercy, whether he is cold or affectionate towards her.[3]

In another instance, the companion tells the hero that the heroine is always constant in her love like the 'neytal' flower of his region which has the capacity of blossoming again even after being rooted out from its its original field.[4]

Dr. V.Sp. Manickam says: "To the people of the Sangam epoch, woman was a better-half and a partner in life of varied fortunes and sexual life was the fountainhead for the full and harmonious development in the spiritual, mental and physical aspects".[5]

Kuṟuntokai is called 'nalla Kuṟuntokai', to show its goodness and greatness. Further it is said that Kuṟuntokai was the first of the anthologies of the Sangam age. In the whole of Sangam literature, forty poets who are called either after the beautiful and apt similes they had employed in

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1. Kuṟu : 262.
2. Kuṟu : 315
3. Ibid : 397
4. Ibid : 309
5. The Tamil concept of Love, p. 160.

their poems or by the catching phrase or description used by them. In Kuṟuntokai alone we get across twenty three cases where the poets have been given such attributive names. The following is a list of poets called after the similes used by them.

(i) Aṇilāṭumuṉṟilār (41)
(ii) Orēruḻavaṉār (141)
(iii) Kaṅkulveḷḷattār (387)
(iv) Kayamaṉār (9)
(v) Kalporucirunuraiyār (290)
(vi) Kavaimakaṉār (324)
(vii) Kaleṟikaṭikaiyār (267)
(viii) Kuppaikkōḻiyār (305)
(ix) Kūvaṉmaintaṉ (224)
(x) Cempulappeyaṉīrār (40)
(xi) Mīneṟitūṇṭilār (54)
(xii) Viṭṭakutiraiyār (74)
(xiii) Villakaviraliṉār (370)

Those who are named after a striking phrase in their poems.

(i) Neṭuveṇṇilaviṉār (47)
(ii) Oriṟpiccaiyār (277)
(iii) Kaḷḷilāttiraiyaṉār (293)
(iv) Pataṭivaikalār (323)
(v) Kuṟiyiṟaiyār (394)

These following poets have earned a prefix to their names because of their original manner of describing some aspect of nature or life.

(i) Neytal Kārkkiyār (55, 212)
(ii) Pālaipāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō (16, 37, 124, 135, 137, 209, 262, 283, 398)
(iii) Kōvēṅkaipperuṅkataḻvaṉ (14)
(iv) Maṭalpāṭiya Mātaṅkiraṉ (182)
(v) Kākkaipāṭiṉiyār Nacceḷḷaiyār (210)

Some of these poets whose poems are found in other anthologies also are called by the same names which they have been given here. This confirms the fact that Kuṟuntokai was the earliest of the anthologies.

There are four stanzas in Kuṟuntokai which relate some past incidents and history. One stanza[1] is attributed to Iṟaiyaṉār for Tarumi. Two stanzas[2] relate the suffering of Veḷḷivīṭiyār when she was separated from her husband. A fourth stanza is attributed to Ātimanti.[3] It is also said that Ātimanti herself sang this poem to express her grief when she missed her husband in the floods of the Kāvēri.

A stanza by the poet Paṉampāraṉār who is supposed to be a contemporary of Tolkāppiyaṉār is included in this collection.[4]

The unique importance of Kuṟuntokai consists in its being profusely quoted by several commentators of the later age. Beginning from the commentator of Nampi Akapporul and ending with Vaittiyanāta Tēcikar, all of them have taken Kuṟuntokai poems as examples to elucidate their points of view. Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai remarks that roughly thousand quotations have been taken from this work.[5]

Herein an attempt is made to bring out the importance and significance of Kuṟuntokai by listing the various authors who quoted or made use of the ideas embodied in Kuṟuntokai in their poetry or in their commentaries.

The names of the commentators and the serial number of Kuṟuntokai poems quoted in their respective works are given in the succeeding pages.

(1) The commentator of Nampi Akapporuḷ :

1, 2, 7, 9, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 25, 30, 37, 40, 43, 44, 47, 62, 73, 74, 78, 86, 88, 91, 109, 123, 128, 129, 131, 138, 141, 148, 149, 150, 153, 162, 171, 181,

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1. Kuṟu : 2.
2. Ibid : 27, 130.
3. Ibid : 31.
4. Ibid : 52.
5. Ilakkiya-tīpam, p. 87.

189, 191, 193, 196, 198, 199, 202, 204, 241, 243, 251, 270, 272, 286, 292, 310, 311, 337, 355, 378, 388, 397.

(2) Aṭiyārkkunallār in his Commentary on Cilappatikāram. 129.

(3) Aḷakiya Maṇavāḷa Cīyar : 30.

(4) Iḷampūraṇar : in Eḻuttatikāram. 21, 71, 78, 107, 180.

Iḷampūraṇar in Collatikāram : 2, 6, 7, 12, 14, 18, 25, 44, 51, 61, 69, 75, 77, 87, 91. 103, 117, 138, 153, 158, 217, 261, 292, 293, 296.

Iḷampūraṇar in Poruḷatikāram. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 27, 29, 30, 33, 40, 44, 45, 49, 51, 52, 53, 56, 58, 62, 66, 69, 70, 73, 79, 80, 81, 87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 98, 99, 101, 105, 106, 113, 114, 120, 121, 123, 129, 136, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 149, 150, 152, 157, 159, 161, 167, 176, 178, 181, 189, 196, 203, 208, 210, 216, 222, 231, 235, 236, 241, 242, 244, 270, 272, 276, 286, 295, 300, 312, 337, 349, 354, 355, 359, 362, 379.

(5) The Commentator on Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ. 1, 2, 7, 17, 43, 58, 71, 115, 119, 128, 129, 149, 176, 222, 242, 362, 397.

(6) Kallāṭar. 1, 2, 7, 14, 51, 52, 61, 75, 113, 138, 153, 241, 292.

(7) The Commentator on Kaḷaviyaṟ Kārikai. 2, 17, 112, 119, 120, 128, 149, 163, 300.

(8) Kuṇacākarar in his Commentary on Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai. 1, 3, 12, 18, 124, 216.

(9) Caṅkara namaccivāyar in his Commentary on Naṉṉūl. 2, 5, 7, 14, 22, 25, 27, 33, 46, 51, 78, 84, 100, 105, 138, 140, 153, 155, 232, 293, 300.

(10) Cāmināta tēcikar in his commentary on Ilakkaṇak kottu. 17, 180, 232.

(11) Civañāṉa muṉivar in Tolkāppiyappāyira virutti.
32, 232.

(12) Cēṉavaraiyar in Collatikāram.
2, 6, 7, 14, 18, 21, 51, 66, 69, 71, 77, 84, 87, 91, 108, 138, 140, 145, 153, 158, 195, 217, 232, 261, 293, 296.

(13) Cokkappa nāvalar in his Commentary on Tañcaivaāṇaṉ Kōvai.
The invocatory song.

(14) The Commentator of Taṇṭi Alaṅkāram.
47, 54.

(15) The Commentator of Tamiḻneṟi Viḷakkam :
1, 2, 7, 17, 18, 22, 40, 71, 78, 88, 119, 130, 149, 315.

(16) The Commentator of Tirumayilai Yamaka Antāti :
The invocatory song; 1.

(17) Nampiḷḷai in his Commentary on Tivyaprapantam.
399.

(18) Teyvaccilaiyār in his Commentary on Tolkāppiyam.
2, 7, 14, 18, 21, 51, 66, 69, 77, 87, 91, 105, 108, 138, 145, 153, 156, 158, 195, 232, 261, 293, 354.

(19) Naccinārkkiniyar in his Commentary on Eḻuttatikāram.
1, 5, 21, 43, 71, 78, 98, 123, 153, 170, 180, 242, 274.
Naccinārkkiniyar in hls Commentary on Collatikāram.
2, 5 7, 9, 14, 18, 21, 23, 25, 35, 43, 44, 51, 52, 57, 66, 69, 71, 77, 78, 84, 87, 91, 108, 113, 117, 138, 140 145, 149, 153, 156, 178, 192, 216, 217, 232, 241, 261, 280, 292, 293.

Naccinārkkiniyar in his Commentary on Poruḷatikāram :
2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 62, 63, 66, 70, 71, 72, 73, 79, 80, 81, 87, 89, 90, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 106, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 120, 121, 128, 129, 130, 132, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 145, 146, 149, 150, 154, 155, 157, 159, 161, 167, 169,

176, 178, 181, 182, 184, 189, 191, 198, 199, 203, 204, 205, 208, 216, 221, 222, 225, 229, 233, 235, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 246, 262, 270, 272, 276, 280, 290, 292, 294, 295, 300, 301, 302, 312, 313, 334, 336, 337, 346, 353, 354, 355, 361, 362, 365, 374, 379, 383, 385, 389, 390, 397, 401.

Naccinārkkiniyar in his Commentary on Kalittokai.
208 (Kali : 38).

Naccinārkkiniyar in his Commentary on Maturaikkāñci.
317 (Matu : 63-4)

Naccinārkkiniyar in his Commentary on Kurinjippāṭṭu.
150 (Kurinci : 49)

Naccinārkkiniyar in his Commentary on Cīvakacintāmaṇi.
8 (cīvaka : 2327), 86 (cīvaka : 2890), 102 (cīvaka : 996) 129 (cīvaka 165), 194 (cīvaka : 1632) 232 (cīvaka 15) 272 (cīvaka : 447), 280 (cīvaka : 393) 325 (cīvaka : 1629; 354) (cīvaka : 222) 370 (cīvaka : 2110)

(20) Parimēlaḻakar. 78, 360.

(21) The Commentator of Puṟanāṉūṟu : 292.

(22) Pērāciriyar in his Commentary on Poruḷatikāram.
2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 25, 26, 27, 29, 38, 46, 47, 54, 58, 69, 71, 85, 97, 98, 102, 106, 107, 110, 119, 121, 128, 129, 139, 152, 158, 161, 164, 167, 169, 178, 187, 198, 204, 208, 213, 216, 222, 224, 239, 242, 261, 262, 278, 280, 282, 301, 312, 324, 337, 361, 362.

(23) Mayilēṟum Perumāl Piḷḷai. 1.

(24) Mayilainātar in his Commentary on Naṉṉūl :
2, 5, 7, 8, 14, 17, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 33, 35, 43, 46, 51, 69, 77, 78, 84, 93, 100, 104, 105, 113, 129, 138, 140, 149, 153, 155, 156, 201, 232, 234, 292, 203, 300, 319, 325.

(25) The Commentator on Yāpparuṅkalavirutti :
2, 12, 19, 71, 107, 119, 124, 138, 140, 216, 262.

(26) Vaitiyanāta Tēcikar in his Commentary on Ilakkaṇaviḷakkam :

1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 30, 47, 51, 58, 62, 66, 69, 71, 77, 84, 87, 91, 98, 100, 102, 105, 108, 113, 120, 128, 137, 138, 140, 141, 145, 152, 155, 156, 158, 161, 167, 178, 180, 195, 201, 202, 216, 229, 232, 262, 274, 280, 286, 292, 301, 337, 355.

(27) The Commentator of Māṟaṉalaṅkāram : 47, 225.

(28) The Commentator of Vīracōḻiyam : 3, 124, 216.

The Stanzas that are not quoted :

10, 16, 24, 28, 42, 48, 50, 55, 59, 60, 64, 65, 67, 68, 76, 82, 83, 94, 111, 116, 118, 122, 125, 126, 127, 133, 134, 135, 144, 147, 151, 160, 162, 165, 166, 168, 172, 173, 174, 175, 177, 179, 183, 185, 186, 188, 190, 197, 200, 206, 207, 209, 211, 212, 214, 215, 218, 219, 220, 223, 226, 227, 228, 230, 237, 238, 245, 247, 248, 249, 250, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 271, 273, 275, 277, 279, 281, 283, 284, 285, 287, 288, 289, 291, 297, 298, 299, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 314, 316, 318, 320, 321, 322, 323, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 335, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 347, 348, 350, 351, 352, 356, 357, 358, 363, 364, 366, 367, 368, 369, 371, 372, 373, 375, 376, 377, 380, 382, 384, 386, 387, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 398, 400.

We find 168 stanzas have not been quoted by commentators. It is interesting to see that the stanzas that are not quoted between 1-100 of this colle ction are 18; between 101-200 of this collection are 32; between 201-300 of this collection are 54; and between 301-400 of this collection are 64, in number. This shows a downward gradation. The stanzas that are quoted decreases in arithmetical progression in this collection. Between stanzas 1-50, only seven stanzas are not quoted. This shows the popularity of the first fifty compared to the rest of the poems.

We come to understand from the 'Naccinārkkiniyar uraicciṟappuppāyiram' that Pērāciriyar had written a commentary on all the stanzas of Kuṟuntokai except twenty.

Further we learn that Naccinārkkiniyar himself wrote the commentary on the remaining twenty stanzas.

Naccinārkkiniyar, in his commentary on Akattiṇai-iyal[1] of Tolkāppiyam - Poruḷatikāram, quotes the 54th stanza of Kuṟuntokai which begins as 'Yānē īṇṭai yēnē' (யானே ஈண்டை யேனே) and mentions that pērāciriyar also has stated this as 'Ēṉaiyuvamam'.[2]

From this, we may infer that Pērāciriyar had written a commentary on this work. Unfortunately both the commentaries are lost to us.

POETESSES

Sangam age witnessed many poetesses of a very high order. They were gifted to sing the feelings and passions of men too. They were capable of composing poems dealing with both the aspects of life, i.e., Akam and Puṟam. Out of 205 poets of Kuṟuntokai, sixteen are women poets. Hence 8% of Kuṟuntokai poets are women poets and they have written fifty eight poems in the collection which works out to nearly 15% of the total number.

The names of the poetesses and their poems are given hereunder :

1. Āḷūr Naṉmullaiyār	:	32, 67, 68, 93, 96, 140, 157, 202, 237,
2. Ātimanti	:	31
3. Uṇpittai	:	232
4. Okkūr Mācāttiyār	:	126, 139, 186, 220, 275.
5. Avvaiyār	:	15, 23, 28, 29, 39, 43, 80, 91, 99, 102, 158, 183, 200, 364, 388.
6. Kaccippēṭṭu Naṉṉākaiyār	:	30, 172, 180, 192, 197, 287.
7. Kaḷārkkīraṉ Eyiṟṟiyār	:	35, 261, 330.
8. Kākaipāṭiṉiyār Nacceḷḷaiyar	:	210

1. Tol : 992.
2. பேராசியரும் இப்பாட்டின் மீனெறி தூண்டி லென்றதனை ஏனையுவமர் மென்றார்.

9.	Naṉṉākaiyār	: 118, 125.
10.	Neṭumpalliyattai	: 178
11.	Pūnkaṇuttimaiyār	: 48, 171.
12.	Poṉmaṇiyār	: 391
13.	Maturai Naṉveḷḷiyār	: 365
14.	Varumulaiyāritti	: 176
15.	Veṇmaṇippūti	: 299
16.	Veḷḷivītiyār	: 27, 44, 58, 130, 146, 149, 169, 386.

The flora and fauna mentioned in Kuṟuntokai are 87 in number : They are as given by Dr. Swaminatha Iyer as follows :

(1) அகில், (2) அசோகு, (3) அடும்பு, (4) அத்திமரம், (5) அரலைச்செடி (6) அவரை (7) அறுகு (8) ஆம்பற் கொடி (9) ஆலமரம் (10) ஆவிரை (11) இருப்பை (12) இற்றி (13) ஈங்கை (14) உகாய் (15) உழுந்து (16) எருக்கு (17) எள் (18) ஐயவி (19) ஐவனம் (20) ஓமைமரம் (21) கரும்பு (22) கருவிளை (23) கவலைக் கிழங்கு (24) கள்ளி (25) காஞ்சி (26) காந்தள் (27) காயாமரம் (28) குரவம் (29) குருந்த மரம் (30) குவளை (31) குளவி (32) குறிஞ்சி (33) குன்றி (34) கூதளி (35) கொலுக்காந்தட்டை (36) கொன்றை (37) கோங்கு (38) சந்தனமரம் (39) சிலை (40) சேம்பு (41) தாழல் (42) ஞெமை (43) தடா (44) தாமரை (45) தாழை (45) தாளி (47) திணை (48) நரந்தம் (49) நெய்தல் (50) நெருஞ்சி (61) நெல் (52) நெல்லி (53) நொச்சி (54) பகன்றை (55) பஞ்சாய் (56) பயறு (57) பருத்தி (58) பலாமரம் (59) பலாசு (60) பவழம் (61) பனை (62) பாதிரி (63) பிடா (64) பித்திகம் (65) பிரம்பு (66) பீர்க்கு (67) புன்கு (68) புன்னை (69) மரல் (70) மராம் (71) மருத மரம் (72) மாணைக்கொடி (73) மாமரம் (74) மிளகுக் கொடி (75) முல்லை (76) முள்முருங்கை (77) முள்ளிச்செடி (78) மூங்கில் (79) யாமரம் (80) வரகு (81) வழை (82) வள்ளி (83) வாகை (84) வாழை (85) வெட்சி (86) வேங்கைமரம் (87) வேம்பு.

There are references in Kuṟuntokai to the following 28 animals :

(1) அணில் (2) ஆடு (3) ஆமான் (4) ஆமை (5) எருமை (6) எலி (7) எறும்பு (8) ஒந்தி (9) கடமா (10) குதிரை (11) குரங்கு (12) செந்நாய் (13) தவளை (14) நண்டு (15) நாய் (16) நீர்நாய் (17)

பசுவும் அனேறும் (18) பல்லி (19) பாம்பு (20) புலி (21) மரையினம் (22) மான் (23) மீன் (24) முதலை (25) யானை (26) வருடை (27) வரையா (28) வெருகு.

Twenty two kinds of birds are mentioned in Kuruntokai : They are :

(1) அன்றில் (2) அன்னம் (3) எழால் (4) கணந்துள் (5) காக்கை (6) கிளி (7) குயில் (8) குருவி (9) குறும்பூழ் (10) கூகை (11) கொக்கு (12) கோழி (13) நாரை (14) துளம்பு (15) பருந்து (16) புறு (17) மகன்றில் (18) மயில் (19) யானையங் குருகு (20) வங்கா (21) வண்டு (22) வெளவால்.

Twenty five kings or chieftains are mentioned in Kuruntokai. They are :

(1) அகுதை (2) அஞ்சி (3) அதிகள் (4) அருமான் (5) அழிசி (6) ஆய் (7) எவ்வி (8) எழினி (9) ஓரி (10) கட்டி (11) குட்டுவன் (12) கொங்கர் (13) கோசர் (14) சேந்தன் (15) தொண்டையர் (16) நள்ளி (17) நன்னன் (18) பசும்பூட்பாண்டியன் (19) பாரி (20) பூழியர் (21) பொறையன் (22) மலையன் (23) வடுகர் (24) விச்சிக்கோ (25) வேளிர்.

Six mountains, two rivers, one forest and nine villages or towns are referred to in Kuruntokai.

They are :

(i) Mountains : (1) அரலைக்குன்றம் (2) இமயம் (3) ஏழில் (4) கொல்லி (5) பறம்பு (6) பொதியில்.

(ii) Rivers : (1) காவிரி (2) சோணை.

(iii) Forest : (1) முள்ளூர்க்கானம்.

(iv) Places : (1) ஆர்க்காடு (2) உறையூர் (3) குறும்பூர் (4) குன்றூர் (5) தொண்டி (6) பாடலி (7) மரந்தை (8) முள்ளூர் (9) வாகைப் பறந்தலை.

The Kuruntokai poets come from various parts of the country. The names of the places mentioned are :

(1) அரிசில் (2) அள்ளூர் (3) ஆலங்குடி (4) ஆலத்தூர் (5) இடைக்காடு (6) இருந்தையூர் (7) ஈழம் (8) உகாய்க்குடி.

(9) உரோடகம் (10) உறையூர் (11) ஐயூர் (12) ஒக்கூர் (13) கச்சிப்பேடு (14) கடம்பனூர் (15) கடியலூர் (16) கருவூர் (17) கழார் (18) காவிரிப்பூம்பட்டினம் (19) கிடங்கில் (20) கிள்ளி மங்கலம் (21) குடவாயில் (22) குறுங்குடி (23) கூடலூர் (24) கோழி (25) கோவூர் (26) சிறைக்குடி (27) செல்லூர் (28) தங்கால் (29) பெருங்குன்றூர் (30) பொதுக்கயம் (31) மதுரை (32) மாங்குடி (33) மாடலூர் (34) மிளை (35) வெள்ளூர் (36) வேம்பற்றூர்:

A poem written by Āriya Aracan Yāḻpramatattaṉ has been included in this collection.[1] He is said to have learned Tamil literature from the greatest poet of the age, kapilar. Though a northern king, foreign to our customs and manners and our language, he had an ardent desire to learn Tamil literature and took interest in understanding the fundamental elements of Grammar on Kaḷavu and left us a beautiful poem which comes under the tuṟai of 'kaḷaṟṟetir-maṟai' (கழற்றெதிர்மறை) it is also said that in order to teach and show him the greatness of Tamil literature, and that too Akam type of poetry, Kapilar has composed Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu, one of the ten Idylls.

Pālaipāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō is an eminent poet belonging to the cērā dynasty. Kuṭṭuvaṉ Kaṇṇaṉ,[2] Nampi kuṭṭuvaṉ,[3] Cēramāṉentai,[4] also seem to have belonged to the cērā dynasty. Among the cōḻās, the name of Kōpperuñcōḻaṉ is to be found as the author of four poems.[5] Aṇṭarmakaṉ-kuṟuvaḷuti and Pāṇṭiyaṉ Paṉṉāṭutantāṉ appear to be Pāṇṭiyās.[6] Both of them have contributed a poem each in this collection. The epithets 'kō' or king before the names of Kōkkuḷamuṟṟaṉ and Kōvēṅkaipperuṅkataḷvaṉ denote that they might have been some minor feudatories. Each of them composed one poem included in this collection.[7]

The poets of Kuṟuntokai collection belonged to different communities and occupations. For example, Maturai Aṟuvai

1. Kuṟu : 184.
2. Kuṟu : 179 3. Kuṟu : 109 4. Ibid : 22
5. Ibid : 20, 53, 129, 147. 6. Ibid : 345, 270
7. Ibid : 98, 134.

Vāṇikam Iḷavēṭṭaṉār was a cloth merchant; Aricil kiḻār, Ālattūr Kiḻār, Kayattūr Kiḻār, Karuvūr Kiḻār, Kiḷḷimaṅkalam Kiḻār, Kūṭalūr Kiḻār, Kōvūr Kiḻār, Peruṅkuṉṟūr Kiḻār, Māṅkuṭikiḻār and Mātalūr Kiḻār all came from Vellala community. The poet Mūteyiṉaṉār belonged to the hunter tribe.

Pāṇṭiyaṉ Ēṉāti Neṭuṅkaṇṇaṉ, was a commander-in-chief. Ceytivaḷḷuvaṉ Peruñcāttaṉ was a Government servant, Kulapati Nakkaṇṇaṉār Kaṇakkāyaṉ Tāttaṉār and Āciriyaṉ Peruṅkaṇṇaṉār were teachers. Maturai Eḻuttāḷam Cēntampūtaṉār seems to have been a writer. Kollaṉ Aḻici, Taṅkāl Muṭakkollaṉār, Maturaikkollam pullaṉ and Maturaipperuṅkollaṉ were goldsmiths. Uṟaiyūr Mutukūttaṉār and Vēmpaṟṟūr kaṇṇaṉ Kūttaṉ were dancers.

Some were named after their physical features : Āciriyar Peruṅkaṇṇaṉ, Kārikkaṇṇaṉār, Kollikkaṇṇaṉ, Neṭuṅkaṇṇaṉ, Pūṅkaṇṇaṉ, and Pūṅkaṇuttiraiyār were named after the features of their eyes. Kaṭuntōṭ karavīraṉ, Tipputtōḷār and Peruṅtōṭkuṟuñcāttaṉ were named after their shoulders. Both Alyūrmuṭavaṉār and Taṅkāl muṭakkollaṉār were cripples as seen from their names.

Some thirteen poets bore the names of Gods. They are. Iṟaiyaṉār, Uruttiraṉ kaṇṇaṉ, Kāntaṉ, Kumaraṉ, Cattināṭaṉ, Cāttaṉ, Tāmōtaraṉ, Tēvaṉpatumaṉ, Peruntēvaṉār, Pēreginmuṟuvalār and Veṇpūti.

Some prominent poets have borrowed the ideas from Kuṟuntokai.

There are three stanzas in Kuṟuntokai, the expression of which are found to be almost common with those in other Sangam works, viz., Aiṅkuṟuṉūṟu and Kalittokai.

Kuṟuntokai stanza : 54 to be compared with Aiṅkuṟuṉūṟu, stanza, 278.

" 163 to be compared with Kalittokai, stanza, 129; 8-11.

" 378 to be compared with Aiṅkuṟuṉūṟu, stanza, 371.

The later day works also have incorporated the ideas of Kuṟuntokai stanzas,

No. of stanza in Kuṟuntokai		Name of the work of the later period with the No. of the stanzas in it
17	—	Valayāpati
370 : 4-5	—	Cīvaka cintāmaṇi : 2110
9	—	Tirucciṟṟampalakkōvai : 374
38	—	Ibid : 276
43	—	Ibid : 340
163	—	Ibid : 179
388	—	Ibid : 202
58	—	Kampa: Cūrpaṇakaippaṭalam: 78
124	—	Ibid : Nakarnīṅkupaṭalam : 226
224	—	Ibid : Mitilaikkāṭcippaṭalam: 42
43	—	Pāṇṭikkōvai : 300
110	—	,, 25
149	—	,, 176
163	—	,, 233
242	—	,, 310, 311, 312
362	—	,, 134
388	—	,, 174
163	—	Kailaipāti kaḷattipāti : 64
242	—	Tañcaivāṇaṉkōvai : 376
196	—	Veṅkaikkōvai : 403
57	—	Taṇikaippuranam : Kalavu : 72
43	—	Tamiḻneṟivilakkam : mērkoḷ :
362	—	Ibid : 104
378	—	Ibid : 121
379	—	Ibid : 96
388	—	Ibid : 90

The foregoing account shows to prove that Kuṟuntokai occupies a predominant place in Sangam literature.

IV. THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF SANGAM LITERATURE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE IN KURUNTOKAI

Max Muller remarks that 'Tamil is the most highly cultivated language and possesses the richest stores of indigeneous literature". Rev. Fr. Heras goes one step further to say that "Tamil is the oldest of the present languages". Prof. T.R. Sesha Iyengar says that "Of all the races of India, the only people who had a-poetical literature independent of Sanskrit are the Tamils, a typical Dravidian people".[1] Dr. Winslow writes: "It is not perhaps extravagant to say that in its poetic form, the Tamil is more polished and exact than the Greek and in both dialects, with its borrowed treasures, more copious than the Latin".

Tolkāppiyam, the ancient work in Tamil, is a grammar. It follows that there must have been a body of literature prior to this work; for literature always precedes grammar.

The Sangam age is really a glorious period in Tamil-literature. It contains two thousand and three hundred and eighty one poems, sung by four hundred and seventy three poets and the names of the authors are not known to us in the case of one hundred and two poems. The shortest verse is of three lines; the longest of 782 lines. The minimum length of the verse could be found in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu while the

1. Ancient Dravidians, p. 43.

maximum limit in length could be seen in Maturaikkāñci, one of the ten Idy ls. The tone and temper of the Sangam age are reflected in every verse of both the collections, Pattu-p-pāṭṭu and Eṭṭu-t-tokai, which are assigned by the commentators on Tolkāppiyam as constituting the Sangam literature. The characteristic literary qualities of that particular age can well be pictured from the Sangam poems themselves.

The ideal love with all its poetic conventions is drawn actually from manifold situations of life. So all the poems are to be considered as faithful and sincere record of life as seen and visualised by the poets.

The Sangam age is the age of singing bards, i.e., the poets do not belong to one place; or to one community or creed or to one occupation or even to one single generation. Still they strike a uniform chord. The poems of this period mark a definite ascent in the progress of poetry; they have a universal appeal, and the manner is so very different from the rest. In short it is a period of creative imagination.

Poetic conventions, rules and regulations did not stand in the way of the poets' freeplay of imagination nor did they stifle their originality. There were some poets who faithfully adhered to the strict rules. A few of them while accepting the general principle touched a new form and introduced a new rhythm. There were others who completely discarded the rules and conventions in their compositions and paved new paths for themselves.[1]

Prof. Purnalingam Pillai remarks: 'Their (poets) rigid adherence to canons helped the production of good and flawless poems, though thereby crushed poetic freedom and originality''.[2] This is subject to verification. He thinks the singularity and oneness that could be found in all the Sangam poems are due to this. ''The universal appreciation

1. Chidambaranatha Chettiar, A., Muṉpaṉikkālam, pp. 82-94.
2. Tamil Literature, p. 18.

of the originality of the Sangam poets was due to the faithful adherence to the canons of Aham grammar by Sangam poets''[1] But in the treatment of the very same theme, it is hard to note two poets agreeing with each other. Although for a casual reader it may appe ar that all the sangam poems are alike in their mode of expression and in the treatment of themes, they differ much from each other. If they are analysed, the subtle differences could be observed.[2] The poets established a cultural unity in their poems although the time in which they lived was not blessed with political unity. We find in Puṟam poems many conflicts and wars between kings and chieftains.

Analysing the theory of Sangam poetry, Prof. T.P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai drawn his conclusion as follows: ''Cankam poetry is unique as group poetry par excellence. It has a personality of its own representing the group mind and the group personality of the Cankam age. Taken as a whole, it satisfies all the requirements of great poetry, enumerated above. The folk songs and proverbs of an age, with their authors unknown, form a unity, as the very expression of the national personality and the language. Cankam poetry, though too cultured to be called folk song, consciously creates this universal personality and that is why it has been classified as a separate group in Tamil literature the really great national poetry, not in the sense of national popularity but in the sense of being the voice of the nation in its origin.''.[3]

It is almost an impossible, rather an uphill task to present here all the aspects of beauty embedded in Sangam literature Further it is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, only a few characteristic features of the Sangam age are

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1. Manickam, V.Sp. The Tamil concept of Love, p. 206.
2. Varadarajan, M. Kuṟuntokai, c-ceḷvam, Foreward, p. 3.
3. The Tamil culture, Vol. I, No. I, February, 1952,

explained here, and as how Kuṟuntokai may be taken as a representative literature of that age.

One of the distinctive features of Sangam literature is the oneness or the universality it preaches throughout in its approach. The contemporary authors of twentieth century appreciate the universality and brotherhood of oneness in the passage from the book 'one world' by the American author, Wendel Wilkie: the line reading thus: 'In future our thinking must be world wide". But long before him, by the first century A.D., Kaṇiyaṉ Pūṅkuṉṟaṉ, a sangam poet preached in his poem,[1] the universality thus 'Yātum ūrē Yāvarum kēḷir' (*யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர்*). The English rendering of this line by Dr. POPE runs as: "Every village is my village; Everyman is my kinsman". Not only to the fellowmen they showed their affection and respect; but they loved even the inanimate things like the plant, the bird. the tree, the sea, the hill, the sun and the insect.

The chieftain Pāri is praised for giving away his chariot when he had happened to see the mullai creeper withering without a proper prop or support nearby to wind upon.[2] Likewise Pēkaṉ had given his shawl as a gift to a peacock shivering in cold weather.[3] There are innumerable instances like the above in Sangam literature. Rightly in the cultural heritage of the hoary past of the sangam age, the renaissance poet of this age, Subramanya Bharathi has sung a song in which he mentions the crow, the sparrow, the sea and the mountain all belonging to his community.[4]

I am giving a few examples of the sense of kinship, embracing aspects of Nature and Flora and Fauna. In a Naṟṟiṇai poem, a lady-love is said to have felt ashamed of speaking with her lover under the 'puṉṉai' tree because she considered it as her elder sister as it was planted and nourished by her mother.[5]

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1. Puṟa : 192. 2. Puṟa : 200. 3. Ibid : 145.
4. *'காக்கை குருவி எங்கள் ஜாதி, நீள் கடலும் மலையும் எங்கள் கூட்டம்'* 5. Naṟ : 172.

The literature which comes under the category of 'āṟṟuppaṭai' clearly portrays the idea of universal brotherhood and the tendency of treating fellowmen as equal to one's self even in a desolate state of life.

The heroine, in a Kuṟuntokai poem, in her utter grief exclaims to the ocean: "O Ocean! Your wail is heard even at dead of night, who is responsible for your immense measure of grief? (By whom have you been discarded?)[1]

The hero does not take any effort on his part to expedite the marriage with his lady-love. So there is a possible delay in the performance of the marriage. This fills the heart of the lady-love with immense grief. She pines away and tells her companion recollecting her first meeting with the hero. In her misery she says that it is upto him to keep up his promise. She also expresses in a melancholy way that there was none to bear witness to their secret courtship and she has to completely depend upon his mercy. She adds that there was a crane then on the bank of the bank of the strean, but the bird was keenly engaged in the look out for the 'āral' fish as its prey in the flowing water.[2]

The heroine is in a state of anxiety and despair when the hero is away from her for a short period in order to make necessary arrangements for marriage. In her extreme misery and grief she asks her companion how her lover forgot to send her a message, though not to her at least to the 'vēṅkai' tree in their garden which has been such great use to him during many nights when he come to meet her at night-trysts.[3]

The people of that age lived in close communion with Nature. Nature was their companion, guide and philosopher. The basic idea of dividing the Tamil land into four divisions indicates their ardent desire for a life with Nature. Nature

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1. யாரணங் குற்றனை கடலே—Kuṟu : 163.
2. Kuṟu : 25.
3. Kuṟu : 266.

forms the background for all the characters of the Akam poems. In short, Nature served as the stage where the people acted their parts.

The Tamil poets drew inspiration from Nature. They observed nature in close quarters and derived a good deal of knowledge from it. They took note of every flower, every animal and bird and hence their pictures are so accurate with details. In that kind of poetic treatment, the later day poetry lacks much. They had keen sense for sound, touch and mell of things, an alert mind to receive intimations from objects of Nature and a capacity or tact to see into the life of things.

Unlike the Neo-classical poets of English literature who very often used stock phrases, the sangam poets describe nature in minute detail and their appreciation of nature is to be seen from their word-pictures. There are abundant pen-pictures of mountains, forests, animals, birds trees, plants, flowers, fields, rivers, ocean and clouds which show their first hand acquintance with nature.

The Sangam poets were quite aware of the influence of nature on human beings. Here are a few examples from Kuṟuntokai. The lady-love who is in love with the hero of the hill is desperately in love with all the objects of Nature connected with the hero. She begins to love the hill, which is owned by her hero, with the clouds that pass over it, with the river that flows down the slope of the hill, with the flowers, plants and trees. Once the lady-companion asks the lady-love how she will bear the separation of her lover when he is far away from her for a short interval before marriage. The heroine replies as follows : "Just now I had a glance at his hill where there was such a heavy down-pour that the peacocks cry in thick groves and the pale-faced langurs with their little ones shiver in cold and fear. My companion, have a look at my fore-head. Is it still the same or perfect Let me know it my dear".[1]

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1. Kuṟu : 249

The heroine on looking at the hill of the hero gets some measure of relief. When it becomes invisible after sunset, she begins to lament upon it thus : "Hitherto I consoled myself simply by looking at his hill. But now it is evening and his hill appears to sink in darkness gradually like a ship that sinks in the sea step by step. I am now inconsolable".[1]

The heroine thanks her mother for her kindness towards her because she did not obstruct her in planting a plant in her garden which she had fetched from the stream that comes from the hill of the hero. She praised her mother that even the Heavens would not be an adequate reward for her great act of kindness.[2]

The heroine blames the stream running fast from the hills of the hero for its cruel deed of uprooting the plantain tree in its current since the tree was her only consolation during the absence of her lover.[3]

"Some impulses remain the same, taking the same course on the same occasions, from age to age, from pre-historic times until today"[4] One such impulse is love. Love is one of the perennial springs of poetry. It affords scope to the poets for varied originality in their mode of expression and the treatment of the theme.

"My love towards the hero is wider than this earth; higher than the sky and deeper than the sea".[5] These words are spoken by the heroine. In turn, the hero tells his lady-love that both their hearts have become united in love at first sight itself as the rain water got inseparably mixed up with the red soil on earth.[6]

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1. Kuṟu : 240.
2. Ibid : 361
3. Ibid : 327.
4. Richards, I.A., Principles of Literary criticism, p.191.
5. 'நிலத்தினும் பெரிதே வானினும் உயர்ந்தன்று
   நீரினும் ஆரள வின்றே' — Kuṟu : 3
6. Kuṟu ; 40.

The water-bird 'makaṉṟil' is noted for its continuous contact with its mate. Even the obstruction of a flower between them seem to them a separation for many years. So also is the union of the hero and the heroine on the earth. Only to discharge some duties they have taken different lives and different sex.

In order to avoid the desolate separation in all the births to come they want to breathe their last in the happy and perpetual union of love.[1]

The most predominant feature with the sangam poets is their originality. The expression of sangam poets are forceful and concrete to the point. There are no words without any meaning. In short, the sangam poets have taken proper care to choose the best words to be employed in their poems. 'Putting best words, in the best place, in the best order, of course forms good diction.

As an example, the oft-quoted poem from Kuṟuntokai may be taken. The hero is delighted by the tenderness and charm of his lady-love and enquiries the bee whether there is any flower known to it smelling as fragrant as the tresses of his sweetheart and begs the bee to give its opinion based on absolute truth.[2]

The Sangam poets are capable of bringing out the element of pathos in the style and expression of their poems.

One such instance is this :

"Puḷḷum pulampiṉa pūvum kūmpiṉa
kāṉaḻum pulampunaṉi uṭaittē vāṉamum
nammē pōlum mammart tāki
ellai kaḻiyap pulleṉ ṟaṉṟē
iṉṉum uḷanē tōḻi innilai
taṇṇiya kamaḻum ñāḻal
taṇṇan tuṟaivaṟku uraikkunarp peṟiṉē"[3]

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1. Kuṟu : 57
2. Ibid : 2
3. Ibid : 310

Here the heroine feels the pangs of separation in the evenings; the sight of the birds returning to their nests, the flowers closing their petals and the grove adjacent to the sea-shore appearing desolute increase her misery. The gloomy evening sky appears to her to be bewildered and suffering like herself; and so she hopes to survive if only someone who has a care for her life informed her hero of her miserable plight.

Simplicity and unequalled naturalness are the special features of sangam literature.

To cite but an example, reference may be made here to the poem 355 of this collection.

The difficiculties undergone by the lover to meet his lady-love in the nights during the course of clandestine meetings is described in this poem. It is a dark night with heavy rain. He has to walk a long distance to meet his sweetheart. When on seeing him at their door-step and at such a crucial darkness of a raining night, the lady-companion exclaims with astonishment and sympathy.

"The gathering clouds have enveloped the whole sky and the stars are not to be seen at all. The vast earth is covered with rain-water from the heavy downpour. The whole atmosphere is pitch dark and all are asleep. How did you notice this hamlet? O Lord of the hill, we are very much pained for the trouble that you have taken to come over her to met us".[1]

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1. 'பெயல்கன் மறைத்தலின் விசும்புகா ணலையே
நீர்பரந் தொழுகலி னிலங்கா ணலையே
எல்லை சேறலி னிருள்பெரிது பட்டன்று
பல்லோர் துஞ்சும் பானாட் கங்குல்
யாங்குவந் தனையோ வோங்கல் வெற்ப
வேங்கை கமழுமெஞ் சிறுகுடி
யாங்கறிந் தனையோ நோகோ யானே — Kuru : 355.

The sangam poets portray the life truly as it is. "While Virgil's shepherds are poetic fiction, the shepherds of Tamil land are of flesh and blood and are faithful portraits true to life".[1]

The rainy season has set in and the mullai blossoms. The heroine notices the mullai buds on the locks of the shepherds while they come to the village in the evening with milk and return to their folds carrying food with them for the night. So she laments that her hero has not come yet, although it is the season that he has promised to return.[2]

Sangam poetry does not indulge in the description of feminine beauty with all its details as it is very often done in the poems of a later age. The sangam poets sang about the feminine beauties only to an extent that they deemed it to be explanatory but restrained themselves from detailed description.[3] There are only a few poems in Kuṟuntokai where feminine physical features are mentioned but they are given in a decent language. We must always bear in mind the age of composition of such poems. Those were the days when both men and women dressed scantily and therefore the detailed descriptions of the different parts of the body would not have been considered decent. But we get several instances of comparative study like the comparison of eyes with flowers, the shoulders with bamboos, the thighs with the plantain stems, the hands with the 'kāntaḷ' flowers and the whole body with gold.

Here is an instance to illustrate this point from a poem[4] in Kuṟuntokai. Here the heroine has been described as having lotus-like eyes, golden body, bamboo - like shoulders.

Sangam poems are having a characteristic quality of being extremely concise, delinating magnificient word-

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1. Thaninayagam, Xavier, Nature in Ancient Tamil poetry, p. 10.
2. Kuṟu : 221.
3. Varadarajan, M., Kuṟuntokai-c-celvam, p. 4.
4. Kuṟu : 101.

pictures with great economy of language. The descriptions of the various trees, plants and flowers are extremely brief and often precise. The use of such descriptive words shows their efficacy in employing words. Especially simles drawn by them from Nature have a wide and universal application. Some of the examples which remind us of the Homeric double-adjectives are given below :

'kaṇaikkāl neytal'[1] (thick-stalked neytal)

'kamaḻpū meṉciṉai'[2] (fragrant flowered delicate cluster)

'maṇineṭum kuṉṟu'[3] (gem-like lofty mountain).

A few of the different kinds of shades either described or used in a comparison by the poets are as hereunder.

'iruḷtiṇintaṉṉa īrntaṇ koḻuniḻal'[4] (the shadow packed with dense darkness)

'pukar niḻal'[5] (inadequate shade)

'iṉṉiḻal'[6] (cooling shade)

'alkuniḻal'[7] (welcome shade)

'variniḻal'[8] (inadequate shade)

The brightness also is compared in the line : ''nilavuk kuvittaṉṉa veṇmaṇal'[9] (the sand-dune appearing as bright as the heaped moonlight).

Sangam poets have used various epithets in describing the north wind. In their expression they bring out the sentimental attitude of the heroine when she was deserted by her husband.

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1. கணைக்கால் நெய்தல் - kuṟu : 9.
2. கமழ்பூ மென்சினை - kuṟu : 10.
3. மணிநெடுங் குன்று - Ibid : 240.
4. இருள்திணிந் தன்ன ஈர்ந்தண் கொழுநிழல் - Ibid : 123
5. புகர் நிழல் - Ibid : 303
6. இன்னிழல் - Ibid : 5.
7. அல்குநிழல் - Ibid : 338.
8. வரிநிழல் - Ibid : 232.
9. நிலவுக் குவித்தன்ன வெண்மணல் - Ibid : 123.

'iṉṉātu eṟitarum vāṭai'[1] (the north wind that blows unpleasantly)

'tuyar kūr vāṭai'[2] (the north wind that aggravates misery)

'taṇvaral vāṭai'[3] (the north wind that chills)

'peruntaṇ vāṭai'[4] (the north wind that blows with extreme coldness).

The evening is described by the poets with much accuracy. The various epithets show the sentimental attitude of the heroine. Some of them are :

'ciṟupuṉ mālai[5] (the evening of misery and unpleasantness)

'kaiyaṟu mālai'[6] (the evening of distress and absolutely helpnessness)

'paiyuḷ mālai'[7] (the distressful evening)

'kaiyaṟa vanta paiyuḷ mālai'[8] (the evening of despair and distress)

The examples mentioned above suffice to show the great economy in words of the sangam poets and at the same time their poetic imagination and talent.

A poet who lacks proper imagination attempts to describe all that he sees diffusely and burdens the reader with words and words leading him no where; but a poet with fertility of thought and profundity of expression renders the very same service in a few pithy epithets and images.[9] Sangam poets belong to the latter category.

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1. இன்னாது எறிதரும் வாடை —Kuṟu : 110.
2. துயர்கூர் வாடை —Ibid : 103.
3. தண்வரல் வாடை —Ibid : 76.
4. பெருந்தண் வாடை —Ibid : 160.
5. சிறுபுன் மாலை —Ibid : 352.
6. கையறு மாலை —Ibid : 387.
7. பையுள் மாலை —Ibid : 172.
8. கைறய வந்த பையுள் மாலை—Ibid : 371.
9. Winchester, C.T., Some Principles of Literary criticism, p. 132.

Stopford Brooke observes: "There are two great subjects of poetry; the natural world and human nature. It is terrible business for poetry when it is wholly employed on men or wholly employed on nature."

Our ancient poets have been fully consciousness of the above dictum. 'Mutaṟporuḷ' or the primary topics; the 'karupporuḷ' or the objects of environment (the portrayal of the pictures of Nature) and the 'uripporuḷ' or the essential objects (conative object) are the predominant features of their poems. Even though the first two objects are not stressed in a poem, the third object which is essential to the subject-matter of poetry cannot be discarded. The 'uripporuḷ' of a poem is always the emotional experience of lovers. So it is obvious that our ancient poets are psychologists, as they describe accurately human feelings and passions of the lovere in their Akam poems. "What is really most interesting and important in your lives happens not to your body, but to your mind and soul. Men without imagination or sensitiveness can live through a life time of wonderful adventures, and at the end they are as poor as when they started."[1]

Describing nature is comparatively easy, but to paint the emotions of the mind is very difficult. Sangam poets are adepts in this line[2].

The young hero promises his lady-love that he would be back soon to celebrate the marriage after earning the required funds in a far-off land. But there is an unavoidable delay in his return. The lady-love becomes restless and pines away with grief. She spends many lonely and sleepless nights.

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1. Lyon, P.B.H. The Discovery of Poetry, p. 79.
2. 'புறத்தே தோன்றும் காட்சிகளைச் செய்யுட்களிற்
புனைந்து காட்டும்
ஆற்றலினும் அகத்தே தோன்றும் கருத்துக்களை
உணர்ச்சியும்
மெய்ப்பாடும் புலப்பட உரைக்கும் ஆற்றல் மிகவும்
சிறந்தது"
—Swaminatha Iyer, U.V., Kuṟu Nūlaraycci, p. 23.

On one such night when the whole of the surroundings is plunged in deep silence and sleep, she, herself is keeping awake in her misery and her grief is further aggravated by the soft blowing south breeze. She cries aloud thus: "Shall I dash against the wall? shall I hit myself? Or assuming some false reason or other, shall I start crying aloud, 'Ah! whoo?'. Or shall I raise an alarm to rouse up the villagers, who are ignorant of my love sickness which is further intensified by the soft south wind, who are sound asleep? I know not what to do?".[1]

This poem is from the pen of the famous poetess Avvaiyār. This needs no further comment since it portrays well the affliction of a heroine who is pathetically plunged in love-sickness.

So our ancient poets are experts in bringing out the feelings and passions that are constantly going on in the inner world of mind and heart.

It is not a rare feat to imagine the life exactly as it is: but poets imagine life as it might be; and then only their poems tinged with their fervid imagination become poetry, capable of providing inspiration and joy to all readers for all times.[2]

A hero comes to meet his lady-love at the night-tryst, overcoming all the obstables both from nature and man. He wants to continue his clandestine meetings without giving serious thought to getting married soon. The lady-companion feels the necessity of marriage to be celebrated in the immediate future. So she addresses the hero who once had come as usual to meet his sweetheart at the night tryst' that the female monkey after the death of its loving mate hands over the young kids to its kith and kin and commits

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1. Kuṟu : 28.
2. Abercrombie, L Principles of Literary criticism, p. 87.

suicide by falling down from the cleft of the mountain. So she requests him not to come anymore in the nights to meet her.[1]

This is not an incident that really happened. This is not described by the poet as it is, but is described how it might have happened.[2] This is what keats means by saying that 'poetry should surprise by a fine excess' the poets imagination is active, when their reason is asleep.[3]

Not mentioning any individual by name or by his caste etc., in Akam poems is a characteristic feature of the sangam age.[4] It was considered indecent to describe a hero or heroine by name in love poems. It will give a handle to the critics to compare them with historical persons and the prominence and the importance of the psychological aspect which is the fundamental basis of the theme of love would be lowered. The commentator Naccinārkkiniyar considers Neṭunalvāṭai, as not belonging to the category of Akam since the significant garland of the Pāṇṭiyā is mentioned in the poem and thus transgresses the rule of decency.

There is not even a single poem that we come across in the whole of Kuṟuntokai collection where we find the personal names of any hero or heroine. Further there was no rigid caste system (caste of birth) prevalent in the sangam age. As such the heroes and the heroines in all the five themes of love-aspect are named after their regions only, like verpaṉ, koṭicci etc., or their occupation like uḻavaṉ, uḻatti etc., There prevailed a complete universality regarding the caste and occupation. Each group was respected in its own way.

Scholars are of the opinion that universality is one of the reasons for the absence of an epic in early sangam age.

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1. Kuṟu : 58.
2. Bradley, A.C., Oxford Lectures on Poetry, p. 3.
3. Winchester, C.T. Some Principles of Literary criricism, p. 123.
4. மக்கள் நுதலிய அகனைந் திணையும்
சுட்டி ஒருவர் பெயர் கொளப் பெறாஅர்—Tol : 999.

"The absence of the epic is a symptom of the intellectual equality of the democratic caṅkam literature. All are equal in the eyes of the God of Truth, the man and the woman, the king and the beggar, the old and the young, the primitive hunter of the forest and the civilised minister of state, the Jain and the Buddhist, the devil dancer and the sage. All are equal in the temple of poetry, each in its return offering the outpouring of his heart the very life blood of truth. The poets of the caṅkam age come from all these groups."[1]

Ulōccaṉār, the author of four poems in Kuṟuntokai was a Jain[2] while Tērataraṉ, the author of a poem in Kuṟuntokai was a Buddhist.[3] Thus poets belonging to several religions contributed to sangam poetry and its rich cultural heritage. Decorum and decency in language is a characteristic feature of sangam poems even when the theme was sexual. Here is an example : A heroine has just than enjoyed the sexual union with her husband who had returned home that very night after fulfilling his duty in a distant land. But then she hears the cry of the cock heralding dawn. She feels extremely sorry, for she had to curtail her happiness in the company of her husband because the morning was approaching. On hearing the cock's clarion she pathetically utters that she was shocked. She goes on to think that the dawn has set in with a sword in its hand to separate her from the happy union of her husband.

"Kukkū veṉṟatu kōḻi yataṉetir
tuṭkeṉ raṉṟeṉ ṟūya neñcam
tōṭōy kātalarp pirikkum
vāḻpōl vaikaṟai vantaṉṟā leṉavē".[4]

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1. Meenakshisundaram, T.P., Tamil cuiture, Vol. I. No. 1, Feb. 1952.
2. Kuṟu : 175, 177, 205, 248.
3. Kuṟu : 195.
4. குக்கூ வென்றது கோழி யதனெதிர்
துட்கென் றன்றென் தூய நெஞ்சம்
தோடோய் காதலர்ப் பிரிக்கும்
வாள்போல் வைகறை வந்தன்றா லெனவே - kuṟu : 157.

The similes that are abundant in sangam literature are all of high standard and aptly artistic. They are simple, forceful and to the point. They discharge effectively their function of bringing the two objects of comparison nearer to our vision. One important point to be stressed here is that the poets have chosen the various objects for the comparison only from the objects that could be seen around them in the outer world. Only in the later age the imaginary things and illusory things that are not seen anywhere at all in this world have been used to draw a comparison.

To elucidate this, here is given a poem in Kuṟuntokai where the objects taken for comparison are restricted to only one region to which the poem belonged. The hero comes to meet his lady-love at the night-tryst by over coming all the difficulties on the way; But positively takes no steps to arrange for the marriage with his sweetheart. The lady-companion thinks that there is no point in allowing him to continue for ever the clandestine meetings. She wants to put off their meetings in order to make the hero feel the immediate necessity of marriage. So one day when the hero came to take leave from them after the usual clandestine meeting, she tells him thus : "O Lord of the hill country where on the slopes are noticed a wild growths of bamboo hedges, jack trees bearing fruits at its roots! Like the big jack fruit hanging on the thin bough, the lady's soul is very slender but her love for you is very great. Whoever except yourself may know this? May you arrange to marry her in the proper time".[1]

Here the important point is that the lady-companion has selected the two objects of comparison from the hilly region only. The hero is daily witnessing the natural picture. They are the objects which are real and known to him.

