

LECTURES ON HISTORICAL GRAMMAR OF TAMIL

BY

DR. KAMIL ZVELEBIL, PRAGUE



UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS.

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1.1. Dravidian linguistics has, no doubt, achieved some very important results recently, in spite of the fact that a qualitatively new era in Dravidian studies commenced several decades ago, with the work of Indian scholars like L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar and others, but especially with a series of articles written by the outstanding Indo-European comparativist, Professor Thomas Burrow of Oxford, and published in the BSOS and BSOAS between 1940-1950. Owing to these articles and to some excellent works of descriptive nature, like M. B. Emeneau's Kolami or Burrow-Bhattacharya's Parji, as well as a comparative dictionary of the family again by Burrow and Emeneau, Dravidian linguistics is not in its "infancy" any more; we may say that it has reached the prime bloom of its adolescence.

What is now needed most in Dravidian studies is, on the one hand, intensive descriptive work on most of the non-literary languages and, on the other hand, intensive diachronic, historical study of the literary languages, so that a new comparative and historical synthesis may be attempted, since the pioneer and ever-important monumental work of Caldwell is utterly and hopelessly antiquated.

As early as in 1929, Suniti Kumar Chatterji—who had always been deeply interested in Tamil and Dravidian—wrote: "What we want is a series of rigorously scientific grammars of all important Dravidian languages...A series of historical and comparative grammars of Tamil, Telugu and Kannada...would be ideal". This just request of Suniti Kumar Chatterji was either only partly given ear to (as far as Kannada and Malayalam are concerned) or, with regard to Tamil, ignored.

• 1.2. On account of different aspects of a much changed general conception of Indian linguistic history, the importance of Dravidian linguistic studies, especially in the historical plan,

appears in a new and sharp light. The sad negligence of Dravidian languages is fortunately a matter of the past ; it has given way to an ever-increasing interest and to feverish activity, and rightly so, for the study of Dravidian is not only enormously important, even indispensable for a right understanding of the linguistic past and present of India, but it has its own share to contribute to general and applied linguistics. I have in mind, e.g., such problems as the typological and genealogical classification of languages, the important part which the study of every new linguistic structure and type may contribute to the solution of the problems of machine-translation, the questions of teaching South Asian languages, the deeper penetration into the intricate relations between language and society in the cultural patterns of South Asia etc.

1.3. In January 1960, the University of Pennsylvania convened a conference to survey the resources available in the United States for the development of language and area studies of South Asia. The languages of South Asia were arranged into five groups of descending priority. The most important of these languages were listed in groups I and II and comprised Hindi and Urdu, Bengali, Marathi, Persian, Sanskrit, Sinhalese, Telugu and Tamil. Tamil has thus been given its just place among the most important languages of the whole of the immense territory of Southern Asia, and I should like to add that, taking into account its over-all cultural importance, the antiquity and high achievements of its literature, its importance for historical and comparative linguistics and, last but not least, its economic and political role, Tamil belongs, with Hindi and Bengali, to the triad of the most important languages of the Indian subcontinent.

This fact is being appreciated in the West as well as in the East, in the United States as well as in the Soviet Union. Tamil studies developed considerably in Moscow and Leningrad during the past decade and the first important results of Tamil studies in the Socialist countries have appeared or will appear very soon ; these books, papers, research articles as well as translations deal with Tamil linguistics as well as with its literature, with the history of religious thought as well as with modern sociology.

2.1. In spite of all these no attempt has ever been made at a systematic, sufficiently broad and exhaustive, detailed and

strictly scientific investigation and description of the history of Tamil language. With all due respect to such achievements as L. V. Ramaswamy Aiyar's *Morphology of Old Tamil Verb*, or P. S. Subrahmania Sastri's *History of Grammatical Theories*, one is bound to admit that the existing attempts in this direction are either very brief sketches, or they treat of small individual problems, or, finally, some of them are papers of somewhat doubtful validity and shallow thinking.

2.2. It was this negligence of serious historical investigation of Tamil on a broad scale which induced us, in January 1959, when I visited Moscow, to form a team of scholars who would try to fill this gap. Originally, the collective work of the team was planned to last six years, and the analytical part of the work was to be finished within these six years step by step in three successive stages two years each. The results of each successive stage were to be published in three volumes forming the prolegomena to the historical grammar proper which would be compiled and published in Russian and English in Moscow under my editorship and reduction within a year after the last of the three volumes will have appeared.

This original plan is fundamentally being observed, only some minor alterations may occur as the work proceeds but I believe we may expect the historical grammar of Tamil prepared by our team to come duly into the world by the end of 1966.

2.3. The first task which was to be solved as soon as we took the decision to go on with the work on a historical grammar of the Tamil language was the survey of sources of our work. Basically, we may distinguish between two kinds of sources: direct and indirect. The direct sources are the texts in the broadest sense of this term, including literary texts as well as inscriptions on different material, in other words, all written data available. The indirect sources are again of two fundamental kinds: first, the indigenous Tamil grammars of the language (like *Tolkappiyam*, *Viracōliyam*, *Nannūl*, together with treatises on poetics, prosody etc.), and second, all that has ever been written about Tamil in form of European grammars, articles, scholarly papers, books, in short, the bibliography of Tamil linguistics.

3.1. We first dealt with the question of the direct, primary sources, that is the epigraphic and literary texts as the monuments of the past development of the language. After long discussions concerning the method to be adopted we resolved that the description of the history of Tamil should be based upon the analysis of primary sources so that conclusions about the whole would be reached from the investigation of a representative selection.

This conclusion which we have reached was not a freak of chance; it was not accidental but inevitable. Even if electronic computers were employed to solve some tasks of our plan it would call for a much more numerous team of scholars working for a much longer period of time to utilize and analyse every scrap of written information about the Tamil language, or, in other words, to use the entire bulk of all Tamil inscriptions and literary texts preserved, which means practically an infinite and unlimited amount of data. Such mammoth task (an ideal which is reached practically only in one or two languages of the world with very long philological and linguistic tradition) may be perhaps undertaken by future generations of Tamilologists perfectly equipped with all achievements of mathematical linguistics and with all devices of electronics and what not, but, at the same time, with the results of this our preliminary and primary pioneer work as a point of departure for such huge undertaking.

3.2. Thus, a selection of data had to be made and these selected data prepared for analysis. First, we faced a general theoretical problem of primary importance, namely that of preparing our sample.

Linguists, like sampling theorists, agree that it is seldom possible to gather and manipulate a complete body of information. This was typically our case with regard to the complete body of written information about Tamil. Therefore it has become usual to utilize a partial count, and to reach conclusions about the whole (in our case, about the whole course of development of the Tamil language in time) from analysis of a selection or sample. The conclusions, however, are reliable only when an unbiased, truly representative selection of data is gathered (as should be the case in dialect geography) or chosen for analysis (as in the investigation of written records). This can be achieved

by two procedures: either we decide upon a random, or probability sample (this method I used in 1958 and to a great extent still use when gathering my dialectological material), or we prepare a judgment sample, which is an attempt to select representative data by using informed judgment to determine which units are typical for this or that phenomenon or group of phenomena. Such judgment sample is not amenable to statistical analysis based on mathematical theory of probability, as is the probability sample.

