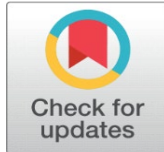
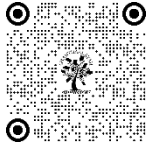


SANSKRITIC PURĀṆIC SOURCES AND THE TAMIL MYTHIC LEGENDS IN THE CAṆKAM LITERATURE 'KALITTOKAI'

R.K.K. Rajarajan ¹✉, S. Sivagurunathan ²✉

¹ Director, Indian Knowledge Systems Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed to be University), Gandhigram

² Department of Computer Science and Applications Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed to be University), Gandhigram



Corresponding Author

R.K.K. Rajarajan,
rkkrajarajan@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

The classical phase of Tamil literature, which lasted from the second century BCE to the fifth century CE, includes a vast corpus that is divided into the Pattuppāṭṭu and Eṭṭuttokai, including the Tolkāppiyam. The Kalittokai is similar to the Paripāṭal, the 150 poems deal with the different landscapes and phases of love poems, it may be understood that the mythologies of the pan-Indian order and the typical Tamil idioms have gone a long way in the making of a cosmopolitan picture. The Tamils had no inhibition in taking from others and shared their ideas with others. In certain cases, the pan-Indian myths were altered to suit the Tamil taste, e.g., 'Dharma' is a pan-Indian remoulded to suit Tamil culture. Thus, the Tamil and Sanskritic mythological and legendary ideas have moved like the warp and woof in ancient Tamil literature. References to the Sanskritic sources of events are ample, and at the same time, no events in the Indian Epics are discernible. The semblance between the narratives of Kalittokai and Cilappatikāram may suggest a date of proximity to the epic. It all depends on where we fix the Cilappatikāram and Maṇimēkalai. Several layers of poems may be found in the Kalittokai, as is the case with Puram 400 and Akam 400. The earlier stratum may return to the BCEs and the later stratum around 400 CE. In an ocean of love poems, sources relating to the pan-Indian purāṇas are scattered sporadically. The Sanskritic sources and ideas had been systematically merged into the Tamil cultural heritage, and influence had an enormous upshot on the ancient Tamil literature. These show how the Āryan ideas had intermingled with the thought of the Tamils. Besides, it shows how Indian culture is an admixture of Tamil and Sanskrit ideas from very early times, starting with Tolkāppiyam.

Keywords: Purāṇas, Myths, Tamil, Sanskrit, Kalittokai

1. INTRODUCTION

The classical phase of Tamil literature dated from the second century BCE to the fifth century CE includes a vast corpus that is brought under the Pattuppāṭṭu (Ten Idylls) and Eṭṭuttokai (Eight Anthologies), including the Tolkāppiyam. The past generation of literary critics (e.g. Subrahmanian 1966, 1966a, 1981: 10-25) included the Patinēṅkīlkaṇakku (18 - Minor Works) and 'Twin Epics' under the Caṅkam category but scientific scholars normally avoid these from the list (Zvelebil 1974: 12-25). The chronology of these classics differs from author to author, taking the Tolkāppiyam to 1000 BCE (Ilakkuvanar 1994: 9) and others to the early centuries CE. Zvelebil assigns an extended period for the Tamil classics, called "Bardic Corpus" 100 BCE to 250 CE, and at the same time assigns specific dates for individual works; e.g. Kuṛiṇcippāṭṭu 150-200 CE and Ciṟupāṇāṟruppaṭai 25-275 CE.

The Kalittokai is a genre of its type, comparable to the Paripāṭal. It seems the work was concerned with Maturai and Vaiyai (vv. 30, 66, 91), and the Western Hills since no other city other than Kūṭal (vv. 29, 55, 67, 91) or Nāṇmāṭakkūṭal

(v. 91) and Kuṇṇam (v. 92), and the ruler Kuṭalār or Teṇṇavaṇ-Pāṇḍya (vv. 34, 55, 102, 107, 130) are noted. Zvelebil (1974: 47-48) has the following to say on Kalittokai:

“The anthology contains 150 poems of unequal length in the kali metre dealing with different phases and details of love experiences. The first part (2-35) relates to the pālai setting, the second (36-63) to the kuṛiṇci themes, the third (64-99) to the marutam situations, the fourth (100-115) to the mullai setting, and the fifth (116-149) to the neytal division... The entire collection is permeated with allusions to purāṇic legends...” (italics mine).

Ca.Vē. Cu includes the ‘Kaṭavuḷvāḷttu’ on Śiva under pālai, which is a separate entity that pertains to all five tiṇais; eṇṇāṭṭavarkkum irai (Tiruvācakam, ‘Pōrṛittiruvakaval’, l. 115).

The present article aims to examine what “purāṇic legends” are exemplified or capsule[d] in the Kalittokai. Zvelebil (1974: 48) brings the Kalittokai under “late classical poetry” and gives the date 4th-5th century CE; cf. Paripāṭal 400-550 CE (ibid. 50), Cilappatikāram 450 CE (ibid. 132) and Maṇimēkalai + 550 CE (ibid. 141). It is not my concern to debate the date of Caṅkam classicism, and so it is left to experts under the banner of Classical Tamil to examine the integrity of Zvelebil’s dates. The present article demonstrates how “purāṇic legends” vis-à-vis the Sanskritic lore help to date the Kalittokai within its cultural sphere (cf. Rajarajan 2012), and how the purāṇic sources interacted with the Tamil mythic legends.