"ciṟukōṭṭup perumpaḻam tūṅkiyāṅkivaḷ
uyirtavac ciṟitu kāmamō peritē".

1. Kuṟu : 18.

There are as many as hundred and seventy two similes in Kuṟuntokai. In addition to this, there are many poems which are rich in uḷḷuṟai and Iṟaicci.

The hero has gone to a distant land to acquire enough money for the celebration of the marriage with his lady-love. But his absence could not be tolerated by the lady-love. So she says to her companion that a langur is rolling the eggs laid by a peacock in a rock-the rock being of her hero's. And finally she utters in a sarcastic way that his friendship has brought forth some goodness for her.[1]

Her idea is that the eggs laid by a peacock are not properly taken care of. So the langur is playing with it by rolling it on the rock. Likewise, she should be in the happy company of her lover; but he does not seem to have understood this as in the case of the peacock. Further, public gossip about her love-sickness was really heart rending.[2]

For the study of a past age, where there are no historical sources, sangam poems are of very helpful. We are left in a position entirely to depend upon sangam literature in constructing the ancient history of our Tamiland. If the poets of the sangam age might not have employed the historical events occasionally or purposely and intentionally in their poems, we would have been left completely in darkness. But luckily for us, the sangam poets have done yeoman service in the field of history of accounting and portraying the political life of the period.

In Kuṟuntokai collection, thirty one poems contain historical information where we find historical references in case of twenty five kings or chieftains, six places of historical interest, two rivers, one forest, nine villages or towns.

We get important information about the chieftains like Akutai, Añci, Atikaṉ, Aḷici, Āy, Eḷiṉi; Ori, Kaṭṭi, Koṅkar,

1. Kuṟu : 38.
2. Kuṟu : 38.

Kōcar, Naḷḷi, Naṉṉaṉ, Pāri, Pacumpūt Pāṇṭiyaṉ, Malaiyaṉ, Vaṭukar and Vēḷir. The river Kāvēri of South India and the River Son of north India are only the two rivers mentioned in Kuṟuntokai. Uṟaiyūr, Toṇḍi, Pāṭali, Maṟantai, Muḷḷūr and Vākaipparantalai are a few places which are mentioned in Kuṟuntokai.

Being very short in the collection of eight anthologies (omitting Aiṅkuṟunūṟu) Kuṟuntokai is of great value to the historians since it does not have any place for the narration of unnecessary exaggerated details. Moreover, "the value of Kuṟuntokai is augmented by the simplicity of the poems and their unequalled naturalness. Indeed it must be said that these poems do for South Indian history what Tacitus did for the history of Rome and must be considered specially valuable on this account".[1]

Sangam poems portray the life of that age. They present to us the social conditions of the age by describing with accuracy the religion, customs and manners, beliefs and superstitions. They unearth the supremacy of our ancient Tamils in the field of learning, literature, art, philosophy, culture and conduct. They give a vivid and decent picture, gently and sweetly about the domestic felicity of good old times. In this sense, it will not be deemed as an exaggeration, if we could say that the sangam poems are really a store-house of all the good things in life in those ancient times.

Kuṟuntokai represents the Sangam age in all aspects just referred to above. Full details have been given in the chapter entitled 'Social life of the ancient Tamils as depicted in Kuṟuntokai'.

Last but not the least the versification of Kuṟuntokai should be held in high esteem. Enough rhyme could be seen

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1. Arokiaswami, M. Journal of the Madras University Vol. No. 2, Jan, 1961.

in them. "Rhyme has an absolute charm for the ear; it is pleasant in itself."

"Vaikal vaikal vaikavum vārār
ellā vellai yellaiyum tōṉṟār"[1]

The first line is called 'muṟṟumōṉai' (முற்றுமோனை) or complete alliteration.

One of the eighteen didactic works, Nāladiyar has borrowed the above complete.

"Today they (Sangam poems) serve as beacon lights to guide modern poetry in the Tamil land. Above all, there is genuine poetry of a very high order which inspite of the inevitable changes in our outlook and in our life, thrills our very being and makes us look back with pride and joy at the poetic achievements of the ancient Tamils".[2]

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1 வைகல் வைகல் வைகவும் வாரார். எல்லா வெல்லை யெல்லையுந் தோன்றார் - Kuṟu : 285.

2 Vaiyapuri Pillai, S History of Tamil language and Literature, p. 46.

V. HISTORICAL SETTINGS IN KURUNTOKAI

(i) How far can kuruntokai be taken as a source of history?

An invaluable mine of information is found buried in Sangam literature. It is rich in information about the kings and chieftains, their achievements and failures in political, cultural and social life. The sources of information relating to historical data of the time may be obtained in more than one way. Literary works of the age, authenticated commentaries on those works by later day commentators, foreign testimonies like the Ceylon historical records as embedded in the-Mahavamsa, the Rajavali and Rajaratnakari, the inscriptional evidences, and references in contemporary and post-contemporary Sanskrit literature. Among these, 'the chief source of information is the continuous tradition as embodied in the Tamil literary works of an original character'.[1] While Prof. V.R.R. Dikshitar is of the view that the early Tamil literature can well be treated as a source of information in constructing the early history of Tamilnad, Prof. K A. Nilakanta Sastri lays much stress on the importance of inscriptional evidences as 'the most copious and authentic source of South Indian History'.[2] But some scholars feel that the inscriptional evidences are only secondary in

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1. Ramachandra Dikshitar, V.R., Studies in Tamil literature, p. 2.
2. A History of South India, p. 13.

character since they are all inscribed to please the then reigning king and merely give panegyric accounts of that monarch.[1]

The important fact about the historical references given by the Sangam poems is that they agree with the accounts written by contemporary western writers like Pliny, Ptolemy and Strabo. Further, the poets of the Sangam age 'did not have any axe to grind, any ulterior motive to serve' in the historical references in their poems. The Sangam poems are remarkable for their simplicity and unequalled naturalness. If we neglect them, we would be letting slip one important source for the knowledge of the early history of our land. So we have to depend mainly upon the Sangam poems for constructing the history of our past. This can be supplemented by inscriptional references.

To what extent can Kuṟuntokai be considered as a source of historical information of the early period, is our problem. It is said that the collection of Kuṟuntokai was effected by Pūrikkō. But we do not know under whose patronage this was done. According to some, Pūrikkō was Cērā chieftain and his principality was Pūri (identified with North Malabar).[2] Some other scholars emphasise that Pūrikkō and Uppūrik Kuṭikkiḻār should be considered to mean only one person and possibly the father of the compiler of Akanāṉūṟu, Uruttiracaṉmaṉ.[3] Kuṟuntokai has been very frequently quoted by the commentators of the later-age and only hundred and sixty eight poems were left without being quoted by any commentator starting from Aṭiyārkkunallār and ending with Vaitiyanāta Tēçikar. Further it is believed, that both Pērāciriyar and Naccinārkkiniyar wrote excellent commentaries on this collection.

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1. Arokiaswami, M., A. Journal of the Madras University, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, January, 1961.
2. Ramachandra Dikshitar, V.R., Studies in Tamil literature, p. 27.
3. Vaiyapuri Pillai, S., Ilakkiya Tīpam, pp. 94-95.

Kuṟuntokai reveals in natural descriptions and is noted for the genuineness of its compositions. We do not find figurative statements and exaggerated accounts in the Kuṟuntokai as in later-day works. The accounts and descriptions referred to by it, are all true and original in character. Although compared with the quantity of historical material contained in Naṟṟiṇai, it is bound to be less and still less than what is found, in Akanāṉūṟu, the quality and nature of the historical information it contains is noway less valuable. Further, an important point should be borne in mind. That is, the poets who are inclined to introduce historical references will write lengthy poems. When one poet describes elaborately the achievements of a king he may be proved to commit the error of exaggeration. We cannot account for all the details that we come across as the true achievements of the kings in Pattuppāṭṭu and Patiṟṟuppattu which are fairly lengthy poems when compared with the poems of Naṟṟiṇai, Kuṟuntokai, Aiṅkuṟunūṟu and Akanāṉūṟu collections, are all fully true and beyond any exaggeration, whereas in the case of the poems of the other collections just referred to, all cannot be taken as real in the manner and the method of their description. A poet who is composing a small poem of a few lines may not possibly give an exaggerated account about his patron since the length of the poem prevents him in indulging in hyperboles. So, Kuṟuntokai can be taken without much hesitation as a good source of historical information of the Sangam-epoch.

Mr. K.N. Sivaraja Pillai who doubts the very existence of the Sangam, says, "as far as the Naturalistic period of Tamil literature is concerned, a wholly different treatment should, in my opinion, be accorded. The works which go into this class show the human mind in the most unsophisticated stage of its growth. ..... Poems like-Kuruntokai, Narrinai, Agananuru and Purananuru are not based on Aryan models or inspired by Aryan ideals in their plan or execution;... ..... The Naturalistic class of Tamil literature must therefore be

considered as containing works exhibiting native Tamil genius in all its Purity and integrity with little or nothing of any exotic strain in it".[1]

The fidelity to reality and loyalty to truth are fundamentals to the historian when examining and using literature as source of historical information. Kuṟuntokai poems serve this purpose 'par-excellence'. The Sangam poets are keen observers of nature as evidenced from their treatment of various aspects of nature such as the earth, sky, seasons, flora and fauna. Not even a small insect like the ant was lost sight of since a Kuṟuntokai poet compares the outlets of a fountain to the mounts of an ant hill.[2]

The historical value of the Kuṟuntokai is very great since it is one among the earliest of the anthologies preserving the earliest historical traditions of Tamilnad.

The details of historical material of the Kuṟuntokai may now be gone into.

(ii) The historical information contained in kuṟuntokai

In all the four hundred poems in Kuṟuntokai, historical information is available only in thirty one poems.[3] Two other poems make us infer something about the political life of those days.[4] Even in this, the whole of the poem is not to be looked upon as containing fragments of history. A few lines in these poems sparkle some flashes casting a ray of light on history. So here and there we find scattered information in the Kuṟuntokai.

Paraṇar, who is second to none of the Sangam poets in giving the historical data in his poems, has contributed one

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1. The chronology of the early Tamils, pp. 12-13.
2. 'எறும்பி அளையின் குறும்பல் சுனைய'—Kuṟu : 12.
3. Kuṟu : 11, 15, 19. 34, 59, 73, 75, 80, 84, 89, 91, 100, 116, 128, 138, 163, 164, 166, 196, 198, 199, 210, 258, 260, 276, 292, 293, 298, 312, 328, 393.
4. Kuṟu : 225, 242.

third of historical information in the Kuṟuntokai He brings out in a poem the kind generosity of the chieftain Evvi. There are three poems in Akanāṉūṟu mentioning Evvi as a liberal patron[1]. He was the chief of the Potiyil hills. He liberally rewarded the bards, who were experts in music and Yāḻ, with flowers made of gold. He belonged to the Vēḷir community. Bards had to face dire situations after his death since there was none to patronise them.[2]

Naṉṉaṉ is mentioned in two poems of Paraṇar in this collection.[3] Naṉṉaṉ is described as an extremely cruel chieftain. He ordered the execution of a girl who had eaten an unripe mango-floating in a stream when she went to bathe in it. It was surmised by the king that the mango might have fallen from the king's mango grove and possibly from his (king's) guardian tree. For this small offence, she was executed despite the offer of eighty one elephants and her equivalent weight in gold as compensation for condonation of the offence.[4] (if offence it was). For his cruel act of giving capital punishment he has been blamed vehemently by the poet who condemns him to hell. In another, poem, it is stated by the same poet that the Kosars made overran his territory after cutting off his guardian mango tree.[5]

It now becomes clear that the cutting off the guardian tree was a preliminary step to war. Here it is said that the Kosars had come with a scheme to defeat Naṉṉaṉ. A lady-companion says that the lady may have some secret longing to get married to the hero as of the Kosars who successfully defeated Naṉṉaṉ. The Kosars are - described as 'oṉṟu moḻik kōcar', which means that they were accustomed to speak nothing but truth. Avvaiyār's poem in the very same collection emits some more light on this point.[6] She refers to the Kosars as 'Nālūrkkōcar', which may mean that Kosars

1. Aka : 115, 126, 266.
2. Kuṟu : 19. 3. Ibid : 73, 292. 4. Kuṟu : 292.
5. Kuṟu : 73.
6. Kuṟu : 15.

belonged to Nālūr or that they belonged to four villages. The latter version may not be taken as true since 'Nālu' is the colloquial form of 'Nāṉku' (four). This place Nālūr has been identified with the place of the same name near Namakkal in Salem district. But no historian so far has come to any definite conclusion. For example, Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar is of the opinion that 'the Kosars were the Kosakaras of the Ramayana and the Khasas of the Mudra Rakshasa' and that 'modern Assam is the ancient kingdom of Kosakaras'.[1] Mr. V. Kanakasabhai thought that the Kosars were Kushanas.[2] Prof. P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar opines that 'the Kosar were inhabitants of the Tulu country. The Kosar from the Tulu land kept making incursions into the Kongu land and founded Coimbatore. (Koyambuttur, the new town of the Kosar).[3] Prof. V.R R. Dikshitar also locates the Kosars in the Tulu country.[4] He identifies the Kosar with the Satiyaputras of the Asokan inscriptions. While - Prof. K.A.N. Sastri accepts this identification of the Kosars as Satiyaputras[5] the late lamented scholar in Tamil, Mahavidwan R. Raghavaiyengar mentions the Kosars as having been settled in the South along with the Vēḷirs from Kashmir long before the annals of recorded history.[6] He adds that the kosars lived at first in the Kongu country and later on settled in the northern portion of the Malabar and the word 'Nāṉmoḻi nāṭu', which is stated as the place of then final settling down is a place near Namakkal in the district of Salem.

Avvaiyār mentions of Kosars as judges, who decided upon the various matters relating to particular villages. The drums will be beating and the chanks will be blowing, when the Kosars would take their seats under the shade of the old

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1. Beginnings of South Indian History, p. 94.
2. The Tamils 1800 year ago, p. 51 .
3. History of the Tamils, pp. 521–522.
4. Indian culture, p. 493.
5. A History of South India, p. 83.
6. Kosar, a Cirṟārāycci, p. 12.

banyan tree, to decide upon the cases in the common place of the village, called Potiyil.[1] From this, it is evident clearly that the Kosars were noted for their impartiality and truthfulness.

About Naṉṉaṉ, it is seen from Akanāṉūṟu that he was killed by the Cērā Nārmuṭiccēral in the battle fought at Vākaipparantalai.[2] But at the same time it is to be noted that Akanāṉūṟu describes four Naṉṉaṉs.[3] So, we are not quite sure whether the Naṉṉaṉ mentioned in Kuṟuntokai was the person killed by the Cērā. He was possibly one of the Vēḷir chieftains of the Sangam age.

Poṟaiyaṉ is mentioned by Paraṇar as the lord of the Kollihills. A deity is described in this connection as living in the hills. It is said further, to have attracted the passers-by its superb beauty and dignity. It was an idol of exquisite workmanship made by an eminent sculptor.[4] The image infused terror into the minds of the persons, who gazed at it even once, because of its deep set dark eyes. Poṟaiyaṉ is mentioned as decorating himself with many costly jewels. The same poet in another poem tells us that Tondi was his sea port and he was rich in chariots.[5] He was the ruler of the west coast. Later on, this principality was annexed by the Cērās.

Kapilar mentions the chieftain Malaiyaṉ in two poems of this collection.[6] In one poem he is praised for his gallantry and bravery in winning battles. He is said to have weilded a strong spear in his huge muscular hand.[7] He is said to have been in possession of the forest 'Muḷḷūr' and a red-spear in

1. Kuṟu : 15.
2. Aka : 199.
3. Ibid : 15, 142, 258, 297, 356.
4. Kuṟu : 89.
5. 'திண்டேர்ப் பொறையன் தொண்டி முன்றுறை' - Ibid : 128.
6. Ibid : 198, 312.
7. 'அடுபோர், எஃகு விளங்கு தடக்கை மலையன் கானத்து' - Ibid : 198.

his hand in another poem.[1] He is identified with Malaiyamān Tirumuṭikkāri (by later Sangam poets) who ruled over portions of the present South Arcot District, with his capital at Tirukkoilur.

One of the last order of seven patrons of the Sangam age was Ori. The chieftain Ori is spoken of as the chief of the Kollihills in the western coast tract in one of the two poems in Kuṟuntokai.[2] Kapilar mentions him as the symbol of the highest achievement in - archery.[3] Paraṇar mentions him as owning a forest, which has not been named. He praises him for his liberality and for the possession of strong chariots.[4] His name is also mentioned in several poems of the Eṭṭuttokai collection.[5]

Pāri is the well-known patron of the Sangam age. He is one among the seven liberal patrons. The region of Paṟambu hills belonged to him. He is a chieftain known both for his bravery and genorosity. A Kuṟuntokai poem mentions that the water in the pool of his Paṟambu hills would be very cool in the month of 'Tai'.[6]

All the above mentioned chieftains belonged to the Vēḷir family, which is mentioned in Kuṟuntokai as a very ancient one.[7]

"toṉṟumutir vēḷir kuṉṟūrk kuṇātu
taṇperum pauvam".

It is seen from this poem that the people called Vēḷr lived in Kuṉṟūr on the east coast and the sea was very close to their habitation. They are believed to be the first cultivators

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1 'செவ்வேல் மலையன் முள்ளூர்க் கானம்' - Ibid : 312.
2. Ibid : 100, 199.
3. 'வல்வில் ஓரி கொல்லிக் குடவரை' - Ibid : 100.
4 'திண்டோ், கைவள் ளோரி கானம்' - Ibid : 199.
5. Naṟ : 6, 52, 265, 320; Aka : 209. Puṟa : 158.
6. பாரி பறம்பில் பனிச்சு னைத்தெண்ணீர்
தைஇத் திங்கள் தண்ணிய தரினும் - Kuṟu : 196.
7. தொன்றுமுதிர் வேளிர் குன்றூர்க் குனது தன்பெரும் பெளவம் - Ibid : 164.

known to Indian history and from a Puṟam poem by Kapilar we learn that they migrated from north to south in very remote time.[1]

Vaṭukar are said to have lived beyond the northern boundary of Tamilnad. The term Vaṭukar was used to denote the northern kings of that age in general. They are said to have been frequently defeated by the southern kings. There is a reference to a lady-love expressing her fears about the possible dangers of undertaking a journey into their kingdoms, where her lord had gone for businees. Yet she determines to go). She refers, that Vaṭukar wear kullaikkaṇṇi on their heads and their domain lay to the north of the kingdom of kaṭṭi, People in both these kingdoms are said to be speaking languages other than Tamil.[2] Kaṭṭi is mentioned in this poem along with Vaṭukar by Māmūlaṉār, a contemporary of Paraṇar. Kaṭṭi is praised for his valour in archery.

Paṭumarattu Mōcikīraṉār provides us with important information relating to north and south Indian history. He mentions the flourishing city Pāṭali, popularly known as Pataliputra on the banks of the River Son, where the poet says, the white-tusked elephants were taking a bath[3] and he describes the city' Poṉmali Pāṭali' showing that the city was rich in gold. Māmūlaṉār in an Akam poem mentions that the famous northern kings, the Nandas hid their treasures of gold under the waters of the river of Pāṭali[4] The Nandas ruled over - north India during the third century. B.C. This historical reference serves more than one purpose. First, it tells us that the people of South India had an intimate

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1. Puṟa : 201.
2. Kuṟu : 11.
3. 'வெண்கோட்டு யானை சோணை படியும்; பொன்மலி பாடலி' - Kuṟu : 75.
4. Aka : 265

knowledge of the north and vice versa. Secondly, the reference is of immense value in fixing the date of Kuṟuntokai poems, as we know the chronology of the Nandas for certain. Pāṭali is now identified with Patna of today. Again a poem of - Avvaiyār, says that the people of the south were very well acquainted with the north. In it a lady-love mentions about the Mount Himalayas as 'Pēricai Imayam,[1] - the glorious Himalayas.

The tribe Toṇṭaiyar is mentioned in this collection as having the hills of Vēnkaṭam for their northern boundary. But there is no reference about Toṇṭaimāṉ, Iḷantiraiyaṉ the hero of Porunar-āṟṟuppaṭai, one of the ten Idylls. Here in this poem, the Tiraiyar are mentioned as noted specially for their elephantry and chariots. The elephants are described as advance-guard in the invasions of enemy territories. Their kingdom was surrounded by the hills.[2]

Atikaṉ is mentioned as the able commander-in-Chief of the forces of Pacumpūṇ Pāṇṭiyaṉ. He was defeated and killed by the Kongars in the battle field at Vākaipparantalai. Because the Kongars were good swordmen, they won a victory and they rejoiced over their victory.[3] It is believed that famous chieftain Atikamāṉ of Tagatur of a later period was from the family of Atikaṉ, and he might have entered possibly into a marriage alliance with Añci since we find the name of the patron, Avvaiyār as Atikamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci in Puṟanāṉūṟu. Avvaiyār speaks of the glory of Añci in a Kuṟuntokai poem. She says that his patronage of poets was generous and continuous. She rightly compares his hands with the unstinting rain. Further, Añci is stated to have owned strong elephant forces and chariots. His foes are described as shivering with terror on hearing his name.[3] Three of the Akam poems speak out the glory of this chieftain Añci.[4]

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1. 'பேரிசை இமயம்' - Kuṟu : 158.
2. Kuṟu : 158. 3. Ibid : 393. 3. Ibid : 91.
4. Aka : 115, 352, 372.

There are some other chieftains who are referred to in Kuṟuntokai. Arumaṉ is one among them. A poem refers to him as Āti-Arumaṉ, ruling from Mūtūr (the ancient or old place.)[1] Except this reference, we find no other information regarding him in Sangam works.

Akutai is another chieftain, mentioned in a poem of this collection. He supplied sweet toddy to the bards and poets who visited him. Akavaṉmakaḷir were rewarded richly with female elephants when they sang the glory of Akutai.[2]

Four of the Akam poems exclusively refer to the generosity of Akutai.[3]

Aḷici and his son Cēntaṉ are jointly mentioned by Paraṇar. Both of them were chieftains of Arcot and reputed for their elephant corps. Aḷici is said to have been the leader of many young swordsmen who were hell to their foes. They ranked first in the field of - hunting.[4]

Āy is one of the well-known chieftains of the Sangam epoch. Although Naṟṟiṇai,[5] Akanāṉūṟu[6], and Puṟanāṉūṟu[7] poems describe him in detail, only a passing reference has been given about him by the poet Mōcikīraṉ. He wore anklets on his feet and Potiyil hills belonged to him.[8] The great geographer Ptolemy says 'that one Aivi was ruling in the country which included cape comorin and Mount Bettigo'.[9]

The above reference of Ptolemy concurs with the same idea found in the Kuṟuntokai. This proves the faithfulness to truth and accuracy that characterised the poets of the Kuṟuntokai.

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1. 'ஆதி அருமன் மூதூர் அன்ன' - Kuṟu : 293.
2. Kuṟu : 298.
3. Aka : 76, 96, 113, 208. 4. Kuṟu : 258.
5. Naṟ : 167, 237. 6. Aka : 69, 152, 198.
7. Puṟa : 127 to 135, 158, 240, 241.
8. 'கழல்தொடி ஆஅய் மலைதவழ் பொதியில்' - Kuṟu : 84.
9. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., A History of South India, p. 116.

One among the seven patrons of the last Order is Eḷiṉi. Avvaiyār tells us, that he recovered his cattle from his enemies after a successful military march over them. He was having many spears.[1]

The chieftain Kuṭṭuvaṉ belonging to the Cērā race is mentioned as ruling from Marantai on the west coast. Marantai is mentioned in Kuṟuntokai as a place of joy for victorious soldiers of Kuṭṭuvaṉ and a place of terror for his enemies.[2]

The celebrated poetess Kākkaipāṭiṉiyār mentions the chieftain Naḷḷi, having many strong chariots. She adds that cows' ghee of his principality was the best available in the land[3].

Ammūvaṉ gives a small hint about the Pūḻiyars. They ruled over the Pūḻi country and were in possession of many goats.[4]

Paraṇar mentions the chieftain Viccikkō. He is praised for his archery. He fought with some kings, at Kuṟumpūr and his soldiers returned victorious from the battle-field with uproarious joy.[5]

'Aralaikkuṉṟam' is mentioned by the poet Mōcikīraṉār as belonging to a patron, who with genorosity patronised the musicians, drummers and bards. The name of the patron is not given.[6] The poet Kollaṉ Aḷici just mentions a hillock called Ēḻil He mentions merely the name of the hill and nothing more.[7] The Potiyil hills are noted for 'kāntaḷ' and 'vēṅkai' flowers.

Iḷaṅkīraṉ refers to the city Uṟantai as the flourishing city of the Cōḻās. 'Vaḷaṅkeḻu Cōḻar uṟantaip peruntuṟai'[8]. This

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1. Kuṟu : 80. 2. Ibid : 34.
3. Kuṟu : 210. 4. பூழியர் சிறுதலை வெள்ளைத்தோடு பரந்தன்ன - Kuṟu : 163. 5. Ibid : 328.
6. Ibid : 59. 7. எம்மில் அயலது ஏழில் உம்பர் - Ibid : 138
8. வளங்கெழு சோழர் உறந்தைப் பெருந்துறை-Ibid: 116

statement agrəes with the observation made by Periplus. "He mentions Arasuru - (Uraiyur) as the place to which were sent all the pearls gathered on the coast and from which were exported muslins called Argaritic"[1]. This city Uṟaiyūr is always described by the Sangam poets as a city noted for justice.[2] This place is identified with the present suburban village, Uṟaiyūṟ, near Trichy.

The poet Kollikkoṟṟaṉ refers to a certain king and his just rule.[3] Kapilar mentions a king who had forgotten the help rendered by somebody in getting a throne.[4] Kings of those days used to send suitable persons to distant places on political missions. They used chariots for their journeys.[5]

Kūṭalūr Kiḷār also mentions the sea-side city Marantai, which belonged to the Cērās.[6] It is seen already that Marantai belonged to the Cērā feudatory of Kuṭṭuvaṉ.[7]

On the whole, Kuṟuntokai provides us with historical and geographical information in respect of twentyfive rulers, be they kings or chieftains, six hills, two rivers, one forest and nine villages and towns.

THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF THE PERIOD

The kings are usually noted for their just rule. Only about one of the chieftains called Naṉṉaṉ, we hear a different story. The punishment ordered by him to the girl who had eaten an unripe mango from the stream is very cruel.

The territory was divided into Nāṭu, Ur, Cēri and Kuṭi.[8] Beyond the northern boundary of Tamilnad, different languages were spoken by the people. The Tamils called their territories as 'moḻi peyar tēyam'. Kaṭṭi, Vaṭukar and others ruled over those territories. Kapilar criticises the

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1. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., A History of South India, p. 135.
2. அறங்கெழு நல்லவை உறந்தை அன்ன - Aka 93.
3. முறையுடை யரசன் செங்கோல் அவையத்து - Kuṟu : 276. 4. Kuṟu : 225. 5. Ibid : 242.
6. Ibid : 166. 7. Ibid : 34.
8. நாட்டின் நாட்டின் ஊரின் ஊரின் குடிமுறை குடிமுறை தேரின் - Ibid : 130,

king, who had forgotten the timely help rendered by his friends in ascending the throne that fell vacant. The king was having his councillors to help him in the fields of administration and justice. They were noted for their amazing wisdom truthfulness. An interesting thing that we note from a Kuṟuntokai poem is that a hero tells the lady-companion that he finds no other go except to represent his case before the council of the king.[1] This shows that the king was the source of all justice and final court of appeal.

People of those days thought that the cruel and wicked king would go definitely to hell. In reparation of punishment elephants and gold equal in weight to the culprit were given. There was capital punishment also.

Each king had his own guardian tree and guarded it with great care from his enemies. Cutting off the guardian tree was one of the preliminary indications of impending war. Four kinds of armies are mentioned in Kuṟuntokai, the elephant, the horse and the foot-soldiers. The foot-soldiers were distinguished as swordsmen, spearsmen, and bowmen with shields. The army was mostly commanded by the kings. Sometimes the Commander-in-Chief took charge of it. He was awarded the title 'ēṉāti', since we find the name of the poet of the poem 156, in our collection as 'Pāṇṭiyaṉ Ēṉāti Neṭuṅkaṇṇaṉ'. The kings, expected the help of some of the neighbouring kings and chieftains in their invasions. The elephant corps were greatly employed in the ware. It was considered praiseworthy and a challenge to heroism to win over the elephants in the battlefield. Even death in fighting with the army of elephants was considered as a meritorious act.

The preliminary to war was the cattle-raid. The contending forces fought openly in a right manner. No fraudulent means were adopted to win battles. Avvaiyār describes the war fought in a good way as 'nukampaṭak-kaṭattal'. The soldiers drank toddy before marching to the battle-field and

1. முறையுடை யரசன் செங்கோ லவயத்து—Kuṟu : 276

as well as after the victory. The victorious soldiers would make a hell of noise when they happened to completely defeat their enemies. The drums would be beaten by the drummers to signify the victory.

Some of the poets of the Kuṟuntokai collection possessed a high degree of historical sense. For instance Aricil Kiḷār is mentioned as the author of the poem 193 in Kuṟuntokai. He is the author of the eighth decad of the Patiṟṟuppattu on Takaṭūr Eṟinta Peruñcēral Irumpoṟai. Avvaiyār who composed fifteen poems in this collection has sung of many kings and chieftains in Puṟanāṉūṟu. The author of the poem, 352 in Kuṟuntokai is Kaṭiyalūr Uruttiraṅkaṇṇaṉār. He composed Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai on Toṇṭaimāṉ Iḷantiraiyaṉ and Paṭṭiṉappālai in praise of the great Cōḷā monarch of the Sangam age, Karikālā. Kapilar, who ranks first in his contribution of twentyeight poems in this collection has sung the glory of Celvakkaṭuṅkō Vāḷiyātaṉ in the seventh decad of the Patiṟṟuppattu in addition to many other kings and chieftains in other anthologies. The author of the poem 210 of Kuṟuntokai Kākkaipāṭiṉiyār Nacceḷḷaiyār is also the author of the sixth decad on Ātukōṭpāṭṭuc Cēralātaṉ in Patiṟṟuppaṭṭu. Kōpperuñ Cōḷaṉ was the great king of the Cōḷā dynasty. Nakkīrar's contribution to this collection is seven poems. He is the author of Neṭunalvāṭai, the hero being Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ, the Pāṇṭiyā, who won the battle at Talaiyālaṅkāṉam. Paraṇar composed the fifth decad on Kaṭal Piṟakkōṭṭiya Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ and his share to this collection is seventeen poems. Māṅkuṭi Marutaṉ is the author of Maturaikkāñci on Pāṇṭiya Netuñceḻiyaṉ. Peruṅkuṉṟūr Kiḷār is the author of the ninth decad in praise of Kuṭakkō Iḷaṅcēral Irumporai. He is the author of the poem 338 in Kuṟuntokai.

In all these respacts, Kuṟuntokai is of immense value in constructing the early history of Tamilnad. Since the descriptions of historical allusions in the poems are all reliable and Original in character and free from unnecessary exaggeration of incidents. So, from the stand point of the historian, Kuṟuntokai has an unique place in Sangam literature.

VI. THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE ANCIENT TAMILS AS DEPICTED IN KURUNTOKAI

It is said that 'Literature is an expression of life through the medium of language'. Poetry, according to wordsworth, 'is the spontaneous overflow of powerful fealings' of a poet and according to Matthew Arnold, 'it is the criticism of life'. The-literature of a particular period reflects the life of the people and represents the various trends of the age in general. Since, language is 'the mirror of people's minds', it necessarily follows that the writings of a certain period or age preserve and represent the passions, feelings and sentiments, ideas and ideals, tendencies and beliefs, customs and manners of that particular period. 'Literature' says Alfred Lyall, 'may be employed by the critic and the historian as a delicate instrument for analysis, for investigating the psychology of the man and of his period, for laying bare the springs of thought and action which underlie and explain history'.[1]

According to this statement, the Tamil literature of the Sangam age may yield sufficient information for constructing social history of ancient Tamils. It is to be remembered that Sangam literature does not exaggerate the accounts of the life of the people of those days. They give us a vivid and faithful picture of the social and cultural life of the people.

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1. Ramachandra Dikshitar, V.R., Studies in Tamil Literature, p. 227.

"Literature embalms the culture, the ideas and the ideals of the people of the age in which it is produced, and it is in its-literary works that the springs of thought and actions of the period stand revealed. So apart from the literary interest of the poems, they are a mine for reconstructing the life of the Tamils centuries ago".[1] Kuṟuntokai is a good example to illustrate this view of Mr. J.V. Chelliah.

Sangam poetry reveals the customs and manners of the people of the epoch. Ancient Tamils were in intimate contact with Nature and their lives were moulded and influenced by Nature. The influence and impact of natural environment on love and its various facts was remarkable. So the Sangam poets described the feelings of joy and sorrow by blending external nature with those feelings. Kuṟuntokai poems are of great value in constructing the social history of the-Sangam age. Though the poems of Kuṟuntokai are short in length, we can construct a picture of the life, the customs and manners of ancient Tamils from them. So let us go into a detailed study of the poems.

The status of women

Due prominence was given to women in the Sangam age. Their different features are described in great detail in a number of poems in Kuṟuntokai. Women helped to make social life lively by participating freely in social activities. They enjoyed freedom of movement in public. The description of clandestine life of ladies throws light on the degree of freedom enjoyed by them.

Marriage and marriage customs

The Kaḷavu or the clandestine method of love was widely prevalent among the Tamils of the Sangam age. The lady-love envies the kindness and freedom shown to young ladies of her own age by their respective mothers by encouraging

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1. Pattuppāṭṭu, Translation, p. 2.

secret courtship.[1] In case where parents were against the choice of a lover by their daughter, usually the girl eloped with her lover.

The Tamils believed in the dictum of Shakespeare that "Hanging and wiving go by destiny". They call this unifying destiny by the name 'pāl'. Pēricāttaṉāṟ in one of his poems in Kuṟuntokai uses this word in the line, 'pāl varaintu amaital allatu'.[2] These poems say that the persons were entirely strangers in one case and persons familiar to one another even from their childhood in another case.

In one case, the hero tells his lady-love after the very first meeting that although their nativity and parentage were different and were strangers till then, their hearts had became united in love inseparably as the rain water with the red soil.[3] This is a clear indication of the fact that it was not necessary that lovers should have known each other previously.

In another case, an on looker in a desert sees a couple about to elope and he exclaims: "This hero and the lady-love engaged themselves in a harmless and childish prank of seizing each other's locks of hair in their childhood and did not leave each other's hair even at the intervention of their respective foster-mothers. O, Destiny! You have brought forth their unity like the two garlands of flowers intertwined with one another. You have done a good thing".[4] From this statement, it is evident that the lovers were known to each other previously.

Every marriage was not necessarily preceded by secret courtship. The 'notumalar varaivu' or the practice of the intervention of the strangers asking for the girl in marriage show that marriages without the consummation of love were

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1. அலையாத் தாயரொடு நற்பா லோரே—Kuṟu : 246.
2. Kuṟu : 366.
3. Ibid : 40.
4. Kuṟu : 229.

also prevalent. But the commentator of Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ says that the marriage of the 'kaḷavu' method is of special significance.[1]

Marriage ritual

'Karaṇam' means 'a sign of marriage', a sign indicating the passing of a girl from virginity to wifehood. Before marriage a heroine wears anklets.[2] When the marriage is fixed, she removes these anklets. This function of removing the anklets before marriage is referred to as 'cilampukaḻi nōṉpu'.

A study of Kuṟuntokai poems reveal that the parents of the hero usually approved his choice because we do not come across any reference to conflicts between the hero and his parents on the choice of a bride. So, the hero's party approached the parents of the lady-love for the performance of the marriage. We get this reference in a Kuṟuntokai poem where the grey-haired elders speak to heroine's parents, the terms of marriage and they agree.[3] The hero's party are described as wearing turbans and having a stick in their hands and uttering the word 'naṉṟu, naṉṟu' to express their satisfaction and joy over the matrimonial alliance. The poet Ammūvaṉ tells us the acceptance of the parent's of the heroine to the marriage proposal of the hero's side as 'urimai ceppiṉar'.[4] This shows that the heroine becomes the hero's own entirely after the marriage.

Kuṉṟiyaṉār emphasizes that the parents of the girl usually approved their daughter's choice in life. The lady-companion

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1. களவின்வழி நிகழாதேயும் உண்டு உலகக் கற்பு;
அஃது இத்துணைச் சிறப்பின்று—p. 186.
2. தொடியோள் மெல்லடி மேவவுஞ் சிலம்பே—Kuṟu : 7.
3. நம்ஊர்ப் பிரிந்தோர்ப் புணர்ப்போர் இருந்தனர்—
Kuṟu : 146.
4. உருமிசைப் புணரி யுடைதகுந் துறைவர்க்கு
உரிமை செப்பினர் நமரே—Ibid : 351.

tells the lady-love that she need not worry since her parents had accepted her choice of the hero.[1]

Pastimes of girls before marriage

Many heroic festivals of the youth were held where the brave youths exhibited heroic talents in, the presence of young ladies. The young ladies assembled in public places, witnessed the valiant feats of the heroes.[2] A maid who is in love with a hero is given liberty to embrace and dance with her hero and this dance was called by the name 'tuṇaṅkai'. This has been referred to by the poetess Ātimanti.

The young ladies looked after the tiṉai-fields when the menfolk went a hunting. They drove away the birds that come in flocks to peck at ripe corn, by using slings, corn-cracks and drums. A young maid plucked the flowers grown in a pool and made them into a garland and by adorning it, she scared away the parrots that come to eat away the tiṉai-crop.[3] They are helped by their lovers in making the playing doll called 'pāvai', made from 'pañcā grass. Further their breasts were decorated with 'toyyil', a kind of drawing usually by their lovers. This interesting custom of the ancient Tamils was called 'toyyil eḻututal'[4]

The hero of the hill is described in a poem to have presented a garland of 'kuvaḷai' flowers and to have helped the lady-love in scaring away the parrots that flocked the tiṉai-field. He comes there in the morning itself; but leaves that place only in the evening.[5]

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1. சேர்ப்பனை, யானுங் காதலென் யாயும்நனி வெய்யள்
எந்தையும் கொடீஇயர் வேண்டும்
அம்பல் ஊரும் அவனொடு மொழிமே—
Ibid : 51.
நின் வெய்யனாயின் அவன் வெய்யை நீயாயின்
நின்னை நோதக்கதோ இல்லைமன்
நின்நெஞ்சம் அன்னை நெஞ்சாகப் பெறின்—
Kali : 107 : 20-22.
2. Kuṟu : 31.
3. Kuṟu : 142. 4. Ibid : 276. 5. Ibid : 346

An engaged lady-love remarks that bathing with the hero in a stream of the hill during day time is more pleasant than the embrace of the foster-mother during the desolate nights.[1]

The lady-love thinks that she is relieved of distress while gazing at the hill of the hero during his absence.[2] Further, she feels comfort by planting the 'kāntaḷ' plant that floated down, the mountain stream in the morning in the garden of her house and kissing it warmly. The idea behind this poem is that the hill belonged to her hero. She pays compliments to her mother for not objecting to this kind of act by her.[3]

The young ladies of the mountainous region took great pleasure in bathing in groups in the mountain stream, and raising a rejoicing cry.[4] The ladies used the clay which was heaped nearby to perfectly wash their tresses.[5] This action is described as love-aspect of marutam.[6] While Dr Swaminatha Iyer gives the meaning of the word 'eruman̤' as clay,[7] Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai says that the correct meaning of the word, or the meaning that should be attributed to the word 'eruman̤' must be 'ceṅkaḻunīrppū' (செங்கழுநீர்ப்பூ) and to establish his view, he quotes the 'piṅkala nikaṇṭu'.[8]

The Fondness for Flowers

The ancient Tamils have cherished an ardent desire and taste for various flowers throughout life. Men and women always adorned themselves beautifully with flowers except on occasions of mourning. In Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu, Kapilar describes ninety nine kinds of flowers. Ladies have shown a desire to have their locks decorated with various flowers. They adorned themselves with Veṭci flowers.[9] The ladies of maritime region liked very much the 'aṭumpu' flowers.[10]

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1. Ibid : 353. 2. Ibid : 249. 3. Ibid : 261.
4. Kuṟu : 367.
5. Ibid : 372.
6. Ibid : 113.
7. Kuṟu : Introduction, p.225.
8. Ilakkiya tipam, p.120.
9. Kuṟu : 209. 10. Ibid : 243.

The Hero During Secret Courtship

During the secret meetings, the hero gently waves the tresses of the heroine and by embracing her warmingly he wipes away the tears from her eyes and thereby consoles her.[1] (aḷ l enṟu nam aḻutakaṇ tuṭaippār). A similar idea in another poem appears where the hero promises his lady-love to surely take her as his bride. Saying this, he gently waved her tresses.[2]

The hero of the hill presented his lady-love with slings and drums to scare away birds and befitting garments to wear. The lady-love says that he had taken away her feminine beauty (நலம்) which was carefully nourished by her mother.[3]

By taking her forehands into his hands, the hero promised he lady-love that he would marry her at an early date.[4]

The lover is depicted as presenting his sweetheart on a ceremonial occasion with a garment of leaves interwoven with flowers to be won by her, around the waist over her regular costume. Ladies wear these dresses gladly on some important festive occasions of social rejoicing.[5] During the clandestine meetings, the lady-love profusely adorns her tresses with various flowers; but in the morning she removes all the flowers from her tresses and thereby discloses her secret love. Her lover wonders over her cunning act.[6]

Life in the Hilly Region

When the 'tiṉai' crop is about to be harvested, the people there sound the drums throughout the nights and the watch and ward of the nights would be awake to prevent theft.[7]

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1. அழாஅல் என்றுநம் அழுதகண் துடைப்பார் - Kuṟu : 82.
2. Kuṟu : 379
3. Ibid : 223
4. Ibid : 53
5. Ibid : 125, 214
6. Ibid : 312
7. Ibid : 375.

Life in the Pasture Land

The mullai blossoms in the evening of the season of early rains. The shepherd used mullai to adorn the locks of hair on his head. He daily comes to the village with milk and returns to the folds carrying food with him. This sight makes the heroine miserable because of her loneliness due to the absence of her hero.[1] The shepherds used umbrella of the palmyra leaves.

The ladies of this region used to climb to the top of an elevated place to see whether the chariots of their heroes were returning. The maid calls the heroine to join with her to see the returning of the chariot of her hero by standing on a huge rock surrounded by the mullai creepers.[2]

There is a peculiar mention of the period of pregnancy as of twelve months. The pregnant women loved sour things to taste. They walked jauntingly with pots full of water on their heads.[3] We get this information from the pen of a lady poet Kaccippēṭṭu Naṉṉākaiyār. Periyāḻvār, one of the twelve Vaishnavite saints of our land also mentions that the conception period is of twelve months.[4]

Life in the Agricultural Region

The ladies adorn their tresses with the fully blossomed 'āmpal' flowers'. They dressed themselves with garments of leaves interwoven with flowers; wore garlands and jewels in their tresses.[5] Avvaiyār mentions 'tuṇaṅkai' dance among the ladies and 'mallar-pār' among the men usually held in this region.[6] The lady of that region pounded the rice in the

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1. Kuṟu : 221
2. Kuṟu : 275
3. முந்நால் திங்கள் நிறைபொறுத் தசைஇ
ஒதுங்கல் செல்லாப் பசும்புளி வேட்கை
கடுஞ்சூல் மகளிர் - Kuru 287
4. பன்னிரு திங்கள் வயிற்றில் கொண்டவப் பாங்கினால் -
Tivyapra : 3 : 2 : 8.
5. உடுத்தும் தொடுத்தும் பூண்டுஞ் சேரீஇயும் - Kuṟu : 295
6. Kuṟu : 364

mortars for preparing 'aval' (அவல்) and laid the pestles on the ridge of the paddy-fields and then played for a while.[1]

Life in the Littoral Tract

The ladies of this region adorned themselves with the white 'aṭumpu' flowers which resemble the cloven feet of the deer.[2] The lovers took sea-baths with joy and then repaired to the adjacent grove to spend a few happy moments. Next, the lovers joined hands with group of ladies and danced with them. This dance was called as 'kuravai'.[3] Crabs of the shore ran into the sea scared by the girls playing on the sea shore.[4]

Life in the Arid Desert Tract

The young girl prefered to play always with her playmates to drinking milk and to playing with the ball; Such a girl in later says was ready to accompany her lover in spite of several obstacles on their way.[5]

Prostitutes

"One unmistakable, if unenviable mark of civilization is the institution of harlotry".[6] From Kuṟuntokai poems we learn about three kinds of prostitutes. They are 'cēripparattai', 'Kāṭaṟparattai' and 'Iṟparattai'. They were trained to sing and dance and these devices were useful to them to entice the youth. It is said that these dancers were successful in netting the newly married youth at the time of some social occasion. There was jealousy between the prostitutes also. In one poem an 'Iṟparattai' abuses another prostitute.[7] It was usual for the prostitute to blame the wife in bitter terms. We get a reference in a poem where associates of the heroine overhear such a reproach : "We shall insert the 'āmpal' flowers in our tresses and go to the tank to bathe in

1. Ibid : 238
2. Ibid : 249
3. Ibid : 294
4. Ibid : 238
5. Ibid : 396
6. Srinivasa Iyengar, P.T., History of the Tamils, p.285.
7. Kuṟu : 364.

it. If she is afraid of us, let her guard her husband along with her kith and kin".[1] Further, they dressed attractively to charm the youth away from his wife. A prostitute laments that the hero who was once always with her, was now living happily with his married wife after the birth of a son.[2] Most of the poems dealing with 'marutam' end with a statement of a son being born to the hero through his wife.

The prostitute says that if she had weaned away the hero from the heroine by force, she was prepared to accept willingly the punishment of the goddess of the sea.[3] Another prostitute speaksof her constancy to the hero.[4]

All these go to prove the prevalence of prostitution among our ancient Tamils. These poems also throw light on the patience and chastity of our womenfolk of those days.

THE MOUNTING OF MATAL CHARIOT (MATAL ERUTAL)

Five poems[5] of Kuṟuntokai refer to this peculiar custom of 'maṭal ēṟutal' in the life of the hero.

The love-smitten hero finds no other way but to practice this method when his request was turned down or ignored by the lady-companion. The hero threatens the maid that he would mount on the uncouth palmyra chariot attached to the horse-shaped, saw-edged stalks,[6] smearing himself with ashes all over his body, wearing a wreath of 'erukku' flowers[7] and would proceed along the streets in public uttering the name of the lady with whom he was in love.[8] He would also wear a garland made of bones.[9]

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1. Ibid : 80.
2. கையுங் காலும் தூக்கத் தூக்கும்
   ஆடிப் பாவை போல
   மேவன செய்யுமதன் புதல்வன் தாய்க்கே - Kuṟu : 8.
3. Kuṟu : 164.
4. Ibid : 370.
5. Ibid : 14, 17, 32, 173, 182.
6. Ibid : 173.
7. Ibid : 17.
8. மறுகில், நல்லோள் கணவன் இவனெனப்
   பல்லோர் கூறயாழ் நாணுகம் சிறிதே - Kuṟu : 14.
   c.f. Ibid : 31.
9. Ibid : 182.

This practice appears to have been a threat used by the hero to bend the heroine to his will. It never seems to have been actually practiced as we do not come across any poem which describes the actual mounting of the 'maṭal'.

The life of men

Man's main work was the fulfillment of his duty. Pālai Pāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō mentions this as 'viṉaiyē āṭavark Kuyirē'.[1] In the mountainous region men were engaged in hunting. They usually pasted sandal on their chests[2] and wore garlands of 'kuvaḷai' flowers. They took their hunting dogs to the hunt.[3]

Soon after the marriage the hero finds his income meagre and so sets out to distant country to earn more. Money was necessary not only to live a happy married life but also for the proper performance of the duties of a householder. The hero is described as leading a poor life with a single cow as his possession.[4] The hero, before he left his house for distant lands in search of wealth, says that his journey was not only for his own future Prosperity but also to patronise others who were needy.[5] Usually even a person who inherited a fortune did not stop with that, It was thought that a person who cannot earn for himself was worse than a beggar [6] Thus earning at any rate with ceaseless attempt was considered a necessity and a poet calls this 'ulakattup-paṉpu'[7]. The wealth earned by right means was described by a poet as 'kēṭilvilupporuḷ'.[8] So far so good, but to the heroine this kind of exodus for wealth gave much anxiety and despair to her.[9] Sometimes the hero would leave his home

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1. வினையே ஆடவர்க் குயிரே—Kuṟu : 124.
2. Kuṟu : 150.
3. Ibid : 179.
4. Ibid : 295.
5. Ibid : 63.
6. Ibid : 283.
7. Ibid : 99.
8. Ibid : 216.
9. அருளும் அன்பும் நீங்கித் துணைதுறந்து
பொருள்வயிற் பிரிவோர்—Ibid : 20.

even without telling his wife if he suspected that she would object to his leaving.[1] The hero would gently toss the tresses and shoulders of his wife in order to cajole her and then tell her of his intending journey in search of wealth.[2] He would promise his dear wife that he would return without fail at the beginning of the rainy season.[3]

Usually the wife would avoid gaiety and flowers during her husband's absence. The heroine speaks in agony after long separation that she would not allow her husband to decorote her tresses with flowers. She adds further that she would not even allow him to touch her body.[4]

During the absence of the hero, the wife undergoes lots of agony to such an extent as to feel that disliking her sweet embraces, the hero may have gone on the journey.[5] In another case, the lady-companion consoles the heroine saying that the hero would not have gone in search of wealth if she had objected to it on the ground that she would be miserably alone in the rains.[6] In another instance to console her grief, the maid says that the hero would surely return even if his target of wealth had not been, achieved. She adds that the hero would never forget her bright, fragrant fore-head.[7]

Usually the wives expected their husbands in the evening They lighted the lamps in the houses and eagerly waited for the arrival of their husbands.[8] Feasts were given to the strangers in the evening, expecting eagerly the happy news of the return of their husbands on chariots.[9]

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1. சொல்லா தகறல் வல்லுவோரே—Kuṟu : 79
   செப்பினஞ் செலினே செலவரி தாகுமென்று—Ibid: 207.
2. Kuṟu : 190.
3. Ibid : 200,
4. Ibid : 192.
5. Ibid : 39, 254.
6. Ibid : 350.
7. Ibid : 59.
8. Ibid : 398.
9. Ibid : 155.