In selecting data for analysis and description we employed the second method, i.e. the judicious selection of typical texts to arrive at representative data.

3.3. This second procedure involves some rather difficult problems. Two of them were especially grave but they had to be solved before we started with the actual work. First, it was necessary to fix the upper limit of our description of the history of Tamil, and second, it was necessary to determine what kind of Tamil we should analyse and describe.

The actual state of affairs in any linguistic community is usually much more complicated and diverse than it may seem at first glance or from some superficial or impressionistic descriptions. Thus all major languages of South Asia are typical for their diversity; all of them have regional dialects as well as dialects which may be called social; all of them have special literary forms which differ more or less from the colloquial forms. As far as Tamil is concerned, the present linguistic situation may well be designed by the term diglossia coined happily by Charles A. Ferguson in his very clever paper of the same title published in Word 15. According to Ferguson, diglossia is a situation in which, in addition to the primary regional dialects there is a highly codified, superposed and literary variety which has great prestige, is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes, but which is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary daily conversation. This is typically the case in Tamil. Literary Tamil, used for writing and formal speaking, is never used for ordinary conversation even by the most educated native Tamilians. A Tamil university professor does not say *colkinrēn* when speaking to his wife or children, but *colre:n*. A Tamil

writer does not use the form *illavittal* when talking to his friends, but *illa: tta* .

Apart from literary Tamil, there is a number of local, regional dialects, which have some very typical characteristic features though they are generally not very sharply differentiated, a number of important social dialects, and a standard colloquial used in ordinary conversation among the educated strata of the population, especially in cities and towns. Now, when preparing judgment sample of the texts we faced an important decision to be made: should we describe only STANDARD LITERARY TAMIL, or the COLLOQUIAL standard of modern Tamil as well, or include even the LOCAL and SOCIAL DIALECTS ?

3.4. This was one of the greatest problems we had to solve: which style or type or level of Tamil should become the target language of our description? After some discussions we decided to analyse and describe the Standard Literary Tamil as such, and Colloquial Tamil forms so far as they have been recorded in our written sources, in our texts. I do not deny that such decision might seem as an odd sort of compromise. I shall try to explain how it has been reached.

First, even after quite a cursory survey of Tamil literary and epigraphic records we see that these written sources do not reflect a single, homogenous, uniform type and style of language. This diversity of language is most striking when we compare the language of some inscriptions with the language of the literary works contemporary with those epigraphs. The language of inscriptions differs in many cases, in some important features, from the language of literature, and the differences are of such nature that we are entitled to conclude that they reflect to a great extent the spoken language of the time. Let me quote at random two or three examples: in the Vallam (early Pallava) inscription we find the form *arecaru* for SLT *aracar*, in which the *-e-* and *-u* show clearly the typical features of colloquial speech (weakening of medial vowel in unstressed syllable, and the development of vocalic *Auslaut*); or, in the same inscription, we find *ceyvitta* instead of *ceyvitta*; or in the Kāśakuḍi grant of Nandivarman II we find *kōnōle* instead of SLT *kōnōlai* (the final monophthong is typical for CT). These instances may be found, as we have just seen, even in the earliest Pallava epigraphs and they increase

progressively during the Chola and Pandya periods. The same and even greater diversity may be observed in some literary records, as, e.g., in the language of some of the *siddhars*, which contain many deviations from the literary codified standard of their time. Many literary works from different periods, beginning with the *Puranānūru*, *Kalittokai* and *Cilappatikāram* and ending with contemporary creative writings, especially that of the dramatists (like P. Sambanda Mudaliar), either directly reflect or try to transliterate colloquial forms. What else than reflections of colloquial speech are such variations in the text of *Puram* as *ventirāl* and *venteral*, *paiccūṇ*, and *ṣaccūṇ*, *ṣaiya* and *ṣaya*, *ukappa* and *uvappa*, *cāpa* and *cāva*, just as there seem to be in the same text some reflections of local dialects, e.g. *kōliyūr* for *kōliyūr*. Since we have once resolved that the sources of our analysis of the historical evolution of Tamil will be the representative samples of written (epigraphic as well as literary) texts, we must take into account all reflections of colloquial speech once they were written down in our records. It is one of the principles of exact descriptive method that once a text was adopted as a source, it was adopted in its totality as an integral unit with all its features, however odd or exceptional they may seem.

Now, an objection may be raised: why not, then, include into the project of the historical grammar a thorough investigation and description of contemporary spoken language in its totality? The answer is obvious: the material for analysis was delimited to written sources; and the investigation of colloquial Tamil requires, first, extensive and detailed field-work with informants, exhaustive gathering of field material, but, above all, a method and technique of work entirely different from the investigation of written records. For the same reason we abstained from the analysis and description of local and social dialects of Tamil within the limits of our present work. Regional and social dialects as well as the colloquial standard of Tamil form a subject of an independent special study based purely on synchronic and descriptive techniques, at least at this initial stage. Lack of these descriptive data would allow only guesses about the historical implications of local dialects, and the same is true about symbiotic dialects with social boundaries of the caste organization. A similar lack of data still prevails with regard to the linguistic boundaries between the four great languages of the

Dravidian South, especially between Tamil and Malayalam and Tamil and Kannada. First, descriptive work must be done in all these directions, and only then serious, historical and comparative conclusions may be reached. Once more I should like to repeat, however, that we shall include in our grammar the description of those reflections of colloquial Tamil which are recorded in our written texts, selected for analysis. Thus, e.g., the very first volume of the Prolegomena to the historical grammar contains a study of the language of a short play by *T. Janakiraman* (*Nālu veli nilam*, Madras 1958) which is a more or less consistent reflection of common colloquial speech in writing. Incidentally, this will also force our hand to try and investigate at least tentatively the historical relationship between the literary and the colloquial Tamil which still remains to be found out. At present it is most often convenient, when comparing the forms of these two styles, to arrange them so, as if the literary Tamil forms were historically prior. I am convinced that the majority of the literary forms is historically prior, though I am equally sure that some of the literary forms are later innovations (thus e.g. some of the verb forms or case—endings appearing in Late Old Tamil or especially in Middle Tamil, in the literary jargon of the commentators).

4.1. Another theoretical problem of utmost importance we had to tackle was the problem of the relation between the synchronic and the diachronic treatment of language.

At the first glance, it seems quite simple though, on the other hand, we know that this problem is one of the pivot questions of general linguistics. Let us recollect the words of Sturtevant: "Descriptive linguistics forms the basis for historical linguistics; you cannot treat the history of a language until you know several stages of that language. Comparative linguistics likewise should be based upon a description of several different languages. In short, grammatical science should logically proceed from descriptive, through historical to comparative grammar." It seems to be as simple as that. The history of a language may be found out and understood only by means of comparing the shapes of the system of a language in different stages of its development. Such series of comparisons is the only possible way to arrive at the internal reconstruction of the history of any language. We must not forget, however, that only the results of

the changes are accessible to the linguistic scholar, not the changes, the processes themselves as such. Only different finite stages may be analysed and described with the help of records and thus it is possible, by means of a number of cuts through the vertical axis, to establish the pattern and shape of the system in successive periods of its development. Another problem is how frequent i.e. how close, how dense such cuts should be.

Ultimately, linguistic science must be historical, since it deals with an entity which is developing in time and space, with a historical and social phenomenon, with language. This does not mean, however, that some techniques and working methods at certain stages of the analysis of a language should not be quite descriptive and synchronic in their nature. On the contrary, the descriptive approach, a synchronic description, should underlie any historical and comparative investigation. For valid results, historical linguistics depends upon synchronic data; solid synchronic description is one of the means to arrive at the final goal, the historical description and explanation of the system of a language in its dynamics, in its development. By synchronic description I mean a thorough, total, entire synchronic treatment of a corpus of data, however tedious and wearisome it may seem at the beginning. If, to give an example, I resolve upon, let us say, the anthology of ancient Tamil poetry known to us as *Narrinai* as a "judgment-sample" for the description of Early Old Tamil morphology, I must, first, analyse the entire text, that is all the 401 stanzas of the anthology, and, second, my description must include the inventory of the entire bulk of morphemes and their allomorphs occurring in the entire bulk of the text.

To conclude: we should carefully distinguish between the methods and techniques of synchronic and diachronic treatment, but we should not conceive of the two kinds of approach within the frame of a rigid contradiction. Not "two linguistics"—one, "*linguistique de la langue*" and the other "*linguistique de la parole*"—, but only one single science of linguistics which is itself ultimately a unity of synchrony and diachrony, a synthesis of the descriptive and the historical methods, a unity in which the descriptive approach is the base, and the historical conclusions the superstructure.

4.2. How did we apply this theoretical framework to our task? In the initial stages of our work we are gathering and classifying descriptive data and thus prepare the base of a series of explicit synchronic formulations as inevitable steps for diachronic investigation and historic description. Nothing is more foreign to us than to proclaim "achrony", that is to exclude the time-factor from our investigation. We conceive of language as a system in motion and we investigate linguistic phenomena in their mutual relationship as parts of a system, and, at the same time, in the course of their development, as units changing in time. Now, just as longer utterances are not simply mechanical combinations of smaller units (words or morphemes), so the evolution of the system is not simply a mechanical additive arrangement of successive stages, which might be fully described, understood and explained synchronically. Synchronic description should not be, and in fact cannot be in rigid contrast with the inner dynamics of language. Even the most consciously "pure" synchronic and descriptive approach presupposes at least some historical considerations: thus e.g. the very selection of data to be analyzed, the statement of their relative (not to speak about the absolute) chronology etc., all this can be performed only on the basis of historical knowledge, however tentative it may be, only after a diachronic preview of the language in question.

Unless an earlier and a later stage have each been subjected to rigorous synchronic analysis, linguistic change cannot be formulated properly. Any historical statement contains at least two synchronic statements. And, at the same time, the picture of the present-day language, presented in a synchronic and descriptive way, is not and cannot be distorted by any historical considerations.

To sum up: The best way to bring in the chronological factor is to compare two or more *relatively complete* and *independent* descriptions of the situation separated by a known (or guessed) interval of time and this is what we are aiming at in the first stages of our work, characterized by the publication of a series of prolegomena. The ultimate goal to arrive at is to bring out a historical grammar of Tamil as a linguistic system variable in time,

5.1. I have stated that so far no serious attempt has been done to publish a complete historical grammar of Tamil. There are various reasons for this fact: one obvious reason is the enormous quantity of data offered by a language with approximately two thousand years of recorded, uninterrupted history behind it. Another, more subtle and more important reason is probably the prevailing notion of Tamil as "preserving remarkably its identity through the ages". Scholars dealing with Tamil are usually under the impression that Tamil is characteristically and remarkably stable, "immutable", "rigid", "conservative" and what not. The degree of phonetic and phonemic change within the time-depth of two thousand years of recorded development is found to be not very great. This view is supported by the comparison with various languages of the Indo-European family in which, truly enough, the degree of changes is relatively greater as time passes; it is also supported by the fact that the degree of phonetic divergence between the different languages of the Dravidian family is not very great. But, fundamentally, the notion of Tamil as being "remarkably immutable" and "rigid" through the ages is incorrect, and is caused by incorrect approach. It is only one style of Tamil, the literary standard, which is stable, immutable and rigid. The reasons for this stability are not so much linguistic as extralinguistic; they should not be sought in the inherent linguistic structure of Tamil but in the social and cultural factors-in short, in the simple fact that it is the written language, the literary style. Standard Literary Tamil is stable and immutable precisely because it is Standard Literary Tamil, a style which nearly ceased to develop, a language which is never used as a spoken language. Tamil as a whole, including the living, the spoken language, the common speech, is no exception to the general rules of linguistic change; on the other hand, some of the general features of linguistic change may be neatly and beautifully illustrated by Tamil examples.

Only those scholars who do not ignore colloquial Tamil speech approach the history of the language from the right angle. I have in mind, e.g. Professor Varadarajan's linguistic essays in which he does not hesitate to quote illustrations from colloquial Tamil, distinguishing between *eluttuvalakku* and *pēccuvalakku*, between *eluttuttamil* and *pēccuttamil*, saying that "we write *onru*, we say *onnu*; we write *vaituvittan*, we say *vaccittan*." This realistic

approach enables Dr. Varadarajan to apply the rules of the phonological changes he had observed in *pēccuvalakku* to the history of the literary language, and thus to reach valid and correct conclusions. cf. his essay *vallān vakuttatē vāykkal*, in *moḷiyial kaṭṭuraikal*, 1st part, p. 66.

Another of the contemporary Tamil scholars, Professor T. P. Meenakshisundaram, is no less realistic than Dr. Varadarajan in this respect. I fully agree with him when he says, "*potu makkaḷ moḷiyaiyum nām kavanikka vēṇṭum.*" He himself pays much attention to the spoken languages of the people, cf. as an instance his "Nasal sounds in Tamil" (Indian Linguistics, 1957), which is another application of synchronic observations of a feature of colloquial speech to the history of the language as a whole. Or, finally, let me remember the pioneer work of the late Professor R.P. Sethu Pillai, his outstanding and path-breaking paper 'Tamil-Literary and Colloquial'.

It is a significant fact that the three most eminent Tamil scholars of our time, R. P. Sethu Pillai, M. Varadarajan and T. P. Meenakshisundaram do not hesitate to admit the importance of investigating the spoken form of Tamil side by side with the literary language, and that they themselves dedicate their time and attention to *potuppēccuttamil*, even if, if I may say so, not quite to the degree which would be necessary.

To return to our historical grammar: we felt that there was only one possible way to overcome the first obstacle which was mentioned in this lecture - the immense quantity of the records at our disposal: this was to form a team and to work collectively. Only a team of investigators is capable to attack successfully such difficult task as to compile and publish a big historical grammar of Tamil based upon detailed analysis and minute description of a number of texts, selected as representative of every recorded stage of the evolution of Tamil during the two thousand years of its history.

6.1. So far, three papers have been prepared to be published as Prolegomena to the Historical Grammar of Tamil, Number I, by the end of 1962 in Moscow. They are the fruit of our labours on this task during the last two years.