It was customary for the ladies to worship 'Durga' praying for the safe return of their husbands. In one case, a heroine speaks to her maid that she would not perform any puja to Goddess Durga since her dearest husband had perhaps forgotten her and had not yet returned as promised. Therefore she says that she would observe no fasting and observe no omens.[1]

The hero would never stay out long aimlessly. As soon as his work was finished he hastened home. The hero says this to his charioteer 'iṉṟē ceṉṟu varuvatu nāḷai'.[2] Even if he goes on an expedition commissioned by the king, he would not stay long in this venture.[3] There were dangers also enroute. The highway robbers and the hunters of the arid desert would nothesitate to do harm to their lives.[4]

The hero usually adorned his head with neem (margosa) flowers before he left home.[5] The fulfillment of the duty the hero is described by a poet as 'ceyviṉai muṭitta cemmal uḷḷam'.[6]

Dancing and amusements

Art is the outcome of the aesthetic desire in Man. Art may either be static or dynamic. Dynamic arts are arts of rhythm and-movement. The 'tuṇaṅkai' dance has been already mentioned elsewhere in this thesis. The female dancer was called 'aṭukaḷamakaḷ' while the male dancer was known as 'aṭukaḷamakaṉ'. This word 'aṭukaḷam' represents the stage or a particu lar place where this kind of group dance took place.[7]

Omens and other su perstitious beliefs

Prof. G. Subramania Pillai observes: "The ancient man was a child of nature. He perceived the finger of God in the

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1. Ibid : 218.
2. இன்றே சென்று வருவது நாளை—Kuṟu : 189.
3. Ibid : 242. 4. Ibid : 77, 297.
5. Ibid : 281.
6. செய்வினை முடித்த செம்மல் உள்ளம்—Ibid : 275.
7. Kuṟu : 31.

working of Nature around him. He irresistably felt himself tied to the nature surrounding him and found a mutual and sympathetic reaction taking place between his mind and nature. Thus his spontaneity to nature and sensibility to its response gave birth to a number of superstitions. Again, the kind of life obtaining in primitive societies all over the world was susceptible to superstitions, beliefs and conventions.[1]

In Poruḷatikāram of Tolkāppiyam, we come across the line 'nāḷum puḷḷum piṟavaṟiṉ nimittamum'.[2] 'Puḷ' refers to the custom of devination by the flight of birds and subsequently this term 'puḷ' was applied to denote all kinds of omens. Then 'puḷḷōrttal'-the custom of reading coming events by observing the movements of the birds took deep roots in Tamil mind. This custom of 'puḷḷōrttal' was strictly observed before starting on a journey. Another omen observed was with reference to animals. This also came to be denoted by the term 'puḷ' although, the word refers to birds only. A Kuṟuntokai Poem refers to the movement of an old chameleon with saw-like back in the arid tract as an omen observed by the wayfarers of the 'pālai' region.[3]

The quivering of the right eye or the shoulder was a good omen in man while the quivering of the left eye or the shoulder was good for women. A poem in this collection tells us that the waxing of the shoulders was an indication of some approaching good in the near future. When the shoulders of a heroine showed a healthy shape, she took it as a good omen, as telling her husband's early return.[4]

It is a common belief now as in ancient times that the cawing of a crow within the limits of a house is an indication of impending arrival of a guest to that house. A Kuṟuntokai

1. Annamalai University Journal; Vol. XVI, Article 5, p. 37.
2. Tol. 1037.
3. Kuṟu : 140.
4. Kuṟu : 260.

poem gives a good example of that popular belief.[1] A lady-companion tells the hero on his return that his wife was able to bear the separation from him, because of the cawing ot the crow indicating the early arrival of the hero.

There is an interesting reference in a poem to a bird called 'kaṇantuḷ' which by its screams in the arid tract warned the wayfarers of the presence of bandits, in the neighbourhood. The travellers alerted by its screams, took some other route and escaped.[2]

'Viricci', according to Tolkāppiyaṉār is a device of knowing the future by hearing words which were spoken by others. On such an occasion some people were sent for to the outskirts of the village or town. Then the occasional words that came to be heard by them were taken to indicate the course for their future. Puṟapporuḷveṇpāmālai mentions this peculiar custom in detail.[3]

Tree worship

The western scholars on anthropology like Sir John Marshall have observed that the custom of tree-worship is undoubtedly a characteristic custom of the Pre-aryans.[4]

A God, instilling fear, was believed to be dwelling in a 'marām' tree (a sea-side Indian Oak). This big tree is in the midst ot a 'maṉṟam' the place where the villagers assembled for all matters connected with their village. There is an interesting episode in Kuṟuntokai about this belief. The hero promised his lady-love standing under the 'marām' tree that he would not forsake her in this life; but failed to keep up his promise. On hearing from others at a later time when she became pale and love-sick that the God of the tree

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2. Kuṟu : 210.
3. Ibid : 350.
4. வேண்டிய பொருளின் விளைவுநன் கறிதற்கு
ஈண்டிருண் மாலை சொல்லோர்த் தன்று
—Puṟa : Veṇpā : Veṭci : 4.
1. Subramania Pillai, G., Tree-worsnip and ophiolatry, p. 3.

would do harm to those who had broken the promise made under the tree, she ran to the 'marām' tree and requested the God not to harm her hero since he was in no way responsible for her present physical state.[1] This is a proof of the belief of those days, that the tree was the abode of some gods or evil spirits that would punish the evil-doers.

The ancient Tamils believed in a god of Death called 'kūṟṟam'.[2] They sincerely believed that the persons who did good deeds would go to heaven[3] and the evil-doers to hell.[4]

The flowering of the 'vēṅkai' or East Indian Kino tree was considered as an auspicious time for the performance of marriage. A herōine is described as anxiously waiting for the return of her lover who promised to positively come by the time when the 'vēṅkai' tree-blossoms. But he did not return. The tree was full of bright coloured flowers. Shepherd lads grazing cattle cried out in joy when they saw ıe tree in full bloom. These joyous cries pierced the heart of the love-sick like deep arrows. Although she restained from weeping, her eyes went out of control and tears rolled down her eyes.[5]

A peculiar custom of those days was that the young ladies would raise an uproar 'tiger', - by standing beneath the 'vēṅkai' tree. By raising a cry, they believed that the tree itself would bend down towards them and then it will be easier for them to pluck the flowers of the tree to decorate their tresses.[6]

Veṟiyāṭṭu

To devine the future was and is an aptitude of man. Tolkāppiyaṉār refers to some old customs of 'kaṭṭu' and 'kaḷaṅku'[7] practiced to know about the future. The hero

1. Kuṟu : 87.
2. Ibid : 267.
3. Ibid : 288.
4. Ibid : 292.
5. Kuṟu : 241.
6. Ibid : 241.
7. Tol. 1061.

meets his lady-love either during the day or in the nights before marriage. Sometimes it so happened that the hero did not turn up to meet her. Or sometimes he may have gone out of the locality to earn enough to celebrate their marriage thus causing affliction due to separation to the lady-love. If the secret courtship comes to be known to the villagers, there will be some gossip. On hearing this, the lady-love became emaciated and pale. Not knowing the fact that her daughter was love-sick, the mother calls the woman deviner (akavaṉmakaḷ). She invokes many gods by her songs. When she once referred to the god of the hill, Muruga, the lady-companion who was there then tells her 'sing once more, the glory of the hill of the hero' (iṉṉum pāṭuka pāṭṭē, avar naṉṉeṭum kuṉṟam pāṭiya pāṭṭē). Thus the lady-companion slyly exposes the secret by mentioning the word 'avar' (denoting the hero), meaning that the cause of her sickness was not the wrath of God Muruga but her love towards the hero.[1]

Sometimes Vēlaṉ, the priest of the temple of God Muruga was sent for by the mother to enquire of the real cause for the sickness of her daughter. He practiced the device called 'kaḷaṅku' - a ball like product of a creeper (molucca-bean). This 'kaḷaṅku' was even used by the young girls in their play called 'ammāṉai'. The Vēlaṉ chooses a place to perform the invocation of the God Muruga.[2] He spreads out the fried paddy everywhere on the sand where he performs his puja. Goat was given as a prey to God. The millet was spread out on the ground. This puja was performed in a junction of streets. Various musical instruments were played upon. The Vēlaṉ invoked other gods also.[3] At the time, the lady-companion eagerly expected the arrival of the hero on the spot with the concrete proposal of marriage, so that the mother might come to know the real cause of her daughter's

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1. Kuṟu : 23.
2. Ibid : 53.
3. Ibid : 263.

sickness.[1] Sometimes, the companion let out the secret openly in the presence of the mother when the Vēlaṉ was performing the puja.[2]

Domestic Life

The congenial life between husband and wife and their domestic life was really praiseworthy. The poems treating the subjects set forth high ideals to wordly life.[3] The wife refers to her husband as 'arumperaṟ kātalar' (அரும்பெறற் காதலர்).[4] In turn, the lover mentions his wife as 'neñcamarntōḷ' (நெஞ்சமர்ந்தோள்).[5] The girl after she becomes a housewife does not very much care for her own happiness or niceties of decoration. She turns a good cook and prepares things without caring for some inconveniences - like smoke in the kitchen. But she cares very much for the approbation of her husband. This is brought out in a poem.

When the girl begins to live with her husband, the foster-mother pays a visit. After the visit she returns and tells the mother that her daughter had skimmed the curd and without even cleaning her stained 'kāntaḷ - like fingers', she tucked up her drooping washed saree; ignored the smoke in the kitchen that made her lily like eyes water and cooked the soup. When her husband had eaten the food prepared by her and commended it very much, her face brightened up with subtle joy.[6]

Sometimes the lady-companion visits the house of the heroine. She remarks that the hero likes always to be in the

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1. Kuṟu : 111.
2. Ibid : 362.
3. ''இச்செய்யுட்களில் காணப்படுவனவாகிய தலைவன் தலைவியரிடையே வளரும் அன்புநிலை, அவர் இல்லறம் நடத்தும்முறை முதலியன உலகியலைச் செம்மைப்படுத்தும் தன்மையின'',
   —Swaminatha Iyer, U.V. Kuṟu : Introduction, p.25.
4. Kuṟu : 398.
5. Kuṟu : 56.
6. Ibid : 167.

company of his wife.[1] This shows that the couple always loved each other's company.

The people used to offer the first crop of millet to God and nobody allowed to use before this offering. A peacock which ate a few grain is represented as having had a shivering.[2]

BACHELORS OF EDUCATION

Young bachelors received their equcation from the able teachers. The villagers supplied their food and necessary things. Unminding his body and food, the bachelor paid full attention to his studies.[3] This shows the generosity and helping attitude of the villagers towards the education of the young lads on one hand and the special interest and enthusiasm shown by the young students in their education on the other hand.

The Saints

There were saints in the Sangam age and they were respected for their wisdom. They were rightly called 'aṟivar'. They knew to a certain extent the future also. They were fed by the Brahmins. No dogs were tied up in the courtyard of the houses of the Brahmins. The saints got sometimes enough food even in a single house. They were not left in a helpless state of begging from door to door for food. During the winter season they preserved hot water in a vessel called 'cēmacceppu'. This 'cēmacceppu' might have been like our modern thermosflasks. They foretold the heroine the home-coming of her hero or sometimes the whereabouts of the hero.[4]

AMUSEMENTS OF THE YOUNG BOYS AND GIRLS

The amusement of the young boys and girls are referred to by the poets. The young children wore an ornament made

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1. Kuṟu : 178.
2. Ibid : 105.
3. Ibid : 33.
4. Kuṟu : 277.

with the teeth of the tiger called 'pulippal tāli'. They got frightened in their sleep, perhaps due to the bad dreams and at that time, the foster-mother embraced them warmly.[1] They evinced a keen interest and joy to drag a toy-cart. They did not take so much pleasure of riding in a cart made by the carpenter and dragged by the horses.[2] The young girls built toy-houses out of sand and mud, while playing near the sea-shore.[3]

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

The people of the hilly region are said to have engaged in farming[4] besides hunting.[5] In the pastoral region, grazing the cattle was the main occupation[6] and next to that was farming. Agriculture was the main occupation in the 'marutam' region Paddy and sugarcane were chief crops. In the maritime region the chief occupation was naturally fishing. The fisherwoman got paddy from the agricultural region in exchange for salt.[7] The 'pālai' region was not free from robbers.[8] Hunting was the chief occupation of that people of those days believed in the existence of fairies or demons.[9] Whenever people saw elderly persons they were honoured with seats when the younger people stood up.[10] This shows the culture as well as the moral heritage of the Sangam age. They never spoke lies. They spoke only about the things that they had seen actually with their eyes.[11] People approached God with a sort of fear in their minds.[12]

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1. Kuṟu : 161.
2. Ibid : 61.
3. Ibid : 326.
4. Ibid : 214.
5. Ibid : 179.
6. Ibid : 241.
7. Ibid : 269.
8. Ibid : 297.
9. Ibid : 180.
10. Ibid : 265.
11. Ibid : 184.
12. Ibid : 203.

They hated to see the stranger's burning ground.[1] Ladies counted the days by making lines on the walls when their husbands parted from them.[2]

There is only one reference in the whole of Kuṟuntokai collection to a ship.[3] This implies a naval expedition by the ancient Tamils in those days. The ship was referred to in a comparison. Just like a ship sinking in the sea, the hill is plunging into the darkness after the sunset.

The gooseberry was planted along the routes of the arid desert to quench the thirst of the wayfarers.[4]

Castes

People were called after their professions. They were hunters, cowherds, shepherds, farmers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, merchants, washermen, fishermen, robbers, bards, drummers and dancers. The bellows of the blacksmith, the touchstone of the goldsmith, the toy-cart made by the carpenter are all referred to in this collection.

The small village was divided into 'ūr' and 'cēri'. Every village had its cemetry. There were separate streets for Brahmins to live. The prostitutes mostly lived in the 'cēri',

Food

Rice, varaku, millet, ghee, curd, honey and milk are all mentioned as the articles of food of the people. Meat-eating was common. A poem refers to the dish of 'kuṟumpūḷ' bird fried in ghee offered to a bard for announcing the home-coming of the hero.[5] Toddy was a very common drink among the masses. For drinking toddy they even walked long distances with joy.[6] A Brahmin lad is referred to as taking only simple food and as observing fast on some days.[7]

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1. Kuṟu: 231.
2. Ibid: 358.
3. Ibid: 240.
4. Ibid : 209.
5. Ibid : 389.
6. Ibid : 293.
7. Ibid : 156.

Punishments

There is only one reference to punishment in Kuṟuntokai. A girl went to bathe in a stream. She ate a mango that floated down a stream. The king ordered her execution for this offence. The relations of the girl offered a compensation of eightyone elephants and gold equal to her weight. But the king Naṉṉaṉ refused the compensation and ordered the execution.[1] That this was excessive and unjust is referred to by the poet.

Good maxims of the day

Before closing the door of the house for the nights, the people of those days use to ask those staying in the frontyard of the house whether they had taken meals. This shows the generosity and the hospitality of our ancient Tamils.[2] From one of the poem in Kuṟuntokai, it is evident that helping the poor was considered as one of the household duties by the people of the Sangam age.

Goodmen received beautiful gifts. The patrons gave away their gifts with water in their hands. It seems that this was one of the customs of those days to make promise with water along with the gifts in the hands whenever a gift was made to a goodman.[3]

It was thought good to live with ease by standing on his own legs and living in his home with contentment.[4]

I shall conclude this chapter with a quotation from Dr. M. Arokiaswami : "It is in depicting social life that Kuṟuntokai excels perhaps all the poems of the Sangam period. It is essentially a collection dealing with the life of the people from every stand point of view and not a political work."[5]

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1. Kuṟu : 118.
2. Kuṟu : 137.
3. Kuṟu : 233.
4. தம்மிற் தமதுண் டன்ன—Kuṟu : 83.
5. Journal of the Madras University, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, January, 1961.

VII. THE CLASSIFICATION OF AKAM AND PURAM

The Sangam age is the Augustian age of Tamil literature. Many poets of a high order flourished in that glorious period and in their poems subjective feelings, emotions, love as well as the objective aspects of life such as war, heroism, just rule and liberality among other things have been brought out. Tolkāppiyaṉār in his treatise on Poruḷatikāram brings out some literary conventions that were observed strictly and followed closely by the Sangam poets. The blending of the internal emotions and passions of men and women, with the beauties of Nature can well be seen in the classification of the sentiments of love Observing keenly the various aspects of life in their appropriate setting, time and place as found in the literature of his days, Tolkāppiyaṉār laid out some poetical conventions. It follows that the Tamil poets understood fully by their closest and accurate observation of Nature, the influence of Nature on human life in its different aspects such as-environment, time and place.

The inward on mental experiences is called 'Akam'. The word 'Akam' means 'subjectivity'. The emotions of lovers cannot be expressed in words to others as the emotional happiness can only be felt and realised by the person concerned. "As emotion is a phase of our own being and not a presentation, this mood cannot be contemplated but

can only be-lived through''.[1] Puṟam simply means the 'outer' or the 'external' (the objective). All that does not come under the category of 'Akam' is deemed to be 'Puṟam'. Puṟam' deals with heroism in war, state-affairs, nature of 'kings, chieftains and people and their modes of life.

Akam

The emotional experience of love is divided into 'Kaḷavu' and 'Kaṟpu'; Kaḷavu dealing with the pre-nuptial and 'Kaṟpu' with post-nuptial love. Poem relating to 'Kaḷavu' or love in secret are larger in number than the poems dealing with 'Kaṟpu', The reason for this is that romance is more predominant in the pre-nuptial stage and hence the love in secret and its power over the young couples created more poetry. This pre-nuptial love-themes have been used by poets to describle in detail the romantic adventures of young couples, their emotions and revolt against the will and wishes of their parents and culminating in elopement and marriage in most cases.

Under the category of Akattiṇai, Tolkāppiyaṉār gives in his grammar a three-fold classification of love, viz., Kaikkiḷai, Aintiṇai and Peruntiṇai. Kaikkiḷai is one-sided love or incompatible love. In Kaikkiḷai either the lover or the lady only expresses his or her passion and desire. The word 'Kaikkiḷai' is a compound of 'kai' and 'kiḷai' which mean 'one side' and 'love' respectively. There is another explanation also which gives us the meaning as that 'kai' is 'littleness' and 'kiḷai' is 'passion or love' and the compound signifies the meaning, little love, i.e., love for a girl who is incapable of understanding the emotions of the lover and hence incapable of reciprocating.

'Peruntiṇai' treats the subject of unequal matches and their consequences. This is of four categories. One is that a lover goes in for a lady-love who is more aged than himself. The second is the forcible seizure of a lady-love by

1. Radhakrishnan, S. Sixtieth Birthday studies, p. 183.

one, just to satisfy his carnal lust. Thirdly the violent love shown towards a lady who is unwilling to reciprocate and the last when the lover threatens to win the lady-love saying he would give up his life by mounting on the 'maṭal' chariot.[1]

Aintiṇai deals with love in the five stages. These stages of love are correlated to the five kinds of natural environment. The five-fold division of land namely, Kuṟiñci, mullai, marutam, neytal and pālai stand for the different stages of culture and each division of the land preserves its characteristics of the stage of culture peculiar to it in the evolution of Tamil culture. The ancient Tamil poets were quite aware of the fact that the growth of the civilisation of man is not only conditioned by the environment around him but has been influenced by the varying physio graphic conditions.

The rules of rhetoric and poetic conditions laid down in Tolkāppiyam are not arbitrary rules but are a reflection of the real life of the people, mirrored in poetry, since 'Language is the mirror of their (people) minds'.

For literature, fundamental elements or the 'mutalporuḷ' or the primary object, the 'karupporuḷ' or the objects of environment and 'uripporuḷ' or the essential topic are main subjects.[2]

The 'mutalporuḷ' of the five-tiṇais is of two kinds, i e., place and time.[3] The time aspect again for each of the five regions is classified in two ways-seasons of the year and parts of the day. According to Tolkāppiyaṉār the year has been divided into six seasons of two months each and the day into six periods of four hours each. The six seasons are kār.

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1. Tol : 997.
2. முதல்கரு உரிப்பொருள் என்ற மூன்றே
நுவலுங் காலை முறைசிறந் தனவே
பாடலுட் பயின்றவை நாடுங் காலை—Tol : 949.
3. முதல்எனப் படுவது நிலம்பொழு திரண்டின்
இயல்பென மொழிப இயல்புணர்ந் தோரே—Tol : 950

kūtir, muṉpaṉi, piṉpaṉi, iḷavēṉil and mutuvēṉil. They begin with the month of Āvani and end with Āṭi, corresponding to the period from second half of August to the first half of August of the following year. The first season is dark and rainy, the second cold, third foggy in the evenings, fourth dewy in the mornings, fifth early summer and the sixth burning or late summer.

The day is divided into six parts of four hours each namely, vaikaṟai or just before dawn, kālai or the morning, naṉpakal or midday, mālai or the evening, eṟpāṭu or the time of twilight shading into night and yāmam or the period of the night that follows the evening.

The time suited to the tiṇais are described as follows: kār and mālai are suited for mullaittiṇai; kūtir and yāmam for kuṟiñci.[1] Muṉpaṉi also is suited for kuṟuñci.[2] Vaikaṟai is the appropriate time for marutam and eṟpāṭu for neytal,[3] Naṉpakal or midday is associated with hot weather vēṉil, the seasons of mild and hot sun, and they relate to the pālaittiṇai.[4] Piṉpaṉi is also assigned to this tiṇai.[5]

Tolkāppiyaṉār gives the objects of environment as follows : 'God, food-stuff, beast, tree, bird, drum, occupations, yāḻ or harp and others' are said to be the objects of environments.[6] The God attributed to the pastoral region is Māyōṉ, to the mountaincus region is Cēyōṉ, to the agricul-

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1. காரும் மாலையும் முல்லை; குறிஞ்சி
கூதிர் யாமம் என்மனார் புலவர் – Ibid : 952.
2. பனியெதிர் பருவமும் உரித்தென மொழிப – Ibid : 953.
3. கைகறை விடியல் மருதம்; எற்பாடு
நெய்த லாதல் மெய்பெறத் தோன்றும் – Ibid : 954.
4. நடுவுநிலைத் திணையே நண்பகல் வேனிலொடு
முடிவுநிலை மருங்கின் முனைனிய நெறிததே – Tol : 955.
5. பின்பனி தானும் உரித்தென மொழிப – Ibid : 956.
6. தெய்வம் உணாவே மாமரம் புட்பறை
செய்தி யாழின் பகுதியொடு தொகைஇ
அவ்வகை பிறவும் கருவென மொழிப – Ibid : 964.

tural region is Vēntaṉ, to the littoral tract is Varuṇaṉ.[1] The commentators say that Māyōṉ is Tirumāl, Cēyōṉ is Muruga and Vēntaṉ is Indra.

Kuṟiñci and mullai lands sometimes turned into pālai by draught and then their fertility decline and foliage disappears.[2]

Union, parting, waiting patiently, lamentation, sulkiness due to love quarrels and the causes of these, form the topics of-'uripporuḷ' or essential topics of the five tiṇais.[3]

The romance of the hill scenery and the possibilities that kuṟiñci afford to the lover and the lady-love to have their meetings in solitude explain why their union pertains to that region.

The desolateness of the desert is appropriate to their parting. Parting is said to be of two kinds that of the parting of the lover from the heroine and of the heroine from her parents.

The pastoral life of cowherds and shepherds involves the daily separation of the husband from the wife. While he himself is engaged in grazing the cattle in the pasture-lands, his wife has to wait patiently and lonely. Such a region has been thought fit to serve as the back-ground for the hopeful expectation of the heroine during the separation of her lover.

Neytal implies a longer and more painful separation of the lovers and the risk in life of the fishermen when they

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4. மாயோன் மேய காடுறை உலகமும்
சேயோன் மேய மைவரை உலகமும்
வேந்தன் மேய தீம்புனல் உலகமும்
வருணன் மேய பெருமணல் உலகமும்
முல்லை குறிஞ்சி மருதம் நெய்தலெனச்
சொல்லிய முறையால் சொல்லவும் படுமே— Ibid : 951.
5. cilap : Kāṭukāṇkātai : 11-13.
6. புணர்தல் பிரிதல் இருத்தல் இரங்கல்
ஊடல் இவற்றின் நிமித்தம் என்றிவை
தேருங் காலைத் திணைக்குரிப் பொருளே—Tol : 960.

undertake the sea-voyagas for fishing, causes a considerable amount of lamentation on the part of the wife, and therefore this has been selected as the proper background for the sufferings of the heroine during her lover's departure to a distant country.

The much easier and happier life of the people in the marutam region gives ease and luxury to the people there and this naturally leads to love quarrels between the lovers and sometimes results in the sulkiness of the heroine when she comes to know the infidelity of her husband but ends in the reconcilation of the couple.

Puram

Veṭci means the theme describing a king's follower wearing veṭci flowers and capturing the cows of the enemy as a prelude to war.[1] The veṭci flower, 'ixora coccinia', commonly called 'flame of the forest' refers to the initial stage of warfare by cattle-lifting. The king who proposes to wage war with his enemy calls upon his soldiers to beduck themselves with garlands of 'veṭci' and lift the cattle from the enemy's camp. Though 'veṭci' is a harbringer of war, this cattle-lifting is an act of charitableness as it gives a premonition of the coming of war so that non-combatants might seek safety. As cattle cannot take refuge the king who intends war removes enemy's cattle to safe custody in his own territory. Moreover in those days cattle were the real wealth of the people and those who own a number of cattle were regarded as wealthy. Naccinārkkiniyar points out that veṭci is the acquisition of wealth (cattle) in accordance with Dharma (righteousness).

'Karantai' is also included in 'veṭci' itself although the later-day grammarian Aiyaṉāritaṉār, the author of Puṟapporuḷ veṇpāmālai deals with it separately. 'Karantai' is taking back

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1. வேந்துவிடு முனைஞர் வேற்றுப்புலக் களவின்
ஆதந்து ஓம்பல் மேவற் றாகும்—Tol : 1003.

the cows from the enemies. 'Karantai' is a kind of 'tuḷaci' or basil leaf of which-garlands are made and worn before entering into the enemy's dominions.

In fact each stage of war had its our peculiar flower after which each of the strategic movements were named. The wreath of flowers indicated the character of the different stages of war and the feelings of the combatants. Perhaps the wearing one particular kind of flower in one stage of war did help to rouse and fan the courage of the combatants. The abundance of wreaths and garlands which were used in warfare and in day-to-day life clearly reveal the love of Nature and the aesthetic sense of the ancient Tamils and they stand in a comparable position with the Greeks and the Romans of ol d.

The theme of Kuṟiñci corresponds to the puṟam aspect of Veṭci.[1] Since the cattle are herded in the hilly tracts and night time is suited for the lifting of cattle and so it corresponds to the secret union of lovers during nights. The element of stealing in secret is common both to veṭci and kuṟiñci since in the former case the neighbour's cattle are stolen and in the latter case it is the secret stealing of the heart of a lady who is the daughter of a neighbour.

The next step after the preliminary cattle-lifting is the invasion into the enemy's territory. The soldiers are ordered to bedeck themselves with 'vañci' flowers and be ready for invasion. So the wreath of vañci is a symbol of a regular invasion.[2]

Kāñci is the 'ulmus intergrifolia' or elm tree with dark foliage. The defenders of an invaded kingdom wore these garlands to recover their lost territory. They fight heroically

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1. வெட்சி தானே குறிஞ்சியது புறனே—Tol ; 1002.
2. எஞ்சா மண்நசை வேந்தனை வேந்தன்
அஞ்சுதகத் தலைச்சென்று அடல்குறித் தன்றே
—Ibid ; 1008.

till their last drop of blood is shed. Although this is the usual meaning of kāñcittiṇai, Tolkāppiyaṉār speaks of kāñci as the transitory nature of the world.[1]

The section in Akam poetry corresponding to vañci is mullai.[2] Mullai is the creeper that commonly grows abundantly in the jungle with the inset of rainy season. The theme of mullai is the patient endurance of a lady during the period of separation from her lover. Since there is goodness and virtue in her patient and faithful waiting for her hero, the mullai flower came to symbolise this.[3] Since the patience is common to both 'mullai' and 'vañci' themes of Akam and Puṟam aspects of life and since the encampment is situated within the jungle adjoining a pasture-land, vañci traditionally corresponds to mullai.

The defence of the fort is called nocci-t-tiṇai. Nocci is the 'vitennirgundi', a wild plant of leaves and flowers. The 'nocci' garland was worn by the warriors defending a fort.

'Uḻiñai' is the common way side weed and it was worn by soldiers when storming a fort.[4] So nocci and uḻiñai describe the defence and siege of the fort respectively.

Marutam corresponds to uḻiñai[5] Marutam is the love action in agricultural tracts consisting of sexual union after sulking. Most of the Tamil cities were situated on the banks of rivers in the plains and harlotry was more prevalent in cities than in villages. No season of the year was allotted to it in particular since the misunderstanding of the couple

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1. பாங்கருஞ் சிறப்பின் பல்லாற் றானும்
நில்லா வுலகம் புல்லிய நெறித்தே—Tol : 1024.
2. வஞ்சி தானே முல்லையது புறனே—Ibid : 1007.
3. அல்லி லாயினும் விருந்துவரின் உவக்கும்
முல்லை சான்ற கற்பின் மெல்லியள்—Naṟ : 142.
c.f. Aka : 274.
4. முழுமுதல் அரணம் முற்றலும் கோடலும்
அனைநெறி மரபிற் றாகும் என்ப - Tol : 1011.
5. உழிஞை தானே மருதத்துப் புறனே - Ibid : 1010.

may occur in any part of the year. The sunrise and the hours immediately preceding sunrise are prescribed as the periods of the day for the 'marutam'. This is the appropriate time for 'marutam' since the unfaithful husband sneaks his head into the house at this early hour so as to avoid being noticed by others.

Since cities were mostly situated in the riverine plains, uḻiñai was appropriately made to correspond with the marutam region and since morning was the hour for setting out to besiege the rampart walls, it appropriately corresponds to Akam poetry.

The tumpai-t-tiṇai represents war in general. Tumpai is the 'phlornis Indica'. The theme of a king or warrior heroically fighting against his enemy goes by the appellation of tumpai-t-tiṇai.[1]

The littorals are the venue of pitched battles. Since 'tumpai' is a sea-side flower the Akam aspect corresponding to tumpai is neytal.[2] The essential topic of neytal is 'the sorrow of lovers due to separation.

Just as articulate sorrow is the keynote of Akam aspect of life, so it is also the keynote of tumpai, the puṟam aspect of life, since pitched battles always result in huge loss of lives on both sides, leaving to mourn the death of members of their families.

The pangs of long separation and anxiety that one experiences as a result of separation is termed as 'pālai' in Akam aspect and the pālai region is symbolic of long separation.

When mullai represents heroine's virtuous suppression of grief; neytal, the pitiful expression of grief; the pālai represents the pangs of separation. Between the three

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1. மைந்துபொரு ளாக வந்த வேந்தனைச்
சென்றுதலை யழிக்குஞ் சிறப்பிற் றென்ப - Tol : 1016.
2. தும்பை தானே நெய்தலது புறனே - Ibid : 1015.

regions there is a graded range of the periods of separation, a proportionate amount of risk and anxiety and sorrow. The explanation for this is partly historical. In the kuṟiñci, men might leave their homes ordinarily to hunt, but they would not be out of home for long. Hence that region is eminently suited to represent meetings and union of lovers. In the pasture-lands, the shepherds - invariably spend the whole day in the grazing fields and would return home only for the night. The sea-board represented longer separation than the pasture-land because the fishermen went afishing at night, and were involved in an occupation involving a higher element of danger.

The pālai is represented as the longest and most dangerous separation because the journey through pālai to unknown regions and forests infested with wild animals would take a longer time and involved greatest danger.

The yearly seasons allotted to pālai are early summer and the late summer and by exception, also the morning dew season. These are the seasons during which the heat of the sun deprives the region of vegetation and creates desert like conditions. To make the scene even more dreary and more desolate, the period of day allotted to pālai is midday when the sun is blazing. As an appropriate setting to the poetry on separation it is most fitting because it symbolises the dreariness of the heart within.

The puṟam division corresponding to pālai is vākai[1], named after the white crest-like flower (mimosa flectuousa). The conqueror wears the garland of vākai and girds himself with a purple tincture. The theme of a conqueror wearing a chaplet of vākai (Sirissa flowers) and celebrating his victory over royal enemies is called vākai[2] and the vākai garland was worn by victorious soldiers when they returned home after victory.

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1. வாகை தானே பாலையது புறனே - Tol : 1019.
2. தாவில் கொள்கைத் தத்தங் கூற்றைப்
பாகுபட மிகுதிப் படுத்தல் என்ப - ibid : 1020.

Kāñci corresponds to Peruntiṇai.[1] It describes the evanescence (transitory nature of the world) of the life in the world in various ways to induce men to appreciate the supreme greatness of renunciation. Peruntiṇai is love that is not well reciprocated and kāñci is manifestation of grief and denunciation of the transcience of love and life.

Pāṭāṇ is the poet's singing of the praises of the patrons. Kaikkiḷai, the Akam division of life corresponds to pāṭāṇ.[2] As kaikkiḷai is one-sided love, so pātān is one-sided praise.

Thus it is seen that the traditional classification of Akam and Puṟam and the regions and seasons, etc., is quite sound and well thought out.

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1. காஞ்சி தானே பெருந்திணைப் புறனே - Tol : 1023.
2. பாடாண் பகுதி கைக்கிளைப் புறனே - Ibid : 1026.

VIII. THE THEME OF AKAM IN KURUNTOKAI - WITH REFERENCE TO TOLKĀPPIYAM

Prof. Purnalingam Pillai remarks: "Love and war formed the themes of the ancient classics, religion and philosophy of the mediaeval poems, as science and humanity predominate in modern writings".[1]

This can well be seen from the fact that five out of the eight anthologies deal in extenso with the theme of love and its several aspects. Two thousand three hundred and eighty one poems now exist under the rubric of Sangam poems out of which one thousand eight hundred and sixty three poems dwell upon the theme of Akattiṇai. Three hundred and seventy eight poets deal with the theme of Akam out of four hundred and seventy three poets who composed the entire Sangam poems of both Akam and Puṟam kind of poetry.[2] Moreover, poetesses are no exception to this general obsession with the delicate theme of Akam in their poems. Ninety seven poems relating to this group are from the pen of twenty three poetesses. Three hundred and one poets out of three hundred and seventy eight Akam poets have composed their poems exclusively on the theme of Akam.[3] The figures cited above clearly illustrate the predominant interest of the Tamil poets in dealing with the theme of Akam.

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1. Tamil Literature, p.2.
2. Manickam, V.S.P., The Tamil concept of love, page.1.
3. Ibid : 200.

Further Tolkāppiyaṉār devotes four chapters exclusively to the theme of love while he devotes only one chapter to the theme of Puṟam, i.e., war. This leads to the conclusion that the theme of love was considered an important aspect of life.

The Tamil Lexicon defines the theme of Akam as 'a mental experience of lovers'.[1] The word Akam *itself* denotes the meanings such as 'the interior', 'self' and 'mind'. The inner feelings and passions of men and women are vividly described in Akam poems. The Akam poems express in a dramatic form, the emotions experienced and sustained by the hero, the heroine, the lady-companion and the foster mother.

Tolkāppiyaṉār, in his Poruḷatikāram lays down many rules relating to this branch of poetry. The Akam poems are composed-according to certain literary conventions and traditions and Tolkāppiyaṉār describes them by the phrase 'pāṭal cāṉṟa pulaṉeṟi vaḻakkam'.[2] These Tamil literary conventions are actually based on customs and manners of the people.[3] All these literary conventions, though at first sight seem to us artificial and imaginary, are of very great help in understanding the full significance of Sangam poetry.

The classification of the sentiment of love in accordance with the different regions and assigning them to particular seasons and hours are the noteworthy features of the poets of the Sangam age. Dr. M. Varadarajan rightly observes: "The ancient poets have found out that in a particular season of the year and in a particular hour of the day, a particular region appears most beautiful and most influential, that every landscape is seen best under the peculiar illumination of a season and a period of it when its influence is powerful on

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1. Tamil Lexicon, Vol I, Part I, p.9.
2. Tol. 999.
3. Srinivasa Iyengar, P.T., History of the Tamils, pp. 63-64.

human impulses and activities...The poets of the age have made this fact evident in their compositions, especially the passages on love... Thus are also the different stages of love correlated to the different aspects of natural environment".[1]

Although we come across the description of nature quite often in the Sangam poems, the primary and predominent place is given to the feelings and passions of men. Nature serves as a stage on which the human actors play their roles. Thus Nature provides an appropriate setting and background for the human life. Stopford Brooke explains this significance in his writings: He holds the view that "human nature is first and Nature second but they must be together, if the poetry is to be great and passionate, simple and perceptive, imaginative and tender."[2]

So, nāṭakavaḻakku, as Tolkāppiyaṉār calls it, deals with the conditions laid down by convention to interest the readers and to enable them fully appreciate poetry. The Tamil poets are in one sense dramatists i.e., in the sense of dealing with intense feelings and passions of men and women. Thus 'Nāṭakavaḻakku' provides enough room for a poet to show display his artistic skill in dwelling upon the various characters who come to play their parts in the dramatic Akam poetry. It is quite evident that the poets made certain conventions that help the proper handling of the theme of love.

Moreover the poets who composed poems on kuṟiñcit-tiṇai, when dealing with the beginning of love among the young men and women, describe elobarately how a young man, the hero, happens to get acquainted with a young woman, the heroine whom he met near the corn-field while

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1. The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature, pp. 6-14.
2. Naturalism in English poetry, p.27.
   c.f. "Geographical environment has a profound influence on racial characteristics. History is governed if not determined by Geography".

he himself went out hunting the deer or tracing the footsteps of an elephant which escaped from the range of his arrow or how the hero saved the life of the heroine who was about to be swept away by the current of the stream in the hills.[1] Hence the subject of poetry or the theme of Kuṟiñcittiṇai is formed in the picturesque and dramatic environment of the life of the people of those bygone days.

The period of early dew-fall is also linked to this region.[2] Naccinārkkiniyar in his commentary explains fully the peculiar influence of Nature on romantic overtures of the lovers. The most dreadful-atmosphere of the night of the late winter is seen when the presistent showers come down and add to all the hurdles and obstacles that stand in the way of lovers. And possibly this would render the union of lovers most difficult and consequently their longing in suspense is intensified to a considerable extent. Every bird and beast of the region finds shelter in its nest or lair in the happy company of its loving mate. Hence, despite the watch and ward round the village, the hero tries to meet his lady-love by the hook or crook. Hence the darkness, the cold weather, the life of the beasts and birds, the foaming floods, all these provide an appropriate dramatic environment.[3]

Love at first sight is the predominant feature of the poem taking the mountanous region as their setting. It comes under the category of Kaḷavu or the clandestine union resorted to by lovers. The word 'Kaḷavu' itself means secret courtship or stealing away what belongs to somebody else and it is the result of passion characterised by ardent love of the hero and the heroine who are alike in their nobility of birth, virtuous conduct, courage, age, beauty, mutual love,

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1. ஊரும் பேரும் கெடுதியும் பிறவும் - Tol : 1048.
2. பனியெதிர் பருவமும் உரித்தென மொழிப - Ibid : 953.
3. Tol : 952, Nacci.

humility, mercy, learning and wealth;[1] and meet of their own accord and unite without the knowledge of either of their parents or of their relations. The Kaḷavu comprises four kinds. They are 'Iyaṟkaippuṇarcci', (இயற்கைப் புணர்ச்சி) the voluntary unfon of the lovers who love each other with head and heart, 'Iṭantalaippāṭu' (இடந்தலைப்பாடு) the subsequent meeting of the hero in the same place where he met the lady-love at first, the 'Pāṅkar-k-kūṭṭam' (பாங்கர்க் கூட்டம்) the hero seeking the help of his confidant or companion to arrange for a meeting with his lady-love, and lastly the 'Pāṅkiyiṟ-k-kūṭṭam' (பாங்கியிற் கூட்டம்) the hero soliciting the help of the lady-companion in carrying on his clandestine meetings with his lady-love as usual without any interference. The details regarding the theme of Akam in Kuṟuntokai with reference to Tolkāppiyam, will be considered in the following pages.

In the first sutra of Kaḷaviyal in Tolkāppiyam, it is said that clandestine-meeting among the ardent lovers in five tiṇais is more or less the same as the 'Gandharva' form of marriage which is one of the eight forms of marriage sanctioned in the scriptures.[2] The custom of marrying the girl in secret courtship is still prevalent among the aboriginals and the tribals living in some parts of South India.[3] Secret courtship is one of the chief themes of Poetry in Sangam Age.

A lady-love tells her companion that her love for the hero is larger than the earth, higher than the sky and deeper than

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1. பிறப்பே குடிமை ஆண்மை ஆண்டொடு
உருவு நிறுத்த காம வாயில்
நிறையே அருளே உணர்வொடு திருவென
முறையுறக் கிளந்த ஒப்பினது வகையே - Tol : 1219.
2. அன்பொடு புணர்ந்த ஐந்திணை மருங்கின்
காமக் கூட்டம் காணும் காலை
மறையோர் தேஎத்து மன்றல் எட்டனுள்
துறையமை நல்யாழ்த் துணைமையோர் இயல்பே -
Ibid : 1038.
3. Ramachandra Dikshitar, V.R., Studies in Tamil Literature, p.272.

the sea.[1] Paraṇar, one of the most celebrated poets of the Sangam age, while - describing the love of the hero, says that his intense love is eternal and will continue to possess him in the subsequent cycles of birth too.[2] Another hero tells his lady-love that he would not forsake her love even for the sake of the entire world surrounded by the sea.[3] A lady-love speaks of her lover's fidelity with great confidence that he will not desert her, whatever might be the circumstances or vicissitudes of - fortune.[4]

The ardent love on both sides is mentioned under four categories, i.e , 'naṭpu' (நட்பு) in thirteen poems;[5] 'toṭarpu' (தொடர்பு) in two poems;[6] 'Kēṇmai' (கேண்மை) in seven poems;[7] 'Kāmam' (காமம்) in as many poems as thirty in number.[8]

KALAVU

1. Iyṟkai-p-Puṇarcci (Union Through Destiny).

A girl walks to the fields with her friend to scare the parrots that come in large numbers and feed on the ripe-beans. Her parents have assigned her this task. A young man goes out a hunting in the hilly tracts. He strays to the millet-fields in the course of his hunting where the young girl is keeping watch. He is attracted by the charms of the young lass. The narrow fore-head under her tresses which resembles the eighth day crescent moon rising above the sea

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1. நிலத்தினும் பெரிதே வானினும் உயர்ந்தன்று
   நீரினும் ஆரள வின்றே Kuṟu : 3.
2. மறுமை யுலகத்து மன்னுதல் பெறுமே - Ibid : 199.
3. Kuṟu : 300.
4. Ibid : 170.
5. Kuṟu : 2, 3, 134, 199, 247, 300, 304, 313, 326 - 373 377.
6. Ibid : 385, 401.
7. Ibid : 38, 61, 90, 105, 170, 264, 308.
8. Ibid : 5, 18, 22, 57, 58, 78, 92, 97, 99, 102, 112, 136, 149, 152, 177, 204, 206, 212, 217, 231, 241, 257, 289, 290, 305, 308, 316, 340, 371, 400.

catches the attention of the hero.[1] Her eyes, which sparkle like the spots on the pea-cock-tail attract the young man.[2] Verily, he does, - 'receive fair speechless messages from her eyes'.[3]

The young man says to his confidant that he loves the young damsel, whose teeth are white and hands are adorned with bangles.[4] He proudly compares her tresses to the black sands shining on the banks of uṟantai, belonging to the prosperous Cōḻās.[5] They become united in love and their hearts are now filled with joy. From this it is quite evident that love at first sight was the predominant feature of the day. A poet speaks of it as 'kaṇtara vanta kāma oḷḷeri'[6] which means 'the eye-produced intense love, Thus the exchange of looks will result naturally in most cases in the union of hearts. Tolkāppiyaṉār gives the name 'kuṟippurai' to this union of hearts through the exchange of side-long glances.[7] It is further said that by the force of ineluctable destiny, young men and women meet each other; and 'pāl' is the word used by Tolkāppiyaṉār in this context to denote the fate or destiny.[8] Mōtācaṉār, a Kuṟuntokai poet, uses this word, 'pāl' in his poem in which he beautifully describes the nature of love which finally results in the elopement of the lovers. "The boy and the girl seized each other's locks of hair and engaged in petty harmless childish quarrel and did not cease their quarrel even at the intervention of their foster-mothers. All that happened during their childhood. O,

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1. Kuṟu : 129.
2. Ibid : 184.
3. The merchant of Venice, Act I, Scene I, 11 163-164.
4. Kuṟu : 119.
5. Ibid : 116.
6. கண்தர வந்த காம வொள்ளெரி - Kuṟu : 305.
7. நாட்டம் இரண்டும் அறிவுடன் படுத்தற்குக்
கூட்டி உரைக்கும் குறிப்புரை யாகும் - Tol : 1042.
8. ஒன்றி உயர்ந்த பால தானையின்
ஒத்த கிழவனும் கிழத்தியும் காண்ப -Tol : 1039.

destiny! (pāl) now you have made them united like two garlands of flowers - intertwined. You are really good''.[1]

From this it is proved beyond doubt that the ancient Tamils believed that the union of hearts was brought about really through the power of destiny.

Under some pretext or other, the hero tries to touch lightly the girl to make her feel more at home in his company and cast off shyness. This is aptly called by Tolkāppiyṉār as 'meytoṭṭuppayiṟal'[2] (மெய்தொட்டுப் பயிறல்). The hero addresses a lovely winged beetle which is always in search of honey in various flowers and asks it to tell him whether there are any flowers in its knowledge that smell sweeter than the tresses of his beloved sweetheart who possesses the tenderness of a peacock.[3] The love between them is said here to be 'payiliatu Keḻīyia naṭpu', i.e., 'the love cherished after a closer intimacy'. The lady responds to her lover when she comes to know more about his devotion to her. Parting is full of sweet sorrow for her now; and the young man consoles her; ''Our relationship does not seem to me to have been the outcome of the relationship that existed between our parents. Like the rain-drops that fall on the red earth and partake of the colour of the soil, so too our loving hearts are blended into one''.[4]

This makes the maiden feel confident and cheerful. The hero heartens her further by saying that holymen who approach people for alms will avoid him if he were to abandon her.[5]

Then the goes away from her, saying that he will soon meet her in the same place. He is sad at this parting and is

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1. நன்று நன்று அம்ம பாலே—Kuṟu : 229.
2. மெய்தொட்டுப் பயிறல்—Tol : 1048.
3. பயிலியது கெழீஇய நட்பு—Kuṟu : 2.
4. செம்புலப் பெயல்நீர் போல
அன்புடை நெஞ்சம் தாம்கலந் தன்வே—Ibid ; 40.
5. Ibid : 137.

reminded of his happy association with her; of her charms and sterling qualities; He compares himself to a pauper dreaming of a prosperous life.[1] He adds that he sighs in vain as deeply as an elephant asleep and his heart is left behind and stays with his sweetheart.[2]

2. Itantalaipatu (Meeting at the Same Place)

The term 'iṭantalaippāṭu' denotes the second meeting or union of lovers at the place of their first meeting. The hero yearns to go and meet his lady-love where he met her for the first time - accidentally. Prompted by keen desire, he arrives at the tryst and meets her over-joyed, he waxes eloquent on her charms and beauty. He says that her body which smells sweetly is as soft and cool as the tender leases of a plant and lords itself sweetly to a warm embrace,[3] Her tresses run down in curls like the waves of the sea; and her forhead is neat and small. He confesses that she is a-nonpareil....., that he finds no words to speak of her appearance and charms. He says at the end that she speaks to him rarely and When embraced she is very tender.[4]

Pankarkkuttam (Union Through the Help of the Mate Companion.)

The term 'pāṅkarkkūṭṭam' implies 'the lovers' union through the help of the confidant of the hero'. After the second meeting with the lady-love, the passion grows in strength and he is placed in a sorrowful plight. He is full of sighs and suffers much pain and distress. The mental agony of the hero is great. The happy memories of the past come to his mind. He desires to meet her lest he should die of this agony. This passion grows and feeds fast upon sweet memories of her and he wastes away his strength gradually.

The confidant of the hero notices the unusual change that has come over his friend. He finds him sleepless, tired

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1. Kuṟu : 120.
2. Ibid : 142.
3. Kuṟu : 62.
4. Ibid : 70

and weary of limbs and questions him about his ailing ; The hero, with no sense of modesty in his expression, narrates majestically his whole love-affair. He tells him that he is captivated by the beautiful young girl on the hillock[1] and says further that her charms have imprisoned him; and he is raving mad and is as restless as the elephant captured by the hunters of the region.

The companion listens to his passionate speech and advises him to forget his courtship with the girl who is not worthy of his nobility, rank and greatness. The hero replies that those who are ignorant of the pleasures of courtship will only despise his fancy. Kāmam, 'this passion to excess driven' is felt in the blood and burns the heart; it is neither a pain nor a fever that passes soon. It is a longing, gently swaying one affected by it with a desire that visits of ten times and impelling him to cherish it for ever. It is something similar to the yearning of the toothless cow for nibbling the tender grass in a plateau.[2]

The hero listens to his friend with impatience and narrates a few instances whera love grown hot in the blood breaks the pale and ports of reason, and all learning is too weak to resist the flood. He entreats his companion to suggest some means for a re-union with his love, and also be instrumental in bringing about a meeting between them.[3] Sometimes, he pathetically describes to his companion that his sorrow is boundless: He tells his friend that he is as helpless as a dumb-man who cannot cry for help nor is, being armless, able to move away a pot of butter that is melting in the heat of the Sun.[4]

Sometimes the companion chides the hero for having lost his heart to a lady. This act of the companion reminds us one

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1. புதுக்கோள் யானையின் பிணித்தற்றா லெம்மே
—Kuṟu : 129.
2. Ibid : 204.
3. Ibid : 156.
4. Ibid : 58.

of the - couplet of the immortal Kuṟaḷ.[1] The confidant, after hearing all the arguments put forth by the hero, arranges for the hero's meeting with the lady-love. He goes in search of the lady-love but does not find her. Then he intimates to the hero the arrival of the lady-love at a particular place. The hero meets his sweetheart and feels immensely pleased as before.

Tōḻiyiṟ Puṇarcci (Union Through the Aid the Lady-Companion.)

The series of meetings of the lovers with the help of the lady-companion is called 'tōḻiyiṟpuṇarcci'. Nearly 95 percent of the Kaḷavu poems come under this category and this clearly shows the important role of the lady-companion in the clandestine course of love.[2]

After the meeting that was arranged by his confidant, the hero realises that he should keep the lady-companion in good humour, and tries to ensure her good-will. He knows that only through the good offices of this companion he will be able to meet his love more often. So, he walks to the millet-fields, the mountain-streams and such other usual haunts where both his lady-love and her maid stay together and makes kind enquiries about their names and place of residence, etc., He is astonished at their intimacy[3] and at the way they think and feel alike, and so desires to befriend the maid and get her favour. This clarifies the predominant place that a maid occupies in the Kaḷavu course of love. Further, Tolkāppiyaṉār call the lady-companion 'oṉṟit tōṉṟum tōḻi'[4] which means that the maid is in perfect identity with the lady-love. The rhetorician says further that the lady-companion is generally the daughter of the foster-mother or

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1. நகுதற் பொருட்டன்று நட்டல் மிகுதிக்கண
மேற்சென் றிடித்தற் பொருட்டு – Kuṟaḷ : 784.
2. Manickam, V.SP., the Tamil condept of love, p. 37.
3. Kuṟu : 222.
4. ஒன்றித் தோன்றும் தோழி—Tol ; 985.

the nurse.[1] Seeking the help of the lady-companion in continuing the clandestine meetings is described by Tolkāppiyaṉār as 'peṭṭavāyil peṟṟirattal'[2] i.e. seeking the help of the maid whom the lady-love loves very much. Some rare gifts or things such as leaves of 'acoku'[3] or a garland made with 'kuvaḷai' flowers,[4] or some tender and soft-like leaves[5] are presented by the hero to the lady-companion to be handed over to the lady-love. But the lady-companion does not pay any heed to this. Her love js not dependent on these presents. So the hero frequently visits her and asks for her help again and again. In one poem it is found that the lady-companion herself tells her lady-love that the hero has visited her many days. The frequent visits of the hero have the desired effect and the companion finally accepts to comply with his request.[6]

The hero, sometimes is at a loss to express his love-sorrows to the maid. He brings with him the 'kāntaḷ' flowers; but the maid refuses them by saying that her mountainous region which ia looked after by Lord Muruga, is having 'kāntaḷ' flowers in an abundant measure[7]. Thus the lady-companion rejects the offer made by the hero on a few occasions. Once she will persuade the lady-love to accept his love.

MATAL REFERENCE

After knowing the real intention of the lady-love, the companion arranges for their clandestine meetings both during the day[8] and the night.[9] The venue of the meetings is now fixed by the maid. Such meetings in night and day are called respectively 'iravukkuṟi' and 'pakaṟkuṟi' by

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1. தோழி தானே செவிலி மகளே—Tol, 1071.
2. பெட்டவாயில் பெற்றிரவு வலியுறுப்பினும்—Ibid : 1048.
3. Kuṟu : 346.
4. Ibid : 214.
5. Ibid : 223.
6. Ibid : 176.
7. Ibid : 1.
8. Kuṟu : 123.
9. Ibid : 345.

Tolkāppiyaṉār.[1] The lady-companion purposely postpons the acceptance of the hero's love and his presents in order to try his constancy in love and also impress upon him the inestimable value of attaining the lady-love. This postponement only increases the intensity of his love and he becomes impatient of her unsympathetic attitude and unwillingness to assist him. The hero threatens to mount the "maṭal" chariot by adorning himself with a garland of the flowers of 'erukku' and to make an uproar in the streets.[2]

This ancient custom is called 'maṭal ēṟutal' and Tolkāppiyaṉār mentions this practice of forcing the issue under the category of peruntiṇai or unequal or ill-assorted love.[3] At the same time the mere reference to such a threat by the hero is treated in Aintiṇai.[4] At any rate, the heroine will not mount on the maṭal chariot.[5]

There are five poems in Kuṟuntokai refering to this ancient custom.[6]

Paying no heed to his modesty, the hero would ride on a horse made out of the fronds of the palmyra-tree and adorn himself with the fresh-bloomed 'āvirai' flowers and blame the lady-love publicly that she is the root cause of this act.[7]

The poet noted for treating this particular aspect of love is Mātaṅkīranār, whose name, is aptly preceded with an epithet, 'maṭalpāṭiya'. He adds two more points to the statement cited above. One is that the lover would adorn himself arround his neck with a wreath made from white bones and

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1. குறியெனப்படுவது இரவினும் பகலினும்
அறியத் தோன்றும் ஆற்ற தென்ப—Tol : 1076.
2. Kuṟu : 17.
3. ஏறிய மடற்றிறம் இளமைதீர் திறம்—Tol : 997.
4. மடல்மா கூறும் இடனுமா ருண்டே—Ibid :1048,
5. எத்திணை மருங்குனும் மகடூஉ மடல்மேற்
பொற்புடைட் நெறிமை இன்மை யான—Ibid : 981
6. Kuṟu—14, 17, 32, 173, 182.
7. Ibid : 173.

the other is that the on-lookers in the public streets would laugh at him for committing this kind of act.[1] He does not feel any sense of shame in mounting on the maṭal chariot and publicly announcing that 'he is lover of the virtuous lady'.[2] Sometimes, he may feel differently. A reference is made in a poem where a lover himself admits that this act of mounting on the maṭal chariot is a blemish in his nature.[3]

At this stage, the lady-companion dissuades him from committing this act and says that it is unfair to do so; and it is not in keeping with his nobility and sympathetic attitude.

The hero only mentions this act of 'maṭal-ēṟutal', but never commits it. No single reference is to be found in Kuṟuntokai testifying to the prevalence of such acts.

All these incidents fall under the category of 'tōḻiyiṟ-puṇarcci'.

THE DAY - TRYST (பகற்குறி)

With the helpful attitude shown by the lady-companion, the clandestine meetings between the hero and the lady-love continue. She suggests the time and place suitable for their meeting both at night and day.[4] The meeting that is arranged in day-time is called the day-tryst. According to Tolkāppiyaṉār, the venue of day-tryst would be suited for the purpose, if far away from the house of the lady-love.[5]

This sort of arrangement is quite appropriate, because if their meeting place is chosen very near the house of the lady-love, then their love-affair would soon become an open secret to all in the village.

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1. Kuṟu: 182.
2. நலனோள் கணவன் இவனெனப்
   பல்லோர் கூற நாணுகம் சிறிதே—Kuṟu : 14.
3. Ibid : 32.
4. குறியெனப் படுவது இரவினும் பகலினும்
   அறியத தோன்றும் ஆற்ற தென்ப—Tol : 1076.
5. பகல்புணர் களனே புறனென மொழிப—Ibid : 1078.

There are only a few instances to be found regarding the day-tryst in Kuṟuntokai. The companion tells that she is proceeding with her mistress to a tank which is situated very near the river on whose banks the cranes are looking for their prey. She adds that they are going to the park nearby to pluck the various flowers to adorn their tresses after their bathing in the river.[1] Thus in a way, she indicates him the meeting place. In another instance, she depicts that the hero has not turned up at the day-tryst to meet his lady-love and is not availing himself of and an opportunity good enough since the kith and kin of the lady-love have gone on fishing.[2]

INTERFERENCE IN THE DAY-TRYST

Sometimes the hero fails to meet his lady-love at the appointed day-tryst, owing to some unavoidable circumstances and reasons. This is called by Tolkāppiyaṉār as 'allakuṟippaṭutal'[3]. Because of this failure in meeting, the lady-love pines away and her companion pacifies her saying that the hero will come to her soon.

After the harvest of the millet-fields is over, the parents would call back their daughter and her companion from the fields where they kept a vigourous and careful watch. Then practically there is no chance left for the hero to meet his lady-love during the day. Because of this hindrance to the day-tryst, he tries to meet her by some other means.

THE NIGHT - TRYST (இரவுக்குறி)

The meeting place of the lovers in night at the instance of the lady-companion is called the 'iravukkuṟi', i.e., the night-tryst. The venue of the meeting at night would be a place not far away from the house of the lady-love but within

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1. Kuṟu : 113.
2. Ibid : 123.
3. அல்லகுறிப் படுதலும் அவள்வயின் உரித்தே
அவன்குறி மயங்கிய அமைவொடு வரினே—Tol : 1076.

the vicinity of the house.[1] This enables the lady-love to meet her lover without much difficulty in the stillness of the night. Moreover, she cannot traverse a long distance away from her house to meet her lover, since it would provide opportunity to others in the village to come to know their secret love-affair. This arrangement of choosing the appropriate time and place on the part of the lady-companion speaks much for her cleverness. So it is generally believed by some scholars that the lady-companion will always be a married lady with much experience in the ways of the world. [2]

The hero intoxicated with the overtures, walks the perilous path infested with wild animals in the thick darkness of night in order to meet his lady. Kapilar describes the diificulties encountered by a hero in meeting his lady-love. The lady-companion, on seeing the arrival of the hero at their doorstep on a rainy night pathetically speaks thus: "The sky is not clear, since it is raining heavily. The ground is not to be seen distinctly since the rain water spreads every where over the surface. The sun has set beyond the horizon in the west and utter darkness prevails everywhere. How did you manage to come over here when all are asleep? How are you able to find the small hamlet in the hills wherefrom the sweet smell of the 'vēṅkai' flowers is spreading. I really pity you very much"[2] (nōkōyāṉe). Only a few poems in the whole of Sangam literature are equal to this poem both in te grandeur and clourfulness.

The lady-companion tells her mistress that they need not feel any misgivings in meeting the hero at the night-tryst, since he himself ventured to come over to the meeting place

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1. இரவுக்குறியே இல்லகத் துள்ளும்
மனையோர் கிளவி கேட்கும்வழியதுவே
மனையகம் புகாஅக் காலை யான— Tol : 1077.
2. Varadarajan, M., Kuṟuntotai-c-celvam, p. 34.
c.f. சூழ்தலும் உசாத்துணை நிலைமையின் பொலிமே—
Tol : 1072.
3. Kuṟu : 355.

by overcoming all the abstacle in his way where the tiger and elephant are engaged in their constant enmity.[1]

The route taken by the hero dangerous and infested with wild animals,[2] fills the heart of the lady-love with terror. The red-eyed ox, averse to stand on a mire, makes a pathetic cry and it breaks the dead silence of the night. The observers of time (*நாழிகைக் கணக்கர்*) are awake throughout the night and likewise, the lady-love passes every minute with great anxiety and fear.[3]

The hero, after meeting his lady-love, thinks that she plays a double game. He proudly twists her that she is pleasant to him in the nights and behaves properly with her parents in the day and dissimulates as if nothing happened the previous night. So he rightly calls her 'iraṇṭaṟikaḷvi' i.e., 'one who successfully plays a douple game'.[4]

The lady-love, on her part expresses her ardent desire and love towards her lover. She says to him that her love can be shaken by no means and under no circumstances, since it has been fastened with iron-nails of steel as it were.[5]

The hero sometimes rides a chariot to meet her.[6] Occasionally tha lady-love would reject the plea of her maid in accepting to her proposal of meeting the hero in the night.[7]

It is very rare on the part of the hero to knock at the door of the lady-love to anonunce his arrival in the night. One Kuṟuntokai poet calls this rare act as 'iravuk-katava muyaṟal'.[8]

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1. Kuṟu : 88.
2. Ibid : 141.
3. Ibid : 261.
4. *இரண்டறி கள்விநம் காத லோனே*—Kuṟu : 312.
5. Ibid : 313,
6. Ibid : 345.
7. Ibid : 340.
8. *இரவுக் கதவ முயறல்*—Kuṟu : 244.

During his meetings at night, the hero adorns himself with the garlands of pearls and of 'kuvaḷai' flowers and semears his chest with sandal-paste.[1]

On the whole, the poems treating the theme of night-tryst fully explain the rapturous love that exists between the hero and the lady-love.

INTERFERENCE IN THE NIGHT-TRYST

As it is seen in the case of day-tryst, here, in the night-tryst also, the hero sometimes misses the meetings. It is usual for the lady-love to mistake some of the sounds caused accidentally by animals, birds and such like, for the signals made by the hero to indicate his arrival and prerence in the garden of her house. She meets with utter disappointment when she does not find her hero there. Somstimes, she may take the signals actulaly made by her lover as if they were caused by other agencies. In either case she meets the disappointment. Tolkāppiyaṉār calls this "allakuṟip-paṭutal".[2]

On account of the disappointment suffered by the lady-love, her shoulders droop and heart sinks. The watchfulness and awakening of the foster-mother sometimes prevent the lady-love from meeting her lover at the rendezvous.[3]

When the hero returns without meeting his lady-love, he is full of sighs and grief. He wonders his heart does not know that his love is so dear to be attained while it is fully aware of her merits and greatness. He compares himself to a pauper dreaming of a luxurious life.[4] Sometimes, he compares himself to a crane grown in age waiting on the sea-sore for the 'ayirai' fish, which it got once at the port of Tondi which belonged to the chieftain Poraiyan.[5]

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1. Kuṟu : 321.
2. அல்லகுறிப் படுதலும் அவள்வயின் உரித்தே—Tol : 1079.
3. Ibid : 161.
4. Kuṟu : 120.
5. Ibid : 324.

VARAIVU KATAVUTAL (வரைவு கடாவுதல்)

The lady-companion deeply thinks of the impending dangers that arise out of the clandestine stage of love and finds out the Possible ways and means to avert them. Here the lady-companion makes a plea with the hero for the need of an early marriage.[1]

The term 'varaivu kaṭāvutal' denotes 'requesting or inducing the hero to arrage an early marriage with the lady-love'.

The lady-companion realises her responsibility in bringing about their marriage and so, as a first step, she puts an end to their clandestine meetings to impress upon the hero the extreme necessity of getting married soon.

Dr. V. SP. Manickam in his thesis rightly takes notice of the indispensable part that is being played in the clandestine stage of love by the lady-companion. He says thus : "A female companion is introduced in Aintinai, not in my opinion, to aid the furtive course of the lovers, but to cut short that course and induce them to get married as early as possible".[2]

The lady-Companion puts forth her arguments in the presence of the hero urging the extreme necessity of an early marriage. She says to him that the soul of the lady-love is tender and fragile like the thin branch of a jack tree, whereas her love for him is great like the massive jack fruit hanging on the branch.[3]

The simile that is used by the lady-companion yields a deeper meaning. She fully explains through this simile the need for an early marriage since it will provide them with conjugal happiness without the break or interference by anybody. Thus the segacious lady-companion impresses the

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1. Kuṟu : 375.
2. The Tamil concept of love, p. 42.
3. Kuṟu : 18.

hero with the necessity of marriage. She warns him that the lady-love is definitely going to perish if he fails in his love and makes delays any longer in getting married.[1] Further she changes the venue of meeting frequently. Sometimes she rejects the day-tryst in preference to the night-tryst and vice versa. Thus she skilfully manages to bring them over to get married as early as possible. She tells him that while she is appreciating his ardent love shown by his willingness to encounter difficulties in his way. She, at the same time, feels for her mistress also who is always thinking of the impending dangers that the hero have to meet along his route. So she compares herself with a mother of twins who feels sorry and seeks remedy for both when they happened to take poison at the same time.[2] She pathetically explains the precarious position of the lady-love under the watch and ward of her parents in her house and tells him that it is not good on his part to prolong the time without arranging for an early marriage.[3] Sometimes, she says to him that the day and night-trysts are dangerous, since there is a stream of visitors to the river bank the venue of the day-tryst and since the foster-mother sleeps warmly embracing the lady-love at nights.[4] She sasy that the reapers of the millet-fields are engaged in harvest even at nights[4] and the sound of the drum beaten by the watchmen is echoing throughout the hills and makes possible a meeting at the night-tryst.[5] Sometimes she pretends not to know the arrival of the hero, and addresses the moon as it is not doing good for the young lovers engaged in secret courtship, since its bright white rays expose their love-affair to the view of others.[6]

The lady-companion occupies an unenviable position and plays a major role in Aintiṇai.

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1. Kuṟu : 169.
2. Ibid : 324.
3. Ibid : 342.
4. Ibid : 354.
5. Ibid : 375.
6. Ibid : 47.

VARAIPORUT PIRIVU

(The hero's dapartura to earn wealth for marriage)

The hero feels the extreme necessity of earning wealth for the celebration of his marriage and so he parts with his lady-love for a short interval of time in pursuit of wealth. The interval of his absence in this case does not last longer than two months.

Before making his journey, he requests the lady-companion to look after his sweet-heart. The lady-companion tells him that he has enjoyed her feminine charms on the sand-dune under the shade of the 'punnai' tree.[1] She tells him further that she is completely left at his mercy and compares her mistress to a young child which cries aloud 'annāy, annāy' even when it is mercilessly beaten by its mother. It is left to him to show kindness or cruelty towards her.[2]

During the absence of the hero, the lady-love experiences a loneliness and in order to get over it, the lady-companion speaks to the lady-love in a consoling manner: "Like the wealth of a dutiful noble man which does not last long, so also 'pacalai' or the pain of separation and the change of complexion are only of a transitory nature and wil not remain ever with you".[3]

The hero returns home with great joy in his heart and in his jubilant mood addresses the north wind to tell him the exact location of the house where his sweet-heart dwells in.[4]

The examples show how the lover goes in pursuit of wealth for celebrating his marriage.

VERIYĀTTU

On seeing her daughter waning everyday which is the result of the love and separation, the mother or the foster-

1. Kuru : 236.
2. Ibid : 397.
3. Ibid : 143.
4. Ibid : 235.

mother feels distressed. She is quite ignorant of the real cause of her present state and attributes it to the deity of the hilly-tract, Murugan and hence she calls for the officiating priesf of the temple of Muruga, called 'vēlaṉ', to cure the malady of her daughter. He chooses the place of ritual and invokes the presence of Murugan offering the red millet along with the blood of billy-goat, sacrificed to the deity.[1] Then he utters that the reason for the sudden illeness of the young girl is the wrath of the hill-deity. This is an occasion for the lady-companion to reveal the secret love-affair of the lady-love with the hero. The Vēlaṉ adorns the place with 'aralai' flowers and with fried red rice and dances the 'veṟiyāṭṭu', a hectic dance.

Sometimes, instead of the priest of the temple of Muruga, an old female-soothsayer is invited by the mother or the foster-mother. She chants a long poem touching the several hills wherein Lord Muruga took his abode. In the course of her song, the old female-diviner mentions the name of the particular hill which belongs to the hero. Availing of this opportunity that came in her way, the wise lady-companion intervenes and makes an appeal to the female soothsayer to stop there and repeat the same line.[2]

The daring interference of the lady-companion and her special interest in a particular mountain lead the mother or the foster-mother to guess the reason of the illness and finally they find out the person who is the real cause of their daughter's sickness. This rare occaaion is utilised fully by the lady-companion to press upon the hero the necessitv of arranging an early marriage with his lady-love.

Sometimes by means of 'kaḷaṅku' (molucca beans) the girl's sickness will be diagnosed by the Vēlaṉ who says that she is possessed by Murugan.

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1. Kuṟu : 363.
2. Ibid : 23.

Both these practices come under the category of 'veṟiyāṭṭu' an ancient custom that prevailed among the Tamils. Tolkāppiyaṉār mentions this ancient practice as 'kaṭṭiṉum kaḷaṅkiṉum'.[1]

ALAR (PUBLIC GOSSIP)

The women naturally have an ardent desire to probe the love affairs of a girl with a young man and the first stage of gossip is called 'ampal', while the growing gossip is termed 'alar'. The first is a rumour in the initiative stage and the latter is public talk rampart. Both have their own salient features. Tolkāppiyaṉār introduces this interesting element in Aintiṇai both in Kaḷavu and Kaṟpu,[2] and adds that 'ala' would intensify the love.[3]

Sometimes the lady-love pathetically remarks that her secret love-affair has become known to others.[4] She resents this 'alar', as it leads her mother to keep a strict and vigilant watch over her.[5]

VĒRRU VARAIVU (Rival Proposal for Marriage)

Normally the hero's parents would approach the parents of the girl and ask their consent for the marriage. Sometimes, it so happens that the party approached is other than that of the hero whom the girl likes. The parents discuss the issue not knowing the girl's preference and choice. This precarious position is called 'Vēṟṟu Varaivu' or the rival-proposal for marriage.[6]

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1. களவு அலராயினும் காமம் மெய்ப்படுப்பினும்
அளவுமிகத் தோன்றினும் தலைப்பெய்து காணினும்
கட்டினும் கழங்கினும வெறியென இருவரும்
ஒட்டிய திறத்தான் செய்திக் கண்ணும்—Tol : 1061.
2. களவும் கற்பும் அலர்வரைவு இன்றே—Ibid : 1108.
3. அலரின் தோன்றும் காமத்தின் சிறப்பே—Ibid : 1109.
4. Kuṟu : 54.
5. Ibid : 262.
6. வேற்றுவரைவு வரினது மாற்றுதற் கண்ணும்
—Tol : 1057.

There is one instance in Kuṟuntokai where some strangers come to the house of the lady-love to ask for an alliance of, marriage while the hero who captivated the heart of the lady-love has not yet turned up with the proposal of marriage in time.[1]

This leads us to the assumption that there existed marriage even without love.

ARATTOTU NIRRAL (Revelation with Virtue)

'Aṟattoṭu niṟṟal' means 'letting the parents know the secret'. The feminine modesty of a girl will not permit her to let out the secret of love-affair to another, unless she is driven to that necessity.[2]

The incidents that are narrated under the category of 'veṟiyāṭṭu' are intended to explain the stand taken by the lady-companion to disclose the secret love-affair to the elders of the family. When asked by the foster-mother about the real cause of the waning of the lady-love, the lady-companion replies that a young man gave a blue lotus-flower to the lady-love one day as a token of his love and wooed her. She adds further that thereafter whenever she happened to have a glance at a lotus flower in a pool of the hill, she was reminded of the happy memories of the past and shed tears.[3]

When they come to know the secret love-affair of their daughter with a hero, the mother and foster-mother will tell this news to the father and brothers of the girl and they will arrange for the marriage with the hero with whom their daughter fell in love.

Even after the elopement of the young couples, the lady-companion will tell the parents of the secret courtship.

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1. Kuṟu : 379.
2. நாணினும் செயிர்தீர் காட்சிக் கற்புச் சிறந்றுதன்
—Tol : 1059.
3. Kuṟu : 366.

Thus the theme 'aṟattoṭuniṟṟal' finds a unique position in Aintiṇai and Kapilar has chosen this theme of 'kuṟiñcippāṭṭu' to bring out the full significance of the clandestine love.

VARAIVU (MARRIAGE)

The term 'varaivu' means 'marriage'. The hero sends greyhaired elders to obtain the consent of the parents of the girl whom he loved in order to get married.[1]

It is evident in Sangam poems that generally the hero's parents consent to their son's request, without any reluctance. Further, the lady-companion tells her mistress by way of consolation that she loves the hero intensely, and her mother and father also agree to her wish. She says that the acceptance of marriage by the parents acts as a check to the gossip of women in the village.[2] From this statement, it is quite evident that the girl's parents also generally accept her love without raising any note of objection. When the terms for the wedding are settled, the lady-companion ironically says that hereafter the persons who are engaged in scandal-mongering will sleep well at nights.[3]

Thus the clandestine meetings of the young couples come to stand-still with the proposal of marriage. "Marriage remains practically inevitable; and the sooner we acknowledge this, the sooner we shall set to work to make it decent and reasonable".[4] Thus opines George Bernard Shaw.

UTANPOKKU (ELOPEMENT)

The beautiful term 'uṭaṉpōkku' refers to the custom of elopement of the lovers that was prevalent in those days. Tolkāppiaṉār tells us that elopement and the consequent, pining for union on the part of the lady-love are frequent

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1. Kuṟu : 146.
2. Ibid : 51.
3. Ibid : 34.
4. Preface to 'Getting married', p. 182.

occurrences.[1] He calls this elopement by the term 'koṇṭu-talaippirital, i.e., 'hero's taking the lady-love with him'.

If the parents do not agree to the proposal of marriage, and sometimes if the lovers themselves do not reveal their love-affairs at the proper time, thereby making arrangements for a marriage easy the lady-companion promotes an elopement and encourages them in that direction. The here has his misgivings about this course of action; he prefers delay and secret meetings. He tells the lady-companion that the journey with the lady-love through the desert is not a pleasant one, and it is full of perils and dangers.[2] He says that even water will be scarce on those regions.[3]

But the lady-companion replies suitably that it will not be pleasant even at home to her, who will be lonely, when he is gone.[4] The day and night-trysts prove futile and bring forth fresh troubles to the hero and his lady-love. So the lady-companion tells that only one solution is open to them and that is the elopement.[5] On a few occasions she takes pains to make the lady-love also agree to her proposal of elopement to be free from public gossip.[6]

The desert that they have to pass is a troublesome one, since the west wind blows there wildly and makes the dry seeds of the 'vākai' rub against one another and produces a sound similar to that produced by an anklet.[7]

At first, the lady-love hesitates; she is too shy and modest to elope with her hero, but finally she comes round and accepts.[8] She says with a merry note that she is quite

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1. கொணடுதலைக் கழிதலும பிரிந்தவண இரங்கலும் உண்டென மொழிப ஓரிடத் தான—Tol : 96 1.
2. Kuṟu : 124.
3. Ibid : 56.
4. பெருங்காடு, இன்னா என்றீ ராயின் இனியவோ பெரும தமியோர்க்கு மனையே—Kuṟu : 127.
5. Kuṟu : 217.
6. Ibid : 262.
7. Ibid : 369.
8. Ibid : 149.

prepared to drink happily whatever little water there will be in those little puddles made by the stampede of the huge elephants, while accompanying her lover along the rugged, mountainous path to a far-off country.[1] When his love agrees to an elopement, the hero warns her of the heat of the blazing sun in those desert regions. The lady-companion tells him that even the desert will be a pleasant one for the lady-love if she happens to elope with him.[2]

When the hero is ready to take his lady-love, the lady-companion requests him that he must keep his love and kindness towards his lady-love constant even when age comes on her charms fade away.[3]

When the foster-mother is informed of the elopement of her girl, she is unhappy and says: "When I embraced her warmly, she resented my embrance and said that she was sweating too much. I was foolish not to have taken the hint. Only now I understand the true reason behind her unusual resentment. Having felt her hero's embrace, it was difficult for her to yield to the embrace of others".[4] She wonders further how it became possible for her to elope with a hero through a barren and waterless desert. At the same time, she is reminded of her childishness and playful nature in the past, when she refused the cooked rice mixed with milk and offered in a gold plate,[5] and when she did not play the game alone, but showed a keen desire to play with her playmates only.[6]

The foster-mother offers her prayers to the Lord of the region. She implores the sacred God that her daughter should have protection from the hot rays of the burning sun

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1. Kuṟu : 262.
2. கானமும் இனியவால் நும்மொடு வரினே—Kuṟu : 388.
3. Kuṟu : 115.
4. Ibid : 84.
5. Ibid : 356.
6. Ibid : 396.

all along the desert, and shady shelters and cool showers should be found everywhere on her way.[1]

The foster-mother goes in search of her daughter along the desert. The on-lookers along the desert give some information to her.[2] They say that they noted the 'kaḻal' on the hero's feet and the anklet on the feet and the anklet on the feet of the lady-love.

The mother's lament over the loss of her daughter, known as 'makaṭ-pōkkiya tāi iraṅkal' has been treated in highly imaginative ways by Sangam poets. Thirty out of one hundred stanzas relating to the theme of separation in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu deal exclusively with the elopement of the young cuples and the subsquent sorrowful search of the foster-mother along the desert.[3]

These incidents are also part of Kaḷavu or clandestine love-making.

KARPU

The word 'kaṟpu' takes its origin from the word 'kaṟpittal', since the lady is taught by her parents to love and obey her husband, regarding him as her Lord and receive proper suggestions from him as to her conduct and relationship with others in society. According to Tolkāppiyaṉār, 'kaṟpu' is the hero's acceptance of the lady from the parents in the appropriate manner with due rituals.[5] Even without the consent of the pride, the hero will marry her at his house performing some rituals after making a successful elopement

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1. Kuṟu : 378.
2. Ibid : 229.
3. Ibid : 7.
4. Aiṅ : 371-400.
5. கற்பெனப் படுவது கரணமொடு புணர
கொளற்குரி மரபின் கிழவன் கிழத்தியைக்
கொடைக்குரி மரபினோர் கொடுப்பக் கொள்வது
—Tol : 1088

with her.[1] Further, Tolkāppiyaṉār adds that when falsehood and neglect of duty came to prevail in society rituals confirming the marriage in public became a necessity.[2] Thus the custom of having rituals gained currency only in later times. The word 'karaṇam' means 'rituals' or ceremony. The solemnised marriage brings the responsibility of the husband to the lover. He has to learn the art and secret of life; and cannot afford to be wayward or reckless in his attitudes and actions. So 'kaṟpu' is the end of 'kaḷavu.[3] 'kaṟpu' is preceded by 'kaḷavu' in most cases.[4] Some scholars differ in opinion and hold that only 'kaḷavu' course had led to 'kaṟpu'.[5]

Betrand Russell observes: "Marriage is something more serious than the pleasure of two people in each other's company; it is an institution which, through the fact that it gives rise to children, forms part of the intimate texture of society, and has an importance extending far beyond the personal feelings of the husband and the wife".[6]

The marriage remains an inevitable thing and it teaches some lesson to the youug couples namely the importance of leading a life with a sense of responsibility.

The traditional and the clandestine are the two means of getting a bride in marriage.[7]

With married life begin some duties to be performed in society. The married people should live well, and do their

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1. கொடுப்போர் இன்றியும் கரணம் உண்டே
புணர்ந்துடன் போகிய காலை யான —Tol : 1089.
2. பொய்யும் வழுவும் தோன்றிய பின்னர்
ஐயர் யாத்தனர் கரணம் என்ப—Ibid : 1091.
3. மாமயி லன்னார் மறையிற் புணர்மைந்தர்
காமங் களவிட்டுக் கைகொள் கற்புற்ற னெ—Pari:II 40-41.
4. கற்பெனப் படுவது களவின் வழித்தே—Iṟai : 15.
5. Raghava Iyengar, M., Tolkāppiyap poruḷatikāra arāycci, p. 12.
6. Marrige and Morals, p. 63.
7. மறைவெளிப் படுதலும் தமரின் பெறுதலும்—Tol:1443.

best to promote the happiness of others.[1] They must be generous and help the poor by alms giving. The happiness of a contended married life is described by a poet as 'ōrāṉ valcie cīril vāḻkkai' i.e. 'a life led happily with the possession of a cow'.[2] It is generally believed that the coming of the bride to the hero's house has brought prosperity and happiness to his home.[3]

It is customary for the lady-companion to visit the young couple to know how they are living in the new place under different circumstances. She may be sent by the girl's mother. A lady-companion after visiting the house of the heroine, happily remarks to the mother that the hero rarely forsakes the heroine[4] and is always in the close company of his sweet-heart. A lady-companion, seeing the hero showing an unbounded desire to be always in the company of his wife, sympathises with the hero for all the sufferings that he underwent during the clandestine stage of love when the heroine was seen rarely by him.[5]

The foster-mother also visits their house and feels extremely happy when she sees the hero's boundless affection for her daughter. She observes that when the hero goes on an errand of the king, he does not stay away for a longer period from his house but returns immediately after accomplishing the work that was assigned to him.[6]

There is one beautiful stanza in Kuṟuntokai where the happy domestic life of a couple is described. The young lady cooks delicious dishes for her husband. She beats the curd with her tender fingers resembling 'kāntaḷ flowers'. She tucks up her skirt with her stained fingers and while she

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1. Kuṟu : 63.
2. ஓரான் வல்சிச் கீரில் வாழ்க்கை —Ibid : 295.
3. பெருநலக் குறுமகள் வந்தென
   இனியவிழ வாயிற் றென்னுமிவ் வூரே—Ibid : 295
4. Ibid : 295.
5. Ibid : 178.
6. Ibid : 242.

seasons the dishes with spices the smoke gets to her eyes which are like water-lilies, soft, cool and attractive. Her husband compliments her on her cooking and her face brightnens up in joy.[1] Here is a poem dealing with the simple joys of married life and the blithesome response of a young girl to the comments of her husband.

PORULVAYIR PIRIVU (Separation for Wealth)

As it is seen in the previous pages, young couples enjoy a blissful life after their marriage without any restriction.[2] But this happiness will not continue for a long time unless sufficient wealth is earned. The maxim of Tiruvaḷḷuvar is also to be noted here. "There is no joy in worldly life without the means in the form of wealth".[3] The chief qualities of the hero according to Tolkāppiyaṉār are nobility and determination.[4] Since without wealth nothing can be attained in this world, the hero with great reluctance parts from his wife, for a while giving up the joy's of home-life. For the life of a man without enough wealth, in this world, is as dark as the night.[5] A heroine pathetically remarks that the ultimate aim of the hero is nothing but to hoard money and he has no affection or kindness towards her.[6]

There are several kinds of separation that are enumerated by Tolkāppiyaṉār[7] and one among them is the separation on account of the hero's pursuit of wealth.[8] This kind of separation is common to both 'kaḷavu' and 'kaṟpu'.

The lady-companion assures the heroine that the hero would drop the plan of parting with her, since it means the very end of her life.

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1. Kuru : 167.
2. கரணத்தின் அமைந்து முடிந்த காலை
   நெஞ்சுதனை யவிழ்ந்த புணர்ச்சி—Tol : 1092.
3. பொருளில்லார்க் கிவ்வுலக மில்லாகி யாங்கு—Kuṟaḷ:247.
4. பெருமையும் உரனும் ஆடூஉ மேனை—Tol:1044.
5. இல்லோர் வாழ்க்கை இரவினும் இளிவு—Kuṟu : 283.
6. பொருளே மன்ற பொருளே —Ibid : 174.
7. ஓதல் பகையே தூதுஇவை பிரிவே—Tol : 971.
8. பொருள்வயின் பிரிதலும் அவர்வயின் உரித்தே
   —Ibid : 979.

The hero will sometimes intimate his wife directly or indirectly his intended departure from her lover in search of wealth and sometimes he does not intimate it.

The hero thinks that if he intimates his intended departure to his wife she would not tolerate the separation and permit him to take up his journey for amassing wealth. But the wife, on her part, thinks that he would not separate from her at any rate. When she actually comes to know that he has separated from her in search of wealth to a distant country, she languishes and faints as though she has been bitten by a snake.[2]

When the hero departs from his wife after telling his intended journey to his wife, he gently caresses the soft tresses[2] and the white forehead[3] in order to console her.

CELAVU ALUNKAL (Delay in Departure)

One of the pleasant devices adopted by the hero to make the heroine realise the importance of his going away and elicit her consent is to show genuine rondness towards her before his departure. The lady-companion puts forth her arguments to stop him away from his intended departure by telling him that it is not wise to break the union of his wife in preference to the value of wealth. The hero is perplexed. He also feels that the separation from his sweetheart really means an end of youth.[4] He postpones his journey when he finds that his wife is sad at his departure. This is called by Tolkāppiyaṉār 'celavu aḻumkal', i.e., 'telling the wife of the importance of his journey and of his quick return as soon as his task is over'.[5]

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1. Kuṟu : 43.
2. Ibid : 192
3. Ibid : 59.
4. Ibid : 151.
5. செலவிடை அழுங்கல் செல்லாமை அன்றே
வன்புறை குறித்த தவிர்ச்சி யாகும்—Tol : 1131.

PANGS OF SEPARATION

"Normally, however there is no more than the grief of temporary parting; the Indian poet does not describe the bitterness of love lost on one, who does not return it or on one whom fate takes irrevocably away, but he excels in pictures of the sorrows of temporary separation of husband and wife, when the former, as often, must go on journey".[1] This truth observed by Dr. A. B. Keith accounts for the existence of many 'kaṟpu' poems on separation.

When the hero parts with his wife and goes in search of wealth, the latter languishes over her miserable separation. Sometimes it seems to her that the separation of the hero from her is justifiable, since the expedition taken by him is only for the welfare of the family. She is very much distresed over the separation.

The loneliness and pangs of separation on the part of the wife afford a good opportunity for the poets to exhibit their poetic talents to enliven the love-poetry. J. M. Murray rightly remarks thus : "Love poets are but seldom the singers of happiness in love; and the greatest love-poet of our own time, Thomas Hardy, has given an expression that is immortal to the intololerable anguish of desiderium".[2]

The mental agony brings forth some weakness and waning in her body. She does not have an undisturbed and peaceful sleep at nights. Her anklets and bracelets slip away from her hands and arms. She does not like to put on new dresses and jewels. During the period of separation, she does not wear flowers on her tresses and nor does she arrange tresses properly.[3] Her natural charms fade away in dismal brightness. Tears in profusion she sheds and her eyes are swollen and turn red with weeping. Her pretty forehead loses its natural colour.

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1. Classical Sanskrit Literature, p. 118.
2. Discoveries, p. 15.
3. கூந்தல் வேய்ந்த விரவு மலருதிர்ந்து—Kuru : 312.

Nearly one fifth of the collection of Kuruntokai deals with theme of separation and its consequences thereupon in married life.

The sad wife remembers the soft caresses of her husband, his tender love and concern, his attempts at consoling her and the gentle way he spoke to her and wiped her tears, when he was by her side.[1]

PARUVA VARAVU (The Advent of the Season)

The hero promises his wife to return in early rainy season. He is held back for some reason; time does not wai and rainy season sets in. The 'advent of this season' brings fresh sorrows for the lovely wife. She has to spend many long and dull evenings. When she thinks of the night that follows, her grief is more. It is like swimming across a river only to find oneself confronted by a vast flood wherein the chance of survival is remote.[2]

The rainy season dawns and adds further miseries to her. 'Kār' (early winter or the rainy season) laughs at her with its 'mullai' (white jasmine buds) teeth, as her hero has not returned to her. He has gone in search of wealth but has lost sight of her blooming youth.[3]

The 'konrai' flowers that bloom early enhance the sorrow of the lonely wife and she chides them for their early appearance and 'presumptuous' flowering.[4] The deer frisk and play by the road-side after a drink of fresh water in the puddles.[5] The ladies adorn their tresses with fresh 'konrai, flowers.[6] The 'pittikam' buds turn red.[7] The shephered

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1. அழாஅல் என்றுநம் அழுதகண் துடைப்பார்—Kuru : 82.
2. Kuru : 387.
3. இளமை பாராார் வளன்நசைஇச் சென்றார்—Ibid:126.
4. Kuru : 66.
5. Ibid : 65.
6. Ibid : 21.
7. Ibid : 94.

boys wear 'mullai' buds on their locks.[1] The north-wind blows chill and is cruel to the lady who is alone.[2]

All these things intensify the pangs of separation in the heroine. She hopes nothing but the broad shoulders or the sweet embracement of her hero would be a consolation.[3] A heroine says that she will be grateful to those who are prepared to proceed directly to her hero with the yellow flowers of sponge-gourd (pīrkku) that blossom in the rainy season and tell him that the heroine has similar marks all over her body.[4] Tolkāppiyaṉār calls this 'taṟkāṭṭuṟutal'.[5]

One of the lonely heroines says that the mornings and noons are no more different from the sad evenings for her in separation.[6] Another heroine says that the colour of her skin takes on a bright glow with the embrace of her hero, and at his parting it changes and sinks to paleness, like the duckweed that expands when touched and shrinks back when the hand is taken off.[7]

The companion consoles the lady that the sight of the male elephant's tenderness to the female, in helping it to eat the tender shoots, will remind the hero of his wife and hasten him homeward soon.[8]

This kind of consolation offered by the lady-companion is known as 'anpuṟu takuna iṟaicciyuṭ cuṭṭal' i.e., 'describing the events of love in an allegorical way'.[9]

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1. Ibid : 221.
2. Ibid : 103, 197.
3. Ibid : 68.
4. Ibid : 98.
5. தற்காட்டுறுதல்—Tol : 1057 ; Nacci.
6. குடுமிக் கோழி நெடுநக ரியம்பும்
   பெரும்புலர் விடியலும் மாலை
   பகலும் மாலை துணையி லோர்க்கே—Kuṟu : 234.
7. Ibid : 399.
   c.f. விளக்கற்றம் பார்க்கும் இருளேபோல் கொண்கன்
   முயக்கற்றம் பார்க்கும் பசப்பு—Kuṟaḷ : 1186.
8. Kuṟu : 37.
9. அன்புறு தகுந இறைச்சியுட் சுட்டலும்
   வன்புறை யாகும் வருத்திய பொழுதே—Tol ; 1177.

THE RETURN OF THE HERO

The hero too feels sad at his separation from his young wife. Yet he has to accomplish something. He earns a lot of wealth, and returns home happily in a chariot. He prompts the driver to run fhe chariot faster, as he cannot afford to lose time.[1] The pāṇaṉ or bard brings home the happy news of the arrival of the hero. In extreme joy, she asks the pāṇaṉ the details of his return; enquires how he came by the news and promises him gold-ingots brought from far-off Pataliputra.[2]

The return of the hero is called 'ceyviṉai muṭitta cemmal uḷḷam' i.e., 'one that has done a noble task'.[3]

PARATTAIYIR PIRIVU

(Seeking the Company of other Women)

Most of the poems depicting the 'marutam' describe in detail the going astray of the hero and his seeking the company of other women. "The instituition of harlotory (parattamai) was peculiar to the agricultural tracts, for during the periods of enforced idleness when the grain is ripening in the fields and when the field is lying fallow after harvest, Satan finds some mischief for idle hands to do".[4] Betrand Russell says "that so long as the virtue of respectable women is regarded as a matter of great importance, the institution of marriage has to be supplemented by another institution which may really be regarded as a part of it - I mean the institution of prostitution."[5]

Let us now examine some of the reasons set forth by the commentators of later age on this theme of prostitution.

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1. காலியற் கடுமாக் கடவுமதி பாக—Kuṟu : 250.
   c.f. உள்ளம்போல உற்றுழி உதவும்
   புள்ளியல் கலிமா உடைமை யான—Tol : 1140.
2. பொன்மலி பாடலி பெறீஇயர்—Kuṟu : 75.
3. செய்வினை முடித்த செம்மல் உள்ளமொடு—Ibid : 270.
4. Srinivasa Iyengar, P.T., History of the Tamils, p. 81.
5. Marriage and Morals, p. 116.

First, it is said that the introduction of this element in Aintiṇai enlivens the aesthetic element in love-poetry. Secondly, this theme is introduced in 'Akam' poetry with a view to bring out the unfailing loyalty and devotion of wife to her husband even when she comes to know of his lapses.[1] Another reason that is put forth in favour of prostitution is that the hero's laxity gives enough room for the display of the wife's coquetry.[2] pērāciriyar in his commentary on Tirukkōvaiyār tells that the hero seeks the company of prostitutes, may be, because, 'variety in the spice of life', and he learns from experience that the joy of union with other women is inferior.[3] Dr. Swaminatha Iyer says that everything stated in poetry need not necessarily be attended with moral propriety and they may well be looked into as sincere and faithful portrayal of the various kinds of life in the world.[4]

Three kinds ot prostitutes are referred to in Kuṟuntokai poems. They are 'Iṟparattai',[5] 'kāṭaṟparattai'[6] and 'cēripparattai''. One of the Kuṟuntokai pdems simply refers to a 'parattai'[8] without any appendage. Tolkāppiyaṉār says that 'kaātarparattai' is common.

When the 'katarparattai' comes to know that the heroine has talKed ill of her, she tells indirectly to the associates of the heroine that she is in no way to be blamed, because she had not attempted to covet the husband. When the hero came to her, she consented for a brief pleasure. Just as a 'vāḷai' fish gets the sweet mango fruit without making any effort from the tree standing near the pond, so too, she had

1. Lectures on Kalittokai, Presidential address, p. 13.
2. Iraiyaṉār Akapporuḷ, p. 214.
3. Tīrukkōvaiyār, commentary, p. 354.
4. இப்பரத்தையிற் பிரிவு உலகியலையே கருதி அமைந்தது போலும்—Kuṟu : Nūlārāicci, p. 84.
5. Kuṟu : 364.
6. Ibid : 8, 64.
7. Ibid : 364.
8. Ibid : 80.

made use of the husband when he came with the offer. She blames him for his waywardness and his joining the wife who is domineering him now; after she has become the mother of a male-child.[1]

Another harlot replies to the heroine that the heroine should guard her husband if she is capable of it and not blame her for her way of life. She throws out a challenge that she will go along with her lover to swim in the river, with the 'āmpal' flowers, adorning her tresses and the wife could do nothing to prevent her.[2] Such is the strong faith of the prositute regarding her power to attract the hero. She is confident that he would not part with her. This clearly shows the priority that the strumpet enjoyed at the hands of the hero.

Sometimes there occurred quarrels among the prostitute themselves, for it could be seen from a poem in Kuṟuntokai where an 'Iṟparattai' blames the 'cēripparattai' and tells her that she never tried to lure away the hero from her but he came to her house of his own accord.[3] This shows the hero became a darling even among the prostitutes!

It is to be noted that in the Kuṟuntokai poems, it is stated that the prostitute has her own stature of soul, straightforwardness, code of morality and faith in God. A 'kāṭaṟparattai' tells the friends of the heroine that if it is true that she has stolen away the hero from the heroine, then let the goddess of the sea punish her for her misdeed. She complains that it was sheer ignorance on the part of the heroine to overrate her husband's fidelity.[4]

When the husband (hero) goes on seeking the company of tarts, the chaste and faithful wife remains calm in her

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1. Kuṟu : 8.
2. Ibid : 80.
3. Ibid : 364.
4. Ibid : 164.

house to perform her household duties as before. She forgets the pettiness of her husband for a while. The companion is surprised at her detachment in regard to his licentious behaviour which has soiled his character, name and prestige in society.[1]

Whenever the lady-companion blames the hero, the heroine requests her not to say more. The house-wife tells her companion not to deride the hero any more for his lapse.[2]

The hero sends a pāṇaṉ (a bard) as a mediator between him and his wife to get her consent for a re-union. The pāṇaṉ tells the heroine that her hero is now very anxious to return home and pleads on his behalf that the hero may be excused for his wrongs all the while. The lady-companion intervenes at this stage and tells him that the bards have turned out to be liars and she wonders whether they were the promoters of these wrongs.[4]

Sometimes, the lady-companion directly addresses the hero at their doorstep when he returns from the prostitute's house, and requests an audience with his wife : "In the happy past, if my mistress offered you only a green unriped bitter neem (margosa) fruit, you accepted and said it was as sweet as a sugar-candy. But now, even if she were to offer you the cool, fresh spring-water in the month of 'Tai' from the pools of Paṟampu hills of the chieftain Pāri, it turns sour to your ungrateful taste".[1] This is the only poem which exemplifies the thousand ninety second sutra in Tolkāppiyam.[6]

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1. Ibid : 9.
2. Ibid : 181.
3. Kuṟu : 127.
4. Ibid : 196.
5. ஏனது சுவைப்பினும் நீ கை தொட்டது
   வானோர் அமிழ்தம் புரையுமால் எமக்கென
   அடிசிலும் பூவும் தொடுதற் கண்ணும்—Tol ; 1092.

In the end, the loving wife thinks of the happy memories of the past and permits her husband, into the house and the joys of the home and reunion. This gesture on her part speaks of her nobility and devotion.

It is mentioned in the poems in Kuṟuntokai that mostly the hero's pursuit of wealth separated him from his wife. Other pursuits like the acquisition of knowledge, the noble task of defending one's country from the enemies in battle, or the good-willl mission to the courts of other kings in distant lands, incident to the career of a great hero are not found.

Thus the theme of Akam portrayed in Kuṟuntokai poems conforms to the rules laid down by Tolkāppiyaūār in his Grammar.

The famous commentators of Tolkāppiyam, viz., Ilampūraṇar, Naccinārkkiniyar, invariably quote Kuṟuntokai poems to illustrate the rules relating to the theme of Akam in Tolkāppiyam. Only 168 poems are left out by the commentators and the remaining 233 poems are often quoted to explain the sutras of Tolkāppiyam.

Therefore, Kuṟuntokai at its best is a collection of poems written according to the traditional style on themes relating to the course of normal love, its complications, deviations and its happy final consummation. It is a collection in Sangam Literature 'which the world will not willingly let die'.

IX. THE TREATMENT OF NATURE IN KURUNTOKAI

The course of Tamil literature may be divided into three periods: the lyrical, the didactic, and the religious, for the sake of convenience. It may not be a happy or even correct division, for a didactic poem may contain lyrical elements, and a religious poem may be highly lyrical in tone and expression. On the basis of the dominant qualities of particular group of poems or a particular phase of Tamil literature, we may divide them into these periods.

Sangam poets come under the first group. Their poetry is very sincere, simple and concrete. Their poems reflect what they saw and heard around them in their normal way of life. They describe the hills and valleys, meadows and fields, scenes and landscapes, clouds and sky scapes, sun-beams and rainbows, rivers and waves, the sun, the moon and the stars. They are very fond of the word "paint". Nothing escapes their keen observation-animals, birds, plants and trees. Then it necessarily follows that, "all great art is the expression of man's delight in the work of God".[1] Not even the arid waterless tracts are left unnoticed by the poets.

They have an eye for all that is beautiful around them. They are highly sensitive to all that Nature offers them.

The themes of Sangam poetry are chiefly love and war. These poets treat Nature not as an objective factor, but as

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1. John Ruskin.

background closely related to human beings. The influence of Nature on man's feelings, thoughts, sensations and moral being is also perceived by them.

The love lyrics of the Sangam age called Akam deal with the feelings and passions of the people in the background of Nature. The poems dealing with love constitute dramatic poetry. The Sangam poets present actions and speak through the hero, the heroine, the lady-companion and others. The emotional experience is called 'uripporuḷ' (the objects of environment). The background of their life serves as the stage where action takes place, since stage and action are very important for dramatic poetry. The description of Nature consists in two parts called 'mutaṟporuḷ' (the place and time) and 'karupporuḷ' (the objects of environment).

Tolkāppiyaṉār stresses the importance of these three elements in 'akappāṭṭu' and their relative importance. According to him, uripporuḷ is the most important of the three, Next in importance, is karupporuḷ and last comes mutaṟporuḷ. Hence, in love lyrics, the emotional experience of the lovers is the most important. The immediate environment is next in importance and 'mutaṟporuḷ. or the region, the season. and the hour come last.

Dr. M. Varaearajan says that "the literary conventions of the age are seen not only in such gracious blending of the human passions with the beauties of Nature; but also in the classification of the sentiments of love in accordance with the different regions and assigning them to particular seasons and hours. The ancient poets have found out thet in a particular season of the year and in a particular hour of the day, a particular region appears most beautiful and most influential, that every landscape is seen best under the peculiar illumination of a season and a period of it when its influence is powerful on human impulses and activities. Thus are also

the different stages of love correlated to the different aspects of natural environment".[1]

Therefore it is obvious that the course of love or marriage was generally prompted by the geographical conditions of the region.[2]

As poetic convention, land is divided into four regions. The kuṟiñci is a hilly tract of land where nature smiles, blossoms and enraptures her inhabitants by her scenery, The next region is called mullai, the pasture ground for the cattle to feed on. The third division is named as marutam, the fertile agricultural region which is generally spoken of as the cradle of civilisation. The last one goes by the name neytal, marine region. Hence the epithet 'nāṉilam' holds good. Besides the four regions, we come across another called 'pālai', the arid desert tract. According to Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ, the author of Cilappatikāram, the arid tract is a mixture of the mountains and the forest that have gone dry and gradually lost their fertility due to the shortage of rain.[3] There are all the literary conditions set forth by Tolkāppiyaṉār in his famous treatise on Grammar. This kind of division of land plays an important part in the dramatic poetry called 'Akam, in Tamil literature. The commentators of Tolkāppiyam differ with respect to the reasons adduced to this classification. But it is generally accepted by the scholars that these regions are named after the trees or flowers which grew abundantly in the respective regions.[4]

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1. The Treatment of Nature in Sangam literature, p.7.
2. Ramachandra Dikshitar, V. R., Studies in Tamil literature, p. 273.
3. முல்லையுங் குறிஞ்சியும் முறைமையின் திரிந்து
நல்லியல் பிழந்து நடுங்குதுயர் உறுத்துப்
பாலை என்பதோர் படிவங் கொள்ளும்
—Cilap : Kāṭukāṇkātai : 11-13.
4. Ramachandra Dikshitar, V.R., Studies in Tamil literature, p. 273.

THE EARTH :- Five regions form the Earth.

THE MOUNTAINOUS REGION :-

Tamil poets show a special interest in painting the mountain scenery in their poems. The huge mountains such as Mount Himalayas,[1] and hills like Potiyil[2] and the territories adjoining them are often described. In Kuruntokai, there are many references to the Kolli hills[3] and Potiyil hills[4] which belonged to the liberal patron Āy.