Some time before that, I have analysed, as a sort of Vorarbeit to the historical treatment of Tamil, the syntax of one

entire Early Old Tamil text, the *Narrinai*, a well-known collection of poems belonging to the *Ettuttokai* anthology. The results of this analysis which was finished more than two years ago, and still remains to be printed or mimeographed, are based largely on the traditional approach towards the syntactical system of language. I shall try to outline very briefly the conclusions reached by me after having analysed the 401 stanzas of *Nairrnai*.

1. Mere juxtaposition of bases with zero allomorphs seems to be one of the characteristic features of early Tamil structure. The meaning is often determined by situation and context alone, sometimes by features of order. The language of EOT poetry shows a high degree of economy. The constructions are predominantly of nominal character: a chain of nouns, joined by nominal forms of verbs, ended by a noun-predicate, or by a finite verb-form which is ultimately analysable into a sequence of nominal forms (verb noun or participial noun or verb stem plus personal pronoun).

2. Early Old Tamil, however-even the literary style of it-is not a language of neat and distinct, homogenous character. We may witness the process of the origin and development of regular verbal flexion of the pronominal type, the origin of well-marked tense-categories, the disintegration of clusters of bases with zero-terminations and the origin of clusters of clauses with well-shaped markers of temporal, causal, conditional etc. relations.

3. The word order is significant in EOT, but not obligatory; with the historical development of literary Tamil, word-order tends to become more fixed. In principle, that which is dependent precedes that on which it depends or which governs it. The order of basic constituents of a subject-predicate sentence is subject-predicate, in attributive constructions, attribute-head, in directive constructions, object-verb. However, as already stressed, this order is not at all obligatory and we often find the order V,O or S,P,O or even P,O,S.

4. The verb stem *iru*, to sit, to remain, to be - the *verbum existentiae par excellence* of later Tamil, is not at all found in the text of NT in the function of the predicative verbs of existence.

Nominal sentences, and the verb stem *aku*, as well as pronominalized forms of the base *u* – are used instead.

5. The semantic and functional differentiation of the two negative bases *il*– and *al*– does not seem to have been fully accomplished during the Old Tamil period.

6. The plural morpheme – *ka* is found in the whole text of NT in one isolated instance (293.2). Apart from this, it is used regularly only with the root *mak*– in *makkal*, *makkal*. The development of this suffix was traced by Dr. M. Varadarajan in his essay *ka* *perra* *peruvalvu* in *moliyiyar katturaikal*, I, p. 76 ff.

7. A very important formation is the so-called pronominalised noun which is, as predicate, capable of subjects and objects which forms a sort of transition between the nominal and verbal spheres (it is not, however, a distinct and independent part-of-speech!).

8. It seems that in the Proto-Tamil and pre-Tamil stages the verb nouns (or possibly even verb stems, and participial nouns) were used, as determinative constituents plus personal pronouns as determinates, placed at the end of utterances and filling the functional slot of predicates. These non-finite verbal determinants plus the pronominal subjects may have amalgamated later into a new type of finite verbal flexion and the subject appeared again at the beginning (optionally, of course), as the pronoun-substitute placed before the verb-predicate : *ariku yan* - *ariku-v-an yan* *arikuvan*, I know, *Puram* 109.14. This is *in nuce* my theory of the origin of finite verbal flexion in Tamil.

The use of such verb nouns and/or participial nouns as predicates in EOT is one of the most typical features of this earliest attested stage of Tamil, and we may fortunately witness this very use in the most ancient literary records. Such verb nouns and/or participial nouns are capable of nominal subjects in the *casus energeticus*, cf. *yan pirakkē*, I shall be born, *nōkō yanē*, I have verily pain, *annai kanniyatu*, mother was thinking, *nī varutal*, thou hast come. In the text of *Narrinai*, the ratio of predicates expressed by finite verb forms to those expressed by verb nouns and participial nouns is circa 5 : 2 which shows that this use ceased to be productive in the EOT stage itself. Later development brought in fact complete extinction of this use in the literary

standard; however, the use of verb and / or participial nouns filling the functional slots of predicates has been preserved in colloquial Tamil and in the style which imitates spoken language, cf. coll. *nān enkē utkaruvatu*, or *nām enna ceyvatu*, *enna ceykiratu*, or *nī appaṭi collukirata illaiyā?* which may be compared with the instance from NT, already quoted and structurally identical, *annai kaṇṇiyatu*.

9. Three distinct morphological tense formations are found in the text of NT: past perfect, aorist-future and the type with the morpheme *-t-* which has predominantly *present* and *future* signification. It may be said here *en passant* that I believe this type with the morpheme *-t-* attested from early Tamil sources to have been preserved in the South-Western dialects of Tamil in such present forms as *ni: collute:*, you sg. say, or *na:n varute:n*, I am coming, I shall come. There is no distinct present tense formation in Early Old Tamil. The opposition of tenses in the system of EOT seems to have been "perfective past versus imperfective future" which indicates perhaps a primary aspectual (and not temporal) dichotomy.

10. No distinct and well-formed passive voice is found in EOT. There is thus no place for the opposition active vs. passive.

11. The question whether adjectives as a word-class have existed in Tamil or not may be answered in the affirmative. In EOT we find quite a number of adjective stems; they are syntactically in attributive construction with the noun which they precede and qualify, and they do not agree with the head-noun in gender or number. It is unfortunate that these primary adjectives have been entirely ignored by the compilers of the Tamil Lexicon. In this controversy about adjectives in Dravidian I take fully the side of Emeneau and Burrow against the opinion of Jules Bloch and Andronov (now mollified) who are inclined to deny the existence of original adjective stems in Dravidian.

12. The scheme of EOT cases and their terminations is according to the text of *Narriani*, as follows:

1. nominative: zero
2. accusative: zero (*ahrinai* nouns), syntactic sandhi, *-ai* (*nyartinai* n.), accusative-oblique (pronouns);

3. sociative :—*oṭu, -ōṭu, -uṭan* ;
4. instrumental :—*kontu, -oṭu, -in* ;
5. dative :—*ku/-kku* ;
6. locative-ablative :—*in* ;
7. genitive : obl. in *-attu* ; unvoicing of final vd, plosive ;
-*atu, -in* ;
8. relative :—*vayin*

13. The basic characteristic feature of Early Old Tamil structure is the fact that the parts of the system of expression are rather loosely connected with the parts of the system of content. Various formal features are yet little differentiated functionally and vice versa. Most of the grammatical relations may be expressed by mere juxtaposition of stems with zero terminations. This may certainly be a feature of the literary jargon but, at the same time, it seems to reflect an earlier stage of historical development. A relatively limited number of formal devices serves to express often rather promiscuously variagated patterns of grammatical meanings ; on the other hand, some of the non-productive and worn-out forms which seem to be archaic fossils are being disposed of partly at the EOT stage itself. The synchronic and diachronic stability of Literary Tamil is, however, one of the characteristic features of that style of language.

This work on *Narriṇai* was in many respects helpful to our later studies. I have committed a number of mistakes during this first attempt at a thorough and exact syntactic analysis and description of Old Tamil. Above all, I have found out that the traditional approach towards syntax, in terms of dichotomic cuttings into two basic constituents (the subject and the predicate) was inadequate and not entirely satisfactory. Thus began my quest for another and better method and technique of syntactic analysis.