Milton's poetry is in general marked by the absence of mountain scenery.[5] For example, in L'allegro, he draws an unimpressive picture of mountain sconery. This could be seen in the following lines :

> "Mountains, on whose barren breast
> The labouring clouds do often rest".[6]

But the Tamil poets describe the clouds climbing to reach the summits of the hills and they even went to the extent of saying that the mere look upon the mountain which belongs to the hero, itself gave some relief to the heroine when she was deserted by her lover for gave some relief to the heroine when she was deserted by her lover for a short period.[7] There is a reference in one poem to the Potiyil hills where the clouds pregnant with water play and trail along.[8] Paraṇar pictures the kolli hills, belonging to the chieftain Poṟaiyaṉ as the dwelling place of the deity called 'kollippāvai' which is stated to have taken out the life of the

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1. Kuṟu : 158.
2. Ibid : 84.
3. Ibid : 89, 100
4. Ibid : 84.
5. Myra Reynolds, The treatment of Nature in English poetry. p. 11.
6. L'allegro, Lines, 73-74.
7. Ibid : 249.
8. Ibid : 84.

person when gazed at by him.[1] Kapilar, on the contrary says that kolli hills were under the sway of Valvil Ori.[2] In another poem, the same poet describes the mountain where the tender mountain-cow is asleep.[3]

The cliffs of the mountain are depicted to be adorned with the passing clouds.[4]

The huge rock in the mountain also occupies a prominent place in the poems. For instance, Kapilar who has no equal in portraying the mountain scenery, depicts that a block of huge rock washed well by the fresh heavy showers resembles a washed elephant.[5] Paraṇar who is also an expert in painting the mountain scenery with its splendour and glory, describes the 'māṇai' creeper that climbs over the elephant mistaking it for a mountain.[6]

In a different place, he compares a huge rock to the bloodstained face of an elephant engaged in a fight.[7]

The white foamed waterfalls please the eye and the ear. The puppling stream from the top of a rock resembles the white moon rising above the blue sea.[8] This sight is a pleasant one, and Nakkīrar paints the same scene again, with the variation of the rising sun for the rising moon at the beginning of his long Idyll Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai.[9]

These poets are also fond of the sweet sounds in Nature. For example, the sound of a mountain stream rushing down

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1. Kuṟu : 89,100.
2. Ibid : 100.
3. Ibid : 115.
4. Ibid : 144.
5. Ibid : 13.
6. Ibid : 36.
7. Ibid : 284.
8. Ibid : 315.
9. Tirumuru : 1-2.

the huge rocks is compared to the rumbling sound of a big drum called 'muracu' when it is played.[1]

Like the rising sun, the setting sun also has some special appeal to Tamil poets. They artistically portray the sun setting beyond the horizon. When darkness slowly comes on and when the mountain is gradually enveloped in darkness, it appears like a ship sinking in the vast sea gradually and finally disappearing completely.[2] The simplicity and directness of the Sangam poets can well be seen in their keen observation of the mountains. In Kuṟuntokai, the height of a mountain cliff is described by a poet as 'Viṇ toṭa nivanta vilaṅku malaik kavāāṉ', which means the mountain is high enough to touch the very sky.[3]

The stream rushing down the rocks is denoted by a poet as - 'tū-veḷḷaruvi' which means 'the clean and white foamed stream'. The white foamed stream of the mountain is aptly compared with the outer skin sloughed off by a serphant.[4] And again it is compared with the white moon rising above the dark blue sea.[5]

It is already noted that the Tamil poets with some interest depict the sound of the stream in their poems. The sudden starts and rapid falls of the torrents are not omitted in their poems.[6] The sudden turns and twists are compared with the movements of the snake on the ground.[7] The stream strikes against the rocks on its way down to the earth from the mountain and carries jack-fruits, which drop down from the trees at the touch of the monkeys.[8] It is said that the stream washes away the bamboo-reeds (எருவை) on its

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1. Kuṟu : 365.
2. Ibid : 240.
3. விண்தொட நிவந்த விலங்குமலைக் கவா அன் Kuṟu : 262.
4. Ibid : 235.
5. Ibid : 315.
6. Ibid : 90.
7. Ibid : 134.
8. Kuṟu : 90.

way.[1] When the stream glides on the slope of a hill, it makes melodious sweet-sound like that of the musical instruments such as the 'mulavu' of the able-bodied and trained dancers.[2] The sound produced by the stream is also compared with the sound produced by 'taṇṇumai', one of the musical instruments of the day.[3] The epithet 'taṇ' (தண்) clearly shows the tender sound it produces. 'imiḻicai' (இமிழிசை) is another epithet given by another poet in Kuṟuntokai to denote the melodious inarticulate - murmur of the flowing stream.[4]

The huge rock when washed well by the fresh showers, resembles the sapphire bells, which are washed off by the torrent from a mountain.[5]

THE PASTORAL REGION

Washington Irving observes : "The pastoral writers of other countries appear as if they had paid Nature an occasional visit, and become acquainted with her general charms; but the British poets have lived and revelled with her - they have wooed her in her most secret haunts, they have watched her minutest caprices."[6] This statement holds good regarding the Sangam poets also, when we observe their portrayal of the pastoral region with its appropriate settings and surroundings. With a keen observation of minute details' they bring in their poems all the charms and splendour of the panorama of the pastoral tract. Especially landscape painting is very remarkable and marvellous in Mullaippaṭṭu, one of the ten long Idylls.[7]

The pastoral region is more or less a sloping plain with a few hillocks in it. Though the region has thorny bushes and

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1. Kuṟu : 170.
2. Ibid : 78.
3. Ibid : 365.
4. Ibid : 365.
5. Ibid : 367.
6. England's Rural life and christmas customs, p.15.
7. Mullai : 93=97.

hard ground, it is very pleasant for one to live in. The season and the time of the pastoral region, when it is seen at its best are respectively, the early winter and the evening.[3] The fresh showers in the evening of early winter bring a new life and the beasts and birds of that region are cheerful. The sun has set in the west beyond the hills; the jasmine unfolds its buds and fills the atmosphere with its sweet fragrance. The cows return to the fold after a good grazing in the pasture-lands in the day. The drowsy tinklings from the distant folds along with the shrill notes of the cowherds playing the flute are pleasant to hear.

The stags with twisted horns leap about with their mates, graze the tender grass of the pastures and drink the fresh, clear water in the pools and play gayfully on the way, where the hero returns in a chariot after fulfilling his duty, before the advent of early winter.[3]

It is true that the hero too wishes to be in happy union with his wife. In a poem in Kuṟuntokai, the desire of the hero for meeting his sweet heart is compared, with that of a ploughman having only one plough to use hurrying to till his land before it dries up.[4]

The heroine feels immensely sad in the lovely evenings. The sight and sound of the birds that are returning to their nests, the flowers closing their petals and the coastal grove appearing desolate increase her distress beyond limit. The evening sky appears to her to be equally suffering like herself; and she hopes that she would survive with the assistance of somebody who will take interest in her and inform the hero of her desperate condition.[5]

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1. காரும் மாலையும் முல்லை - Tol : 952.
2. பரலவல் படுநீர் மாந்தித்து ணையோடு
   இரலை நன்மான் நெறிமுதல் உகளும் - Kuṟu : 250.
3. Kuṟu : 131.
4. Ibid : 310.

There are five arresting phrases in Kuṟuntokai where the evening is described as causing distress to the heroine, who feels extremely lonely owing to her separation :

'Paiyuḷ mālai'[1] (the distressful evening -)

'Kaiyaṟa vanta paiyuḷ mālai',[2] (the evening of despair and distress -)

'Ciṟupuṉmālai'[3] (the evening of misery and unpleasantness -)

'Kaiyaṟavu mālai',[4] (the evening of despair -)

'Nāril mālai',[5] (the evening, which has no sympathy whatsoever with the heroine -)

are some variations of expressions that we come across.

The mullai (Jasmine) blossoms in the evening when early winter sets in. The heroine notices the mullai buds decorating the locks of hair of the shepherds while they come to the village with milk pails in their hands and food for the night. This sight makes her more and more desolate and miserable since the hero has failed to return in time as he promised.[6]

On his home-coming, the hero notices the fresh mullai buds and he imagines that they laugh with scorn at the lovers who are in separation. These buds appear like the teeth of a man laughing and she chides them for their lack of sympathy.[7] When he returns home safe and sound, he feels happy and remains unperturbed by the changes of the external world. He addresses the rainy clouds happily :

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1. Ibid : 172.
2. Ibid : 391.
3. Ibid : 352.
4. Ibid : 387.
5. Ibid : 118.
6. Kuṟu : 221.
7. Ibid : 162.

"Dispel the darkness with your lightning, pour forth cool and pleasant showers and cast your rumble of thunders like the beaten drums; send thy showers as you like; as I am safe and reposing on the soft tresses of my sweet heart."[1]

The season - Kār seems to laugh at a heroine with the mullai buds as its teeth.[2] The heroine speaks to the clouds passing in the sky and says that it is cruel and heartless with its roaring thunder, which can shake off even the great Himalayas and it is merciless towards the pitiable and helpless women, especially when they are separated from their lovers.[3]

The pittikam and konrai blossom when early winter sets in. The pittikam yields buds red in colour and makes the heroine feel distressed.[4] The konrai blossoms, pale in colour, like her own paleness, which is the result of her loneliness and solitude due to the separation of her lover.[5] The fresh showers have made the pastoral region look fresh and cool and the stags leap about happily with their companions.[6]

On noticing the mullai buds on the locks of hair of the cowherds, the lady companion tells the heroine that it is just the season the hero has promised to return home and adds that the mullai buds seem to convey some message to her.[7] Sometimes, the lady-companion utters sweet lies in order to console the heroine by saying that the early winter season has yet to set in and says further that the konrai - flowers are foolish enough to blossom by mistaking the casual rain for

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1. Ibid : 270.
2. Ibid : 126.
3. Ibid : 158.
4. Ibid : 94.
5. Kuru : 250.
6. Ibid : 183.
7. Ibid : 358.

the seasonal one.[1] The pīr blooms in early winter and its colour is compared with the paleness of the heroine when deserted by her hero for a short interval of time before the marriage.[2]

The evening is described with the rain of the winter season and the poet sings in relief and contentment and thinks of the deer and elephants that soon seek shelter with their mates in the forests and mountains.[3]

The koṉṟai flowers golden in colour falling into a pit on the wayside, make it appear like an open box full of gold coins.[4]

The evening in the pastoral region is associated with sweet scenes like the flowering of the mullai, the lowing herd, winding slowly over the lea to reach home, and the clouds 'gathering storm' over the cliffs.[5]

THE AGRICULTURAL REGION

Nature as it is found in the early hours of the morning in the agricultural regions is often portrayed in the marutam poems. A particular season is not attributed to this region and so all the seasons of the year have to be taken into account in these poems. The parts of the day specially mentioned are the break of dawn and early sunrise.

The lotus, water lilies, the king fisher, the otter, the mango tree and its fruits are in abundance in these poems. Vāḷai, ayirai, keṇṭai and other kinds of fish that are found in tanks and rivers are often described by the poets. The patient but irresponsible buffalo as it looks and the bee

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1. Ibid : 66.
2. Ibid : 98.
3. Ibid : 319.
4. Ibid : 319.
5. Ibid : 108.

wheeling from flower to flower, when it has sucked one flower dry are compared to a hero, who is in pursuit of unlawful pleasure with different women.

The fields are veryfertile. Paddy and sugarcane are the main products of this region. The region is marked by the abundant marutu trees[1] and hence this region is named after it. In addition to these marutu trees, there is mention of kāñci tree in one of the poems in this collection.[2] The vālai creeper is mentioned in Kuṟuntokai here and there.[3]

The tanks are full of water. The epithet 'kuṇṭunīr'[4] explains the depth of water in the tank. The tank is full of lotus flowers and water-lilies (ஆம்பல்). The pregnant vāḷai fish leaps in joy with the sweet mango in its mouth. The fruit falls from the tree that stands on the shore.[5] The poet Māṅkuṭimarutaṉ, adds an epithet to the vāḷai fish as 'kaṇaikkōṭṭu vāḷai', which means the stout or huge vāḷai fish. The poetess Neṭumpalliattai in one of her poems in this collection, describes the Ayirai fish in a beautiful manner.[6]

In another poem depicting 'marutam', there is mention of Neytal flower, which blossoms abundantly in a watery field of cultivation.[7]

There is only one reference to the otter in this collection.[8] There, it is said that the otter gets vāḷai fish for its prey.

The āmpal with closed petals looks like the back of the crane.[9] The above comparison of the āmpal bud to the

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1. Kuṟu : 258.
2. Ibid : 10.
3. Ibid : 260.
4. Ibid : 122.
5. Kuṟu : 164.
6. Ibid : 178.
7. Ibid : 309.
8. Ibid : 364.
9. Ibid : 122.

crane is more interesting in another poem in Kuṟuntokai, where it is said that the keṇṭai fish which taking a plunge deep into the water in fear of a crane, is disappointed and horrified on coming to the surface again, and seeing the white āmpal bud and mistaking it for a crane.[1]

The rattan creepers on the bunds of tanks[2] and the frightened otter taking refuge in its shade are very often mentioned by the poets. The vāḷai fish in the tank is said to seize the rattan fruits for its food[3] and in turn the otter tries to eat the vāḷai fish.[4] The kuvaḷai flower in a tank full of water and high floods in a river once touching the high branches of the trees and in course of time subsiding and finally leaving no trace of water are all well described by the famous poetess Avvaiyār.[5] She further portrays a monkey with its young ones safe in its clutches even in the topmost branch of a tree.[6]

The poet Kuṉṟiyaṉār pictures the crab that tries to escape from the crane quickly and runs into the hole at the roots of the kaṇṭal. Its fast movement is compared by the post to that of an ox that breaks off the rope round its neck and escapes trom the control of the cowherd.[7]

Paraṇar, one of the highly imaginative poets of the sangam age, describes the duckweed in a tank that separates at the touch of one's hand and rejoins and covers again when the hand is removed from the water.[8]

The foam of a water-current (river) is described to strike against a rock and gradually dissolve itself and finally

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1. Ibid : 127.
2. Ibid : 91, 364.
3. Ibid : 91.
4. Ibid : 364.
5. Ibid : 99, 388.
6. Ibid : 29.
7. Kuṟu : 117.
8. Ibid : 399.

disappeṙ altogether, by the poet 'Kalporuciṯuunraiyār' in Kuṟuntokai,[1] and the poet is remembered by the arresting simile th at occures in this poem.

THE MARITIME REGION OR THE COASTAL REGION

Tamilnad is surrounded by sea on three sides. The Vēṅkaṭam hills form the northern boundary. The influence of the sea on the life of the people of Tamilnad was more pronounced than the influence of the mountains. The costal region is surrounded by the sea but for the groves adjoining the sea-shore and the back-waters. There are only very few references to the seafaring life of the Tamils of the Sangam age. In Kuṟuntokai, there is only one reference to a ship and that too is described when it is sinking in the sea.[2]

Ammūvaṉār, Nallantuvaṉār, Ulōccaṉār and Neytal Kārkkiyaṉār, perhaps through their closer contact with the sea and its vicinity gained a rich knowledge of the flora and fauna of the coastal region and they give an accurate vivid and highly imaginative picture of the litteral region in their poems.

The sea-shore with white sand looks like the heaped moonlight while the dark blue sea appears like the congealed darkness spread everywhere.[3] The poems relating to the theme of neytal mostly depict the natural scenery at the time of sunset. The poets describe the crabs on the sea-shore and the young girls who scare them away.[4] The crane is patiently waiting on the sand-dunes anxious to catch a big fish.[5] The crabs playing gaily at the root of the Puṉṉai are interesting to look at.[6]

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1. Ibid : 290.
2. Ibid : 240.
3. Kuṟu : 123.
4. Ibid : 401.
5. Ibid : 328.
6. Ibid : 351.

The vast stretch of water in the sea and incessant noise of the tides are described by 'Maṇik Kēḷaṉṉa Mānīr',[1] (the vast expanse of blue, gem-like water) and the blue colour of the sea is mentioned as 'Ilaṅkunīrpparappu' - the vast expanse of water.[2]

All these poets conceived the world as a piece of land surrounded by seas. Tolkāppiyaṉār too has the same idea.[3]

The sand-dune appears like a mountain and the backwaters, where the melodious sound is heard are adorned with screw-pine trees near the shore.[4].

Ammūvaṉār, in one of his poems in the collection describes an old crane, which has no strength left to fly, sitting for its prey on the branch of a tree that stretches low towards the waves of the sea.[5]

Ulōccaṉār, who is equally good in portraying the coastal region with clear pen-pictures, depicts the sand heaped by the east wind and the west wind on the shore. The portrayal of the west wind heaping the sand around the trunk of a tall palmyra tree and making it appear short is impressive and memorable.[6] This description shows his keen interest in depicting the coastal region with all his power of vivid imagination. Further, it shows that his special interest lay in depicting the puṉṉai tree in his poems. For example, the puṉṉai tree is very near the sea-shore and its branches are made wet by the waves.[7]

The Aṉṟil bird lives in the nest built on a palmyra tree, very near the sea-shore. The slow shrill cry of the bird

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1. Ibid : 49.
2. Ibid : 318.
3. *படுதிரை வையம் பாத்திய பண்பே* - Tol : 948.
4. Kuṟu : 345.
5. Kuṟu : 125.
6. Ibid : 248.
3. Ibid : 175.

disturbs the stillness of the dreadful night.[1] This shows that these poets were sensitive and observant.

A crow seeking fish for its food in the backwaters is described by Kapilar.[2]

Kuṉṟiyaṉār describes the young girls of Tondi region, when they are playing. They prepare 'aval' (flattened rice) pounding plain rice for a while and when tired, lay their pestles away and come to play merrily on the margin of the fields.[3]

The short-legged swan sitting quietly on the sand-dune is observed by poet Ciṟaikkuṭi Āntaiyār.[4] The wind blows violently and causes the palmyra leaves drop down from the tree.[5]

The gentle moist breeze at nights blows and the sapphire-like flower in the backwaters closes its petals and this indicates that the late winter season has set in.[6] There is a reference to the sound of the bell on a chariot passing through the shore.[7]

THE ARID TRACT

The description of this region very often occurs in Sangam literature. The poems treating the Pālai region are more in number than poems written on other regions. No specific landscape is assigned to the pālai region. The hills and the forests that have become dry and waste owing to the shortage and dearth of showers, and heat of the sun, have brought this region into existence.[8]

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1. Ibid : 177.
2. Ibid : 246.
3. Ibid : 238.
4. Kuṟu : 300.
5. Ibid : 372.
6. Ibid : 55.
7. Ibid : 212.
8. Cilap : Kāṭukāṇkātai, 11-13.

Rev. Fr. Xavier Thaninayagam rightly observes : "The Tamils have the distinction of being' perhaps, the only people in history who, while not being desert-dwellers, made poetry blossom in the desert, and better poetry than that which the other regions inspired."[1] Despite being very many in number, the poems describing the pālai region are by far the best both in its subject-matter and treatment.

The trees provide no shade since they are devoid of leaves and the scorching heat of the sun in summer is found radiating everywhere and even the plants like vaḻai and Maral that can withstand the heat of summer wrinkle.[2] The highwaymen living in this region expecting the way-fares to pass by, quench their thirst by licking the outer-skin (பட்டை) of the tree, since the water became very scarce during the summer.[3]

The stormy wind in the deserted, waterless tract blows over the ripe dry seeds of the uḻiñcil, which make sounds by striking themselves against one another.[4] The female doves perching on the Omai tree call their mates with a melancholy tone.[5]

The poet Veṇpūtiyār depicts a sorrowful picture of a pair of pigeons in the arid desert. The kaḷḷi tree is dry for want of rain for a longer time and has branches forked and bent. The seeds of the kaḷḷi, when they burst/out in the heat of summer produce a wild sound and that scares away a pair of pigeons perching on the branches.[6] The screwpine tree in the coastal region has close-set leaves and its trunk bent towards the waves of the sea.[7]

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1. Nature in ancient Tamil poetry, p. 146.
2. Kuṟu : 100, 260.
3. Ibid : 274.
4. Ibid : 39.
5. Ibid : 79.
6. Ibid : 174.
7. Ibid : 219.

A male elephant when it cracks the trunk of the Omai tree to feed on the fleshy part of it, hears the thunder of the clouds and feels happy in the hope that it may rain shortly and it may find - enough water to quench its thirst.[1] The mountains in pālai region are extremely hot in summer.

The bees of this region in search of honey, in a bunch of maram flowers are utterly disappointed as there is not a drop to drink.[2] The lizard, sitting on a kaḷḷi tree calls to its mate with its peculiar ticks and this ticking sound is compared to the sound of the robbers, who inhabit this area sharpening their arrows on the edges of their own nails.[3] This strikes a note of intense horror.

A deer kicks the bark of a trunk, feeds its young one with it, and eats what is left over and stands against the hot sun to protect the young one.[4] This description is one of the finest in Kuṟuntokai. It is a realistic picture touching the tender feelings of the reader, his sympathy, love and affection.

THE WINDS

The various winds are described by the poets beautifully. They are particular in depicting their direction, power and the seasons when they blow. They also speak of the changes they bring about in both worlds, inner and outer. They affect the feelings of the people as well as the natural objects of the external world.

Kaṭuvaḷi or the hurricane, Acaivaḷi or the south wind, Kōṭai or the west wind, Vāṭai or the north wind, Utai, the wind that blows in winter, the koṇṭal or the east wind - all of them are described by these poets.

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1. Ibid : 396.
2. Ibid : 211.
3. Kuṟu : 16.
4. Ibid : 213.

Nakkīrar has a poem on Neṭunalvāṭai (the north wind) comparable to Shelley's famous poem "Ode to the West Wind".

There are two references to the Katuvali.[1] It blows at random with a terrific speed and scatters the dry seeds of the uḻiñcil far away. These seeds break when they strike at each other and make a queer sound.[2] In another poem it carries the sand and piles it in a place to look like a hill.[3]

Acaivaḷi or the south wind is pictured in three poems.[4] Its very name is charming: Appropriate epithets like 'Alamara acaivali'[5] and 'taivaral acaivali'[6] are given to this wind.

The West wind, it is said, gathers up the sand around the trunk of a palmyra tree and makes it appear very short.[7]

The North Wind is frequently mentioned by the poets when they dwell on the feelings of the heroine who is pining very much in the absence of her hero. It blows chill in winter and makes the heroine shiver. It carries small rain-drops; and when it blows, the flowers close their petals.[8] It makes the crane too shiver.[9] It blows through the leaves of the cēmpu, which resemble the ears of an elephant.[10] There are many references to the effect of the north wind on the heroine. It causes anguish to the anxious lady with its chillness.[11] Sometimes, the north wind blows in the late

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1. Kuṟu : 39.
2. Ibid : 372
3. Ibid : 28, 195, 273
4. Ibid : 28
5. Ibid : 195
6. Ibid : 248
7. Ibid : 55
8. Ibid : 103
9. Ibid : 76
10. Ibid : 110, 160, 240, 277, 317, 332.
11. Ibid : 277, 332.

winter too;[1] 'Vaṭapulvāṭaj' which means the wind blowing from the northern side in late winter[2] on a few occasions, is called ūtai (ஊதை), a cool moist breeze.[3]

THE SKY

The witchery and wonder of the skyscapes, the splendour of the sunset, the glorious morning which brightens up the green fields and meadows and the countless stars that twinkle and keep endless watch, like sentinels in the night have a fascination for Tamil poets of this age.

Veḷḷivītiyār speaks of the young lovers meeting secretly at nights are as innumerable as stars in the sky.[4]

The scorching heat of the sun in summer is referred to in many of the poems dealing with the pālai region. In one poem, the heroine compares herself with the neruñci flower and her lover with the sun.[5] The idea underlying here is that the neruñci flower leans always in the direction of the sun and hence the heroine compares herself to the neruñci flower and her hero to the sun. In another poem, sunset with all its brilliance is described. The sun which is setting beyond the mountains in the evening is compared to a ship that is gradually disappearing and finally sinking in the sea.[6] When the sun sets in the west, the dark gloom spreads over the world.[7]

THE MOON

Poets are more attracted by the moon than by the sun. Perhaps it may be due to the fact that the moon is not too

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1. Ibid : 317
2. Ibid : 86, 197, 397, 398.
3. Kuṟu : 44
4. Ibid : 315
5. Ibid : 240
6. Ibid : 355
7. திங்க ளைப் பேரற்றுதும் திங்க ளைப் போற்றுதும்—
   Cilap; Maṅkalavāḻtukkātai. 1.

dazzling to look at with naked eyes. Moreover, the moonlight is soft, gentle and soothing to all except those thieves, who wish for darkness to carry on their theft. The moonlight particularly infuses enthusiasm and pleasure in the young children and lovers. Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ attaches some prominence to the moon when he begins his immortal and great epic cilappatikāram with an invocation to the Moon.[1] He praises the sun next to the moon.[2] The commentator of cilappatikāram, Aṭiyārkkunallār writes that the word moon is an auspicious word and hence it is mentioned in the stanza.

The moonlight, though it gives pleasure to the people, who are married and are living close in happy union, affects to a considerable extent, the lives of the clandestine lovers and the separated couples, placed far away from one another. In one poem, if is seen that a lady-companion blames the moon for emitting its bright rays, thereby exposing the hero to the sight of others, when he eagerly comes to meet his lady-love in the nights by passing through all the perils and dangers on the way.[3] When the slow moon climbs, it is very attractive to see. A poet compares the crescent moon of the eighth day rising over the sea in the sky with the little forehead of the heroine.[4]

It was the custom of the ladies of ancient Tamilnad to worship the crescent moon of the third day.[5] When the cresent is seen in the sky red in colour it resembles a broken conch-shell.[6] The rising moon above the sea is compared with a white-foamed stream rushing down the slopes of a mountain.[7]

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1. திங்களைப் போற்றதும் திங்களைப் போற்றதும்—
   Cilap : Maṅkalavāḻttukātai; 1.
2. ஞாயிறு போற்றுதும். ஞாயிறு போற்றுதும்—
   Cilap : Maṅkalavāḻttukkātai; 4.
3. Kuṟu : 47.
4. Ibid : 129.
5. Ibid : 178, 307.
6. Ibid : 307.
7. Ibid : 315.

THE STARS

There is one reference to the stars where they are compared by a poetess to the countless numbers of couples, who are on elopement.[1]

THE CLOUDS

The clouds receive little attention and their chief use is in similitudes. They are usually said to adorn the mountain cliffs. Further, they are described as playing over the hills. It is said that they fetch water from the sea, store it for one year to supply the world with their showers. A poet imagines in a fanciful way that they are pregnant with water and compares their slow movement in climbing over the sky to he slow walking of a woman big with child.[2]

THUNDER

The roar of thunder is said to be very harsh to be heard[3] and it has strength enough when combined with the whirl-wind, to shake off even Mount Himalayas. There is a popular belief in Tamilnad that the thunder is an enemy of the snakes and on hearing the harsh roar of the thunder, the snakes would meet with instantaneous death. This is mentioned in a poem in Kuṟuntokai.[4]

THE FLORA AND FAUNA

The Sangam poets have a trained eye to gaze at things in their environment and they are able to paint the pictures of Nature with their appropriate colours and forms. More than this, they also-visualised the various objects that they had seen and come across. They give us minute and accurate descriptions of Nature as Wordsworth and Shelley. They know fully well the life and growth of the plant, bird and animal kingdoms and they portray the pictures of the flora

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1. Kuṟu : 44.
2. Ibid : 287.
3. Ibid : 158.
4. Ibid : 3.

and fauna with their exact colours, forms, sounds and odours. Thus, the Nature poets of the sangam age paint with great intetest and enthusiasm, the pictures of the trees, the creepers, the herbs and shrubs.

TREES

First of all, the **Kuṟuñci tree** is mentioned in the third poem of Kuṟuntokai. It is a reference to the plenteous honey sucked by the bees from the sweet fragrant flowers of the black-boughed Kuṟiñci trees in the slope of the hills, where it is said that it blooms once in twelve years.[1] Next to Kuṟiñci tree, the Vēnkai tree, catches the attention of the poets. Veḷḷivītiyār refers to the tree as black-stalked Vēṅkai which has blossomed with all its buds bloomed.[2] Kapilar paints two pictures with an allegory in them. An elephant attacks a vēṅkai tree with anger and tears away its branches. The branches of the tree are not completely broken separately from the tree but only bent towards the ground and continue to give attractive flowers to the ladies of the Kuṟavā community, who find it easy to pluck the flowers by standing on the ground itself. It was a custom among children and young ladies to shout out 'Tiger, Tiger' in the childish belief that on hearing that uproar the vēṅkai tree would lower down its branches within their reach to make it easy to pluck the flowers.[4] The colour of the vēṅkai flowers looks like the coloured back of the tiger and perhaps this may be reason for the origin of this custom. The blackish yellow flowers that are strewn on a rock under the vēṅkai tree remind the poet Neṭuveṇṇilaviṉār of a tiger asleep since both their colours had a similarity.[5] A heroine, who feels lonely in the absence of her hero pines away. In a state of anxiety and despair, she asks her lady-companfon how the hero restrains himself

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1. Kuṟu : 3.
2. Ibid : 26.
3. Ibid : 208.
4. Ibid : 241.
5. Ibid : 49.

from sending any message to the vēṅkai tree under whose shade the clandestine meetings were held although he has forgotten them.[1]

There occurs plenty of references regarding the mention of **jack tree** and **jack fruit** in this collection. Kapilar depicts them both in a peom[2]. Another poet depicts that the sweet jack fruit is abundantly grown in every branch of the jack tree.[3] A funny incident is also portrayed by a poet. When the Kāṉavaṉ orgets his watch and ward in his sleep, the monkey avails of the opportunity by stealing away the sweet-smelled jack fruit from the grove and when the Kāṉavaṉ comes in notice of it, he puts net for each and every jack tree.[4] The jack fruit is beautifully depicted by a poet as 'pūnāṟu pulavuk kaṇi', which means the sweet flower smelled jack fruit.[5]

The plantain tree is also mentioned in two poems.[6] The soft tenderness of the heroine is compared with the tenderness of a plantain tree.[7] The reference to an **Akil tree** occurs in only one poem in which it is said that it gives sweet fragrance in the helmet of the Kuṟavars.[8] There is only one reference to an **Acōkā tree** in the whole collection.[9]

The **konrai tree** belongs to the pastoral region. The flowers of the koṉṟai get more prominence than the tree itself. When a heroine is pining away in the absence of the lover, the lady-companion tries to console her by saying that she need not feel pistressed by seeing the koṉṟai tree which

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1. Kuṟu: 266.
2. Ibid : 18
3. Ibid : 83.
4. Ibid : 342.
5. Ibid : 90.
6. Ibid : 308, 327.
7. Ibid : 327.
8. Ibid : 339.
9. Ibid : 214.

is foolish enough to blossom with flowers although its season in which the hero promised to return has not come.[1] The konrai flowers resemble the gold coins is observed by a poet.[2] **Kurunta tree** is also mentioned by the same poet[3]. The agricultural region is named after the tree, **marutam.** Paraṇar refers to this tree on the banks of the river Cauvery.[4] Further, he says that a white tusked elephant that belonged to Cēntaṉ is tied to the trunk of the marutam tree. **Kāñci tree** is mentioned in two poems.[5] Orampōkiyār depicts the Kāñci tree with an epithet as 'kamaḻ pū meṉciṉaik Kāṇci', which means the tree with sweet fragrant and tender-like branches. It grows abundantly near the paddy fields.[6] The mango tree is a perennial tree of the agricultural region and it is frequently mentioned by the poets. Both the flowers and fruits are descriped as having sweet fragrance.[7] The bees are said to suck the honey from the flowers of the mango tree.[8] The tender leaves of the mango tree are quite often compared in paleness to the body of the heroine when her lover is away from her in pursuit of wealth.[9] The mango fruit serves for an allegory in one poem of this collection.[10] The **puracā tree** and its red flowers are mentioned in a poem.[11]

The **palmyra tree** belongs to maritime region and it is painted along with the birds living in the nests thereon and this forms the natural background of the region. This tree is mentioned in more than ten poems.[12] The Aṉṟil bird is said

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1. Kuṟu: 66.
2. Ibid : 148.
3. Ibid : 148.
4. Ibid : 258.
5. Ibid : 10, 127.
6. Ibid : 127.
7. Ibid : 201.
8. Ibid : 306.
9. Ibid : 331.
10. Ibid : 8.
11. Ibid: 156.
12. Ibid : 81, 168, 177, 182, 248, 281, 293, 301, 372, 374.

live in the palmyra tree.[1] The tender palmyra fruit is mentioned in one poem.[2] The palmyra stalks are useful in roofing the huts.[3] The stalks of the palmyra leaves are knife-edged.[4] The weaver-bird builds its nest in the tree.[5]

The ñāḻal tree usually grows near the back-waters of the seashore. The branches of the ñālal tree are described by the poets by epithets like 'pacunaṉai ñāḻal'[6] and 'ciṟuvīñāḻal'[7] which mean 'greenish bud nalal' and 'tiny flowered nalal' The puṉṉai tree is depicted by a poet artistically by an epithet 'karuṅkōṭṭuppuṉṉai, 'black boughed puṉṉai.'[8] The tree belongs to the coastal region. Sangam poets have a partiality for this tree. The back-waters dash against the puṉṉai tree nearly and drench its branches with their spray of water[9]. A crane is said to be sitting on the low branch of a puṉṉai tree, whose branches are gilding through the foamy surface of the back-water.[10] In another poem, it is said that when the crane gets disgusted with the fish, for a change, it would regale on the nalal flowers.[11] The cool shade of the puṉṉai tree is the meeting place of the lovers of the coastal region.[12] The companions of the heroine gather the puṉṉai flowers (gold pollened) to play with on the sea-shore.[13] Vaḻai (வழை) or curapuṉṉai tree is also metioned in one poem.[14]

The arid tract and its extreme heat during the summer are described frequently by the poets. There are many trees

1. Kuṟu: 77
2. Ibid : 293.
3. Ibid : 301.
4. Ibid : 372.
5. Ibid : 374.
6. Ibid : 81.
7. Ibid : 328.
8. Ibid : 123.
9. Ibid : 175.
10. Ibid : 236.
11. Ibid : 296.
12. Ibid : 299.
13. Ibid : 311.
14. Ibid : 260.

in that waterless dry region and all of them form a synthetic and a sympathetic background to the theme of love of that region. Although the wather is very scarce and rare in that tract there are many kinds of trees that are often described by the poets. The **marām tree**, which is said to blossom in the early spring season finds it place in three poems[1]. Due to the scorching heat of the sun, the branches of the marām tree become dry and a bee seeking honey in it gets disappointed.[2] The **yā tree** is always mentioned in association with the elephants. The branches of the yā tree are described by a poet in an epithet 'meṉciṉai yā' i.e., Yā tree with tender boughs and a male elephant plucks a bough of the tree to feed its mate.[3] The deer finds its shelter under its stray shadow and its branches are destroyed and eaten away by an elephant.[4] The picture of elephant plucking the Yā tree with its tusks to feed its loving-mate frequently occurs in the poems.[5] Another tree which is found abundantly in the arid tract is the **ōmai tree**. The kite is said to be making sorrowful sounds while sitting on its branches.[6] Again it is said that the elephant plucks the trunk of the Omai tree with its tusks and eagerly seeks water from it, to quench its thirst.[7] It is described further that the elephant likes to eat the outer bark of the ōmai tree.[8] The **veṭci tree** is described as 'Muṭacciṉai veṭci' which means bended veci tree.[9] Thisṭ kind of observation by the poets shows a keen and accurate sense of the things in Nature that they came across in their lives.

The **gooseberry tree** is described by the poet Pālai Pāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō as 'Aṟantalaippaṭṭa Nelliyam Pacuṅkkāy'

1. Kuṟu : 22, 92, 211.
2. Ibid : 211.
3. Ibid : 37.
4. Ibid : 232.
5. Ibid : 255, 307.
6. Ibid : 207.
7. Ibid : 396.
8. Ibid : 79.
9. Ibid : 89.

since it was the custom of those days to plant the gooseberry trees along the public roads in order to quench the thirst of the wayfarers.[1] And it is said that it will be plesant to drink water after eating the gooseberry fruit. The maraiyā (மறையா) eats the gooseberry and drinks water in a pond or a pool nearby.[2]

The koṅku tree is also mentioned in one poem.[3] The ukāy tree that resembles the back of a dove is noted by a poet[4] and its shadows are described as 'leafless'[5] and the tree itself is described as 'pullarai ukāy'.[6] The neem or the margosa are plenty in number in the arid desert region and this tree is described by Paraṇar as 'Karuṅkāl Vēmpu', which means the blackboughed neem.[7] The flower of the tree is described as 'oṇpū' (ஒண்பூ)—the lustrous flower[8] and the ripe fruit as 'pacuṅkāy'.[9] The nemai tree with the kite sitting thereon is also mentioned by a poet.[10] The iruppu tree is depicted in a poem[11] and it is usually said that the bears have a good liking for its flowers. The kura tree and the puṅku tree are mentioned by the poet, Miḷai Kiḻān Nalvēṭṭaṉ, with their appropriate settings.[12] The irṟi tree is mentioned in a poem,[13] The hanging or the waving aerial roots of the tree by the side of a rock resemble the waterfall in a mountain.

Last of all, the Vākai tree of the arid desert tract finds its place in three poems.[14] The dry white seeds of the Vākai

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1. Kuṟu : 208.
2. Ibid : 317.
3. Ibid: 254.
4. Ibid : 274.
5. Ibid : 363.
6. Ibid : 363.
7. Ibid : 24.
8. Ibid : 281.
9. Ibid : 196.
10. Ibid : 285.
11. Ibid : 329.
12. Ibid : 341.
13. Ibid : 106.
14. Ibid : 7, 347, 369.

tree strike one another when the wind blows and produce a sound similar to the sound of the drum beaten with a stick to the accompaniment of the rope-dance performed by the Aryans.[1] The sweet fragrant flowers of the Vākai tree are aptly compared by a poet with the crest of the peacock.[2] The sound of the dry seeds of the Vākai tree resembles the sound produced by the anklet.[3]

LEAVES

The colour and tha form of the leaves of the different plants are beautifully brought out by the poets in their descriptions. The epithet 'Ciṟiyilai' (small leaf) is prefixed to the neruñci plant.[4] The leaves of the aṭumpu are in threes and forked.[5] The nocci leaves look like the feet of a peacock.[6] The waving leaves of the cēmpu in the wind are artistically and appropriately compared by a poet with the waving ears of an elephant.[7]

FLOWERS

The colour, Odour and the form of flowers are artistically touched upon by the poets with their deeper insight and imaginatlon. Wordsworth says "To me the meanest flower can give thoughts, that do often lie too deep for tears." The same is the case with the Tamil poets also. They take special interest in describing the various flowers. The people who lived in those bygone days have cherished an ardent desire for flowers. Every activity of their life, in one way or other is told as associated with the flowers.

The seasons and hours, in which the various plants blossom are closely observed by the poets. The season of blosoming is used as an epithet to the plant itself by the

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1. Kuṟu : 7.
2. Ibid : 347.
3. Ibid : 369.
4. Ibid : 206.
5. Ibid : 343.
6. Ibid : 138.
7. Ibid : 76.

poet as we could see in the word 'mārippittikam'-the pittikam that blossoms in the rainy season.[1] The dots and stripes of a tiger resemble the vēṅkai flowers and this sight is very often described by the poets.[2] The flowers of the puṅku and ñāḻal are minutely observed by the poets and they employed them in their comparisons with other objects alike to them in Nature.[3] The tiny ñāḻal flower which has rarely been described by the poets is said to have soft hair like parts.[4] The neruñci flower which is seen in the desolate parts in the country-side without having any attractive colour and fragrance whatsoever is used in a similitude to the chastity of the heroine by the poets.[5] The flower always leaps towards the direction of the sun and it fully corresponds with the devoted and chaste life of the heroine. The kuvaḷai flower is often compared with the eyes of the ladies.[6] It usually grows in the ponds near the hills and the young ladies have a fancy to adorn their tresses with these flowers. The flowers would not dry up even in the summer.[7]

Kāntaḷ flower is mentioned in twelve poems dealing with the hill-tracts.[8] It is said that its bunches of flowers are blood-red in colour.[9] It has a sweet fragrance.[10] The red kāntaḷ flower with closed petals is compared to a snake of withheld hood.[11] The bees are gathering the gold pollen from the waving bunches of the kāntaḷ flowers, in the slope of the mountain.[12] The sweet fragrance of kāntaḷ is compared

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1. Kuṟu : 94.
2. Ibid : 47.
3. Ibid : 50, 341, 397.
4. Ibid : 110.
5. Ibid : 315.
6. Ibid : 339.
7. Ibid : 388.
8. Ibid : 1, 62, 76, 84, 100, 185, 239, 259, 265, 284, 361, 372.
9. Ibid : 1.
10. Ibid : 84.
11. Ibid : 185.
12. Ibid : 239.

to the fragrance emanating from the forehead of a heroine.[1] In one poem it is said that the kantal of the variety resembles the elephant wounded and blood-stained in a battle,[2] and it has tender leaves also.[3] The sweet fragrance of the kāntaḷ flower along with the fragrance of the flower of the jack-fruit enters the small helmets of the mountain and makes the people living there rejoice over it.[4]

The mullai flower is the perennial flower of the pastoral tract since the region itself is named after it. There are sixteen poems in which the mullai flowers are referred to.[5] It is described by various epithets like pacuvī mullai[6] prosperous mullai, pūṅkoṭimullai[7] the mullai of the flowering creeper, ciṟupacumukai[8] the tiny and prosperous buds, ciṟuvīmullai[9] the tiny flowered mullai and paiṅkoṭimullai[10] the prosperous creeper of mullai. The mullai flower blossoms afrer the first showers of early winter.[11]

Okkūr Māsātti, a poetess of the sangam age, evinces a keen interest in describing the passions of a heroine, who is pining due to the absence of her lover. She draws a picture, wherein it could be seen that the blossomed mullai flowers resemble the scornful laughter of a cat.[12] Moreover, the blossoming of the mullai flowers is a clear indication of the setting in of early winter or the rainy season. The mullai flowers blossom always in the evening of the early winter

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1. Kuṟu : 259.
2. Ibid : 284.
3. Ibid : 361.
4. Ibid : 373.
5. Ibid : 19, 62, 126, 186, 188, 220, 221, 234, 240, 275.
6. Ibid : 62.
7. Ibid : 126.
8. Ibid : 221.
9. Ibid : 348.
10. Ibid : 382.
11. Ibid : 126.
12. Ibid : 220.

season.[1] The sweet fragrance of the flowers mingles with the fragrance of the 'taḻavam' flowers in the bushes.[2]

The blackgram and field-beans are used in comparisons.[3]

The koṉṟai flowers looking like the globular gold coins are artistically pictured by a poet.[4] The young ladies have a special liking to adorn their tresses with the newly blossomed koṉṟai flowers.[5] The kuḻavi or the mullai flower of the forest region is mentioned in three poems.[6] They are said to have fallen into the small pool of the arid desert tract and thereby makes the water not drinkable.[7] The ñāḻal flower of the coastal region blooms, when the west wind blows,[8] The ñāḻal and the puṉṉai flowers are spread everywhere in the sand-dunes of the sea shore.[9] There is a word-picture of the ñāḻal flower depicted by a poet. He depicts that the tiny flower of ñalal looks like a white pepper.[10]

The fragrance of the nārattam flower is compared to the fragrance of the tresses of the heroine.[11] The poet-cum-king-Kōpperuñcōḻaṉ draws a beautiful word-picture of comparison that the punku flowers when well spread out on the sand-dune resemble the fried red rice that are spread out by the Vēlaṉ, the priest of the temple of God Muruga, being called upon by the mother of the lady-love to perform worship as she finds her daughter pining.[12]

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1. Kuṟu : 234, 387.
2. Ibid : 382.
3. Ibid : 68. 240.
4. Ibid : 148.
5. Ibid : 21.
6. Ibid : 56, 59, 100.
7. Ibid : 56.
8. Ibid : 397.
9. Ibid : 318.
10. Ibid : 50.
11. Ibid : 52.
12. Ibid : 53.

The colour of the pīrkku flower is compared with the paleness of the forehead of the heroine when deserted by her hero for a short period before the marriage.[1]

The pātiri flewer are said to be cone-shaped in form and to blossom in the summer season.[2] The āvirai flower is flattered by an epithet 'poṉṉēr āvirai' the 'gold like āvirai' in a poem in Kuṟuntokai[3] The Kāyā flower of the pastoral region is referred to in a poem.[4] The pitā flower is said to blossom in the early winter season.[5] Pakaṉṟai flower is used in a comparison by a poet.[6]

The lotus flowers in the tank are frequently mentioned in the poems. They belong to the agricultural region. They resemble the eyes of the young ladies.[7] The keṇṭai fish mistakes a bud of the lotus flower for a crane and gets frightened by the very sight of it.[8] The īnkai flower is referred to in a poem.[9]

ANIMALS

The various animals belonging to all the five regions are beautifully described by the poets. Only a few animals are referred to in the poems, which are said to belong to the agricultural and coastal regions. The other regions, namely the mountaninous, pastoral and arid tracts are described with an abundant number of animals living thereon. The word-pictures of the various animals are interesting and delightful to observe and study. The manners and habits of the varlous animals, their favourite food, their modes of life are all vividly described by the poets with zeal and zest. Only a few

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1. Kuṟu : 98.
2. Ibid : 147.
3. Ibid : 173.
4. Ibid : 183.
5. Ibid : 251.
6. Ibid : 330.
7. Ibid : 226, 259.
8. Ibid : 127.
9. Ibid : 380,

domestic animals are treated and their treatment shows how far the ancient Tamil poets have an accurate and close observation of the wild animals belonging to all the regions.

The elephant is a perennial animal and the biggest mammal found anywhere in the world. Elephants live mostly in the mountains, and arid desert tracts. Their eyes, ears heads, trunks and feet are beautifully described by the poets, They depict them with minute details. The bunch of a millet corn is compared with the trunk of a female elephant.[1] The broad ears of an elephant are compared with the leaves of the cēmpu[2] and pācaṭai.[3] (பாசடை). A block of huge rock is compared with the whole body of an elephant.[4] The elephant desire to eat the shoots of the bamboos. The bamboos rendered short by being bitten by elephants are sung by a poet.[5]

Although the grammarians of Tamil language classed the elephant as an animal belonging to the mountainous region, still it is occasionally described by the sangam poets in their poems as an animal of the arid desert tract also. An affect tionate attitude of love shown by a male-elephant towards its loving mate, is described in a poem of the palai region. The male-elephant breaks the branches of the yā tree to satisfy the hunger of its loving mate.[6] In another poem, a pathetic and sympathetic description of the life of the elephants is given. The unusually hot rays of the sun make still worse the dreariness of the arid tract. The male-elephant, in order to quench the thirst of its mate dashes against the yā tree with its trunk, pierces through its fibres and gets disappointed when finding not even a single drop of water and roars in agony and grief.[7] Very often the sangam poets describe the

1. Kuṟu : 360.
2. Ibid : 76.
3. Ibid : 246.
4. Ibid : 279.
5. Ibid : 179.
6. Ibid : 37.
7. Ibid : 307.

constant enmity existing between the elephant and the tiger. A poet describes the elephant as 'ciṟukaṭ peruṅkaḷiṟu' which means 'the tiny eyed big elephant'.[1] The big elephant having small eyes makes the valour of the wild tiger futile in a thick grove.[2]

The elephants were made use of in wars in those days. The roar of the elephant is often compared to the sound produced by a war drum when beaten with the stick.[3] The hill-men are said to sell the tusks of the elephants to earn their livelihood.[4] The young calf of the elephant is not left unnoticed by the poets. The young one of the elephant is said to play with the young children of the Kuṟavā community.[5]

The elephants are used in comparisons also. The springing back of the green branches of the bamboo tree, let loose by the elephant, on hearing the humming sound of the sling, is compared with the movement of a fishing angle.[6] The Kuḷaku or the liquorice leaves are the favourite dish to the elephants.[7]

The Wild Cat, is mentioned in a poem where it is said that it is anxiously waiting for the rats for its prey.[8] The teeth of the wild cat are compared to the buds of the mullai flower.[9]

The Wild Cow also is mentioned in a poem where it is said that the calf of the wild cow becomes tamed by the children of the Kāṉavar (காணவர்) and gets itself accustomed to the countrylife [10] **The Otter** is described in four poems.[11]

1. Kuṟu : 88.
2. Ibid : 88
3. Ibid : 393.
4. Ibid : 100.
5. Ibid : 394.
6. Ibid : 54.
7. Ibid : 136.
8. Ibid : 107.
9. Ibid : 240.
10. Ibid : 322.
11. Ibid : 56, 141, 179, 364.

There are word-pictures of the otter such as 'vēṭṭaccennāy',[1] 'painkaṭ cennāy'[2] and 'nīrnāy'[3]. The otter gets the vāḷai fish as its prey.[4] There are three poems to be found in Kuṟuntokai where references are made the Ox.[5] The cow which gives birth to a calf likes to be always by its side.[6] In the midnight of the late winter, the pathetic cry of the ox can be heard when it gets frightened away[7]. The bell which is tied around the neck of the ox is making sound whenever the ox moves its neck.[8]

The speed of a horse is used in a comparison.[9] It is said to gallop with speed like the wind.[10]

The crabs are very frequently described in the poems, treating the coastal region. There are six references about them in this collection.[11] When frightened by the sight of the crane which resembles the white āmpal of the winter season, the crab runs fast to escape from it and its fast movement is compared to the movement of an ox which escapes from the fold of a cow hero by cutting off the rope that was tied around its neck.[12] The young girls who are playing on the sea-shore are delighted is scaring away the crabs that are living there.[13] The keen observation by the poet Ammuvaṉ, who is an expert in painting the coastal regions with its appropriate setting can be seen in a poem, where he describes the foot-prints of the crabs left on the wet sand.[14] In another

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1. Kuṟu : 56.
2. Ibid : 141.
3. Ibid : 364.
4. Ibid : 364.
5. Ibid : 181, 261, 279
6. Ibid : 181.
7. Ibid : 261.
8. Ibid : 279.
9. Ibid : 74.
10. Ibid : 250.
11. Ibid : 117, 303, 316, 328, 351, 401.
12. Ibid : 117.
13. Ibid : 316, 328.
14. Ibid : 351.

poem it is said that the crab takes shelter in the ocean, when it gets frightened by the mischief of the young girls who are playing on the shore.[1]

There is only one reference that could be seen in Kuṟuntakai about the **chameleon.** It is said by a poet that the back of a chameleon resembles the sickle.[2] Moreover, it is mentioned in the some poem that the Tamils had observed the movement of the chameleon as a good omen. The frog is mentioned in one poem. There it is said that the mouth of the frog is compared to the round gold coin adorning the feet of the young children.[3]

The tiger is mentioned in eight poems.[4] It is often described that the colour of the back of a tiger resembles the colour of the vēṅkai flowers, that have fallen on a block of rock.[5]

The **crocodile** is said to be having wild and strong legs.[6]

The **snakes** are frequently mentioned by the poets. There could be seen references to them in eleven poems.[7] Avvaiyār compares the troubled state of the mind of a hero with the giddiness brought out by the bite of a serpent.[8] A small white snake is described as having caused trouble to a big elephant living in a forest.[9] The course of a stream rushing down the slopes of a mountain is compared with the crawling of a snake on the ground.[10] The harsh roar of the thunder

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1. Kuṟu : 401.
2. Ibid : 140.
3. Ibid : 148.
4. Ibid : 47, 88, 141, 209, 215, 237, 253, 303.
5. Ibid : 47.
6. Ibid : 324.
7. Ibid : 43, 119, 134, 154, 158, 185, 190, 235, 239, 268, 354, 391.
8. Ibid : 43.
9. Ibid : 119.
10. Ibid : 134.

brings upon the snakes an instantaneous death.[1]. The snake of with drawn hood is aptly compared with the closed petals of the kāntaḷ flower.[2] The skin of the snake is compared with the white foamed straem.[3] A reference is be seen about the gem produced by a snake and its colour resembles the colour of a short winged beetle.[4]

Kaṭama is a kind of animal that could be seen only in the mountainous region. A poem in Kuṟuntokai mentions this animal.[5]

The monkeys are living plenty in number in the mountainous tract. Sometimes they are funny in their character. Their colour, and funny actions are all artistically portrayed by the poets. The chastity of a female monkey is described in a beautiful poem. A male monkey is depicted by a poet as 'karuṅkaṭṭākkalai (கருங்கட்டாக்கலை). After the accidental death of the male monkey, the female does not like to live further more and so it hands over its young one to the care of its kind and finally commits suicide by falling down from the cliff of a hill.[6] What a pathetic picture! Touched by a monkey the ripe jack fruit falls in a stream running near the tree.[7] A monkey jumps merrily from branch to branch and causes damage to the tree. This picture is described by Kapilar in two poems[8]. The love and affection shown by a monkey towards its loving mate is seen in a poem, where it is stated that the monkey eats the ripe sweet fruits that are obtained by the shaking off, of the branches of the tree by the male-monkey.[9]. The monkey avails the rare opportunity in stealing away the jack fruit from the tree when the watch and

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1. Ibid : 158, 190, 268, 391.
2. Ibid : 185.
3. Ibid : 235.
4. Ibid : 239.
5. Ibid : 179.
6. Ibid : 69.
7. Ibid : 90.
8. Ibid : 121, 153.
9. Ibid : 278.

ward falls asleep.[1] It frightens away when it was aimed at by a sling and escapes from it by jumbing fast from one tree to another.[2] The monkey with its young one steals away the pani cum (செந்தினை) by making full use of the opportunity that came in its way when the young ladies who watch over the millet-field went to bathe in a pond near the rock.[3] A young langur rools the eggs of a pea-hen on a rock and plays with them in the morning.[4]

The various kinds of fish are described by the poets. The āral[5], the keṇṭai[6], the ayirai[7], and vāḷai[8] are all beautifully depicted in poems. Although most of the time they live under the water in a tank, pool, well or sea, their modes of life are not unknown to the poet. It is mentioned that the crane has a taste for āral fish and the softness of the forehead of the lady is compared to the tenderness of the āral fish,[9]. A funny incident is described by the poet Orampōkiyār. He descripes that the keṇṭai fish, on seeing the appearance of a crane dips into the water to hide itself and again it is frightened at the sight of the buds of the lotus flower, as the crane and lotus flowers look alike in colour.[10] A crane, which has grown old and has no vitality to fly and seeks its food sits on the sea-shore of Tondi and remembers the happy days when it got the ayirai fish as its food.[11]

The domestic animals such as cows, sheep, goats and dogs are well depicted by the poets. The cows go to the pasture land in the morning and return after a good grazing

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1. Kuṟu : 342.
2. Ibid : 385.
3. Ibid : 335.
4. Ibid : 38.
5. Ibid : 114.
6. Ibid : 127.
7. Ibid : 128.
8. Ibid : 168.
9. Ibid : 114.
10. Ibid : 127.
11. Ibid ; 128.

to their calves in the evening when their young calves are eagerly waiting for their return.[1] It is said in one poem that in late winter, the cow grazes the tender creeper of 'tāḷi'[2] (தாளி). The feeling of an young calf of the cow in the day time is compared to a heroine deserted by her lover, who is away in search of wealth.[3]

The domestic dog is mentioned in one poem A poet describes a house which has no dog in the front yeard to guard.[4] Ammūvaṉ depicts a goat in one of his poems. There he says that a herd of goats looks like the group of cranes fetching the fish.[5] The sheep are mentioned in two poems,[6] where it is stated that they are looked after well by the shephered.[7] In worshipping the God Muruga, the Vēlaṉ, the priest of the temple of Muruga, dedicates the sheep in honour of Him by cutting it off.[8]

The description of the deer is found both in the poems which deal with the pastoral and the arid desert tracts. The advent of early winter is indicated by the merry playing of the deer on the road-side after drinking the water from the small pits.[9] They play with their loving mates[10]. They have a taste in eating the bengal-gram in the late winter season.[11] The affectionate life of the deers is well drawn by the poets. The deer sleeps under the leafless shadow of the yā tree after eating its food.[12] The feet of the deer are mentioned in a comparison. It is said that their feet resemble the forked

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1. Kuṟu : 64.
2. Ibid : 104.
3. Ibid : 132.
4. Ibid : 277.
5. Ibid : 163.
6. Ibid : 221, 263.
7. Ibid : 221.
8. Ibid : 263.
9. Ibid : 65.
10. Ibid : 65, 250, 256.
11. Ibid : 68.
12. Ibid : 232.

eaves of the aṭumpu.[1] One other kind of deer called varuṭaiāma is depicted in one poem.[2]

BIRDS

The sangam poets evince a keen interest in drawing beautiful pen-pictures of the various birds. They observe their varied lives, their manners and habits, their places of dwelling, their nests, their flight, and their affectinate attitude towards one another. The affection of the birds towards their young ones is beautifully described by the poets. In short, they lived in close association with the domestic birds and at the same time they have shown a keen interest in depicting well the other birds also.