On the other hand, some of the results of this careful investigation of one entire text proved valid and finally I was able to use some of the conclusions as a welcome point of departure for my further work.

The three papers which are included in the first volume of the Prolegomena are my own description of Early Old Tamil based

on the analysis of the language of *Perunkunṛūr Kilār* (an early Sangam poet), the description of the language of *Tirukkural* by my Soviet colleague Glazov, and finally the description of the language of a short *nāṭakam* by *T. Janakirāman* from the pen of M. S. Andronov.

6.2. My analysis of Early Old Tamil will be supplemented (in the second volume) by the analysis of the stanzas composed by two other ancient poets, *Kallātanār* and *Mamūlanār*. Incidentally I should like to explain why these particular texts were selected as representative of the Early Old Tamil period of development.

As far as this first recorded stage of the development of Tamil is concerned, the records of that period have been preserved in the two anthologies of poems, *Eṭṭuttokai* and *Pattuppaiṭṭu* (and of course in the *Tolkappiyam* which belongs most probably to a slightly earlier date).

Considerations about the synchronism suggested by a later work, the *Cilappatikāram*, between the Chera monarch *Cen-kuttuvan* and king Gajabahu I of Ceylon (173-195 of our era) which may be accepted as historical on the ground of other lines of evidence derived from archaeology, Greek and Latin sources and the general development of history in South and North India, lead us to the conclusion that it is fairly possible to date not only relatively but to some extent also absolutely the lifetimes of a number of poets of the Sangam era. The tradition which ascribes different stanzas of those early anthologies to different individual authors is basically right, too.

Under such circumstances it was possible, when selecting the material for analysis, to proceed along three different lines. First, I might have chosen more or less wishfully out of every anthology a number of stanzas irrespective of their authors, and thus acquire a typical random sample of the texts; or, I might have analysed one or two entire anthologies *in toto*; or, finally, it was possible to prepare a judicious sample, i.e. to take all poems ascribed to a single chosen author and analyse them in their entirety as the works of that single author. This third method was employed since the authorship ascribed to different poems and consequently their relative and to an extent also their absolute chronology may be at least approximately determined.

Out of the great bulk of the poems preserved in the Eṭṭutokai anthologies I have selected the pieces composed by (or ascribed to) *Peruṅkunṛūr Kīlār*, *Kallāṭanār* and *Māmūlanār*. These three poets were chosen as being representative of the three successive stages of the development of EARLY OLD TAMIL LITERARY LANGUAGE since all of them may be more or less safely dated and since the quantity of lines they composed is just the right number for conclusions to be statistically valid while the analysis itself does not become too tiresome a burden. Their works cover roughly the period of 250 years, between cca 16°—360 of our era. *Peruṅkunṛūr Kīlār* belongs to the early years of the Sangam epoch, *Kallāṭanār* lived round about the middle of it (cca 215 A. D.) and *Māmūlanār* belongs to the closing years of the era (cca 300 A. D.).

6.3. Quite a number of problems emerged during the last two years while we were engaged in the analysis of our chosen texts. I shall outline some of them.

In morphophonemic and morphemic analysis it was quite advantageous to base the segmentation of larger units on the hypothesis of the *monosyllabicity of roots* in Tamil and Dravidian (formulated best by Bh. Krishnamurti.) It is to be hoped now that the labours of Burrow and Emeneau, of Krishnamurti and ourselves will prove that the monosyllabicity of roots in Dravidian is not a mere hypothesis but an established fact of the Dravidian structure.

It was also necessary to solve the problem of the parts-of-speech system of Tamil. As far as this question was concerned, in the discussions among Glazov, Andronov, Rudin and myself we have reached the following conclusions. First, the definition of a part of speech valid for Tamil: a part of speech is a form class of stems which show similar behaviour in inflection, in syntax, or in both. The stems which follow a pattern of usage but do not follow some other patterns may be grouped into a class. Now, the Tamil parts-of-speech system is as follows:

1. Nouns 1.1. substantive (and numerals) 1. 2. Pronouns. In morphology and syntax, all nouns behave alike; that numerals are substantives with specified meaning in Tamil is quite obvious; pronouns are a special subclass of nouns since they are unlike

nouns classified for person, and in the 1. p.pl. they have the category inclusiveness: exclusiveness. Otherwise they behave like nouns; functionally, they are substitutes.

2. Adjectives 2.1. adjectives proper 2.2. pronominal adjectives. Adjectives form a special part of speech which behaves in a totally different way than nouns in one or two most basic points: adjectives are not inflected for case and number like nouns, they may not be subjects of clauses like nouns. Nevertheless they form a NA class with nouns which is based on similar behaviour in syntax, cf. *atu pon*, that—gold, *atu ponnakaram*, that—golden town, just like *atu putu nakaram*, that—new town, etc. Proper adjectives, like *peru*, *ciru*, *nal*, *netu*, *putu* etc., and pronominal adjectives, that is proclitic deictic adjectives like *i*—, this, *a*—that both qualify the head they precede in Qualifier Head constructions.

3. Verbs. The existence of verbs as a stem-class is of course not disputed in Tamil. With adjectives, verbs form an AV class based on similar behaviour in such constructions as *avan pōvan*, he will-go,⁹ which cf. with *avan nallavan*, he is—good, fem. *aval pōval* cf. with *aval nallaval*; adjectives are inflected for gender, but not for tense and mode as verbs. Nouns, adjectives and verbs form one NAV class based on similar behaviour in constructions like *nān atiyen*, *nān nallēn*—*nān pōven*. This phenomenon is usually called “conjugation” of nouns and adjectives; the resulting forms were designed by Jules Bloch as “*noms pronominalisées*”, pronominalized nouns; thus we see that these pronominalized (or personal) nouns are not a special class of stems, a special part of speech, but that they form a single NAV class and that they behave very much like nouns.

4. Particles and Adverbs are uninflected stems and may be divided (according to their behaviour in syntax and according to their meaning) into four subclasses: proper particles like *man*, enclitics like *-um*, *-ā*, *-ē*, *-ō*, adverbs like *inī*, and interjections plus onomatopoeic words.

According to Charles F. Hockett (A Course, p. 265), the parts-of-speech system of a language belongs, as its first unit, to the grammatical core of a language, i.e. to “the essential grammatical tenor” of a language. I think that the setting up of the

part-of-speech system of Tamil was one of our most important results reached so far. Therefore I shall once more give the scheme here :

DECLINABLES

- | | | | | |
|----|------------|--|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | Nouns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Substantives/ and numerals/ 1. 2. Pronouns | } NA
class | } NAV
class |
| 2. | Adjectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. 1. Proper adjectives 2. 2. Pronominal adjectives | | |
| 3. | Verbs | | | |

INDECLINABLES

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 4. Particles and Adverbs— | —4. 1. Proper particles |
| | —4. 2. Adverbs |
| | —4. 3. Enclitics |
| | —4. 4. Interjections and
onomat. words |

6.4. One of the most difficult problems was (and still remains) the problem of syntax : how to analyse and describe the structure of units larger than words. In the syntactic analysis each of us is proceeding along his own way and these ways may differ considerably.

I myself have tried to apply the so-called TAGMEMIC model for the analysis and description of the syntax of Tamil, and the string constituent analysis to Tamil structure. As the tagmemic approach proved most operative and fruitful in my first attempts, I have been using it all along and proceed to use it, to develop it on new material, and hope to contribute my own modest share to the theory and method as well.

This model for analysis and description was first suggested by Professor Kenneth L. Pike (1954, 1955, 1960), and later it was developed and modified by R. Longacre, Velma B. Pickett, Benjamin Elson and some other scholars. The basic assumptions of this model may be summed up as follows : *first*, there is no

sharp division between language and non-language ; linguistic and extralinguistic behaviour form one basic pattern which should be often studied as a unity ; language should always be looked upon as a part of social process and social activity ; *second*, the linguistic continuum is formed by functional spots or slots, filled by appropriate fillers ; language is a system of filled slots ; these substitution points or functional slots along with the classes found at those points, i.e. along with their fillers, form a unity which is called TAGMEME (hence, tagmemic model) ; tagmemes may be defined as correlations of grammatical functions or slots with classes of mutually substitutable items occurring in those slots. This slot-class correlation has a distribution within the grammatical hierarchy of a language ; *third*, language is a form-meaning composite ; the linguist must work both with form and with meaning from the beginning, and keep both of them in his definitions to the end ; *fourth*, the tagmemic model does not begin with the assumption of binary division into immediate constituents, but begins rather with groupings of substitution forms appropriate to the language structure so that it views linguistic structure ordered like beads on a string. In tagmemic model we do not look for dichotomous cuts but for meaningful groupings at any given level ; grammatical hierarchy is composed of several levels ; sometimes, a string of tagmemes is found to be embedded in another string at the same level ; we then speak about layerings.

Let me demonstrate the application of tagmemic principles and string constituent analysis on a very short Tamil inscription on the earliest Tamil inscription so far discovered and published properly. It is the Tirunatharundra Inscription of cca 400 A. D. published by T. A. Gopinatha Rao and it reads as follows :

aimpattēlana|

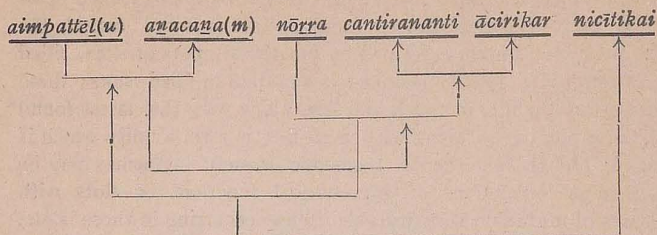
canannōrra|

cantirananti ā|

cirikar nicitikai

“ The *niśidikā* Chandranandi Acharya who (died) observing fifty-seven days fasting. ” The linguistic analysis of this very

brief epigraph in terms of tagmemic theory and method may be symbolized in the following way :



Or, we may symbolize the structure as follows :

<u>aimpattēl(u)</u>	<u>ēlu</u>	<u>anacana(m)</u>	<u>nōrra</u>	<u>cantirananti</u>	<u>ācivikar</u>	<u>nicitikai</u>
.....
.....
Qual Quant		Head	Qual	Head		
.....
Obj Modifier			Head			
.....
			Qual Poss			Head
.....

The boundaries of this inscription are determined only by space before and after the text. There are no overt openers or closers here as in most later inscriptions (in later epigraphs we may find such openers as *śrīrastu*, *śrīh* etc.)

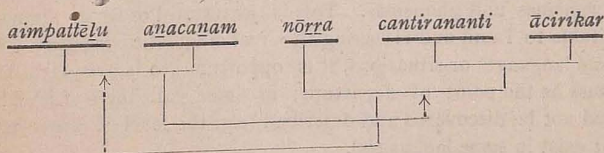
The TEXT SLOT is filled entirely by an independent non-clause sentence (we define a clause as a structure which is manifested by a subject tagmeme and by some kind of predicate, which is not the case here, therefore non-clause sentence; on the other hand, it is an independent sentence since it may be uttered or written alone as a complete independent utterance). The independent non-clause SENTENCE SLOT is filled entirely by a POSSESSOR-HEAD PHRASE (and hence the sentence level is

identical here with a highly inclusive phrase-level) which may be symbolized by the so-called occurrence formula \pm Qual Poss : Nphr + H:n which should be read, an optional qualifier possessor slot filled by a noun-phrase followed by an obligatory head slot filled by a noun.

The Nphr filling the Qual Poss slot is composed of an object modifier slot filled by a noun-phrase, and of a head slot filled by another noun phrase ; the formula is \pm Obj Mod : Nphr + H : Nphr.

The HEAD SLOT is filled by a Nphr of the formula \pm Qual :relpart + H:Nphr. Now, the Nphr filling the Head slot here, in this structure, may be analysed in two ways: either it is a coordinate Nphr of + Item 1 (*cantirananti*) \pm Item 2 (*ācirikar*), or, *ācirikar*, the more general term, is identified by *cantirananti*, a personal name ; if so, the formula would be \pm Qual Ident : n + H : n.

The OBJECT MODIFIER slot is filled by the Nphr *aimpattēlu anacanam*. The relations between the Obj Mod filler and the H slot filler may be symbolized as



We observe here rather intricate relations which I shall not try to describe in detail here. The Obj Modifier slot is filled by the Nphr *aimpattēlu anacanam* the formula of which is \pm Qual Quant:num + H:n, which read optional qualifier quantifier slot filled by numeral *aimpattēlu* followed by obligatory head slot filled by noun *anacanam*.

In this way, tagmemic analysis has disclosed the hierarchic structure of this independent non-clause sentence, it has helped us to find out different levels and layerings, i.e. the level of the text, the level of non-clause independent sentence identical with an inclusive phrase-level, the level of another inclusive phrase, the level of included phrases, and finally the levels of words. At this point, syntax and morphology meet, and we may proceed deeper into still lower levels in the structure, to morphemes and

phonemes. Proceeding in this way, we discover eight root-morphemes : *ai-*, *pat(u-*, *ēl(u*, *anacanam-*, *nōl-*, *cantiranantī-*, *acirika-*, *nicitikai*. We see at once that TAMIL roots are monosyllabic ; four of the eight roots (the polysyllabic items) are Indo-Aryan loanwords. At the same time, we discover derivational, derivational-inflectional and inflectional morphemes : *-ar-*, *t(u* in oblique *pattu*, *-t-* in past relative participle *nōrra* < **nōl -ta*, and *-a* in the same form. We describe morphophonemic and syntactophonemic changes like *ai - m - patt(u* ,like *anacanam + nōrra* > *anacanannōrra* etc. Comparing the IA originals (Sanskrit or Prakrit or Pali) with the Tamil loans we find out the rules operating during loan-processes. Finally we reach the level of phonemes and their graphemic representation and we describe roots, stems and affixes in terms of vowel and consonant phonemes.

A significant fact emerges from what has been just outlined : the procedure in tagmemic analysis starts with the largest units and comes down to the smallest portions : from the total text down the hierarchy through sentences, clauses, phrases, words to morphemes and phonemes. This is the natural order of analysis suitable to Tamil and reflecting the real linguistic structure. In some languages or situations, it is opportune to start with the clause as the point of departure ; in some, all these LEVELS need not be discovered and described (e.g. the level of words may not exist in some languages).