The most familiar and common bird of any region is the crow. It is mentioned in four poems.[3] A poetess earned the epithet 'kākkaipāṭiṉi' before her original name Naccelḷai, since she had described a crow and the help rendered by it to redress the suffering of the heroine in the absence of her lover in her poem.[4] We find a beautiful word-picture of the crow in three poems,[5] where it is described as 'ciṟuveṇkākkai' which means the small white crow. From this it is inferred that there were white kinds of crows also in those days. The white crows are scarcely seen nowadays. They cause damage to the green leaves of the plants,[6] and eager watchulness they expect the fish in the back-waters.[7]

The bees are frequently mentioned along with all the sweet fragrant flowers. It is rightly observed by a great poe Iṟaiyaṉār as 'Koṅkutēṟ vāḻkkai Añciṟait tumpi',[8] which mean 'the, bee, gathering or sucking the honey from flower to

1. Kuṟu : 243.
2. Ibid : 187.
3. Ibid : 210, 246, 313, 334.
4. Ibid : 210.
5. Ibid : 246, 313, 334.
6. Ibid : 246.
7. Ibid : 313.
8. Ibid : 2.

flower'. The colour of the smallwinged bees is compared with that of the precious gem obtained from an aged snake.[1] It is described that it sucks honey from the bunches of the kāntaḷ flowers.[2] There is a sad picture of a bee getting disappointed in not finding any drop of honey from the marām tree in the arid desert tract in summer.[3] An apostrophe also can be seen to it in a poem.[4] It is often described that it sucks honey from various flowers such as punnai,[5] kāntaḷ[6], kuvaḷai,[7] mango,[8] neytal,[9] and āmpal.[10]

The parrot frequently occurs in the description of the poems relating to the theme of love. The beak of the parrot is compared to the golden rod in the hands of a goldsmith.[11] The parrot eats the small paniccum grain with great relish.[12] The heroine, scares away the flock of parrots that come to steal away the bunches of corn.[13] The mouth of the parrot is compared by a poet to the āvirai flower.[14]

The flight of the bird **'bat'** reminds the heroine, who feels loneliness and solitude in the obsence of her lover, the impending pain and agony that are going to happen in the immediate future.[15]

The **peacock** is another bird, which is mentioned frequently by the poets. The peacock is very lovely in appearance. It is said to dance merrily in early winter.[16] Its

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1. Kuṟu : 239.
2. Ibid : 239.
3. Ibid : 211.
4. Ibid : 392.
5. Ibid : 175.
6. Ibid : 265.
7. Ibid : 291.
8. Ibid : 306.
9. Ibid : 309.
10. Ibid : 370.
11. Ibid :
12. Ibid : 133.
13. Ibid : 141, 142, 198, 217, 291, 331 346, 360.
14. Ibid : 240.
15. Ibid : 172.
16. Ibid : 251.

feet are compared to a bunch of the nocci leaves.[1] The big branch of a kāyā tree looks like a peacock.[2] It dances by waving its charming tail and walks with gait and pomp like the ladies.[8]

The **Cuckoo** has a charming and sweet voice. It is the bird of early summer, the season which is most suited for the enjoyment of the lovers.[4] The **anril** bird is described as having the fire-like head[3] and black feet,.[6] In another poem it is stated that it is living in the stalk of a tall palmyra tree.[7]

The **Cranes** are the birds living in flocks in the coastal region. It is referred to as sleeping in the shade of the puṉṉai tree,[9] and its feet are compared with the trunk of tiṉai corn.[9] It has a firm good liking for the āral fish.[10] The white flower of the screwpine resembles the white crane in colour.[11] The poet Ammūvaṉ paints a word-picture of the crane. The depicts the crane as 'karuṅkāl Veṇkuruku'[12], which means the 'black legged white crane'. It is to be noted that this line of the poem contains one of the figures of speech, the transferred epithet. Naṉṉākaiyār also draws the very same picture as Ammūvaṉ.[13]

The **house sparrow** is described by an epithet 'tuḷḷṭunaaic cēval' since it leaps more than it flies.[14]

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1. Kuṟu : 138.
2. Ibid : 183.
3. Ibid : 264.
4. Ibid ; 192.
5. Ibid : 160.
6. Ibid : 301.
7. Ibid ; 177.
8. Ibid : 5.
9. Ibid ; 25.
10. Ibid : 25.
11. Ibid : 226.
12. Ibid : 303.
13. Ibid : 325.
14. Ibid; 85.

The swans belong to the coastal region. They have smooth feathers. They assemble on the sand - dune of the sea - shore.

The **domestic cocks** are mentioned in two poems.[2] The red fore - head of the cock is compared with the 'tōṉṟi' flowers.[3] The cock's fight is referred to in a poem.[4]

The doves are said to have been frightened when the dry seeds of the kaḷḷi trees in full ripeness produce a cracking sound by splitting themselves.[5]

The skill of a **weaver bird** in building a nest to live in it is applauded by a poet.[6] The affection of a male bird towards its loving mate is carefully mentioned in two poems.[7]

The verbal reproduction of the notes of the domestic cock is attempted in a poem in an amazing manner.[8]

The breaking sound of the waves forms a song of lullaby to the cranes living in the sea-shore.[9]

The keen observation shown by the poets while describing the flora and fauna in great details clearly indicates to us their close and intimate relationship and association with them in all walks of their life. Hence it is not an exaggeration to say that these poets lived a rich life in close communion with Nature.

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1. Kuṟu : 300.
2. Ibid : 107, 234.
3. Ibid : 107.
4. Ibid : 305.
5. Ibid : 174.
6. Ibid : 374,
7. Ibid : 263, 301.
8. Ibid : 157.
9. Ibid : 303.

10. How far Kuruntokai can be Treated as Pure Literature

"A great book grows directly out of life; in reading it, we are brought into large, close and fresh relations with life; and in that fact lies the final explanation of its power. Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language"[1]. This is the opinion of Prof. W. H. Hudson, regarding the function of literature and of the sources of poetic inspiration. Then it may by all means be said that the ancient Tamil poets recorded their best thoughts and emotions that they observed in the world of Man and Nature. They had a keen insight and perception to look into the things around them. The ancient poets were observers of a high order of all the aspects of various modes of life. They faithfully draw pictures of life of men and women of their times. We can see the sincere reproduction of what they have seen of life in their poetry. Their poety is a faithful record of their experiences, which are so close to our own sensual, passionate and intense experiences although the time between theirs and ours is about two thousand years.

The Sangam poets give us first hand information about the religious, political and social life of those days. They even go to the extent of describing the life of various animals, birds, plants, shrubs, creepers and trees in a manner that a modern naturalist may envy. The Sangam poets are noted for their originality, simplicity, and naturalness of thought and expression, coupled with a sure

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1. An Introduction to the study of literature, p. 10.

historical sense. No doubt these historical evidences are very useful in constructing the ancient history since other sources of information are very scanty. Only the poems serve as sources of history. But here arises a question. Do not those fragments of history or the historical references stifle the readers' interest and appreciation of poetry in the true sense?

"Literature exists not only in expressing a thing; it equally exists in the receiving of the thing expressed".[1] Thus observes Prof. L. Abercrombie. "The two pillars upon which a theory of criticism must rest are an account of value and an account of communication".[2] "For evidently whateverelse literature may be, no communication, no literature."[3]

The Sangam poets have communicated in their writings some of the events of the past and events that occured during their age. So we can take it that Sangam literature communicates or furnishes some historical information also.

If a poet has any ulterior motive or an object in his poem to be conveyed to the reader, then it is taken as **applied literature.** For Prof. L. Abercrombie writes: "Thus, by **applied literature,** we mean work which can be regarded as literature by ignoring its authors's purpose: What he intended as a means to an end in itself. But in **pure literature** no such exclusion of the author's purpose is required: for there never was any purpose except that the expression should exist for the mere sake of existing as itself."[4]

This is found in one of Paraṇar's poems where the chief interest of the poet is glorification of his own native country. To this end he directs his attention in very cleverly composed stanzas depicting the charms of a lady of that region.[5]

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1. Principles of Literary Criticism, p-23.
2. Richards, I.A. Principles of Literatry Criticism, p. 25.
3. Abercrobie, L. Principles of Literary Criticism, p. 24.
4. Abercrombie, L. Principles of Literary criticism, p. 28.
5. (1) அழிசி ஆர்க்கா டன்ன இவள், பழிதீர் மாணலம்-- Kuṟu: 258.
   (2) குட்டுவன் மரந்தை யன்ன — Ibid : 34.

Therefore Dr. V. Sp. Manickam feels that Paraṇar in a sense is more a historian than a poet.[1]

Out of 400 poems in Kuṟuntakai, we find fragments of history in 31 poems[2] by seventeen poets and in 4 poems[3] we have indirect suggestions. Then of those thirty one poems with historical information were written by Paraṇar. He always describes some kings or chieftains of his age in his poems. Or at least he refers to some stories of the past in his poems.[4]

On the whole, the historical allusions in Paraṇar's poems stand in the way of proper aesthetic enjoyment of his poems and to a large extent blunts the edge of one's poetic sensibilities.

An examination of his poems will confirm this observation :

The tresses of the heroine have a natural fragrance that fills the sweet breeze. The fragrance reminds the poet of the fresh and sweet smell that comes from the jungles when the trees are in full bloom. Paraṇar imagines th ose tresses to be as thickly grown and dark and scented as those brambles and bushes of the forest of Ori[5] which happens to be the property of his own patron. In order to enlogize his patron chief, he draws this comparison. No proper reason can be given except perhaps that he avails himself of this opportunity to show his appreciation of and gratitude to his patron Ori.

Paraṇar compares the feminine beauty of the lady-love with the image of 'kolli' made by the God on the western

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1. The Tamil concept of Love, pp-289-290.
2. Kuṟu : 11, 15, 19, 34, 59, 73, 75. 80, 84, 89, 91, 100, 116, 128, 138, 163, 164, 166, 196, 198, 199, 210, 258, 260. 276, 292, 293, 312, 328 and 393.
3. Kuṟu : 31, 130, 225 and 242.
4. Swaminatha Iyer, U.V. Kuṟu : Introduction, p-154.
5. Kuṟu : 199.

ghats which belonged to Poṟaiyaṉ, a Cērā King.[1] In another poem he compares the richness of a lady's charms to the fertile lands of Arcot which belongs to Aḷici, the father of Cēntaṉ noted for his wealth and white tusked elephants.[2]

The ardent love for one's own native place is natural and it cannot be treated out of place in any time. It is evident in some of the poems of Aḷḷūr Naṉmullaiyār. Since the very name of her village is Aḷḷūr, she employs it as a simile to the once prosperous life of the heroine.[3]

Kuṭavāyil Kīrattaṉār, one of the Sangam poets has mentioned his own town in two poems, one in Naṟṟiṇai[4] and another in Akanāṉūṟu.[5] He compares the general beauty of a heroine to a prosperous town. (taṉ Kuṭavāyil aṉṉōḷ). In Naṟṟiṉai the poet compares the weeping eyes of the tender girl to the blue lilies of the rainy season in the ditch of Kuṭantai-vāyil which was under the Cōḷās.

But there is no necessity for Paraṇar's glorification of Ori because his native place is neither situated in the principality of Orinor in the Kingdom of Poṟaiyan. Not even Aḷici's Arcot was his native village. He has taken these three places to compare the general beauty of the heroine. If he had been very keen in praising in his poem only one place, then it might be taken that he wanted to glorify that particular place, as it happened to be his native place. He speaks of a number of places in his comparison of the beauty of the heroine and this shows that he wanted to show his gratitude to his patrons from whom he had received gifts. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar remarks : "From early times the bards sang with an eye to profit. So the heroes of their poems

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1. Kuṟu : 89.
2. Ibid : 258.
3. Aka : 46.
4. Naṟ : 379.
5. Aka : 44.

were tribal chiefs..... Bards have always been semi-starved men, hungering for meat and thirsting for drink, and they have always tried to earn these by glorifying in song the feats of kings and chieftains in love and war. This was exactly the way in which tne Tamil muse came to be born".[1]

The ultimate aim of the poets have been fulfilled by these devices of mentioning their patrons in their poems because the patrons are remembered by their noble deeds and generosity.

One important function of literature is to delight and ennoble us. The didactie element is only secondary. If that is more dominant it brings an obstacle to the reader in enjoying the poetry. For example, the author of cilappati-kāram has cherished no other aim except to delight us or render his own emotions live again in our minds since 'poetry is the translation of experience into language'.[2]

The experience of the poet must be given purely to the reader without any ulterior purpose to serve. Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ succeeds in his attempt while cāttaṉār, the author of the epic Maṇimēkalai fails when he takes much pains to bring forth all the Buddhistic principles into his epic and to propagate Buddhism. So he sets forth the principles of Buddhism in his epic. The heroine of the epic Maṇimēkalai is described in the closing chapters of the epic as preaching Buddhism. Further she is said to have conqured other religionists at Kāñci. But Iḷaṅkōvaṭikal does not attempt at anything through his epic except to delight us and instruct us with his wide range of wordly experience. Therefore the epic cilappatikāram has come to be appreciated as pure literature while Maṇimēkalai remains even today as applied literature.

Tiruttakka Tēvar wrote Cīvakacintāmaṇi with the aim of bringing out the underlying principles of Jainism. The last

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1. History of the Tamils, pp. 71 and 119.
2. Abercromble, L. The Idea of Great Poetry, p. 23.

portion of his work 'mukti ilampakam' is nothing but the preaching of Jainism. In mediaeval litereture, Kaliṅkattup-paraṇi was written by Ceyamkoṇṭār in order to praise the achievements of Kulothunga III in his Kalinga war. In one sense it is to be considered as applied literature. But years had lapsed from the date of its composition, and we are in a position to read it as pure literature.

Coming to the subject under study, the desolation of the heart of the hero whose heroine is engaged in love-quarrels with him find comparison in his poem with the heads of the desolate bards with no flowery gold ornaments adorning their heads because their patron Evvi who was generous enough to present golden flowers to them was now no more.[1] It is the desired motive of Paraṇar to enlogise the generosity of his patron Evvi. Dr. K.K. Pillai observes: "Paranar, for instance was ostensibly swayed by the temptation to glorify his friends and exaggerate their achievements.[2]

In two places the public gossip (alar) born of the hero's delay in marriage is compared to the thunderous uproar of the victorious soldiers in the battle-field. Paraṇar refers to this in a poem in Kuṟuntokai, the victory of the chieftain Vicci[3] and in another poem a reference is made to the victory of Konkars overs Atikaṉ, the commander in-chief of Pacumpūṇ Pāṇṭiyaṉ.[4] A poem in praise of the same Atikaṉ is found in Akanāṉūṟu by the same poet Paraṇar.[5]

A passing reference is made to Akutai as a patron who was very liberal in giving to the bards who visited him.[6]

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1. Kuṟu : 19.
2. Journal of the Madras University, Jan. 1959, p. 271.
3. Kuṟu : 328.
4. Kuṟu : 393.
5. Aka : 162.
6. Kuṟu : 298.

Another passing reference is made by the poet on the sea-shore Tondi and its chief, Poṟaiyaṉ who was in possession of strong chariots [1]

The cruelty of Naṉṉaṉ towards an innocent girl who had gone for a bath in a river adjacent to the mango-grove of his palace is illustrated in a poem.[2] The girl had eaten an unripe mango that was afloat in the river. For this act, she was ordered by Naṉṉaṉ to be executed and persistently refused eighty one elephants and gold equal to her weight offered as compensation by her parents.

Here, the reference is to the mother of a lady-love who on seeing the hero one day in the company of her daughter, puts her under her great care thereby preventing the possi-blity of any further meeting between the hero and lady-love. So, in her furtive love and misery, the lady-love utters desola-tely that it is sure that her unkind mother would go to unbounded hell like Naṉṉaṉ, who, she thought had gone to hell because of his cruel act of ordering the execution of an innocent girl.[3]

This poem mentioned above contains eight lines. The theme relating to Akattiṇai is of three lines only. The rest of the lines unlock the story of Naṉṉaṉ. When such historical description is 'far fetched and not related to the love themes in any way', the poem is to be considered defective. The fact that Paraṇar wrote this poem merely to bring out the cruelty of Naṉṉaṉ is clear This leads us to think that Paraṇar was vehemently perturbed by his atrocity and has rendered it with a gusto and strong feeling. Further it is evident from another poem in the same anthology. The lady-companion refused the hero both day and night trysts in order to urge

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1. Kuṟu : 128.
2. Ibid : 292.
3. பெண்கொலை புரிந்த நன்னன் போல
வரையா நிரயத்துச் செலீயியரோ அன்னை—Kuru : 292.

early marriage. Then she speeks to her lady-love that she must have some sort of skill like the truth speaking kōsar who effectively planned an invasion into the territory of Naṉṉaṉ, cutting the mango tree, his royal tree of defence.[1]

Thus Paraṇar with the aim of introducing his historical knowledge in his poems is always lax in treating Akattiṇai in a proper manner as the other poets did.

Next to Paraṇar, Kapilar is the most importanr poet. Sangam poets pay him high tu ributes·[2] He is a poet of poets. Both in quantity as well as in quality he excels all other poets of the Sangam age. He had a life-long association with many kings and chieftains like Celvakkatuṅkō Vaḷiyātaṉ, Pāri, Pēkaṉ, Kāri and others. Most of his patrons were the rulers of hilly territories. Although Kapilar has devoted sixteen poems in praise of his patron-in-chief, Pāri in Puṟanāṉūṟu[3] he confined himself to the theme of love though he refferred to their glory in some Akam poems. "It seems to me" writes Prof. V.Sp. Manickam, "that the mention of the names of kings and patrons and their activities in Aham lyrics is a means to show the poets' gratitude to them in a nevel way".[4]

Kapilar mentions one of his patrons Ori who was noted for his archery.[5] Here the reference is to the beauty of the heroine whom the hero compares to the 'Kollippāvai'—the image of the koll hills belonging to the patron Ori.

In another poem, the poet mentions that the fragrance of sandal emanating from the chest of the hero resembles the sweet fragrance of sandalwood that emanates from the jungle of Malaiyaṉ who is noted fot his skill in sword-fighting and his valour.[6] Here, the poet Kapilar avails himself of the

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1. Kuṟu : 73.
2. Puṟa : 53 : 11-13; 174 : 10.
3. Puṟa : 105-120.
4. The Tamil concept of Love, p. 247.
5. Kuṟu : 100.
6. Kuṟu : 198.

opportunity to express his heartfelt thanks to his patron Malaiyaṉ. The chieftain Malaiyaṉ is refferred to by the same poet in another poem also in Kuṟuntokai.[1] Here the poet compares the sweet smell of the body of the heroine to that of the sweet fragrance coming from the forest at Mulḷūr belonging to the chieftain Malaiyaṉ with bloodstained spear in his hand. This is another example of his gratitude to his patron.

The lady-companion abuses the hero that it is not wise on his part to forget the help done by her in the past in meeting his sweetheart just as an ungrateful king had totally forgotten the help rendered by his friends in regaining the throne.[2] Here Kapilar is employing only a figure of speech as the name of the king is not mentioned.

Avvaiyār is one of the greatest poetesses or rather the greatest of the Sangam age. Her patron was a chieftain by name Aṭikamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci whose capital was Takaṭūr. Her contribution to Sangam literature and her reference to Aṭikamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci and his son Eliṉi are eighteen in number in Puṟanāṉūṟu.[3] In her poems in Puṟanāṉūṟu, she praises Añci with respect and high esteem for the benovolence conferred upon her by him when he gave her the precious gooseberry without telling its wonderful qualities. She praised him highly and wished that he should have a long, glorious life like God Siva.[4]

The hero returns from the house of a prostitute and requests an audience with his heroine. The heroine thinks about the consequences that may arise when accepting him into her house. She speaks to herself i.e., thinks aloud as

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1. Kuṟu: 312.
2. Ibid : 225.
3. Puṟa : 87-104.
4. நீலமணி மிடற்று ஒருவன் போல
மன்னுக பெரும நீயே—Puṟa : 98.

thus: "If you accept him once again, then you will have before you only a few nights of undisturbed sleep like the sleepless people of the villages adjacent to the battle-field where the liberal patron Añci, was engaged in war with his mighty elephant corps."[1] Avvaiyār has thus cited this incident in a simile in her poems as it was a well known incident to the people of her age.

In another poem, a prostitute challenges the heroine when she comes to know that she has coveted her husband by some way or other. In a firm tone, the prostitute tells that if she (heroine) was bold enough she may prevent her husband from going with her to have a bath in the village tank with the help of her kith and kin just as Eḷiṉi with many spears have fought and recovered the cattle wisels from his foes.[2] Here Avvaiyār draws this comparison simply to convey her gratitude to her patron Eḷiṉi.

In another instance, the foster-mother reveals the secret of love-affair to the mother of the lady-love. She tells the mother that the love that exists between her daughter and her hero is as true as the good word of kosars of Nallūr.[3] Here the reference does not serve any purpose of the poetess. She simply brings in the kosars who were well known for their truthfulness in those days for the purpose of comparison.

Poet Mōcikīraṉār mentions of Aralai-k-kuṉṟam in one of his poems.[4] He compares the sweet smell of the forehead of the heroine to the fragrance of the 'kuvaḷai' flowers that blossoms in the mountain pool (cuṉai) of Aralaik-kuṉṟam. Here the object of the poet is clear, to give some priority or prominence to Aralaikkuṉṟam. Perhaps it may be his or his patron's native place.

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1. Kuṟu : 91.
2. Ibid : 80.
3. Ibid : 15.
4. Ibid ; 59.

Potiyil, one of the peaks of the western ghats was rich in sandalwood. Many poets including the great Sanskrit poet Kalidasa have referred to this hill and the sandalwood thereon. The Potiyil hills was sometime under the possession of the patron Āy before it passed into the hands of Poṟaiyaṉ as evident from a poem in Kuṟuntokai.[1]

A heroine is said to be as fragrant as the 'vēṅkai' and 'kāntaḷ' flowers of Āy's Potiyil and cooler than the water-lilies that are found there.

Mōci is the name of the village and Kīrar is his name. We are now at a loss to locate the place 'Mōci'. Thus Mōcikīraṉār has shown his sense of affection towards his patron.

Prof. L. Abercrombie warns us of the defects underlying applied literature: "In applied literature we shall ignore anything which was written to give information or to make argument persuasive, any expression designed to serve a purpose beyond the mere achievement of-expression as such. We shall ignore all this for two reasons. First, because whatever expressive qualities may be found in applied literature, may be much more easily and more demonstrably found in pure literature, along with a much greater range of such qualities. Secondly, because the principles to which criticism of these expressive qualities must appeal, will most naturally reveal themselves when expression has to rely solely on itself for all its justification, being actuated by no other purpose than to exist as now".[2]

Hence it logically follows that applied literature is inferior to pure literature. For, in pure literature the exprience is communicated to the hearts of the readers with happiness, born of good qualities.

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1. Kuṟu : 84.
2. Principles of Literary Criticism, pp. 28-29.

In the light of consideration let us examine some more poems.

Māmūlaṉār's contribution to the Kuṟuntokai collection is only one poem. The poet is to be treated more as a historian than as a poet, since he gives some important information about Nandas and Mauryas of the north in his poems in Akanāṉūṟu.[1] He mentions Vaṭukar and Kaṭṭi in a Kuṟuntokai poem. In both their dominions, a language other than Tamil was spoken. The poet expresses this idea in the line 'moḻipeyar tēem' (மொழிபெயர் தேயம்). Vaṭukars are said to have lived beyond Vēṅkaṭam hills and were noted for their bravery. Kaṭṭi is said to have ruled over the Ganga country which was also situated beyond the northern boundary of Tamilnad.

Here the reference is this: "Although it was positively dangerous to undertake a journey to their kingdom, yet the lady-love decides to undertake the journey at her own risk to meet her hero who has possibly gone on a journey in search of wealth".[2]

Although two feudatories are mentioned in these poems it does not stand in any way, restrict the vision of the reader from following the love-aspect that is in store for him. Further the poem sincerely portrays the intense love in the hearts of the lady-love for her hero and her sorrows when deserted by him. Thus 'the author's mind is again made to live in the reader's mind.

The chieftain Kuṭṭuvaṉ is mentioned in a poem as ruling from Marantai on the west coast.[3] The lady-love pining for her hero says that she belongs only to him and for others she would be an object of terror-i.e., beyond their reach. In expressing this, the comparison is effectively made with the

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1. Aka : 255, 281.
2. Kuṟu : 11.
3. Ibid : 34.

city of Marantai, which is a place of joy for the victorious soldiers and a place of dread for their enemies. Here the author of this poem, Kollikkaṇṇaṉ takes this opportunity of describing the valour of Kuṭṭuvaṉ possibly a Cērā king, along with his capital city Marantai.

The poet Iḷaṅkīraṉ compares the black tresses of a heroine to the waving nature and coolness of the sand-dune of uṟantai belonging to the prosperous Coḻās.[1] Although the poet does not mention any particular name of the Cōḻā, his intention is to espouse the greatness of uṟantai and its sand-dunes as it is evident from a line in the poem as 'vaḷaṅkeḻu Cōḻar uṟantaip peruntuṟai'. The poet seems to have cherished a special liking for the sand-dune of uṟantai.

Kollaṉ Aḻici draws a comparison of feet of the peacock in the Eḻil hill with that of the forked leaves of 'nocci'.[2]

A point of objection may be raised here. Why the poet has chosen the leaves of the 'nocci' with of the peacock that is found in the hills of Eḻil? Is the peacock found in some other regions beyond Eḻil, not worth being compared with the leaves of 'nocci'? Why that peacock found in that hill should be the only object of comparison with the leaves of 'nocci'? Nothing but the personal liking of the poet towards the Eḻil made the poet to compose his poem in that way. Here, his poem comes under the category of applied art, since the poet has some other motive than to delight us with his pure experiences.

Kūṭalūr Kiḻār makes a reference to Marantai[3]. Kallāṭaṉār makes mention of Toṇṭaiyar who is rich in chariots.[4] The poet Kaḷḷilāttiraiyaṉ compares the beauty of the prostitute with Mūtūr, belonging to Āti Arumaṉ.[5] This shows the

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1. வளங்கெழு சோழர் உறந்தைப் பெருந்துறை—Kuṟu : 116.
2. Kuṟu : 138.
3. Ibid : 166.
4. Ibid : 260.
5. ஆதியருமன் மூதூரன்ன சேயிழை—Kuṟu : 293.

partiality of the poet towards 'Mūtūr' belonging to his patron Āti Aruman.

In poem No. 75 of the Kuruntokai collection Paṭumarattu Mōcikīraṉār gives an important historical information. When the heroine hears the happy news of the return of her hero to the home through a bard, she at once jumps up in her over enthusiasm and merrily exclaims to the bard that he will get as a reward the prosperous city of Pataliputra on the banks of the River Son where the white-tusked elephants bathe.[1]

Here there is no necessity for the poet to describe the prosperity of the city of Pataliputra since it is neither his native place nor situated in his native land. He might have heatd from others about the richness of the city or perhaps it might have been well Known to many of the people in Tamilnad that the city was rich in gold. Hence it would have been interesting to the readers of his age to appreciate the beauty of the poem.

Ammūvaṉ who is an exponent of 'neytal tiṇai' makes a passing reference to the minor feudatory Pūḻiyar.[2]

Miḷaikkantaṉ is the author of a beautiful poem in Kuṟuntokai. He mentions that the water in the 'cuṉai' (pool) of the Paṟampu hills belonging to Pāri, will be very cool in the month of Tai. He refers to this in an instance when the lady-companion brings out the infidelity of the hero who had forgotten his ardent love to her.[3]

Likewise, the poetess Kākkaipāṭiṉiyār Nacceḷḷaiyār has a partiality for the ghee obtained by the cowherds from the forest belonging to Naḷḷi and the paddy from the Tondi region.[4]

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1. Kuṟu : 75.
2. Ibid : 163.
3. Ibid : 196.
4. Ibid : 210.

All these things are to be taken to prove that some of the poems found in Kuṟuntokai, have partially, if not totally, contain some fragments of 'applied literature'.

Though we have no direct information of any biographical interest in the poem of Ātimanti in Kuṟuntokai,[1] somehow or other, the story relating to her life has come to be known to us, just as we see in another poem in Kuṟuntokai, the indirect evidence of a biographical note on the poetess Veḷḷivītiyār.[2] The second poem of Kuṟuntokai is from the pen of Iṟaiyaṉār. Although nothing could be found in the poem as a trace of history or of a legend, somehow or other a story or a legend was invented and set on the poem.

The reasons may be given to explain the attitude of the poets who introduced some historical evidences in their poems. First, they may not have any definite purpose in employing such historical references or allusions in their poems, may be they simply wanted to record what they have seen and heard in their life. Secondly, they might have introduced them to express their sense of gratitude to the kings and chieftains who patronised them and whom they had known well.[3] A desire to immortalise in poetry the glory of their native place may also be a reason in the case of some poems. Thirdly, a mixture of both the reasons just referred to, may be responsible for the composition of such poems. The poet might have had a long association with patrons and with their places. For example, Kapilar lived in close contact with Pāri and fully knew the entire region of the paṟampu hills. Therefore, he is the poet par-excellence in treating 'kuṟiñcit-tiṇai'. The description of Kuṟiñci with all its splendour and glory is praiseworthy. By the magic wand of imagination he beautifully describes the natural settings that are fit for 'kuṟiñci' form of love.

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1. Kuṟu : 31.
2. Ibid : 130.
3. Thaninayagam, Xavier, Nature in Ancient Tamil poetry, pp. 62-63.

The solitary reaper of the highlands and the daffodils of the Lakeside are long remembered by wordsworth who composed poems on them in a mood of recollection. Tennyson wrote the 'Elegy' on the death of his bosom friend Arthur Hallam seventeen years after his death. Till then the feelings slowly and steadily from his heart and took shape one day in an excellent elegy.

Judging the merits of the poets on this ground, Dr. M. Arokiasawmi writes about the Kuṟuntokai poets thus: "Besides the qualities they have, to which reference was made above, it can never be said that the poets gathered in that collection have any axe to grind, any ulterior motive to serve, in all the descriptions they give."[1]

Of all the poems in the Kuruntokai collectoin, we have noticed the elements of 'applied art' in thirty one poems only. Even in these poems only two or three lines alone contain some such little fragments of history. The rest of the poems deserve to be called 'pure literature' where the poet has no other ulterior motive except to transmit his own emotions to his readers and give them delight.

With the passage of time, roughly two thousand years, these poems appeal to us as 'pure literature' e.g., Kaliṅkattup-paraṇi wherein the historical and local references have lost their associations and significances. We read it more for its aesthetic appeal than to know the history of the times.

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1. Journal of the Madras University, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, Jan. 1961.

XI. Figures of Speech in Kuruntokai - Similes, Metaphor, etc.

Tolkāppiyaṉār does not differentiate between simile and metaphor. In the third part of his work on Grammar, poruḷatikāram, he recognises only one figure of speech namely 'UVAMAM'. In this respect he agrees with Appaiya Dikshitar who writes in his chitramimamsa that the other figures of speech are but the various modes of expressing this one great UVAMAM.[1]

During the Pallava period, two great scholars Dandhin and Bharavi, enjoyed the patronage of the king, Nandivarman III who is described as 'the victor of tellaru'. Dandin translated the "alankaras" or the figurative way of speech, or the ornate style of expression, into Tamill language and the work is rightly called by the name 'Dandialankaram'. He classified figures of speech or alankaras in a manner similar to the alankaras that are found in Sanskrit Grammar. He speaks of many kinds of similes in his work. In fact, he classifies the similes into thirtyfive categories. On the contrary the ancient Tamil grammarian Tolkāppiyaṉār classifies the 'uvama' or simile into four kinds only. The points of similarity are found in action, result, form and colour.[2] These points of comparison can occur separately or together or in various other combinations.

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1. Chitramimamsa, p. 2.
2. 'வினைபயன் மெய் உரு என்ற நான்கே
வகைபெற வந்த உவமத் தோற்றம்'—Tol : 1222.

Pērāciriyar, the commentator of Poruḷatikāram in Tolkāppiyam stresses the significance and importance of 'uvamai', and says that all other beauties or alankaras are the offsprings from 'uvamai' or simile alone.[1] Prof. Suryanarayana Sastriar also observes that all other alankaras have their origin in 'uvamai' alone.[2] Our Resaissance poet-patriot Subramania Bharatiyar holds a similar view in his article on 'art'.[3]

Similes consist of upamanas and upameyas and they are considered to be of a kind of ornate parts of literary expression, and have been used largely by the Sangam poets. "The similes or the metaphors come in for bringing out the significance of the idea of poetry; the other figures are but its varied forms". Introducing suitable similes and metaphors in their poems is one of the characteristics features of the great poets of all ages and climes. While both these are common in all poetry and at all times, poets have seen and handled nature only in the metaphorical way.[4]

The simile is the simplest device by which we are able to bring two objects together for comparison. It helps up to establish an enduring relationship between them. Though one or both of the objects thus brought together may cease to exist, the link with which the simile has bound them together will not perish; it will subsist for ever. It creates ideas which are everlasting, educative and illuminating.

The simile either introduces an unknown object to us or points out the latent quality or qualities of objects already known to us. These two are its basic or primary functions. When the simile seeks to introduce an unknown object to us, then it has recourse to either comparing or contrasting it

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1. Comm. Tol : Uvamaiyal, 37.
2. Tamiḻ moḻiyiṉ varalāṟu, pp. 61-62.
3. Essays, Kalaikaḷ, Mālai, (1).
4. Hudson, W.H., An introduction to the study of literature, p. 323.

with the one, we know already. It either points out the similarities which subsist between them or enumerates their dissimilarities. It furnishes us with the necessary details which will enable us to easily identify the object introduced when we happen to come across it.

The importance of the simile or metaphor lies in being the only way in which the poet can make us understand his poetic vision. The great poets like Homer, Dante, Milton, Valmiki, Kambar and our modern poet Bharatiyar are all masters in this respect. 'Poetry is not a thing imitated nature; but it is a thing imitated the conception of nature'.[1] Hence the poets because of the depth of their insight into wordly things, are able to use appropriate similes in their works.

There are hundred and seventy four similes in Kuṟuntokai. They are all of various kinds.

A few examples are given here to explain the significance, of the four kinds of comparions of Tolkāppiyaṉār.

The simile discloses a similarity which subsists between dissimilars. This is considered to be the supreme function of a simile. Although we claim a familiarity with both the objects brought together by a simile, we are unaware of the common qualities which bind them. It is curious that our understanding of many things, objects and experiences increase in intensity because of the similes.

Matters of comparison of action (Viṉai Uvamam)

Action or movement or vibration or agitation, must necessarily involve the use of energy for its action; and this inevitable leads to dissipation of a quantity of energy.

The stream flowing from a mountain dashing against the rocks resembles a cobra crawling on the surface of the

1. Abercrombie, L. Principles of Literary criticism p. 134.

earth.[1] The flow of stream and torrents and the sound that they make have a special appeal to the poet. Nakkīrar takes keen interest in painting pictures of the mountainous region. To his ears, the huge whitefoamed waterfall rushing down from a mountain sounds like the rhythm of experienced dancers.[2] Another poet enjoys the music of the stream flowing from a steep mountain and compares it to that of the sound of the drum called 'mulavu' when it is beaten with a stick.[3] The sudden turns and twists of the mountain stream are again compared to the movements of the snake on the ground.[4]

The sound of the waves of the sea that dash against the tiny pores under the root of the 'ñāl̤al' flowers the crabs are found, is compared to the sound of the 'muracu'.[5] The sound of the waves dashing against the soft sand-bed on the shore where the crabs have drawn the line with their sharp nails is denoted by an epithet 'l̤l̤umeṉa'.[6]

When the violent wind blows in an arid tract of land, the jingling of the seeds of vākai sound like the drum-beats in accompaniment to a rope-dance.[7]

The lizard calls its mate with its chsracteristic 'ticks' while sitting on the branch of a Kal̤l̤i tree in an arid desert and the sound it raises is rightly compared by the poet to the sound made by the hunter, sharpening his arrows on the edges of his own nails.[8]

The poet compares the sudden rise and the bending of the bamboo to the fishing-rod that rises and falls when the fish is caught. An elephant which bends a bamboo, hears

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1. Kuṟu : 134.
2. Ibid : 78.
3. Ibid : 365.
4. Ibid ; 134.
5. Ibid : 365.
6. Ibid : 328, 351.
7. Ibid : 7.
8. Ibid : 16.

the noise of the stone shot from the sling of the hunter, watching the millet fields, runs away frightened and leaves the bamboo.[1] The tossing of the bamboo from one side to the other when the elephant runs away resembles the fishing-rod. This is an apt simile denoting 'action'.

The poet compares the tall bamboos soaring high towards the sky to the galloping of a horse let loose in great haste and speed.[2] This comparison between the action of the bamboo and the horse is so apt and arresting and the very phrase 'viṭṭa kutirai' in the poem came to denote the name of the poet since the poet's original name had been forgotten.

The sudden jumping of a monkey while eating a jack-fruit, over a bamboo tree to escape from the arrow of the mountaineer, resembles the galloping of a horse in a battle-field.[3]

Matters of comparison of result : (Payaṉ Uvaman)

Veḷḷivītiyār, a famous poetess of the Sangam age uses an apt simile when she compares the numerous couples engaged in secret-courtship and elopement, to the countless stars over the dark broad sky.[4]

The tender love between the couple which has not touched them 'deeply' to end in physical consummation of their love, is compared to an old cow rubbing its side on the tender grass on a meadow.[5]

The softness and the beauty of a heroine is compared to the soft tender leaves that look fresh after [6] showers. And the yellow spots on the skin of a lady which are aptly

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1. Kuṟu : 54.
2. Ibid : 74.
3. Ibid : 385.
4. Ibid : 44.
5. Ibid : 204.
6. Ibid ; 222.

compared to enhance her beauty by a poet to the pollen of the lotus that grows in deep-waters.[1]

Matters of comparison of form : (Mey Uvamam)

The broad leaves of the 'cēmpu' on a hill is compared to the ears of an elephant.[2] The forked-leaves of the 'aṭumpu'- resembles the cloven feet of the deer and the lustrous flowers of the 'aṭumpu' apper like gems artistically strewn from a garland.[3] The flowers of 'avarai' resemble the beaks of parrots.[4]

The narrow-mouthed pool (cuṉai) is compared to a finely shaped honey jar.[5] Blackgram is compared to the feet of the bird called 'pūḻ' or 'kuṟumpūḻ'.[6] A neem fruit in the curved beak of a parrot, appears like a gold coin between the sharp nails of a goldsmith who is making up a new jewel by stringing them into a lace.[7]

The long-stalked 'vākai' bloom appears like the plumed crest of a pea-cock.[8] The feet of the migrating bird are compared to the trunk of the millet-corn.[9] The 'māṇai' creeper beside a block of stone appears like a creeper grown on the back of an elephant sleeping close to the rock.[10]

Kōpperuñcōḻaṉ, 'poet-king' compares the forehead of a lady adorned by the black tresses of hair to the crescent moon of the eighth-day, above the dark, broad, blue sea.[11] The foot-prints of an elephant in the waterless tract give the

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1. Kuṟu : 300.
2. Ibid : 76.
3. Ibid : 80, 243.
4. Ibid : 270.
5. Ibid : 193.
6. Ibid : 68.
7. Ibid : 67.
8. Ibid: 347.
9. Ibid : 25.
10. Ibid : 36.
11. Ibid : 129.

appearance of the gardenbeds of the sugarcane fields.[1] This is a matter of comparison of 'form' drawn from two objects seen in nature.

The crop of the 'tiṉai' ear appears to a poet as the trunk of a female elephant.[2] The green leaves of the coastal region are rightly compared to the ears of an elephant by Kapilar.[3] The large flat rocks on the hills are like the hard blocks of iron in a blacksmith's forge and the small pools in the mountain are like the holes in a mole-hill[4]. This is really a rare simile to be found and this shows the acute sense of keen observation possessed by the Sangam poets.

Matters of comparison of colour : (Uru Uvamam)

The short-winged bee that hums and sucks the honey from the golden pollen of 'kāntaḷ' flowers is compared to a gem thrown out by a snake.[5] The pea-cock sitting on the top-most branch of the 'vēṅkai' tree in full blossom resembles the girl who is plucking the 'vēṅkai' flowers to adorn her tresses.[6] These are matters of-comparison of 'colour'.

Ammūvaṉār, the poet PAR EXCELLENCE in portraying the coastal region, compares the rich golden pollen shed from 'muṇṭakam' flowers to the tiny teeth of a squirrel; while the big ocean glitters like a sapphire.[7] Both these pictures are taken to indicate comparison of 'colour'.

The tiny 'ñāḻal' flower is aptly compared to a white-mustard.[8]

The flowers of the 'nocci' are sapphire like in colour. The nocci leaves are in a knot of three, and they are rightly

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1. Kuṟu: 262.
2. Ibid : 360.
3. Ibid : 246.
4. Ibid : 12.
5. Ibid : 239.
6. Ibid : 26.
7. Ibid : 49.
8. Ibid : 50.

compared to the feet of the peacock.[1] The first comparison is taken for comparison of 'colour', and the latter for comparison of 'form'.

Both these comparisons show the range of observation of these poets and also their capacity to bring together objects which have close resemblance.

The white root of the 'iṟṟi' resembles a stream flowing from a hill.[2] The cone-shaped 'pātiri' flowers of the summer season are compared to the paleness of a girl adorned with jewels.[3] The 'mullai' buds appear like the white teeth of the wild-cat.[4]

The fire-like 'kāntaḷ' flowers resemble the elephant stained with blood as a result of the fight with its enemy, the tiger.[5] The red end-portion of a 'blackgram' resembles the 'kāṭai' or 'kuṟumpūḷ' bird, red in colour.[6] The red beak of the crame is compared to the red petals of the red petals of 'kavir'.[7]

The red-head of the 'aṉṟil' bird is aptly compared to a red flame.[8] The shining black feathers of the cuckoo-bird touched with the golden-pollen of mango blossoms look like the black touch-stone with the gold dust spread on it.[9]

The white-foamed stream flowing from the mountain is compared to the skin sloughed off by a cobra.[10] Again the

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1. Kuṟu : 138.
2. Ibid : 106.
3. Ibid : 147.
4. Ibid : 240.
5. Ibid : 284.
6. Ibid : 35.
7. Ibid : 103.
8. Ibid : 160.
9. Ibid : 192.
10. Ibid : 235.

mountain stream is drawn in a picture of comparison to the moon rising above the vast blue sky.[1] Further the blue colour of the sea is sapphire like in colour and the vast expanse of water therein is also referred to.[2]

In late-winter, the dew drops fall in the early house of the morning like the pearls dropping down from the thread of a lace which has snapped.[3] The black rock whereon the 'vēṅkai' flowers have fallen and have spread appears bright and clear and resembles a tiger-cub in a forest seen in the bright moonlight.[4]

The newly blossomed 'vākai' appears like the plumed crest of a peacock.[5] The blossomed 'puṅku' appears like burnt rice spread on white sand.[6]

In one stanza we observe a beautiful simile where the north wind is said to toss the 'karuviḷai' flowers that look like the round bright spots in the peacock's plumage.[6] In another stanza the peacock, sitting beautifully on the 'vēṅkai' tree with no buds to blossom, is stated to look like the ladies who are plucking the 'vēṅkai' flowers.[7]

The very colour of the crane is compared with 'āmpal' flowers blossoming in winter.[8] In turn the 'āmpal' flowers which close all their petals are appropriately compared to the back of the crane with its wings closed.[9] The bright white stream flowing from the high mountain is compared to the rising moon seen above the ocean.[10]

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1. Kuṟu : 49.
2. Ibid : 104.
3. Ibid : 47.
4. Ibid : 347.
5. Ibid : 53.
6. Ibid : 110.
7. Ibid: 138.
8. Ibid: 117.
9. Ibid : 122.
10. Ibid : 315.

The common 'neruñci' that blossome first and then yields thorns does not escape the keen observation of the artist and is painted in an appropriate context.[1] The golden coloured 'koṉṟai' flowers falling into a pit on the way give an appearance of a box of gold coins with its lid wide open.[2] This is an attractive simile drawn by the highly imaginative poet, Pēyaṉ.

The folded green leaf of the sugarcane resembles the pregnant whipsnake in point of colour.[3] The cuckoo besmeared with the golden pollen of flowers resembles the touchstone with sfreaks of gold on it.[4]

Colour when it is blended with a beautiful form to match, arrests our attention and creates an irressistible charm.

We are drawn to it by the witchcraft and wonder as particles of iron to a piece of magnet.[5]

Matters of comparison of both form and colour

For example, the folded feathers of the house-sparrow resemble the withered 'āmpāl' flowers.[6] The crest of the domestic cock looks like the lustrous red 'tōṉṟi' flowers gathered in a-bunch.[7] These are matters of comparison of both 'form and colour'.

The just-blossoming sugarcane flower which is cone-shaped in 'form' and white in 'colour' is compared to the white pregnant whipsnake.[8] The 'aṭumpu' is said to have forked-leaves like the hoofs of the deer and its flowers resemble small bells in shape.[9]

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1. Kuṟu: 202.
2. Ibid : 233.
3. Ibid : 35.
4. Ibid : 192.
5. 'காந்தமீமிசை வீழு மிரும்பினைப் போல்'— Kuyil : IX ; 115.
6. Ibid : 46.
7. Ibid : 107.
8. Ibid : 35.
9. Ibid : 243.

Matters of comparison of both form and result :

A huge piece of rock full of dust over it when washed well by the fresh showers reminds the poet of the washed elephant.[1]

Matters of comparison of both action and colour :

The 'mullai' flowers blossomed in the midst of the harvested millet-corn appear like the wild cats laughing and showing their teeth.[2]

Paraṇar's interest in depicting 'action and colour' in his similes is revealed when he compares the changes in the complexion of a heroine, the sudden glow and paleness, in response to the presence or absence of her lover, to the duck-weed in a village pond that separates itself with a gentle touch of hand and reunites itself when the hand is taken off.[3]

Matters of comparison of both form and action

The broad leaves of the 'cēmpu' on a mountain, waving in the wind, is compared to the ceaseless waving of the ears of the elephants.[4] The 'neytal' blooms that get under the tides of the dark back-waters look like the eyes of the women dipping into and rising above the surface of the water while bathing in a tank.[5]

When the east wind blows, the 'kāntaḷ' flowers close their petals and scatter their lustrous red petals on the rocks and they resemble the cobra that spreads the hood.[6]

The chariot moves fast as the mountion stream and its bright wheel appears like the crescent moon and while on its way it cuts off the green crops like a meteor in the sky.[7]

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1. Kuṟu : 13.
2. Ibid : 220.
3. Ibid : 399.
4. Ibid : 76.
5. Ibid : 9
6. Ibid : 185.
7. Ibid : 189.

'Action and form' as well as 'colour' of the objects found in nature have their appeal to the poet. For instance, Kuṟiyaṉār, describes the crab that tries to escape from the crane which looks like an 'āmpal' flower in winter and runs fast to its hole in the roots of the 'kaṉtal'. Its rapid movement is rightly compared by the poet to that of an ox that breaks off the rope with which it is tied by the cowherd and makes a clean escape from the fold.[1]

Matters of Comparison of form, Colour and Action

The waving of the white aerial roots of the 'irri' tree, beside a rock resemble the stream flowing from a mountain.[2] The drops of the dew are alike in colour and form with the pearls that drop from a garland that has snapped.[3] The sand-dune appears like a mountain.[4] The grove of puṉṉai trees with black branches that give cool shade like condensed darkness on the white sand looks like heaped-up moonlight.[5] The waves of the sea which dash against the shore sound like a drum and also cause damage to the small burrows where the crabs live.[6]

"Indeed only a poet can see similarities and draw comparisons because only a poet has the gift to see the likeness in two things which on the surface are quite different."[7] Sangam poets instead of comparing two things, draw a complete picture in a comparison with the appropriate setting. There is a complete picture presented to us and when we enjoy the beauty of the picture, we are spell-bound. Let us examine some of the examples from Kuṟuntokai.

Due to the shortage or lack of rain for a very long period the poet says that the rugged rocks covered with dust

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1. Kuṟu : 117.
2. Ibid : 106.
3. Ibid : 104.
4. Ibid : 345.
5. Ibid : 123.
6. Ibid : 328.
7. Lyon, P.B.H., The discovery of Poetry, p. 167.

and mud are like the elephants covered with dust all over the body.[1] In another poem, Kapilar dwells on the same theme and draws a comparison between the rugged rocks washed clean by good showers, and the elephants washed clean, of the dust on their bodies.[2]

Nakkaṇṇaiyār, is a poetess interested in the changing seasons of the year. She compares the slow movement of the rainy clouds in the wintersky to the slow walking of a pregnant woman.[3] This kind of comparison is rare in Sangam poetry.

When darkness slowly sets in and envelops a mountain with its patches, it appears like a ship sinking gradually and disappearing into the sea.[4]

A heroine compares herself to the 'neruñci' flowers and her hero to the sun. As the 'neruñci' flowers are always leaning their heads towards the sun, so too, the heroine desires to be ever beside her hero without any separation.[5]

The simile conjures up mental images and makes us feel that the unknowable is not really so, but is only unknown. It also helps us to know the unknown through the medium of the known.

There is another class of similes in Kuṟuntokai. It is in comparing the inward feelings of a heroine to those feelings with which nature itself responds to human emotions.