The process may seem tiresome and slow at the beginning ; it may actually be so when starting the analysis ; however, as soon as we discover the real structure of the particular language, it is much more easy and it goes on fairly quickly. In this way we analyse every scrap of material which we have chosen as our representative data and the advantage is the very fact that nothing remains unanalyzed and undescribed.

7.1. Our team is now engaged in the compilation of the second volume of the prolegomena. The analysis of the records will be finished probably by the end of 1963 and the volume will comprise the description of Early Old Tamil based on the analysis of *Kallaṭṭanar*' and *Māmūlanar*'s poems, and the description of the language of earliest Tamil inscriptions of the Pallava and early Chola periods (by myself) ; it will further include study of

the language of *Cilappatikāram* by J. J. Glazov, a description of the language of *Nalatiyar* and *Periyapurāṇam* by Pjatigorskij, and finally a description of modern literary Tamil based on the analysis of selected prose works of Bharathi and Puthumaipittan.

7.2. I cannot say yet with certainty which texts and epigraphs will be analysed next during the third stage of our work. I am sure now that we will include *Tolkāppiyam*, *Kalittokai*, *Villiputtūrār Bharatam*, medieval commentaries, *Appar's* and *Periyālvār's* poetry, *Kamban's* language, medieval and later inscriptions, the works of the *Siddhar*, some of the ballads, *Ramalinga Swami's* songs, *Rajam Aiyar's* novel, *Kalki's* prose and some recent contemporary writings. By the end of 1965 we would like to have the analytical stage of our work completed. Then we shall tackle the task of the compilation of the historical grammar proper which will represent the diachronic elaboration of the results reached by a series of synchronic descriptions plus the utilization of all indirect sources and information and our entire experience not included within the volumes of the progmena.

8. At present we are unable to state any definite historical conclusions about anything. We have reached certain synchronic, structural conclusions which may prove operative, too, on the diachronic level (as e.g. the setting up of the parts-of-speech system, or the monosyllabicity of root-morphemes). We are also able to make certain inferences with regard to our future work. We have naturally not closed our eyes before some historical and comparative problems which so to say emerged before us *sua sponte* and which we had to, or felt inclined to, tackle.

8.1. Among the first fruits of our labours, I should like to mention several more or less important results which may or may not prove valid in our future work, but which will form certainly a good point of departure for it.

First, there is the hypothesis about the origin of the present tense suffix in Tamil formulated by Andronov in Tamil Culture IX, 2. Andronov maintains that the present tense suffix *-kinr-* consists of *-k-*, a suffix attached to the root of the verb, and *inr-*,

the past tense base (=root plus *-t-*) of the verb *-il-* which originally was not only negative in its meaning. I am inclined to agree with his conclusions.

Then there is the reconstruction of Proto-Tamil and Proto-Dravidian personal pronouns by myself, published in Indo-Iranian Journal under the title Personal Pronouns in Tamil and Dravidian. I should like to add a few remarks to that somewhat impressionistic and very brief paper.

According to my conviction, the original PDr forms of personal pronouns may be reconstructed in a neat system of six items :

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. p. sg. * <i>ān</i> , obl. * <i>an</i> | 1. p. pl. * <i>ām</i> , obl. * <i>am</i> |
| 2. p. sg. * <i>in</i> , obl. * <i>in</i> | 2. p. pl. * <i>im</i> , obl. * <i>im</i> |
| 3. p. sg. * <i>tān</i> , obl. * <i>tan</i> | 3. p. pl. * <i>tām</i> obl. * <i>tam</i> |

These forms may be correlated with the very early PDr reconstructed stage before a distinct dialect splitting within the fairly homogeneous proto-language took place.

During the PDr stage itself, some of the dialects, notably those which became the base for later PSDt dialect and languages, and may be for later PNDr, developed a prothetic **y-* (phonetically perhaps as a sort of palatal onglide [i]) in the 1st persons; this **y* preceding the vowel caused the contrast between *ā* and *ē* in this position to be neutralized. Hence the reconstructions **yāñ* (**yēñ* with obl. **an*)**en* may be set up. Most of the languages, notably Parji, Kolami, Naiki, Ollari, Gaḍba, Kota, Toda, Old Kannaḍa, Kui and Gond have preserved in their current forms the most ancient reconstruction, viz. **ān*. Thus I consider the forms **yān* (**yēn* and **yām*)**yem* as later developments of earlier **ān* and *an*.

The initial **ñ-* in the reconstructions **nan* (**nen* is secondary) **y-* is primary. These forms belong to late PDr stage, being typical for PSDr, especially for the sub-group Tamil—Malayalam.

Initial **n-* in Tamil, Kannaḍa and Telugu forms is the latest development in the personal pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons.

Most probably it is a back-formation from very late PDr inclusive pl. **nām*. A reflection of this is the fact that the opposition inclusive: exclusive had been still very weak in the Old Tamil period itself. It is also to be noted that OKa has *ān*, and later only *nānu*, that Old Te has *ēnu*, later *nēnu*. The primary and at the early stage of evolution of PDr, the only distinction was sg. **n* : pl. **-m* (**ān* vs. **ām*, etc.).

Initial *n*- in 2. p. sg. and pl. is also later; the original forms were, as stated above, **in*, obl. *in*, **im*, obl. **im*. Initial **n*—is on analogy with the 1. p. sg. and pl.

3. p. sg. and pl. was originally **tān* (**tan* and **tām*) **tam* (both for masculine and feminine gender). In some ancient literary texts as well as in some local dialects the use of *tān* and *tām* as personal pronouns of 3. p. sg. and pl. has been preserved. Only later, the demonstrative pronouns, going back in the masculine gender to the two PDr reconstructions, **avan*, **avant* (Bh. Krishnamurti), began to be used as personal pronouns, and *tān*, *tām* became reflexive.

To sum up: The forms with initial vowels **a*-, **i*- in the 1st and 2nd p. were original in PDr and have been preserved in most non-literary languages of the central group, notably in Parji, Ollari, Kolami, Naiki and Gadba. Forms with initial **y*-, later, in some languages **ñ*-, are secondary, though still PDr, and reflect some dialectal diversity within the PDr family, causing the fluctuation of the vowel quality (*ā*)(*ē*). Forms with initial **n*- are the last back-formations from late PDr incl. pl. **nām*, and, in some languages, they belong to a pre-stage, in other (Tamil, Kannada, Telugu) to the fully historical stage of evolution.

There are some other preliminary studies of historical nature which may be used by us in our future work. I shall quote only at random Andronov's 'On the Future Tense Base in Tamil' (Tamil Culture VIII. 3), my own 'Dative in Early Old Tamil' (III) and some others.

I should like to mention some other problem, not yet elaborated and published anywhere. This is the identification of the Old Tamil tense-form with the morpheme *-t-* with the South-Western (Tirunelveli) dialect present tense with (*-t-*).