The villagers engaged in gossip against the lovers are blamed for their undesirable behaviour. Their talk is like the fibres-intricately woven without any pattern or order in the nest of the weaver-bird built in the tall palmyra tree.[6]

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1. Kuṟu : 279.
2. Ibid : 13.
3. Ibid : 287.
4. Ibid : 240.
5. Ibid : 315
6. Ibid : 374.

The rare appearance of the heroine before the hero during the period of clandestine courtship is compared by a poetess to that of a crescent-moon in the sky.[1] The heroine in separation pines and fades away gradually like the spray that gets scattered in particles when the wave dashes against a mighty rock.[2] The lady-companion blames the hero for causing anxiety and despair to the heroine during his secret courtship and compares his behaviour to the young elephant that first amused the boys in the village and later on played havoc when it devoured the 'tiṉai' crops in the fields.[3]

On one occasion when the heroine had to criticise the behaviour of the hero, she extols her companion and explains the behaviour of the hero saying that the hero who had been kind all along, had now become the root, cause of all her sufferings, just as the 'neruñci' that first yields attractive blooms and then throws out thorns.[4]

The lady-companion asks the hero who has just returned from a distant country after accomplishing his duty, whether he-remembered them during his stay in the far-off country, the hero replied that his passion for the heroine was like a flood which flowed once in massive measure to the height of a branch of a tall tree and then subsided to flow even as a silent stream wherein one could drink easily.[5]

It is said that the tender care and affection of the mother turtle to its young ones, is similer to the love of the hero for his lady.[6] And in turn, the affectionate look of the heroine at her lover is compared to the boundless affection shown by the calf towards its mother.[7]

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1. Kuṟu : 178.
2. Ibid : 290.
3. Ibid : 394.
4. Ibid : 202.
5. Ibid : 99.
6. Ibid : 152.
7. Ibid : 132.

The disappointment and despair of the heroine is aptly compared to the sorrowful plight of the calf when the cow had not returned to its shed in the evening.[1] Further the soft, tender delicate soul of the lady-love sustains her great love for the hero just as the slender branches of the jack tree bearvery big fruits.[2]

The hero and the heroine, think and feel alike. The heroine tells her companion that she leans on her lover like the 'neruñci' blooms which always lean towards the sun and droop down their heads when the sun sets in the evening.[3] The inseparable union of lovers is campared to the rain-water that is intermingled with the red soil and turns red in colour.[4]

Again, the inseparable union of lovers is compared to the life of the 'makaṉṟil' the water-birds which do not endure the separation even for a short while when they swim from one flower to another separately.[5]

The solitary, and desperate condition of the heroine is compared to the desolate threshold of a house in a small village where the timid squirrel freely frisks about, without any fear, as there is none to scare it away. The villagers have gone to a festival. The village folk are happy during their festivals and the lady's sorrow in the absence of her lover grows to a considerable extent.[6]

The changing moods and behaviour of men are explained with the help of similes drawn from the changes seen in nature. For example: The bees hum over the 'kāntaḷ' but and try to go far inside to suck the honey therein and the but

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1. Kuru : 64.
2. 'சிறு கோட்டுப் பெரும்பழந் தூங்கி யாங்கிவள்
   உயிர்தவச் சிறிது காமமோ பெரிதே'—Kuṟu : 18.
3. Ibid : 315.
4. Ibid : 40.
5. Ibid : 57.
6. Ibid : 41.

slowly opens and unlocks its fragrance like the grateful men who welcome with pleasure the noblemen with whom they have made friends.[1]

When parted from her hero, a heroine's sufferings are limitless. She compares her condition of lonliness and pining in grief and wasting hereself away to the spray in a current which dashes an a rock and gradually breaks into particles and disappears.[2]

A heroine expresses her feelings in the absence of her lover. She compares her destitute plight to the fighting of the cocks of their own accord on a heap of grain with none to induce them to fight or stop them from fighting.[3]

Group Similes, Similes in Contrast

Instead of comparing two different things in a simile, there is another way of comparison of two objects which are of the same kind or category but opposed in nature or quality. That kind of simile adds beauty to poetry.

For example, the hero compares the tenderness of the lady-love to that of the softness of the water and his strength or valour to that of the fire. He says further that just like the tender water extinguishes the fire so also his strength is now reduced to the-minimum by the tender and soft nature of his lady-love.[4]

There is another matter of comparison of contrast in colour to be seen in Kuṟuntokai.

COLOUR CONTRAST

The dark blue sea and the dark grove which are side by side on the sea-coast present the appearance of the colour

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1. Kuṟu : 265.
2. Ibid : 290.
3. Ibid : 305.
4. 'நீரோ ரன்ன சாயல்
   நீயோ ரன்னவென் னுரவித் தன்றே'—Kuṟn : 95.

contrast of the white rays of the moonlight in the surface and the ring of darkness that exists side by side in the thickly grown dark grove.[1]

An interesting picture is very artfully drawn by another poet. He compares the white sand-dune to a clump of rays of the moonlight while the dark shady branches of the 'punnai' trees, thickly grown close to the sea-shore envelobing in darkness the area around them.[2] Hence there exist brightness of the sand-dunes and the blackness of the dark 'punnai' groves side by side and this scene arrests the imagination of the poet and his picture in the poem leaves a vivid impression on the reader's mind.

A simile, when it is used to explain an unknown thing through the known, (as it is usually done; but some poets reverse the order in which the tone of the poem assumes a romantic vein) helps us to have knowledge of the unknown object, experience, or realisation as the case may be. In short, it is not merely a decorative element in a piece of literary work, but a necessary figure of speech, to communicate and explain a new and uncommon object or experience.

Further it may also serve as a pointer to something remote, beyond and incomprehensible.

Metaphor

'Metaphor is nothing but compressed simile'.[3] It is one of the figures of speech in which the upameyam or the thing compared is represented as identical with the upamanam or the object of comparison.[4] "Metaphor is the supreme agent by which disperate and hitherto unconnected things are brought together in poetry for the sake of the effects upon

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1. நிலவும் இருளும் போலப் புலவுத்திரைக்
   கடலும் கானலும் தோன்றும்—Kuṟu : 81.
2. Kuṟu : 123.
3. Ridley, M.R., Poetry and the ordinary Reader, p. 64.
4. Tamil lexicon, Vol. I, p. 449.

attitude and impulse which spring from their collocation and from the combinations which the mind then establishes between them."[1]

Rupaka or metaphor is according to Tolkāppiyaṉār, "Poruḷē uvamam ceytal"[2] as interpreted by Iḷampūraṇar.[3]

In Kuṟuntokai we have a poet named after the beautiful metaphor that he employed in one of his poems.

The heroine anxiously waits for the return of the hero one evening in early winter. She suffers very much. She worries herself greatly during those few hours of utter loneliness and intense grief. She considers that it is like swimming across a vast stretch of water at the risk of her life. Her sorrow is boundless when she thinks that such a solitary evening will however pass on before a more terrible solitary midnight will come. In her imagination the evening is like a river with banks to make it possible for one to swim through it to reach the other side safely but the night is a vast stretch of water spreading everywhere with no banks whatsoever. So she regards that no other comfort is open to her for survival from this grief and anxiety.[4]

The metaphor, picturing the night as the great flood is employed with such artifice and propriety that the poet came to be called after the metaphor itself. 'Kaṅkul' means 'night'; and 'veḷḷam' means 'flood' and the poet is called as Kaṅkulveḷḷattār.

Uḷḷuṟai Uvamam

Tolkāppiyaṉār states in 'Akattiṇai Iyal' that there are two kinds of similes, viz., uḷḷṟai-uvamam and ēṉai-uvamam.[5]

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1. Richards, I. A., Principles of Literary criticism, p. 239.
2. 'பொருளே உவமம் செய்தனர்'—Tol : 1230.
3. Tol. 230. 1Iḷam.
4. Kuṟu : 387.
5. உள்ளுறை யுவமம் ஏனை யுவமமெனத்
தள்ளா தாகும் திணையுணர் வகையே—Tol : 992.

When the poet does not propose to convey directly the feelings of a hero or a heroine, he tries to present them through the employment of suggestive comparisons as would help the readers to infer from the indirect suggestion. This is called 'uḷḷuṟai-uvamam' which is a comparison in explicit form.

In the above kind of comparison all the karupporuḷ except the deity of the particular region appear and they cannote various things by implication.[1]

In 'uḷḷuṟai uvamam', we find adequate words, to convey to the readers the intention of the poet who tries to draw a comparison of implied objects with explicit objects, comparison drawn here is not from the fundamental basis of action, result, form or colour, but on the basis of environment introduced by the poet.[2]

The other kind of 'uvamam' called 'ēṉai uvamam' does not require any great effort on the part of the reader to understand the sense conveyed by the poet. The words or phrases used by the poet clearly convey the meaning.[3]

Therefore 'uḷḷuṟai uvamam' is an indirect suggestion by which an author without explicitly stating some feelings or experiences tries to present them through the skillful employment of excellent comparisons which help us to discern his personal feeling or experience or thought.[4]

The 'kāṭaṟparattai' or the prostitute when she comes to know that the lady-love speaks about her in derogatory terms, says so as to be heard by the lady-love's adherents as follows :

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1. உள்ளுறை தெய்வ மொழிந்ததை நிலனெனக்
   கொள்ளு மென்ப குறியுணர்ந் தோரே—Ibid : 993
2. உள்ளுறுத் திதனொ டொத்துப் பொருள் முடிகென
   உள்ளுறுத் துரைப்பதே, யுள்ளுறை யுவமம்—Ibid : 994.
3. ஏனை யுவமம் தாலுணர் வகைத்தே—Tol : 959.
4. Tamil Lexicon. part II, p. 474.

"The hero who is the lord of the agricultural region, where the vāḷai fish in the ponds eats the ripe fruits of the mango that drop from the mango tree which stands adjoining the pond in the midst of the wet-fields, after enticing me by his nice and sweet words, goes back to his house and behaves according to the command of his wife who is the mother of his male-child just like the reflected image of a mirror which raises or lowers its hands and legs as often as those who stand before it raise or lower them."[1]

Iṟaicci

Tolkāppiyam has sound suggestions about Dhvani-iṟaicci-long before the Dhvani school had its rise. "Dhvani rightly regarded as the ultimate source of poetic appeal and with it predominant position of Rasa among the elements that enter into the make-up of poetry becomes finally established."[2] This is the view expressed by a Sanskrit scholar regarding the significance and function of Dhvani.

"Iṟaicci is suggestive meaning conveyed indirectly by reference to the distinctive features of the tract of land."[3]

Iṟaiccipporuḷ is that which appears apart from the uripporuḷ specified for each of the five regions and it often comes as an adjunct to or the qualifying word for the town, village or the particular division.[4]

Iṟaicci has been classified as an anamoly because it is infered from reading a phrase or an object.[5] In such poems the hero is not be mentioned specifically, and 'Iṟaicci' is

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1. கழனி மாத்து விளைந்துகு தீம்பழம்
பழன வாளைக் கதூஉம் ஊரன்
எம்மிற் பெருமொழி கூறித் தம்மில்
கையும் காலும் தூக்கத் தூக்கும்
ஆடிப் பாவை போல
மேவன செய்யுந்தன் புதல்வன் தாய்க்கே—Kuṟu :8.
2. Sankaran, A., Some aspects of literary criticism in Sanskrit, p. 50.
3. Tamil lexicon, Vol.I, Part II, p. 366.
4. Varadaraja Iyer, V. S. Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Vol. I, Part II, page : 510.
5. 'இறைச்சி தானே பொருட்புறத் ததுவே'—Tol : 1175.

present only when the heroine or the lady-companion comments on the cruelty of the hero. It is allied with the objects of environment.

The objects of environment are not only useful in bringing out the significance of other objects, and the critical reader will derive a special meaning even in them. 'Uḷḷuṟai uvamam' is identical with 'Iṟaicci', in some respects only.

"kaṉṟu payamulai mānta muṉṟil
tiṉaipiti uṉṉum peruṅkal nāṭa
keṭṭitai tuvanta utavik kaṭṭil
viṟuperṟu maṟanta maṉṉaṉ pōḻa
naṉṟu maṟantaṉai yāyiṉ meṉcirk
kalimayiṟ kalāvat taṉṉa ivaḷ
olimeṉ kūntal uriyavāl niṉakkē"[1]

These words are spoken by the lady-companion to the hero when he intends to go in order to earn more to a distant country, and postpones the wedding with the lady-love to a later period.

The lady-companion speaks to the hero as follows:

"Dear hero, please accept the hand of the lady-love in open wedding without forgetting the help rendered by us in fulfilling your desire all these days. O lord of the lafty hills! where the female elephant freely grazes the millet-fields, situated in front of the houue while its young ones suckle its udder teeming with milk".

The innermeaning of this stanza is as follows:

Just as the female elephant grazes in the millet-fields and fatiens itself to have enough milk to feed its young ones, so also it is the duty of fhe hero to amass wealth to enjoy the pleasures of life. Yet he should never forget to wed his lady-love early.

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1. Kuṟu : 225.

The words 'mulai mānta' suggest the meaning 'contemplating upon duty without any hindrance'.

The above sutra further throws some light upon this topic. There is some other meaning that can be traced from the-'Iṟaiccipporuḷ'. The person endowed with a sense of discrimination will see the suggestion in 'Iṟaicci'.

Both Iḷampūraṇar and Naccinārkkiniyar quote the following poem to illustrate the 'Iṟaiccipporuḷ'.

"oṉṟē ṉallaṉeṉ oṉṟuvaṉ kuṉṟattup
porukaḷiṟu mititta neṟitaḷ vēṅkai
kuṟavar makaḷir kūntaṟ peymmār
niṉṟukoya malaru nāṭaṉoṭu
oṉṟēṉ tōḷi yoṉṟi nāṉē".[1]

This is an occasion where the lady-love speaks to her companion; she is very much disressed on hearing the news of the intended departure of the hero to a distant land to amass wealth. Their marriage is postponed. But the lady-companion asks her to be patient and to endure the burden of the separation from her lover.

The text of the lady-love's speech runs as follows:

"My dear companion! I am not one who does not know the real nature of the vero but I am surely united with him in full. I will not identify myself with the lord of the place, where the 'vēṅkai' trees, which have their dranches broken on account of the fights of the male elephants with one another in the slope of the hill and that 'vēṅkai' tree now appears full of flowers and the trouble of the hunters' girls of that region climbing over the tree to pluck the blossomed flowers to adorn their tresses, has been avoided and made easy for them".

The purport of this stanza is that she feels restless because she fears that somebody other than her own hero may seek her hand in marriage with the permission of her

1. Kuṟu : 208.

parents since they have no chance of knowing the love-affair existing between her and the hero. Such delicate situation, she thinks, may be created by the unwarranted delay on the part of the hero in marrying her.

Further, the 'Iṟaicci' is well illustrated in another poem in Kuṟuntokai. It is as follows:

'arumpaṟa malarnta karuṅkāl vēṅkai
mākkeḻu perumciṉai yiruntа tōkai
pūkkoy makaḷiril toṉṟum nāṭaṉ'.[1]

This is a beautiful reference in Kuṟuntokai where the full significance of the 'Iṟaicci' is very well illustrated.

A hero comes to meet his lady-love at night. He does not show any inclination to arrange for an early marriage with her. The delay causes some anxiety and despair to the lady-companion.

One day she indirectly urges the hero to marry her friend sooner. In a skillful manner, she refuses the night-trysts in which he is interested.

She tells the hero that the beautiful female monkey of his hill is not prepared to live after its loving-mate had died due to the mishap that occured while jumping from one tree to another on the hill. She adds that the female monkey takes its young ones which are very innocent and do not even know the art of climbing trees, and leaves them under the care of its kith and kin. Then it commits suicide by falling down from the top of a mountain.

The 'Iṟaiccipporuḷ' or the innermeaning of the stanza is as follows : Just as the female monkey does not wish to continue to live after the early and unexpected death of its loving-mate, so also the lady-love will cease to exist when

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1. Kuṟu : 26.

any misfortune befalls the hero during his night journeys for the clandestine meetings.[1]

'Iṟaiccipporuḷ' is to be found in 54 poems in Kuṟuntokai.[2]

Tolkāppiyaṉār mentions that 'Iṟaicci' occurs is poems in other forms too. The lady-companion skillfully employs some innermeaning through the topics connected with the environment in the poem and tells the heroine of the Poundless love of the hero towards the heroine when she pines away in agony in the absence of her lover, who has gone in the pursuit of wealth to a distant country. This is called 'vaṉpuṟai'[3].

An example will illustrate this po int.

'nacaiperi tuṭaiyar nalkalu ṉalkuvar
piṭipaci kaḷaiyiya peruṅkai vēḷam
meṉciṉai yā-am polikkum
aṉpiṉa tōḷi avarceṉṟa vāṟē'[4]

"O dear maid! my hero is full of love and affection for me; he may shower his affection on me. For, in his journey through the arid tract, he will surely witness the male elephant breaking the tender branches of the 'yā' tree in order to appease the hunge of its loving-mate, the female elephant".

Here, the lady-companion does not utter even a single word directly to console the heroine when she pines away in grief due to the absence of her lover. But she skillfully

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1. கருங்கட் டாக்கலைப் பெரும்பிறி துற்றென
கைம்மை யுய்யாக் காமர் மந்தி
கல்லா வன்பறழ் கிளைமுதற் சேர்த்தி
ஓங்குவரை யடுக்கத்துப் பாய்ந்துயிர் செகுக்கும்
சார னாட நடுநாள்
வாரல் வாழியோ வருந்துதும் யாமே—Kuṟu : 69.
2. Kuṟu : 8, 9, 38, 42, 46, 51, 53, 54, 69, 78,82, 85, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96, 99, 105, 111, 112, 117, 125, 127, 133, 134, 171, 175, 181, 187, 208, 225, 232, 239, 243, 245, 247, 265, 271, 278, 296, 303, 308, 313, 316, 320, 332, 333, 342, 246, 351, 370, 371, 379.

employs some words in her speech to picture the happy a affectionate life of elephants in the arid tract, the lady-companion appeases the heroine through this comparison that her hero is also having of the same love and affection towards her as the male elephant has for its mate.

Thus, the Sangam poets observe the beauties and the impact of the world of nature chiefly through their keen, perspective of the world. The sense of smell, sound and taste occupy a place of prominence in their poems.

They have successfully employed the figures of speech-in particular the simile and the metaphor to convey their profound observations and experiences.

12. The Names of some of Poets: The Significance of the Epithets and the Surnames

The Sangam poems were composed in the remote past perhaps long before the dawn of the Christian era. These poems where there in our country in several places and with several persons. Then perhaps some great patron or king or chieftain wanted that they should be preserved because of the literary worth and for the benefit of posterity. Hence it was that these "tokais" came into existence. As we have already seen, the "tokais" were made up mainly, having the length of the verses as a norm. When the compilers began their work they must have come across many many hurdles. (1) some of the poems had no authors; (2) some of the poems were incomplete and (3) some were hopelessly damaged. So when the great compilers began their unenviable work and had to group them into four hundreds each they must have (a) completed a few incomplete ones (b) added a few from their own poems and (c) perhaps rejected a few that were hopelessly damaged.

And then they had to provide many of the poems with some authorship. In this task they displayed great cleverness. To some poets who had names in the poems, they added surnames culled from the most striking passage of their Writings. Having done this, the compiler found himself on a surer ground about the poems whose authors were not known at all. He simply took out the most striking phrase

or figure of speech in the poem and gave it as the pen-name or pseudonym of the author.

Now we have four hundred and seventy three poets in the 'tokai' and about 2780 verses were composed all by them. The names of many of the authors are not known to us and definitely that of 102 poems. In the case of Kuṟun-tokai, composed by 205 poets, the problem of authorship is relatively easier. We are in the woods only about 10 poems in this collection. In the case of 24 poets of the whole lot, the ingenuity of the compilers have been exercised in a laudable manner. Six of these poets have been given surnames because they made their own names by the special distinction of treating a particular subject in a first-rate manner-

Other 18 poets whose names have been consigned to oblivion have however been made to live before us by the compilers in an excellent way. Five of them have been baptised after some catching phrase occuring in their composition. The remaining 13 poets have been given the names after the attractive similes in their poems.

The first six are kākkai pāṭiṉiyār Nacceḷḷaiyār, Kōvēṅkaip Peruṅkataḻvaṉār, Maṭalpaṭiya Mātaṅkīraṉār, Neytaṟ Kārkkiyār, pālaipāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō and Tumpicērkīraṉār.

The next five who have been named after the catching phrases used by them are Oriṟpiccaiyār, Kaḷḷilāttiraiyaṉār, Kuṟiyiṟaiyār, Pataṭivaikalār and Neṭuveṇṇilaviṉār.

To follow this remarkable way of getting out the difficulty of naming a poet, the compilers must have been great scholars to have pitched upon a single epithet of the poets which flashes a whole array of thoughts on our imagination and fills our hearts with pleasure.

The last batch of 13 poets have come down to us through their own wonderful similes. These similes are not

only apt but are also graphic to deserve, being used for the names of the poets.

"The characteristic of christening poets of the Sangam age after their beautiful expressions of thought in their poems shows how zealously Sangam poets encouraged and appreciated beauty of thought and expression in song".[1]

Commenting on this subject, Prof. P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar observes thus : "A few of them (Poets) are anonymous; perhaps this anonymity is due to the fact that being very old poems, the names of the authors had been forgotten by the time they where included in the anthologies. Moreover such poems are characterised by the fact that sanskrit words do not occur in them. Moreover the customs referred to in them are pure Tamil ones; there is no reference at all to Aryan ideas. Hence they may be taken as relics, all too few, of this period".[2]

Poets Distinguished by their Pictures of Nature

(i) Kākkaipāṭiṉiyār Naccellaiyār :

This poem, 210 in Kuṟuntokai by Naccellaiyār describes the pining love of a lady-love. She is consolted by her lady-companion. This consolation-has been brought in by the poetess in an arrestingmanner–the crow is cawing within the precincts of the house which signifies that the hero will return very soon. This consolation just satisfied the lady-love and in a very short time the hero himself returns.

The hero asked the lady-companion how they were bearing the separation. She replied that it was the cawing of the crow that gave immediate relief from the pangs of separation. Such a crow should be served in seven piates with delicious food, made of rich grown in the Tondi region

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1. Balakrishna mudaliar, R. The Golden anthology of Ancient Tamil Literature, Vol. I, p.92
2. History of the Tamils, P. 162.

mixed with the ghee of cows' of the forest of the 'Naḷḷi' chieftain of the strong chariots. Even such a food to the crow will not compensate sufficiently the relief given.

The poetess has thus sung about the crow which is after all an ordinary bird and by her poetic intuition raised the crow to the level of immortality. It is therefore natural that she should be named after the song about the crow,[1]

(ii) Kōvēṅkaipperuṅkataḷvaṉār :

Poem 134 is by the poet Peruṅkataḷvaṉ. The mountain stream rushing down the slopes flows beside a 'vēṅkai' tree standing all alone on the slope. The grandeur of the tree is enhanced not only by its superb lonliness but also by its enchanting full blooms.

This graphic picture of the 'vēṅkai' tree is so very arresting that the poet has been rightly named after this pen-picture.[2]

(iii) Maṭalpāṭiya Mātaṅkīraṉār :

In poem 182 of Kuṟuntokai, Mātaṅkīraṉār has given an exquisite description of a poetical convention about peculiar device used by a rejected lover to win the hand of his love. We are not sure whether such a custom existed except in the fertile imagination of poets.

The foresaken lover adorns himself with wreaths made of bones and flowers of 'erukku' and smears ashes on the whole of his body. This picrure is that of a person who is prepared to forsake this world. To add to this, he uses a

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1. திண்டோர் நள்ளி கானத் தண்டார்
பல்லா பயந்த நெய்யிற் றொண்டி
முழுதுடன் விளைந்த வெண்ணெல் வெஞ்சோறு
எழுகலத் தேந்தினுஞ் சிறிதென் தோழி
பெருந்தோள் நெகிழ்த்த செல்லற்கு
விருந்துவரக் கரைந்த காக்கையது பலியே—Kuṟu : 210.
2. Kuṟu : 134.

cart of palmyra stem with a wooden horse, made from jagged edges of palmyra leaf-stalks for his ride, and carried the picture of the lady-love who had forsaken him, he shows the world the cause of his misery. He thus makes himself a laughing stalk of the locality and goes through the streets in this despicable manner. In other words, he gives up all his honour in society and is prepared even to give up his life.

The astounding description of mounting the chariot has caught the imagination of the compiler as to give this surname to the poet.[1]

This surname has again been used to denote this poet by the redactors also with reference to his poem in Naṟṟiṇai.[2]

(iv) Neytal Kārkkiyār :

This poet has described the mari-time region beautifully and therefore he deserves the epithet 'Neytal' before his original name 'Kārkkiyār'. He is the author of two poem in Kuṟuntokai.[3] Both the poems describe the natural scenery of the 'neytal' region the blue flowers in the back-waters close their petals and the soft moist breeze blows at the nights. This is the description of the poet from one poem.[4]

The other poem of his, is a simple reference to the sea-coast. A chariot is said to be passing along the sea-shore with its ringing bells.[5]

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1. விழுத்தலைப் பெண்ணை விளையன் மாமடல்
மணியணி பெருந்தார் மரபிற் பூட்டி
வெள்ளென் பணிந்துபிற ரெள்ளத் தோன்றி
ஒருநாண் மருங்கிற் பெருநாண் நீக்கித்
தெருவி னியலவுந் தருவது கொல்லோ
கலிழ்ந்தவி ரசைநடைப் பேதை
மெலிந்தில சும்விடற் கமைந்த தூதே – Kuṟu : 182.
2. Naṟ : 377.
3. Kuṟu : 55, 212.
4. Ibid : 55.
5. Ibid : 212.

(v) Paālaipāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō :

The epithet 'Pālaipāṭiya' is richly deserved by this poet since no other poet can compete with him in describing the arid desert tract with so much accuracy. There are ten stanzas in Kuṟuntokai from his pen.[1] Except one stanza[2], all other stanzas are about the Pālai region.

A lizard calls to its mate with its characteristic tickles by sitting on the branch of a 'Kaḷḷi' tree in an arid desert tract. These calls are compared to the sound of the hunters there sharpening their arrows on the edges of their own nails.[3]

This poem shows that this poet is gifted with a keen sense of observation so as to note even the minute sounds like the tickles of the lizard.

He sense of form is also remarkable. The foot-prints of an elephant in a desert tract are said to look like the garden beds of the surgarcane field.[4]

He describes the 'veṭci' tree-a tree seen only in the desert tracts, in one of his poems. Even in the waterless desert tracts, the 'veṭci' trees grow abundantly. There are plenty of gooseberry plants along the routes of the desert. The cubs of the tigers find them as a place of safety.[5]

In the waterless arid desert tracts, the highway robbers expect the wayfarers to pass their hiding places. They lie in wait to kill them and rob them. They are having spears in their hands. The kites are anxiously waiting for the dead bodies of the wayfarers as their prey.[6]

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1. Kuṟu : 16, 37, 124, 135, 137, 209, 231, 262, 283. 398.
2. Ibid : 231.
3. கானவர், பொன் புனைபகழி செப்பங் கொண்மார்
உகிர்நுதி புரட்டும் ஓசை போலச்
செங்காற் பல்லி தன்துணை பயிரும்
அங்காற் கள்ளியங் காடு — Kuṟu : 16.
4. Kuṟu : 262.
5. Ibid : 209.
6. Kuṟu : 283.

The hillock in the desert tract is mentioned by the poet as 'viṇtoṭa nivanta vilamku malaik kavāaṉ.''[1]

The rest of his stanzas are about the love aspects of the Pālai-region.

(vi) Tumpicērkīraṉṉār :

The epithet 'Thumpicēr' is prefixed to the name of this poet 'Kīraṉār', since his poem is an apostrophe to the black bee (தும்பி). It is addressed to the bee, by the heroine expressing her feelings of suffering caused by the separation of her lover.[2]

Another poem from the pen of the same poet in Naṟṟiṇai is also an apostrophe to the bee.[3]

Poets who Earned their Names by the Striking Perase which occurs in their Poems :

(i) Orirpiccaiyār :

In the poem 277, the poet introduces the lady-companion as asklng the 'Aṟivar' (a soothsayer) when the hero would be returning. He gave exactly the time when the hero will be back. The lady-companion thanks him by saying that he should get his sufficient quantity of good from a single house in a clean street not infested by dogs. This meal should be made from pure and best rice and served with ghee and hot water preserved in 'cēmacceppu'.[4]

In this piece, the phrase, Oriṟpiccai' is so very striking that the author has been named after this phrase.

(ii) Kaḷḷilāttiraisaṉār :

The poem 293 of Kuṟuntokai gives us a good description of one of the common habits prevalent in olden times. The

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1. 'விண்தொட நிவந்த விலங்குமலைக் கவாஅன்'
   —Kuṟu : 262.
2. Kuṟu : 392.
3. Naṟ : 277.
4. Kuṟu : 277.

common folk went in a group to drink toddy. They used to go together to the palmyra grove, drink toddy and bring back with them the kernel of the tender palmyra fruit, (நுங்கு).

The idea has been brought out in a pictursque manner by the poet. The heroine fears that the prostitute would not only take away her happiness by entising her husband but she may also take him away bodily.

This is compared to the drinkers taking the toddy as well as the kernel of the tender palmyra fruit from the palm-grove. Because of such apt description, the unknown author has been called Kaḷḷilāttiraiyaṉār.[1]

The late Dr. R. P. Sethu Pillai opines that 'Kaḷḷil' is the name of a place.[2]

(iii) Kuṟiyiṟaiyār :

The poet describes the young boys of the village as they are having the small wrists (Kuṟiyiṟai) in his poem.

Since every reader of this poem is sure to get attracted by the short but inspiring descriptive touch of the young boys with small wrists playing with the bapy-elephant, the poet is named after it.[3]

(iv) Neṭuveṇṇilaviṉār :

The lady-companion addresses the moon and states that it is quite unfavourable to the visit of the hero to meet her at night, since its rays are so bright and clear that even the huge block of rock whereon the 'vēṅkai' flowers have fallen in full measure give an appearance of the tiger's cup and frighten away the lover who may happen to come that way.

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1. Kuṟu : 293.
2. Ūrum Pērum, p. 59.
3. Kuṟu : 394.

(v) Pataṭivaikalār :

'Neṯuveṇṇilavu' means 'the pig white moon'. Since the phrase is an imaginative word-picture of the moon, the poet came to be denoted by that very phrase of his.[1]

The hero says that the days he spend in sweet embracement of his wife were the only days which could be counted as days worth living. All other days of his life were 'Pataṭivaikal' (useless days).

No wonder this beautiful description has given the name to the poet of this piece.[2]

Poets who Earned their Names after the APT Similes Occuring in their Poems

(i) Aṇllāṭumuāṟilār :

A lady-love experiences a lot of hardship and sorrow in the absence of her lover. Her untold sufferings know no bounds. In her extreme state of agony she expresses her sorrow thus :

"In the presence of my lover in my company, I would feel very happy like the people of the village where a festival is going on with pomp and merriment. But in his absence, I feel extreme sorrow as the lonely and solitary courtyard of the house in the desert tract where a squirrel is playing merrily without any fear whatsoever".[3]

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2. கருங்கல் வேங்கை வீயுகு துறுகல்
இரும்புலிக் குருளையிற் றோன்றும் காட்டிடை
எல்லி வருநர் களவிற்கு
நல்லை யல்லை நெடுவெண் ணிலவே—Kuṟu : 47.

1. Kuṟu : 323.

2. காதலர் உழைய ராகப் பெரிதுவந்து
சாறுகொள் ஊரிற் புகல்வேன் மன்ற
அத்தம் நண்ணிய அங்குடிச் சீறூர்
மக்கள் போகிய அணிலாடு முன்றிற்
புலப்பில் போலப் புல்லென்று
அலப்பென் தோழி அவரகன்ற ஞான்றே—Kuṟu : 41.

No one who reads this poem can ever forget the best word-picture and the phrase 'Aṇilāṭumuṉṟil' (the courtyard where the squirrel was playing). Squirrel is a very timid animal. Even that was playing in the courtyard of a deserted house, situated in a desert tract. Usually the habitation in the desert tract was scarce and it became still worse when the people left the house for attending festivals nearby. The house became so lonely that even a squirrel, an animal noted for its extreme timidity plays happily without any fear in the courtyard of that house.

Since this apt simile 'aṇilāṭumuṉṟil' beautifully brings out the whole pathos experienced by a lady-love, it is most appropriate and it has been selected to remember this poet.

(ii) Orēruḻavaṉār :

'Orēruḻavaṉ' means 'an artisan having only one plough'. Since this word is used in a comparison in the poem, the poet came to be known by that very simile.

This poem describes the feelings of a hero when he is returning in early winter after fulfilling his duty in a distant land.

The hero expresses his feelings by comparing himself to a ploughman having only one plough as his possession. He states that when he was at a long distance from his wife he did not feel much. But when he was nearing his village, his heart jumps to see her immediately. He brings out this idea in a beautiful comparison. He compares his unquenchable desire of immediately meeting his sweetheart to that of the eagerness af the ploughman with only a single plough to plough his field immediately after the rains had fallen.[1]

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1. ஆடமை புரையும் வனப்பிற் பணைத்தோட்
பேரமர்க் கண்ணி யிருந்த வூரே.
நெடுஞ்சே ணாரிடை யதுவே நெஞ்சே
ஈரம் பட்ட செவ்விப் பைம்புனத்து
ஓரே ருழவன் போலப்
பெருவிதுப் புற்றன்றோ னோகோ யானே—Kuṟu 131.

(iii) Cempulappeyalnīrār :

The poet compares the blending of the two young loving hearts to the inseparable mixing up of the rain-water with the reddish-soil of the earth.

The red soil of the pastoral region is far away from the rainy clouds in the sky. The rain unites them together and thereafter they cannot be separated by any means. In a like manner the loving hearts of the hero and the heroine are inseparably united into one though both their parents were unknown to each other previously. Further they themselves did not know each other before. But love brought them together and made them united.[1]

The comparison is an oft-quoted one and well appreciated by one and all. Therefore, the phrase 'cempulappeyalnīr' (the rainwater in the reddish soil) is used to remember the poet, since his original name has been forgotten.

iv Kankulveḷḷattār :

'Kaṅkul' means 'night' and 'veḷḷam' means 'flood'. The poet compares the night to a great flood in his poem.

The heroione espects eagerly the home-coming of her lord in the evening, of a day in early rainy season the season in which he promised to return. The heroine sees the mullai creeper, blossoming in the evening due to the impact of the fresh rain water of the early rainy season. This adds edge to passion. She meditates that she had not only to pass the evening in grief but a more terrible solitary midnight that was to follow. So she considers the evening to be a lake with banks and a lake that could be negotiated by a swimmer. She adds that the night was a vast flood spreading all over space and that there was not even a sigle ray of hope for her

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1. யாயும் ஞாயும் யாரா கியரோ
எந்தையும் நுந்தையும் எம்முறைக் கேளிர்
யானும் நீயும் எவ்வழி அறிதும்
செம்புலப் பெயல்நீர் போல
அன்புடை நெஞ்சம் தாம்கலந் தனவே—Kuru : 40.

to see the other end of this vast flood (night) and therefore could be endured.[1]

The poet is remembered today by the metaphor of picturing the night as a great flood as 'Kaṅkulveḷḷam' occuring in his poem.

(v) Kāleṟi Kaṭikaiyār :

The poet employs a beautiful simile in his poem. He expresses the feeling of the hero when he think over the pros and cons of his intending departure in pursuit of wealth. He wants to earn to live happily; but he also thinks about the joy and glory of life with his wife. So, in the ecstacy of his love for his wife, he compares the sweetness of the nector from her white teeth with the sweetness of eating the bottom portion of a sugarcane. He thinks that parting from her was nothing but the very end of his life.[2]

Since the essence of the poem lies in the phrase 'kāleṟi-kaṭikai' the poet has come to be known by that name.

(vi) Kalporuciṟunuraiyār :

The poet earns his name from an arresting simile occuring in his poem.

The poem is about the sufferings of the heroine when the hero has left her for the purpose of earning more in far-off country. During his absence, she suffers to a great extent and comes to the dire conclusion that she may succumb to her grief.

She compares her dosolate state to the foam in a flood which dashes on a huge rock and gradually becomes less and less and finally disappears.[1]

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1. Kuu : 387.
2. Ibid : 267.
3. Ibid : 290.

'Kalporuciṟunurai' means the 'foam dashing on the rock' and this phrase is the very core of the arresting simile found in the poem and hence the poet has been rightly called after this simile.

(vii) Kavaimakaṉār :

The phrase 'kavaimakaṉ' means 'twinsons'. The poet uses this phrase in bringing out an appropriate simile in his poem.

The lover overcoming all the dangers on route comes eagerly to meet his lady-love at the night-tryst. The lady-love feels very much when she hears about the dangers that he had to undergo during his journey at night. On seeing the condition of both, the lady-companion tellt he hero thus :

''You are coming to meet your lady-love with eagerness and affecrion by swimming through the wild sea-coast where in the back-waters the male crocodile wks obstructing passage. The lada-love, because of her extreme love for you, feels distressed for your troubles due to her attachment. I, myself for my own part, feel for both of you, like the mother worrying over her twinsons who had taken poison''.[1]

The mother shows equal and affection towards both her sons. So she will hurry for their treatment washing no time. Like-wise, the lady-companion feels for both. If she accepts the hero's coming at the night-trysts, the lady-love will be full of anxiety and if she rejects his visit, then he would be very much dejected. So the only solution she said to them was to get married early.

(viii) Kayamaṉār :

Since the original name of the poet is forgotten, the poet is now called after an excellent simile to be found in his poem.

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1. Kuṟu : 324.

The poet compares the neytal flowers tossed hither and thither by the waves in the back-waters to the eyes of ladies bathing in a tank.[1]

Anyone who reads the poem is attracted by the importance of the word 'kayam' in this poem.

It is worthwhile to note here than Māṇikkavācakar finds the aptness of this simile and used this simile in a poem of his own 'Tirucciṟṟampalakkōvaiyār'.[2]

(ix) Kuppaikoōḻiyār :

The name is derivee from the striking phrase 'Kuppaikkōḻi' which occurs in the poem.

The heroine experiences a bitter state of sorrow due to the absence of her lover. So she compares her distressen state of mind to the fighting of two cocks of their own accord with none to induce them to fight or stop. The two cocks are fighting between themselves on a heap of grail with none to interfere till they die of exaustion. Likewise, the lady-love thinks that she must either go to her lover or he has to come to her to save her from extreme grief. If he did not she believes that she may succumb to her grief.[3]

(x) Kuūvalmaintaṉ :

The poet has been called after a beautiful simile occuring in this poem.

This poem describes the sufferings of the heroine when her lover was away in search of wealth. The heroine's despair increases day by day. Her lady-companion consoles her to some extent. But the heroine expresses her feelings thus :

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1. Kuṟu : 9.
2. 'வேயாது செப்பி னடைத்துத் தமினவகும் வீயி னன்ன', (374)
3. Kuṟu : 305.

"I am always thinking about my husband who was travelling through waterless erid desert tracts. I cannot bear anymore the separation. I am suffering extremely like a dumb person who cannot communicate to others the untold sufferings of the cow which accidentally had fallen into a well at night",[1]

Since the word picture 'kūval' is capaple of giving thought to the imagination of the readers, the poet, parhaps earned the epithet 'kūval' before his original name 'Maintaṉ'.[2]

(xi) Mīṉeṟitūṇṭilā. :

The striking phrase 'mīṉeṟitūṇtil' occuring in the poem to bring out a pictursque simile. 'Mīṉeṟitūṇṭil' means 'the fishing-rod'.

we remember the poet today by this name after the phrase 'mīṉeṟitūṇṭil' which is used in explainin a comparison in his poem.

The heroine expresses her sufferings when the hero has delayed the celebration of their union by marriage.

She expresses pathetically that though she remains in her home, her feminine beauty had gone with the lord of the hill.

This is explained by means of a comparison.

On hearing the sound of the stone pelted from a sling by the watch and ward of the millet-field, the elephant of the forest leaves away the shoots of the bamboos and runs into the forest in fear. The movement of the bamboos, rising up after having been bent by the elephant and the oscillations

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1. Kuṟu : 224.
2. 'மைந்த னென்பது இவர் இயற்பெயர் போலும்
—Swaminatha Iyer, Kuṟu, introduction, p. 109

that followed among the bamboos are compared to the movements of the fishing-rod.[1]

The distinguished commentator pērāciriyar is said to have quoted this stanza as an example for 'Eṉaiyuvamam'.[2] The phrase occurs in an Aiṅkuṟunūṟu poem also.[3]

(xii) Villakaviraliṉār :

The catching phrase 'Villakaviral' which means 'the fingers holding tightly the bow' occurs in the poem.

A prostitute describes her great attachment to the hero in such a way as to be overheard by the associates of the heroine. She says that as long as he is with her, both of them entwain themselves like the fingers of the hunter and his bow when he is using the bow. But when he leaves her she finds herself hopelessly solitary and that situation is unbearable.[4]

Fascinated greatly by this arresting simile, Tiruttakkatēvar employed this simile in his immortal epic 'cīvakacintāmaṇi'.[5]

(xiii) Viṭṭakutiraiyār :

The phrase 'viṭṭakutirai' which occurs in the poem brought the name to the poet.

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1. யானே யீண்டை யேனே யென்னலனே
ஏனல் காவலர் கவணொலி வெரீஇக்
கான யானை கைவிடு பசுங்குழை
மீனெறி தூண்டிலி னிவக்கும்
கானக நாடனொ டாண்டொழிந் தன்றே
—Kuṟu : 54.
2. Tol : 992.
3. Aiṅ : 278.
4. Kuṟu : 370.
5. வீட்டிடந் தோறும் வில்லக விரலிற்
பொருந்திநின் றொருங் கெதிர் கொள்கென்று—
Cintāmaṇi : 2110.

The poet compares the tall bamboos soaring high towards the sky to the horse let loose seen leaping at a gallop with terrific speed.

The horse which is let loose gallops with great speed like the bamboo leaning down and soaring high. This is denoted by the phrase 'viṭṭakutirai' and the phrase is very apt to bring out fully the effect of the comparison.[1] Hence the poet is appropriately named after the thought-provoking phrase, occuring in his poem.

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1. விட்ட குதிரை விசைப்பின் அன்ன
விசும்புதோய் பசுங்குழை—Kuṟu : 74.

13. The Didactic Elements in Kuruntokai

One of the features of Tamil literature of the early times is the didactic note that is prominent in it. A large number of poems of the Sangam Age reflect the ethical values of the people of that era.

With the advent of Jainism and Buddhism in South India, a body of didactic works came to be writen in Tamil. (e.g.) The eighteen didactic works deal chiefly with moral values and ethical philosophy. Yet the romantic background is not entirely omitted in these works.

The didactic element has its place in a work of art, though primarily a work of art is meant to please, entertain and amuse the people. Many writers in English have emphasized on the need for moral values in literature; and the business of a writer is to instruct as well as please his readers. Dr. Johnson accuses Shakespeare that he seems to write without any moral purpose; in short, he is not didactic: "His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so such more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose..... He makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his person indifferently though right and wrong, and, at the close, dismisses them without further care, and leaves their-example to operate by chance. This fault, the barbarity

of the age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better and justice is a virtue independent on time or place".[1]

There is also the other view that has gained wide popularity, namely : 'Art for Art's sake'. Prof. A.G. Bradley expounded the theory that the function of Poetry must be to inspire rather than to instruct. Pope remarks, "...if moral emotion is of higher literary value than purely aesthetic, sensuous emotion, why is not purely ethical poetry of higher rank than any other?".[2]

But most of the western scholars agree to the importance of moral virtues in literature. "No man was ever yet a great poet", says Coleridge, "without being at the same time a profound philosopher".[3] Emerson stresses the need for the moral ideas to be expressed in poetry. "The great poets are judged by the frame of mind they induce."[4]

Matthew Arnold speaks of the evil of discarding moral deas in Poetry. He says: "A Poetry of revolt against noral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life; a poetry of ndifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference owards life".[5] Further, "Literature is not composed in rder to be beautiful; we judge it to be beautiful when it has ucceeded in its aim".[6]

"A poet's greatness must ultimately depend upon the reatness of his subject-matter, the power of thought, which e brings to bear upon it, and his moral strength and nfluence".[7]

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1. Winchester, C.T. Principles of Literary Criticism, p. 111.
2. Winchester, C.T., Principles of Literary Criticism, Appendix p. 323.
3. & 4. Hudson, W.H. An introduction to the study of Literature, p. 93.
5. Essays in Criticism, Second Series, p. 144.
6. Abercrombie, L. Principles of Literary Criticism,p. 45.
7. Hudson, W.H. An Introduction to the Study of Literature, p. 95.

The Tamil people of the Sangam Age lived a moral life of a high order. They had developed high ethical standards of conduct in all walks of life.

Even in the lyric poems of the Sangam period, the didactic element is not altogether absent; most of them refer to the moral values of the people, their noble deeds and virtuous lives. Rev. Fr. Thaninayakam rightly points out, "Cangam literature is nearly one fourth ethical if you consider the didactic poems as well as those that-personify and illustrate virtuous deeds and allude to virtuous persons".[1]

The three aspects of life which Tiruvalluvar depicts in his Kuṟaḷ are Aṟam (Duty), Poruḷ (Wealth), and Iṉpam (Love). The fourth aspect of life is said to be 'Vīṭu' or 'Moksha' in Sanskrit, which can be attained if one lives the other three aspects of life fully. Therefore Tiruvaḷḷuvar does not specially deal with this aspect namely 'Vīṭu'. He speaks of the need for and importance of a moral life for the individual and society.

'Aṟattuppāl' deals with the ethical codes of life. The value and the right use of wealth are explained in his next chapter, 'Poruṭpāl'. 'Kāmattuppāl' deals with the emotional aspect and the chastening Influence of love.

As a whole, Kuṟaḷ is a great work embodying great thoughts and precepts on human life. Vaḷḷuvar's considered thoughts are rendered in a series of couplets under these three main divisions. Hence, the didactic note in Tamil Literature, may be said to date as far back as the age of Kuṟaḷ or Vaḷḷuvar.

Besides Kuṟaḷ, Kuṟuntokai which was compiled at a later date, also contains thoughts and aphorisms on the moral life of an individual. It is the first work to be compiled among the collection of (poems) Eṭṭuttokai. Of the 400 poems (stanzas) that form this work, except two poems (stanzas 307

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1. Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry, p. 58.

and 391), the rest of them confine to the maximum limit of eight lines. This pattern is well suited to the expression of moral values and the didactic nature of the work.

The predominant emotion that is dealt with in Kuṟuntokai is the emotion of love. In the history of Tamil Literature, we find that round about the second and third centuries of the Christian Era, exclusive didactic works were written.

Sangam literature is classified under two main heads-(divisions): Pattuppāṭṭu and Eṭṭuttokai as 'Mēṟkaṇakku' and 'Patiṉeṇkīḻkkaṇakku' or the eighteen minor ethical works as 'Kilkkanakku'. The justification for such a classification and how and when this classification of Sangam literature came to be accepted by others is a subject for reasearch by eminent scholars. But many scholars are of the view that the eighteen minor ethical works neither do belong to the Sangam Age nor come under the category of Sangam literature. Further, all the eighteen minor didactic works do not belong to the same period. Their dates are roughly assigned to the period from second century A.D. to eighth century A.D. Among them Tirukkuṟaḷ claims the foremost place both in age and in merit.

The three aspects of life which Vaḷḷuvar speaks of, are mentioned in Kuṟuntokai poems too, in several contexts.

The ancient Tamil people regarded Gratitude as one of the greatest virtues a man should possess and ingratitude, a damnable sin. In one of the poems in Puṟanāṉūṟu it is mentioned that there is expiation for those who have committed grievous sins, such as cutting the udders of a cow, or injuring the learned priests or Antaṇars or committing artificial abortion on the part of women; but there is no atonement for the sin of forgetting the help rendered by one at an opportune moment.[1]

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1. Puṟa : 34.
c.f. Somasundaram Pillai, J.M., Two thousands of Tamil literature, p. 8.

Here is the free translation of the passage :

"whatever sins men do in hurting kine,-all heinous crimes, and wrongs to Brahmans wrought,-where fault is pondered and confess't-, a place may yet be found to wash away the stain. but they, who benefit conferred have slain can ne'er escape,- so virtue's self hath sung o sponse of her with jewels rare adorned!". c.f.

The poet says that it is in keeping with the thought-expressed in 'Aṟam'.[1]

Hence it is evident, as some scholars agree, that the thought is similar to that of Vaḷḷuvar's couplet:

"ennaṉṟi koṉṟārkkum uyvuṇtām uyvillai
ceynnaṉṟi koṉṟa makaṟku".[2]

These examples illustrate that the Tamils considered gratitude to be one of the greatest virtues in the scale of perfect moral values.

A poem in Kuṟuntokai says : "If you render a great help to another, will be ever forget it?".

The lover may be much devoted to his-lady-love when she is young and charming. When age comes on her and time plays cruel tricks on her appearance, she may not be as attractive as she was to his eyes-when she was young. Still, the-lady-love exhorts to her lover that he should continue to love her.[3]

The people of Tamilnad always strove to do some work of noble note, and desired through such action to attain glory that would last for ever. Puṟanāṉūṟu mentions of those who achieved fame and glory, that they might have done some meritorious deed earlier in their lives.[4]

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1. 'அறம்பாடிற்றே ஆயிழை கணவ'—Puṟa : 34.
2. Kuṟaḷ : 110.
3. Kuṟu : 115.
4. Ibid : 168.

Vaḷḷuvar devotes ten couplets to the importance of greatness and glory and how they go together.[1]

"Those who want to get fame in the right way with the right means, will take no thought of the morrow,' but spend their wealth to help the needy people."[2]

Kuṟuntokai mentions this idea in the words of Mūturai, etc.

The hero has gone to seek a fortune. He tells his dear lady that he would soon return with much money and arrange to marry her. He did not return in time as he promised. So, the lady-love pines for her lover. Her companion consoles her with the words that the lover is very affectionate and tender-hearted; he is afraid of sin; and surely he will come and join her, And the change in her complexion is but evanescent like the wealth acquired by merciless and sinful men which does not remain with them for long.

A number of references to many good qualities and virtues are found in Tamil literature.

The poet introduces this in Kuṟuntokai, through the words of the lady companion. The maid tells her mistress that the lover is a noble-minded young man and that she need not have any misgivings about his return and rejoining her. The poet suggests that Dependability is one of the traits of a noble man.[3]

The Tamil poets considered that humility is another quality which a noble man must possess.

Noble minded persons will not exult and hold their heads high when compliments are paid to them in the presence of others; they will bow in all humility and receive the praise. Further, they will be most blameless in all their actions.[4]

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1. Kuṟaḷ : Pukal.
2. Kuṟu : 143.
3. 'திறவோர் செய்வினை யறவ தாகும்'—Kuṟu : 247.
4. 'சான்றோர் புகழு முன்னர் நாணுப
பழியாங் கொல்பவோ காணுங் காலே'—Ibid : 252.

The lady-love considers the hero to be a noble man, and hopes earnestly that he will marry her soon.

"Charity begins at home". This was a precept which the ancient Tamil patrons practised with great zeal. They were well known for their munificence and hospitality. Seven patrons of the great-tradition are mentioned in ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai.[1] The kings as well as the minor feudal lords and the various chieftains of those days took much pride in liberally donating huge sums to the court-poets, bards, Pāṇars, Porunars and dancers of both sexes who visited their courts. Examples are legion to prove the liberal and generous nature of those kings and chieftains. Paṇṇan, a chieftain of the glorious Sangam age is described in one of the poems in Akanāṉūṟu[2] as a patron 'who lived not for his own sake, but exclusively for others'. Hence it is clear that selflessness was considered a great virtue in those days.

A poem in Kuṟuntokai speaks of a lady-love calling the river flowing from the summit of the hill cruel since it has uprooted the plantain tree on the bank and brought it down with its current and thereby made the hill lose its beauty.

The lady-love pines when there is some delay on the part of the hero in arranging for the marriage sooner. But, she is not in a position to bear the separation even for a short interval of time. She finds consolation in gazing at the plantain tree on the hill which belonged to the hero. She feels that only marriage with him will make her happy. She addresses the river and speaks of her sorrows, though her lover is standing close to her. She indirectly suggests that she is lonely and suffering owing to the separation. She says that it is not wisdom on the part of one to be cruel to other who are at one's mercy.[3]

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1. Ciṟupāṉ : 84-113.
2. 'தனக்கென வாழாப் பிறர்க்குரி யாளன் பண்ணன்'— Aka : 54.
3. Kuru : 327.

"To be ungrateful to one who rendered help is an act below one's dignity whatever the circumstances may be".

These are the words spoken by a heroine when the hero is standing beside her. The hero is returning from the house of a prostitute. The lady-companion has remarked that her mistress has lost all charm since her lover has turned his affection to a prostitute.

The heroine very cleverly tells her lover that she has lost all her feminine charm on account of his absence. At the same time, she reveals her nobility of mine, telling her maid that it is better to die than to aspire for his love, which has been offered to some one gladly and in full.[1]

To take back anything that has been given away, is not a noble act and it is better to suffer and die without it.

Another marked virtue which the people of Tamilnad valued most was honesty. Men of integrity were respected and given prominence in society.

'Persons endowed with a sense of gratitude and a desire to recognise greatness in others, will rise and give place to the great in honour of their integrity'.[2]

The companion consoles her mistress with the remark that the hero is an honest man; and he has undertaken the journey only on her account, to earn a fortune and return to marry her. She concludes her counsel with the encouraging note that the hero will never betray the trust she has reposed in him, and will return soon.

In summing up, we may say that the people of Tamilnad had a fine sense of moral values in life and they tried their best to live according to the highest standard of moral excellence. Those virtues which they held high may be said to relate to Aṟam.

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1. Kuṟu : 349.
2. Ibid : 265.

The poems of the Sangam age portray two different stages of life. For instance, the 'Āṟṟuppaṭai' collection of poems pictures two sides of life elegantly. There existed prosperity and poverty at the same time as they exist even to-day.

There is a simile in Kuṟuntokai in which the hero speaks in the following way. The hero meets with disappointment in meeting his lady-love at the appointed place : "O mind! You have aspired for a thing which is beyond your reach, just as a man without wealth aspires for pleasures in life. You have somehow come to know that your sweetheart is good and kind, but at the same time forgotten to remember that she is very difficult to win for yourself".[1]

The suggestion here is that poverty and happiness rarely go together. A man without wealth cannot think of plesure in life. Tiruvaḷḷuvar emphatically stresses the value of wealth as follows :

"Poruḷilārk Kivvulaka millai Aruḷilārk
Kavvulaka millāKi yāṅku"

The king poet, Pālaipāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō also stresses the need of earning wealth in one of his poems saying that those who lead a life of ease with inherited wealth are meaner than beggars".[2]

This clearly shows that everyone in this world should earn money by his own efforts without attaching any importance to inherited property.

There are poems in Kuṟuntokai in which much stress is laid upon the value of perseverance. At no moment in our own life we should lose our effort and perseverance. It is

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1. இல்லோன் இன்பம் காமுற் றாஅங்கு
அரிது வேட்டனையால் நெஞ்சே காதலி
நல்லள் ஆகுதல் அறிந்தாங்கு
அரியள் ஆகுதல் அறியா தோயே—Kuṟu : 120.
2. உள்ளது இதைப்போர் உளர்எனப் படாஅர்
இல்லோர் வாழ்க்கை இரவினும் இளிவு—Kuru : 283.

through persevenrance many men come to prominence in this world. So, perseverance is regarded as a virtue to be possessed by all.

Pālaipāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō shows greater zeal in depicting moral and ethical values in life in his poems than other poets. He might have set an example to others in his life. He says that those who squander away ancestral property cannot be considered to be living persons. Thus he stresses the need of amassing wealth on one's own without giving any consideration to the property that was acquired by inheritance. He stresses further that those who lead an easy-going life with inherited property are meaner than beggars.

The peom referred to is of the lady-love and she narrates to her maid how her lover taught her the truth the value of wealth in life.

The same poet, Pālaipātiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō in another poem speaks that duty is the soul of men. So, the maxim that, duty first and everything next holds good with every-one in the Sangam age.

A lady-love languishes when she comes to know that her hero is proceeding to a distant land in search of wealth. The lady-companion comforts her by saying that though he told them that duty was the soul of men, yet he also told them that men were the souls of women. So she says that he would not part with her since it would mean to her the very end of her life.[1]

The greatness of mutual friendship is beautifully expressed in two poems.[2] "The lady-love tells her maid that her hero is a good and kind person." Though his separation from her worries her to a great extent, the

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1. வினையே ஆடவர்க் குயிரே வாணுதல்
மனையுரை மகளிர்க்கு ஆடவர் உயிர் – Kuṟu : 135.
2. Kuṟu : 288, 322.

happiness of the 'swarka loka' is in no way superior to his love for her.[1] The lady-love here says that though his separation brings upon her some misery, it does not mean that the happiness to be enjoyed in 'Swarka Loka' (புத்தேள் நாடு) is greater in its value, when compared to the sweet hardship caused by the hero by his separation.

This shows the high stature and nobility of mind of the lady love. She considers even the hardship caused by her lover quite pleasurable. Here, it is noted that the difference between the happiness and the misery depends upon the nature of the mind that views it.

There is nothing more pleasant than the two hearts mingling with each other, either in love or in friendship. When the two hearts become united, then all the objects and feelings in this world will be viewed from the same angle and then there will arise no conflict between those two hearts. Such is the good result achievd when two hearts come into contact closely with each other.[2]

Another poem in Kuṟuntokai depicts the transitory nature of the world.[3]

'The honest men would not give false evidence' is a good moral put forth in a poem.[4]

"There is no need for fear in uttering the truth" is a great idea that is expressed in a poem in this collection.[5]

There are many such didactic ideas that we come across in Kuṟuntokai.

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1. இனியன் ஆகலின் இனத்தின் இயன்ற
   இன்னா மையினும் இனிதோ
   இனிதெனப் படூஉம் புத்தேள் நாடே—Kuṟu 288.
2. மனையுறை வாழ்க்கை வல்லி யாங்கு
   மருவின் இனியவும் உளவோ
   செல்வாம் தோழி ஒல்வாங்கு நடந்தே.—Ibid : 322.
3. நில்லா மையே நிலையிற்று—Kuṟu : 143.
4. அறிகரி பொய்த்தல் ஆன்றோர்க் கில்லை—Ibid : 184.
5. நன்மொழிக்கு அச்சம் இல்லை—Ibid : 392.

14. Dramatic Monologues in Kuruntokai

Tolkāppiyaṉār has wisely divided his grammar into three parts, namely Eḻuttatikāram, Collatikāram and Poruḷatikāram. These three-parts of his grammar deal in extenso with many aspects: orthography, phonetics, phonology, morphology, etymology, syntax, semantics, prosody and rhetoric. The erudition of *Tolkāppiyam*, shows that even prior to that work, there must have existed some treatise on grammar, because, Tolkāppiyaṉār mentions in a number of places previous authors on the subject. Words and phrases like 'eṉpa', 'eṉmaṉār pulavar', 'yāppaṟipulavur', 'Nuṇṇitiṉ uṇarntōr' and 'moḻipa' occur frequently in his writings.

But most of the rules enunciated by Tolkāppiyaṉār lost their force by the time of Sangam literature as seen from the writings of the later day commentators on *Tolkāppiyam*. Therefore, *Tolkāppiyam* may well be looked upon as a trestise on grammar earlier in time compared to the Sangam period.

Tolkāppiyaṉār gives in detail elaborate rules and describes the various sentiments, etc., which were not so much essential for the narrative verse of the later day epic. The dramatic moments are depicted in separate unconnected lyrical stanzas in these works.

The Ceyyuḷ Iyal, in the third part of *Tolkāppiyam* is a treatise on prosody. It deals with the literary composition of the age. The theory of poetry is beautifully brought out in this chapter. The first 'cūttiram' itself speaks about the various constituents of a verse,

"The harking back to the ideal behaviour patterns of an ennobling humanity (Tiṇai); their varying main currents of activity (Kaikōḷ); the speaker (Kūṟṟu) whose expression is the poem; the person to whom the poem is spoken (Kēṭpōr); the place (Kaḷaṉ); the time of the poem (Kālam); the resulting effect or purpose of the verse (Payaṉ); the sentiment or emotion bubbling forth there; the elliptical construction or the yearning after completion of the sense, at every stage of its progress (Eccam); the context making the meaning (Muṉṉam); the underlying universality (Poruḷ); the ford of the poetic current where the particularity enters into the flow of poetry or the particularity of the poetic aspect of the verse (Tuṟai)"[1] are some of the important constituents of a poem.

From this it appears "that every poem is expected to be spoken by one and addressed to some other, at a particular place and time, inspired by an urge or purpose, and resulting n an effect, the whole speech being aglow with a living major sentiment or emotion or feeling".[2]

Further, Tolkāppiyaṉār stresses that the three unities, of action, of time and of place are necessary for a poem. 'The unity of all these trinitles within the unit of a poetical moment of one dramatlc speech and no more'! This is quite clear from every Akam poem which invariabiy gives a series of illustrative rather than exhaustive poetic situations, where the dramatic personnei may give expression to their lyrical feelings'. Hence every poem may be considered a dramatic-monologue- If these poems are rearranged as to make successive narratiive, it may result in a connected story or love or war. In this sense all the Akam poems are all dramatic monologues of the lovers of their companions, or the foster-mother or the prostitute or the confidant of the

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1. Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaranar Sixty-first birth-day commemoration Volume. p. 56.
2. Ibid : p. 60.

hero and others. Tolkāppiyaṉār contemplates in his theory of poetry not any continuous narrative poetry in the form of an epic, but only isolated poems.

We find no drama or epic before *Cilappatikāram*. In those days there were actors, Porunars and dancers. But no drama of Sangam age is extant. Only in the later age the dea of 'Kōvai' dawned in the minds of the poets.

W.H. Hudson speaks about three kinds of dramatic element in poetry. The first kind he calls by the name 'Dramatic Lyric'. The best examples for this type of dramatic lyric are Browning's works and Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses*. The ballad or the short story in verse form such as Arnold's *Forsaken Merman* comes under the second division called the Dramatic story. "The third species of Dramatic poetry comprises the Dramatic Monologue or soliloquy...The aim of the ideal dramatic monologue may, therefore, be defined as the faithful self-portrayal, without ulterior motive of the personality of the (supposed) speaker".[3]

In the footnote, the same author remarks thus : "Though the two words (Dramatic Monologue) are habitually employed interchangeably, soliloquy really means a poem in which the speaker talks to himself, as in Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos*, monologue, a poem in which he addresses some listener or listeners, as in his *Andrea del Sarto* and *Fra Lippo Lippi*.[4]

"It is essentially a study of character, of mental state, of moral crisis, made from the inside. Thus it is predominantly psychological, analytical, meditative, argumentative". W.H. Hudson emphasises that Browning was the greatest master in this field.

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3. Hudson, W.H. An Introduction to the Study of Literature, pp. 112, 113.
4. Ibid, Foot-note.

Let us look into the pages of *Kuruntokai*, having in mind the principles laid down by Hudson and assess its value as to the element of dramatic monologue prevailing in it.

The persons who are speakers in the poems, treating the theme of clandestine stage of love according to *Tolkāppiyam* are the Brahmin, the hero's friend, the lady-love's friend, the foster-mother, the hero and the lady-love.[5] Those who are speakers in the poems pertaining to the theme of married state of life, according to *Tolkāppiyam* are : the Bard, the male dancer, the woman dancer, the prostitute, the learned (அறிவர்) and on-looker (கண்டோர்) in addition to the six persons who are mentioned in the clandestine stage of love.[6]

But in *Kuruntokai*, we have only the speeches of the lody-love or the heroine, the lady-companion, the lover or the hero, the foster-mother, the on-looker, the hero's friend and the prostitute. In the poem 396, there is the possibility of taking the speech as that of the 'mother' (நற்றாய்).[7] The canons about the poem might have been written by a learned scholar since they are all of great help to understand the context of the poem, the mental state of the speaker, the hearers of the speech and the effect that it has produced. In short, the canons go a long way to make us fully understand and appreciate the dramatic situations and moments, the poem so aptly portrays. The canon of the above poem (396) simply illustrates thus 'Makaṭ pōkkiya Tāi uraittatu' (மகட் போக்கியதாய் உரைத்தது). The first preference given

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5. பார்ப்பான் பாங்கன் தோழி செவிலி
சீர்த்தகு சிறப்பின் கிழவன் கிழத்தியொடு
அளவியல் மரபின் அறுவகை யோரும்
களவின் கிளவிக்கு உரியர் என்ப—Tol: 1445.

6. பாணன் கூத்தன் விறலி பரத்தை
ஆணஞ் சான்ற அறிவர் கண்டோர்
பேணுதகு சிறப்பின் பார்ப்பான் முதலா
முன்னுறக் கிளந்த அறுவரொடு னைகஇ
தொன்னெறி மரபின் கற்பிற்கு உரியர்—Tol : 1446.

7. இதனை நற்றாய் கூற்றாகவும் கொள்ளுதல் பொருந்தும்.
—Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer, Kuṟu, Edition p. 778.

by Dr. Swaminatha Iyer is to the speech of the foster-mother. Applying this verdict to this anthology, we do not see a single poem being spoken by the mother. Likewise there is no poem in *Kuṟuntokai* mentioned as the speech of the Pārppāṉ (பார்ப்பான்) the bard, the learned scholar (அறிவர்), the driver of the chariot (பாகன்). But in one poem, we find that the lady-companion addressing the learned scholar although his reply is not given there.[8] There are five references that could be cited as addresses of the hero to the driver of his chariot;[9] but not *vice versa*.

Although the bard does not figure as a speaker in any poem in *Kuruntokai*, yet there are a few references where he is addressed by the heroine[10] or by the lady-companion.[11]

There are some apostrophes also to the moon:[12] to the cock,[13] to the rain,[14] to the mullai flower,[15] to the sea,[16] to the north wind,[17] to the river,[18] and to the beetle[19] which will be dealt in extenso later in this chapter.

In the canons, it is to be noted that the heroine is referred to as 'Talaivi' (தலைவி), 'Talaimakaḷ' (தலைமகள்) and 'Kiḻatti' (கிழத்தி) and the hero as 'Talaivaṉ' (தலைவன்), 'Talaimakaṉ' (தலைமகன்), and 'Kiḻavaṉ' (கிழவன்). Likewise, both the words 'Kāval' (காவல்) and 'Kāppu' (காப்பு) occur in the canons to denote the restrictions imposed by the parents in the case of their daughter when they come to know of her love-affair.

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8. Kuṟu : 277.
9. Ibid : 223, 237, 250, 323, 400.
10. Ibid : 50, 75.
11. Ibid : 45, 61, 85, 127, 359, 379.
12. Ibid : 47.
13. Ibid : 107.
14. Ibid : 158, 270.
15. Ibid : 162.
16. Ibid : 163.
17. Ibid : 235
18. Ibid : 327.
19. Ibid ; 392.

LADY-LOVE OR THE HEROINE

The poems that are mentioned as the monologues of the heroine in the *Kuruntokai* collection are altogether 180 in number. Out of them, the heroine speaks to her lady-companion in 142 poems.[20] Thus nearly three-fourths of her monologues are addressed to the lady-companion. This shows the special position occupied by the lady-companion in the Akam poems.

Most of the verses are noted as the reply of the heroine to her companion when asked whether she is bold enough to hear the separation of the hero for a short period before marriage. In this context it is to be noted that the querry of the lady-companion is not mentioned explicitly but we have to infer from the situation. Here is an instance:

"The chillness of the north wind is felt more severely on the dreary nights when even the cranes and the crabs could not bear it. This season being so severe, the lover has not yet turned up here. Is it good on the part of any lover?"[21]

Sometimes, the heroine will say that she can bear the separation of the hero. One such instance is this: "Just now I had a look at the mountain of the hero where due to heavy down pour of rain, the peacocks are shivering and the

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20. Kuṟu : 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 46, 54, 57, 60, 64, 65, 67, 76, 77, 79, 82, 86, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 110, 112, 118, 121, 126, 133, 134, 140, 145, 148, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154, 160, 170, 171, 172, 174, 175, 181, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 197, 200, 201, 202, 203, 205, 207, 208, 216, 218, 220, 221, 223, 224, 226, 228, 231, 234, 240, 241, 243, 245, 249, 252, 254, 257, 264, 266, 271, 278, 279, 281, 283, 285, 288, 289, 290, 293, 301, 302, 304, 307, 310, 314, 315, 316, 319, 322, 325, 329, 330, 334, 340, 341, 344, 352, 361, 368, 371, 377, 385, 386, 387, 391, 395, 398, 399.
21. Kuṟu : 160.

grey-faced langurs with their young ones are also shivering with cold. Is my fore-head still of the same state now? Let me know it my companion".[22]

Next to this, the theme relating to the advent of the season (பருவ வரவு) occupies a prominent place in the conversation of the heroine and the lady-companion. On seeing the advent of the rainy season in which the hero promised to return, the heroine's hardship knew no bounds. She utters these words in her desolate condition.

"The Mullai buds blossom with the advent of the rainy season. The hero who is the reason for making the jewels on my body to get loose has not come here; but the evening has set in to make me feel more distressed".[23]

When the lady-companion tries to appease her that it is not the rainy season proper, the heroine reluctantly and in a tone of desolateness asks her : "The Konrai flowers, which resemble the globular gold coins adorning the feet of the kids of the rich, have blossomed with the advent of the rainy season. If you say that this is not the season proper, tell me whether what I am seeing is only a dream"?[24]

Sometimes when the companion consoles her when her hero has gone away to a distant country, the heroine feels more miserable on seeing the Mullai buds on the shepherd's locks,[25] since Mullai served as the calendar of those days and indicated the in-coming of the rainy season.

Astonishingly in a few instances the heroine will take the budding of Mullai, etc., season as a false indication. For example, in the poem 21 of *Kuruntokai*, the heroine says to her companion as follows : "Although the Konrai flowers

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22. Ibid : 249.
23. முகை முற்றினவே முல்லை; முல்லையொடு
தகை முற்றினவே தண்கார் வியன்புலம்
வாலிழை நெகிழ்த்தோர் வாரார்
மாலை வந்தன்று என்மாண்நலம் குறித்தே
— Kuru : 188.

are adorning beautifully the tresses of the ladies, I would not take this season as the rainy season since my hero is not accustomed to tell lies".[26]

There is only one instance in the whole of the *Kuruntokai* where the heroine speaks directly to the hero. The reference here is to the happy union of the hero and the heroine after his return from the house of a prostitute. The heroine exclaims to him: 'Oh my Lord of the sea! Even in subsequent birth that are to follow, you shall be my husband, and I want to be dear and near to your heart".[27]

Here the heroine cleverly uses the word as 'one who is dear and near to his heart' instead of the word 'wife'. No doubt, she remains as a faithful wife to him in this birth. But there appears to be no equal response from him as he was attracted by some prostitute to whom he had given his heart. So the heroine does not want merely to be his wife in the subsequent births but also wants his total love and affection to be reserved for her alone.

Sometimes the heroine speaks of herself when she is left in an utter state of desolation. One such instance is as follows : "The Ā mpal with closed petals looks like the back of the crane and indicates the setting in of the evening. Nay, not only the evening, but also the night is to follow it."[28]

This is a sort of monologue where the heroine speaks out her heart, failing to control her feelings. There are eight occasions where the feelings of the heroine are thus expressed.[29]

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24. Kuṟu : 148.
25. Ibid : 221.
26. Ibid : 21.
27. Ibid : 49.
28. Ibid : 122.
29. Ibid : 43, 68, 92, 122, 155, 157, 163, 195.

There are twenty poems in *Kuṟuntokai* where we can see the ciṟaip-puṟak-kūṟṟu (சிறைப்புறக் கூற்று) of the heroine.[30] 'Ciṟaippuṟaṃ' is a 'secret place, a hedge-side near a mansion from which a lover can watch unseen what passes between his sweetheart and her maid.[31]

There is not even a single instance of a speech of the heroine directly addressed to the hero in the *Kuruntokai*. But there is one example in the whole collection where the heroine speaks to her hero and that only a speech in married life. The noteworthy feminine modesty of the heroine stands in her way to speak to the hero direct or it was considered indecent to talk ill against the hero under his very nose. Further direct speech may not bring such good results. In some cases it may prove to be the other way about. So the heroine makes use of an indirect way of speaking to the hero. Knowing of the arrival of her lord very near the hedge where she stands, that too within earshot, the heroine speaks to her lady-companion telling her about her sorrowful plight as well as the unkind attitude of her hero. These speeches of pretention or the indirect way of dealing with the situations are considered to be more effective and appealing to the hero. Thus the Ciṟaippuṟak kūṟṟu plays an important role in the clandestine stage of love.

The hero goes on postponing the actual marriage, longing for the emotional enjoyment of clandestine union. The heroine becomes impatient and distressed 'since she sees him less and less'.[32] She pines away with grief. The lady-companion speaks ill of the hero when the heroine says 'that her love towards the hero is larger than the earth, higher than the sky and deeper than the sea'.[33] On hearing these words,

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30. Kuṟu: 3, 125, 141, 158, 161, 219, 239, 246, 261, 269, 296, 299, 311, 313, 318, 320, 326, 349, 360.
31. Tamil Lexicon, Vol. III, Part III, p. 466.
32. 'காணும் பொழுதினும் காணாப்பொழுது அதிகமாகலின்'
33. Ibid : 3.

it is certain that the hero would think highly of his lady-love and make efforts for an early marriage.

In another instance, the heroine addresses the cloud, but her intention is that her hero must get to know of her plight.[34] She blames the cloud for its merciless and harsh behaviour towards the pitiable women who are deserted by their lovers. It is needless to mention here, the over-hearer of her speech, i.e., the hero will take immediate steps to expedite the marriage.

An instance can be cited to prove the effect of the indirect speech of the heroine in the married state of life. In the single instance in the whole collection the heroine speaks to her husband indirectly when he has just come from the prostitute's house. She tells her companion that it is better to die than to demand from the hero the virginity that had been given away for the married life.[35]

There are two more apostrophes in the heroine's speech, one is to the cock[36] and the other to the river.[37]

The heroine experiences an immense measure of pleasure on the night on which the hero returns, and she comes to know of the day break suddenly when she hears the cock crowing. She chides the cock in her fury and curses it to become the prey of a wild cat.

Addressing the river which flows with torrents of water from the mountain of her lover, the heroine says (the hero overhears her words) that it is more merciless than her hero since it has rooted out the plantain tree from the mountain. "On frequently seeing the plantain tree on the slope of her hero's hill, she had a sort of consolation in her desolation. Since the tree itself is now rooted out and brought down by

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34. Kuṟu : 158.
35. Ibid : 348.
36. Ibid : 107.
37. Ibid : 327.

the river, she is at the end of her tether. From hearing her words, it is certain, the hero's heart will melt and he will quickly arrange for their marriage.

The heroine speaks in two instances to the associates of the hero.[38] She complains of the ill treatment by the hero since he responsible for her present paleness and the emaciated state of her body.

In another instance, she addresses the bard when he mentions the return of the hero. The words and the manner in which the heroine speaks imply haste. "Have you seen him coming? or have you heard from others? Please state to me clearly. You will be rewarded with the prosperous and flourishing wealth of the city Pāṭali on the banks of the river Sōn where the white-tusked elephants are plunging into the waters to have a bath. Please tell me from whom you got the information of the home-coming of my hero".[39]

This is a very good example to explain the dramatic monologue. The address of the heroine to the bard implies the dramatic situation that she was told by the bard of the return of the hero. Thus we infer the previous incident or talk that might have taken place.

Further, it is to be noted that the author of this poem is Paṭumarattu Mōcikīraṉār, a poet who imagines the feelings of a woman and ably presents them. "The symbolic nature of human events is even more evident in lyrical poetry. The emotional moment which a lyric celebrates may to the poet mean much more than itself; and if it is completely caught in language, it will suggest it to the reader also".[40]

It is the dramatists' or the novelists' business to find a wide and continuous range of emotional effects: but in an Akam poem the continuous emotion of narrative of epic grandeur is not necessary.

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38. Kuṟu : 50, 75.
39. Ibid : 75.
40. Abercrombie, L., Principles of Literary Criticism, p. 133.

Thus in every Akam poem, the thoughts and feelings of the author are beautifully interwoven and expressed through the characters he imagines and creates. The experience itself is thus transplanted into the minds of the reader.

There are four references in *Kuruntokai* where the heroine speaks to herself, that is to her own heart.[41] She really addresses her heart as 'eṉ neñcē' (என் நெஞ்சே).

The lady-love here rebukes her heart for having loved the hero in spite of her warnings and doubts. The situation is that the hero is prolonging the secret courtship without arranging for their marriage early. Seeing her emaciated condition, the parents kept a vigilant watch over her. So it brought on her an unbearable grief since she is unable to meet her lover at a tryst. In her extreme misery she talks to herself as follows : "O heart ! have warned you that you should not speak to the hero with soft, sweet and enchanting words. But you have totally forgotton all my words when you saw him".[42]

Here the poet Ammūvaṉ who is a poet par excellence in reating the Neytal theme, beautifully portrays the feelings and the pangs of love of the heroine, bringing out clearly the destitute condition of the lady-love.

Rarely the heroine refuses admittance to the hero even when it was requested through the companion. She compares the hero to the Neruñci that blossoms first and then grows thorns. The hero, who at first was kind in the clandestine stage, now turns to be cruel to her.[43] Telling this she denied admittance to the hero. This poem implies an earlier request of the companion to accept her husband, the hero. Further the poem ably portrays the past and the present attitude of the hero towards the heroine.

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41. Kuṟu : 91, 305, 306, 401.
42. Ibid : 306.
43. Kuṟu : 202.

The companion visits the house of the heroine (கடி நகர் during her married life. She asks her how she is able to bear) the separation of her hero now. The heroine replies that although her husband is away from her in a distant land on duty, he is very near to her heart, and hence she is able to bear the separation.[44]

She tells the companion that her Lord embraced her long ago in the white moonlight and her shoulders still preserve the sweet smell of the Mullai.[45]

THE LADY-COMPANION

Next to the heroine, the lady-companion occupies the most prominent position among the women characters in the Akam poems. She is said to be the daughter of the foster-mother.[46] Scholars are of opinion that the lady-companion is always a married woman. She is clever and wise enough to play her part skillfully in the love-episodes between the hero and the heroine. She consoles the heroine when she pines away due to separation. She has rich worldly experience in store and rebukes the hero whenever she deems it fit to do. She is noted for her power of eloquence. She knows fully well how, when and where to deal with persons. She continues to be the companion of the heroine even in her married stage. In the clandestine stage she appeals to the hero to arrange for early marriage. In case it is not possible, she urges to agree to elope with the heroine. She visits the house of the heroine after the marriage to know how they are in their married state of life. Thus the lady-companion plays a major role in Akam poems.[47]

There are 140 poems where the lady-companion is the speaker. Nearly a half of the poems giving her speech in

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44. Kuṟu: 228.
45. Ibid : 193.
46. தோழி தானே செவிலி மகளே—Tol. 1071.
47. Varadarajan, M. Kuruntokai-c-celvam, p. 34.

form to be addressed to the heroine. They are sixty eight in number[48] dealing with various situations.

Most of her talks with the heroine relate to two particular aspects. One is she consoles the heroine when the hero had left her for a short period prior to the marriage and the other speech is a consolation to the heroine when she becomes restless and desolate on the advent of the rainy season. Thus her main duty is to console the heroine during the absence of her hero both in the clandestine and married states of life.

The hero prolongs the period of the clandestine union and postpones marriage. The heroine becomes emaciated and pale. She really pities her condition and fears that it may disclose to her parents her secret relationship. While consoling her, the companion utters thus : "Let him restrain from coming over here to meet you. Do not feel much distressed over the deterioration of your health. Let us purchase in the local market smaller bangles that will fit in your withering hands and wear it to avoid the suspicion on your secret union by your parents".[49]

This is really a good picture of poetry. In the first place the extraordinary skill of the companion in giving relief to the lady-love in her miserable condition is to be noted. Secondly it gives a vivid idea of what would have preceded this speech. Possibly the lady-love might have expressed her state of plight to her. This is the reply to the heroine by way of consolation and at the same time she suggests the remedy also which is easily available, i.e., purchasing smaller bangles and wearing them.

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48. Kuṟu : 16, 22, 34, 37, 48, 51, 52, 53, 59, 66, 74, 88, 117, 130, 135, 143, 146, 166, 176, 177, 180, 211, 212, 213, 215, 217, 230, 232, 247, 248, 251, 253, 255, 259, 260, 262, 265, 273, 275, 282, 284, 287, 297, 298, 308, 317, 321, 328, 331, 333, 338, 339, 340, 346, 348, 350, 351, 358, 367, 369, 370, 374, 380, 381, 382, 383, 389, 424.
49. Ibid ; 117.

With the advent of the rainy season, the season when the hero promised to return, the heroine's misery becomes immense. So she becomes much distressed and her feelings of misery are beyond her control. At that juncture, the lady-companion consoles her that it is not really the advent of the rainy season, although the foolish peacock dances on seeing the early showers. Even the 'piṭavu' has also blossomed. But this is not the season proper. The sky is discharging the old stock of water of the previous rainy season for the sake of fetching fresh water from the sea. Hearing the thunderous sound of the sky, the peacock is foolish enough to mistake the rainy season had really set in. This is not really the incoming of the rainy season, my dear, do not feel distress"[50] (காரன்று இருளை தீர்கநின் படரே).

Thus the lady-companion in a masterly and intelligent manner consoles the lady-love. This kind of speech of the companion is called 'paruvam aṉṟu paṭṭatu vampu eṉal' (பருவம் அன்று பட்டது வம்பு எனல்). This speech implies to be a reply to a question of the heroine on seeing the advent of rainy season.

Just to divert the feelings of the lady-love when she is brooding the companion tries to speak ill of her hero. The consequence that may arise will be a speech in favour of the hero from the mouth of the lady-love. By denying the charge levelled against her lover, the lady-love forgets her distress and comes forward to defend her lover. While the maid accuses the hero for not getting her married soon, the lady-love begins to tell her the ennobling qualities of her lover. This is a trick played upon the lady-love by the companion to divert her feelings when she is filled with grief.

One such instance is this :

"Your natural beauty is withered; your shoulders have lost their lustre; your soul gets troubled; you have no

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50. Kuṟu: 251.

comfortable sleep in the nights; your face has become sallow; this is the result of your merriment with your lover".

On hearing this, the lady-love is expected to get impatient and make a reply immediately telling all the ennobling qualities of her lord.

The speeches made by the lady-companion to the hero are really worth studying. There are instances where the unique skill of the companion is depicted. In the whole collection except two speeches,[51] that were made by the companion of the hero (பாங்கன்) and one by the heroine in the married state,[52] the person who is addressing the hero is none other than the lady-companion. There are forty one speeches where she addresses the hero[53] in various ways. The striking speech of the companion could be seen in her address to the hero in urging him to accept the lady-love's hand in marriage as early as possible when he on his part was postponing the marriage.

"O Chief of the hill country of fertile slopes abundant with bamboo hedges and jack trees full of fruits at its roots! Like the big jack fruit hanging on the very thin boughs, the soul of the lady-love is very delicate whereas her love for you is very great. Whoever (except yourself) knows this? May you arrange to win her hand early in marriage".[54]

In her address to the hero, she beautifully portrays the desperate condition of the lady-love. Since the hero happens to be a lord of the hillock, the big jack fruits hanging on the slender boughs could not have escaped his vision. So she aptly chooses this simile to give him an idea about the quantum of the love of his beloved.

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51. Kuṟu : 78, 204.
52. Ibid : 49.
53. Ibid : 1, 9, 10, 18, 42, 69, 73, 81, 113, 114, 115, 124, 119, 146, 176, 179, 196, 198, 210, 225, 236, 238, 244, 258, 295, 303, 309, 323, 335, 396, 442, 445, 454, 455, 464, 465, 484, 488, 497, 47, 492.
54. Ibid : 18.

The whole poem constitutes a dramatic monologue. This is called as 'expediting the marriage' (வரைவு கடாவல்).

Sometimes the parents, on seeing their daughter becoming famished seek the aid of a fortune-teller to find out the exact reason for their daughter's illness or languish. ing. At that time, thinking that the situation is going out of her hand, the companion speaks to the soothsayer so as to enable the mother and the foster mother infer about the clandestine love. She addresses the fortune-teller like this: "O sooth-sayer! O fortuneteller! O sibyl with lengthy tresses as white as in colour of the conch! Sing the song. Again and again sing the song of his (hero's) lovely lofty hill".[55]

The companion thus cleverly attempts to reveal to the mother and the foster-moher the secret love of the heroine. The dramatic monologue and the manner in which it is expressed by the lady-companion are really noteworthy.

The denial of the night-tryst to the hero is very suggestive. The hero despite the obstacles in his path during nights comes daily to meet his lady-love. But hearing the dangers of the route that he had to take to come to the night-tryst, the lady-love feels much and it becomes necessary to the companion to deny him the night-tryst. It will not be decent to tell him directly not to come henceforth. So she wisely says thus: "O the lord of the hill! The female monkey of your region, after the death of its male companion, unwilling to face widowhood, leaves its young ones under the care of its relation and commits suicide by leaping down from the top of the hill. Please do not take such a route in the midnight. It will make us miserable".[56]

The idea underlying this poem is that even a female nonkey of his region is not willing to endure separation

55. Kuru : 24.
56. Ibid : 69.

from its partner, then how could his sweet-heart be expected to remain even after hearing the countless difficulties and dangers that he had to face en route. Through this speech, the lady-companion appeals indirectly to the hero to arrange for the marriage early.

In an apostrophe to the moon she suggests to the hero that it is not advisable to come during nights when the full moon makes everything clearly visible.[57]

The lady-companion is really the mouth piece of the heroine. She takes full liberty to speak on her behalf. This is borne out by a number of poems in this collection.

The hero tries to be admitted by his wife when he is returning from a prostitute's house. He sends a bard as a mediator between him and the heroine. But the lady-companion stops the bard at the doorstep and says "Your Lord is very affectionate according to you. The local male sparrow collects the white straw of the sugarcane to be preserved and used at the time of delivery of its mate. But your hero though he possesses rationality has no sympathy for his wife".[58]

Thus she plainly speaks of the unsympathetic attitude of the hero towards his wife, by drawing attention to the affectionate life led by the sparrows. She hinted at the irresponsibility on the part of the hero who was happy hitherto in the company of the prostitute.

There are six references where the companion speaks to the associates of the hero.[59]

There are eighteen poems in the *Kuruntokai* collection where the companion speaks to the heroine pretending not to have seen the hero who has come there.[60] All the while the hero is hearing near the hedge of the hamlet.

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57. Kuṟu : 47.
58. Ibid : 85.
59. Ibid : 45, 61, 85, 127, 459, 479.
60. Ibid : 56, 89, 90. 109, 111, 123 198, 159, 227, 263, 268, 292, 332, 359, 357, 373, 375, 393.

In one case the companion tells the heroine thus: "The days when your lover embraced you warmly and affectionately are quite few; but the public gossip is more clamorous than the victorious uproar of the sworded Kongars at their victory over Atikaṉ, the commander-in-chief of Pacumpūṭ Pāṇṭiyaṉ in the battlefield at Vākai.[61]

Through the mouth of the companion, the poet describes the relationship between the hero and the lady-love which had now resulted in public gossip.

The foster-mother is addressed by the lady-companion on only one instance.[62] When she was asked by the foster-mother about the continued languishing of the lady-love, she tells her that she has chosen a suitor worthy of her in every respect. "It is fate that decides the course of love. There is no use of calling for a diviner to settle the matter who may say that the iliness is due to the wrath of God Muruga".[63]

There is only one address made to the learned scholar who knows the future[64] (அறிவர்) where she asks him whether that is the proper time when the hero promised to return. In an apostrophe to the bee, but of course intended to be heard by the hero, who is there nearby she explains fully the state of the heroine due to the delay of getting married to the hero.[65]

Thus the lady-companion freely speaks with all the characters in the Akam poems. Sometimes, she even laughs at the hero for his actions.[66]

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61. Kuṟu : 393.
62. Ibid : 366.
63. Ibid : 366.
64. Ibid : 277.
65. Ibid : 392.
66. Ibid : 236, 384.

THE HERO

The *Kuruntokai* contains sixtytwo poems having the speeches of the hero and one-third of them are soliloquies. Twenty poems relating to the hero are addressed to himself.[67] This leads us to assume that his mental set up is disturbed since his desire of meeting the lady-love was not invariably successful.

Here is an instance where the hero returned unsuccessfully without meeting his lady-love in a night-tryst. Despite the signal sound he made, his lady-love did not turn up to meet him. Perhaps her foster-mother might have been awake which prevented her from stepping out. At the juncture, the hero addresses his heart thus: "Like the destitute person yearning for the happiness of life, you aspire for a rare object. You understand that the lady who is in love with you is gentle and good natured, but you do not realize that she is difficult to be obtained".[68]

This is a beautiful soliloquy. Here the hero differentiates the two attitudes of the heart. It loves the lady-love very dearly but at the same time, it is reluctant to understand the difficulty of obtaining the maid in love.

On a few occasions, he exclaims thus: "The love proved to be imaginary with the passage of time, i.e. the morning, the day, the desolate evening, the midnight, and the dawn (பொழுதிடை தெரியிற் பொய்யே காமம்). Henceforth it is a blameworthy act to ride on the chariot made of palmyra steaks (stalks). More than that it is ridiculous to live after separation."[69]

Similar to this, there are five other instances where the hero speaks out and all of them are monologues.[70]

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67. Kuṟu : 19, 22, 62, 63, 70, 71, 116, 120, 128, 131, 151, 165, 168, 182, 199, 274, 312, 347, 376. 286.
68. Ibid : 120.
69. Ibid : 32.
70. Ibid : 56, 142, 223, 256, 267.

The hero's friend is called by the name 'Pāṅkan' (பாங்கன்) in Akam literature. He always takes proper care of the hero. On seeing the hero in distress he asks him the reason for the change of demeanour. On such occasions the hero's reply would run thus : "The shouldered young lass, the daughter of the high-lander living in the small hamlet put out the fire of my nature and has completely conquered my heart".[71] The hero's speech forms a drematic dialogue.

The hero addresses the driver of the chariot in six poems.[72] "The days not spent by embracing the heroine from whose forehead emanates the smell of the mullai flower are all useless. Only the days in close proximity with the heroine are the days really worth living here, in this world".[73]

This clearly express the idea of love in the mind of the hero.

There are two apostrophes one to the Mullai buds[74] and the other to the north wind.[75] In the former case although the address is attributed to the north wind, really the hero speaks to the driver of the chariot.

On seeing the Mullai buds blossoming due to the advent of the rainy season, he exclaims to them thus : "You are smiling by showing your white teeth (petals) which are the result of the fresh showers in the red soil. Is it good on your part to laugh at persons who are away from their beloved and enduring loneliness?"

In an apostrophe to the north wind he speaks to the driver of the chariot, pointing out to him the exact location of the small hut in whose court-yard the 'maraiyā' (மரையா) was eating the gooseberry fruit" (நெல்லி).

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71. Kuṟu : 95.
72. Ibid : 100, 233, 237, 250, 323, 400.
73. Ibid : 123, 323.
74. Ibid : 162.
75. Ibid : 235.

Six addresses are made to the lady-companion.[76] The hero returns home wealthy. The lady-companion enquires of him whether he remembered his wife during the absence. The reply runs thus : "Did I not remember her? Remembering, did I not think greatly about her? Did I not, thinking of the very nature of the world and I get confused? Like the floods that, touching even the boughs of the towering trees, diminish itself in its size and in the flow of water only to be ladled out with the hand and finally dry up altogether, my flood of love was immense when I was away from the heroine and has now become very thin on meeting her and ceased to flow after the warmth of the embrace".[77] This is from the pen of Avvaiyār who has knit the feelings of the hero into a beautiful poem.

In an apostrophe to the rain,[78] the hero addresses it to shower in torrents since, he is now in the happy company of his sweet-heart after the journey that he undertook to acquire enough wealth to lead a comfortable life.

The lady-love feels desolate when she learns that separation awaited her immediately after the happy union with her lover. On seeing this, the hero tries to console her by saying : "O tender-hearted lady! If I separate from you, leaving you pine away with grief, let me have many days before me in which mendicants may not turn out for alms from my hands".[79]

Three more poems also deal with the same subject.[80]

Thus the speeches or the dialogues of the hero are varied in the manner and method of expression. Many of the speeches are to his heart. There is no speech directly to the

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76. Kuṟu : 14, 17, 99, 173, 276, 337.
77. Ibid : 99.
78. Ibid : 270.
79. Ibid : 137.
80. Ibid : 2, 4, 300.

heroine. Even in the poem where the hero consoles the heroine over her fear of separation (பிரிவச்சம் உரைத்தல்), the speech of the heroine is only to be inferred. When he decides to go on a journey leaving her so that he might amass wealth for a better mundane life, he speaks to his heart about the gentle and sweet nature of his sweet-heart and every such speech can be regarded as a dramatic monologue.

THE FOSTER-MOTHER

There are nine poems in *Kuruntokai* in which the addresses are made by the foster-mother.[81] In no instance does she speak directly either with the hero or the heroine. Tolkāppiyaṉār mentions in his grammar that the mother will not speak with the hero or the heroine.[82]

After hearing from the lady-companion that the hero and the heroine had married, she reveals to the mother that the intimacy of the lady-love with the young man has become as true as the proverbial truthfulness of the Kosars of Nālūr.[83]

The foster-mother, when she hears of the elopement, goes to the desert (Pālai region) in search of the eloped couple. She strains her eyes, walks hither and thither in her search. She meets a large number of eloping couples and not her own foster-daughter. So she utters in distress that there are more persons than the stars in the sky engaged in secret courtship and elopement.[84] This is really a pathetic cry from the heart of the foster-mother when she could not discern the eloping couple.

After she comes to know of the elopement of her daughter with the hero whom she loved, through the lady-companion she remarks thus : "She (the heroine) would not

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81. Kuṟu : 15, 44, 84, 144, 167, 242, 256, 378, 396.
82. 'கிழவன் தன்னொடும் கிழத்தி தன்னொ'டும்
நற்றாய் கூறல் முற்றத் தோன்றாது —Tol.1448
83. Ibid : 15.
84. Ibid : 44.

even drink milk; would not play with the ball but was always engaged in the company of her play-mates; does she now feel it easy to elope with the hero along the routes of the dry desert where the thirty elephant eagerly awaits the incoming of rain in future!"

Thus the foster-mother connects and compares the past and present states of mind of the heroine.

It is also part of her duty to visit the house of the heroine after her marriage. She visits and observes the happy and dutiful life lead by her foster-daughter and tells the mother what she had seen at the heroine's house.

"With her tender rosy fingers, she mashes the curd and without even cleansing her stained fingers, she tucks up her saree and prepares sour soup, not even minding the smoke spread to her cool and charming water-lily like eyes. On the arrival of her husband to dine he commends the preparations and eats with joy. On hearing his good comments her fair-browned face brightens with subtle joy".[85]

This is a beautiful description of the happy life of the couple by Kūṭalūr Kiḻār. This is a real happening that was observed by the foster-mother. In a dramatic monologue, she beautifully explains in detail the life by her daughter in her new home after marriage.

PROSTITUTE

Five poems[86] are the addresses made by the prostitute mostly to be heard by the associates of the heroine except in one case where she blames another prostitute.[87]

When the prostitute heard that the heroine was talking ill of her, she (the prostitute) speaks out in such a way as to be heard by the associates of the heroine expressing her displeasure.

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85. Kuṟu : 167.
86. Ibid : 8, 80, 164, 364, 370.
87. Ibid : 364.

She blames the heroine like this : "The hero despite the great promise that he had made, has now turned to be so good as to dance to the tune of the mother of his son, i.e., the heroine". The prostitute dislikes to mention the heroine as such. She simply mentions her to be the mother of the hero's son. By implication she does not want to give recognition to the heroine as the wife of the hero. There is an allegory also in her speech which means that she need not be blamed as she had not coveted the hero from the heroine, but that the heroine is not capable enough to attract her husband and keep him always with herself.

Thus the speech of the prostitute is in the form of narration of a dramatic monologue.

THE ON-LOOKERS IN THE DESERT (கண்டோர்)

Three poems are the addresses made by the on-lookers in the desert.[88]

The on-lookers note the 'Kalal' (கழல்) on the feet of the hero and the anklet adorning the ankles of the heroine and thereby come to the conclusion that they are eloping. So they feel sympathy for them.

In another instance the on-lookers speak to themselves. They see the hero and the heroine who are eloping in prime of their youth. They utter thus : "In their childhood days he caught hold of her locks; and in turn she drags the hair on his head; despite the interference of their respective foster-mothers they had not restrained from their harmless fighting. Those days are gone. Now they are inseparably united like the pair of flowers in a garland. This union is effected by fate, nothing but good fate".

Although this is the speech of the on-lookers in the desert, it beautifully portrays the events that occurred in the past when they were children and the present happening when they are eloping.

88. Kuru : 7. 229. 390.

PĀṄKAN (பாங்கன்) OR THE HERO'S FRIEND

There are two poems in the whole collection mentioning the Pāṅkaṉ[89]

On seeing the hero pine away with grief, he asks his friend the real cause of his distress. The hero replies that is is due to the love for a lady. On hearing this, the friend rebukes him for the act of blemish that he has committed. In his opinion he feels that his love for a girl is disgraceful and below the dignity of the hero. The hero replies harshly to his friend thus : "People deprecate love without understanding its true nature. Love is neither of the nature of misery nor of disease. It is more subjective than objective as it is evident in the case of a cow licking and enjoying the tender blades of grass subjectively on an old plateau".[90]

Likewise, the friend of the hero will tell the real character of love for which the hero would be reluctant to take up his advice since love has taken deep roots in his heart.

Thus poems classified as Akam or dealing with love in Sangam literature constitute dramatic poetry, since they are talks expressing emotional experiences of the interlocutors, the hero, the heroine, the lady-companion and others.[91]

In this sense every poem in the *Kuruntokai* collection may be considered as a dramatic monologue uttered by the characters of the Akam poems.

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89. Kuṟu : 78, 204.
90. Ibid : 204.
91. Varadarajan, M. The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature, p. 4.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Aiṅ.	for	Aiṅkuṟunūṟu
Aka.	,,	Akanāṉūṟu
Cilap.	,,	Cilappatikāram
Cintāmaṇi	,,	Cīvaka Cintāmaṇi
Cirupāṇ.	,,	Ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai
Iṟai.	,,	Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ
K. Paraṇi.	,,	Kalinkattupparaṇi
Kali.	,,	Kalittokai
Kampa.	,,	Kamparāmāyaṇam
Kuṟaḷ.	,,	Tirukkuṟaḷ
Kuṟu.	,,	Kuṟuntokai
Kuyil.	,,	Bharathiyar's Kuyilpāṭṭ
Maṇi.	,,	Maṇimēkalai
Maturaik.	,,	Maturaikkāñci
Mullai.	,,	Mullaippāṭṭu
Naṟ.	,,	Naṟṟiṉai
Neṭu.	,,	Neṭunalvāṭai
Pari.	,,	Paripāṭal
Paṭṭi.	,,	Paṭṭiṉappālai
Pattu.	,,	Pattuppāṭṭu
Pattu, Nac.	,,	Pattuppāṭṭu, Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar's Commentary
Perumpāṇ.	,,	Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai
Porun.	,,	Porunarāṟṟuppaṭai
Puṟa.	,,	Puṟaṉāṉūṟṟ
Tirumuru.	,,	Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai
Tivya pra.	,,	Nālāyira Tivyaprapantam
Tol : Iḷam.	,,	Talkāppiyam; Poruḷatikāram Iḷampūraṇar's commentary
Tol : Nac.	,,	Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷatikāram Naccinārkkiniyar's commentary
Tol : Pēr.	,,	Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷatikāram Pērāciriyar's commentaty.

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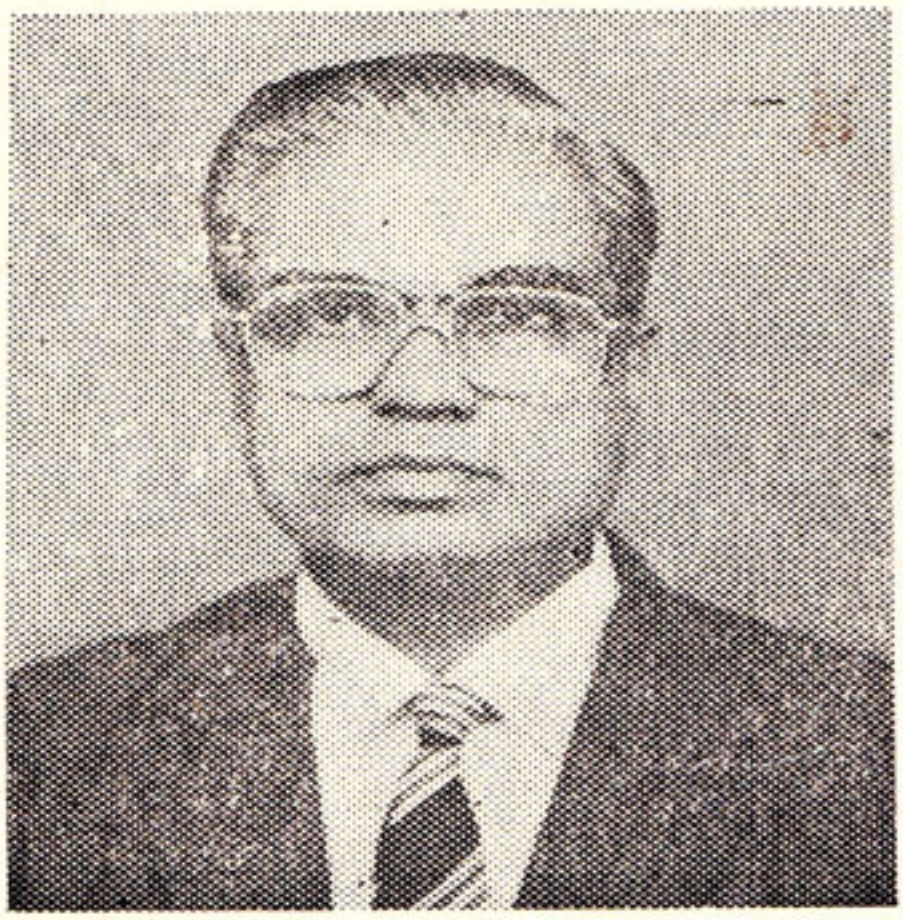

He humbly started his academic career as a Tutor in 1957. His academic position was gradually and steadily elevated from Tutorship to Lecturership, from Lecturership to Readership and then from Readership to Professorship. He became the Professor and Head, Dept. of Tamil of the Madras University in December 1976. He rose to the position of the Head, Department of Tamil Language, Madras University in 1980. With his 32 years of teaching and research experience, he has produced about 30 Ph. D. s and 100 M. Phils. apart from a good number of graduates and post-graduates. He has also published to his credit about 25 books, including four works in English.

His 'Ilakkia Anikal' won the First Prize of the Government of Tamilnadu for the best work on Literary Studies in 1972 and his 'Ceranattuccentamil Ilakkiyankal' won the Cash Prize of Rs. 20,000/- the Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar Award for the Best Research Work in 1987. He also won the cash prize of Rs 5000/- in 1990 along with V.G. Santhanam Ammal Award for the Best Literary Writer in Tamil. Several titles like Pulavar Eru, Cencor pulavar, Canka-nurcelvar, Cankattamilc celvar etc., were awarded to him in recognition of his contribution to Tamil Language and Literature. He has visited all cver India and countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and Mauritius and delivered scholarly lecrures. He has also been serving sincerely in various academic committees of different Universities and the State and the Central Govt. bodies for the cause of higher education and research. He is the senior most Professor of Tamil in the State.