In the Sangam texts and in some slightly later records such as the *Tirukkural* we come across a strange tense-type formed by the morpheme *-t-*; I quote at random *ancutum yām* (*Narriṇai*) (NT) 125.5, *nammanai vāttum*, NT 129.6, *tuncutiyo*, ib. 154.7, *muyānkuti*, ib. 260.5, *nāṇuti*, ib. 39.2, or from other texts, *ṭōkuti*, *Kalittokai* 10, *kāṇṭirō*, *Puram* 286 or *iḷattum*, *Kural* 1250. The commentators are not very certain about the grammatical meaning of this tense-type; *Teyvaccilaiyār* says that it may have future or present meaning according to context, *Cēnāvaraiyār* speaks about the future meaning, *Naccinārkkiniyār* says that it is future as a rule, but occasionally present or even past, *Ḥampūranār* says that forms like *uṇṭi* or *tinri* are past and *varutum* is future, etc; my investigation of this tense-form has shown that it has very predominantly present or future imperfective meaning, exceptionally future perfective. Now I am inclined to believe that the peculiar present-tense formed in South-Western Tamil dialects with the morpheme (*t*) is a reflection of this very ancient tense-type with *-t-*. I have in mind such dialect forms, current in Tirunelveli, as [sollude:] you-sg. say, [aḷude:], you weep, [tu: n gude:] you sleep, (quoting from my material), or *varute: n* I come, *collutiya*, you-pl. say, *pe: ṣuṭa:n*, he speaks (quoting from literature).

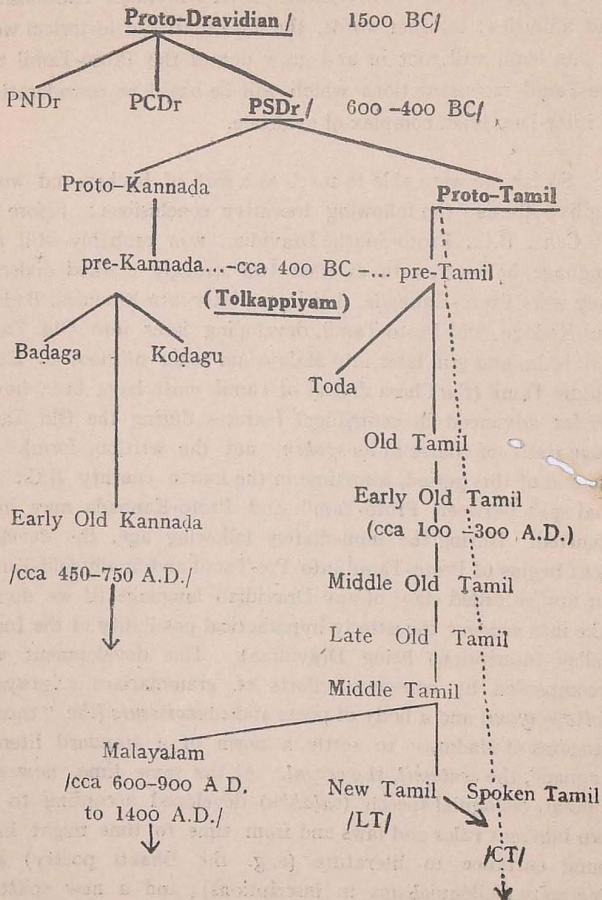
In old records, the form with *-t-* is found only in 2. p. sg. and pl. and in 1. p. pl., which is, one must admit, a distribution looking most suspicious. On the other hand, there are three points which are in favour of my identification of this ancient tense-type with the South West Tamil present. First, the meaning of the old tense-type is in most cases present or future; second, the present tense with (*t*) in South West dialects can be hardly explained on any phonological or morphophonemic grounds and is best explained as a reflection of an old form otherwise obsolete; third, there is in Telugu an old imperfective present-future formed with *-d-*.

8.2. I have said that we are able to make certain inferences about our future approach towards the problems offered by our work. First of all, we shall have to seek a deeper time-perspective in the final stages of our work. Some outstanding books and papers published recently, like the *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* by Burrow and Emeneau and the supplements to this

dictionary, or Bhadriraju Krishnamurti's Telugu Verbal Bases, enable us and also oblige us to try to take into account this deeper time-perspective and to consider inter-Dravidian relationships and affinities; in other words, the final synthetic historical work of our team will root in and grow out of the Proto-Tamil and pre-Tamil reconstructions which will be based on considerations of inter-Dravidian complex of evidence.

So far, we were able to reach as a sort of background working hypothesis - the following tentative conclusions: before the 5th Cent. B.C., Proto-South Dravidian was probably still one language, however, with at least two strongly marked dialects; they were Proto-Kannada, developing later into Kannada, Badaga and Kodagu, and Proto-Tamil, developing later into Old Tamil and Toda, and still later into Malayalam as an offshoot of Early Middle Tamil (the Chera dialect of Tamil must have been however far advanced in centrifugal features during the Old Tamil stage itself - of course in its *spoken*, not the written, form). At the end of this period, sometime in the fourth century B.C., the final split between Proto-Tamil and Proto-Kannada may have occurred. During the immediately following age, the development begins of Proto-Tamil into Pre-Tamil and finally Old Tamil, our first recorded stage of any Dravidian language (if we do not take into account the utterly hypothetical possibility of the Indus Valley inscriptions being Dravidian). This development was accompanied by conscious efforts of grammarians (*Agastyam*, *Tolkappiyam*) and a body of poets and *connoisseurs* (the "three" Sangams of Madurai) to settle a norm of a standard literary language, the *centamil*, the *ceyyul*. At the same time, however, popular, colloquial speech (*valakku*) developed according to its own inherent rules and laws and from time to time might have found entrance to literature (e. g. the Bhakti poetry) and epigraphy (colloquialisms in inscriptions); and a new splitting into Tamil local and regional dialects - *tikai* - as well as the maintenance of old dialectal variations may be observed at the same time, responsible for such centrifugal drifts as the origin of an independent language (Malayalam).

The situation may be schematically presented by the following drawing :



Second, we must and we shall dedicate much of our attention to the reflections of non-literary Tamil, of the spoken, colloquial language, in our written sources. This will enable us to observe the facts of linguistic change (both evolution and diffusion) in Tamil

as congruent with regular moments in the general course of linguistic development. In anticipation we may say even now that Tamil in its totality is no exception to the general rules and course of linguistic evolution -in spite of the fact, which cannot be denied, that in Tamil, the rate of change has been generally slower than in any Indo-European language.

The evolution of literary Tamil has been practically finished and completed by now ; it cannot very well continue farther since the language as such is spoken by no portion of the Tamil population, educated or illiterate, urban or rural. The Literary Tamil forms are dead and non-productive. On the contrary, colloquial Tamil does not only represent another style of language but it is full of new productive forms ; in its totality, it is the sum of new features of evolution, though some elements of the system of spoken Tamil may have appeared very long ago. In short, today's colloquial Tamil is the necessary and legal offspring and heir of literary Tamil ; it is another and more modern stage of evolution of literary Tamil. Tamil *diglossia* must and will result sooner or later in adopting spoken language as the over-all standard speech and as the language of literature ; today's literary Tamil will ultimately fade away and become a learned language studied by scholars and specialists and not used actively by any member of the community of Tamil speakers - in fact, it is not being used so-as already stressed - even now, at the present day, in normal, current, informal conversation.

If this is so - and I am convinced it is so - we are so much more obliged to prepare a detailed, exhaustive, thorough and scientifically sound historical grammar of the Tamil language. May we have enough perseverance and ability to do so.