To start with an elementary introduction to the anthology understudy is warranted. The Kalittokai is one among the “eight”, ‘Eṭṭuttokai’, the others being Naṛṇṇai, Kuṇṇtokai, Paripāṭal, Aiṅkuṇṇūru, Patirṇyuppattu, Akanāṇūru and Puṇāṇūru. Zvelebil counts 150 poems and Ca.Vē.Cu 2006 says these poems range from 11 lines to 80 lines. The pleasures and pangs of the lovers under the akattiṇai are the main themes. The lovers meet, enjoy by kaṛpu (marital love) or kaḷavu (hidden love), quarrel, separate, the hero visits the harlot, and is rebuked by his lady-love or harlot, and made the butt of ridicule and so on. The herald, tōḷi plays a vital role in the Indian field of love-making whether north or south (cf. Kālidāsa’s romances in the Mālavikāgnimitra). Thus, 66 poems are what the herald speaks. The heroine speaks in 45 poems and the hero in 12. Therefore, the hero in these poems is usually silent, listening to the rebukes of either his mistress or the harlot (eight poems). The remaining eight poems are by others such as the cāṇṇōr (the learned), cuṛṇṇātār (kith and kin), kaṇṇōr (spectators) and so on (Ca.Vē.Cu 2006: 312). In an ocean of love-making poems, mythologies relating to the pan-Indian purāṇas are scattered sporadically. These help very much to show how the Āryan ideas had intermingled with the thought of the Tamils. Besides, it shows how Indian culture is an admixture of Tamil and Sanskrit ideas from very early times, including Tolkāppiyam.

2. INVOCATION

The “invocation”, ‘Kaṭavuḷ Vāḷttu’ to the Kalittokai (from now on ‘Kali.’) is by Nallantuvaṇār (Zvelebil 1974: 48), author of the neytal-Kali. The poem is of great value to examine to religious traditions of the Tamils around the fifth century CE. It is worth quoting the poem and examines the mythological motifs or what Zvelebil says “purāṇic legends”.

āruarī antaṇarkku arumaṇai palapakarntu
tērunīr caṭaikkarantu tiripuran tīmaṭuttu
kūramal kuṛittataṇmel cellum kaṭuṅkūḷi
mārāppōr maṇimiṭarṇu eṇkaīyāy kēliṇi
paṭumaṇai palaiyampap palvuvuvam peyarttunī
koṭukoṭṭi āṭuṅkāl kōṭuuyar akalalkul
koṭupurai nucuppiṇāl koṇṭacīr taruvālō
maṇṭuamar palakaṭantu matukaiyāl nīruaṇintu
pāṇṭaraṅkam āṭuṅkāl paṇaielil aṇaimēṇṭōl
vaṇṭu araṇṇum kūntavāl vaḷartukku taruvālō
kolaiuḷuvait tōlacaii koṇṇaittār kavalpuraḷa
talaiaṅkai koṇṭunī kāpālam āṭuṅkāl
mulaiaṇinta muṇuvalāl murpāṇi taruvālō eṇaṅku
pāṇiyum tūkkum cīrum eṇṇivai

māṇilai arivai kārppa

āṇamil poruḷemakku amarntānai āti

The concern of this brief article is not the poetic excellence, prosody or literary heritage of the Tamils. It examines the mythological motifs that may help an art historian in his interpretation of Indian sculpture and painting. The “Invocation” is unique in respect of the iconography of Śiva. It finds Śiva, the Kūttan-Nāṭarāja performing few of the karaṇas (cf. Cilappatikāram, ‘Kaṇalāṭukātai’, ll. 40-67). The above poem allows the scope to pinpoint the following iconographical forms of Śiva (cf. Jeyapriya 2014):

- Dakṣiṇāmūrti who taught the secrecies of the Vedas to antaṇar/brāhmaṇas; cf. Takkiṇaṇ (Cilampu. 23.95, Tēvāram 6.219.10) and Ālamarkaṭavuḷ (Puṇaṇṇūru 198) or Ālamarcelvaṇ (Cilampu. 23.91). It is a cherished theme in the Tēvāram of Mūvar (Kalidos 2006: II, 44-47). The antaṇar are expected to be aṇavōr “the righteous”; cf. ‘aṇavōr antaṇar’.

Another poem naively points out that the Lord carries the karakam/kamaṇḍalū in one of his hands (Kali. 132). It is an emblem of the anchorite. The Lord is Ciṇṇappiṇṇ, the celebrated.

- The Lord compressed the Gaṅgā in his matted locks of hair. The myth elaborated in the Mahāhārata (‘Vana Parva’, chap. 35) would aver Śiva contained the fierce Gaṅgā flowing from her celestial abode in the heavens was tamed and forced to settle on the matted locks. Bhagīratha of the Solar Race was chiefly instrumental in this move, and so the Gaṅgā came to be known as Bhāgīrathī.
- The Lord toppled the tripuras; an event celebrated in Sanskritic lore since the Ṛg Vedic times. Tamil sources would find Tiripurameritta-viricaṭaik-kaṭavuḷ a member of the Caṅkam told in the Iṇṇaiyaṇā-akapporuḷ-uṇai (cf. Rajarajan & Jeyapriya 2013: 54-55).
- The Lord’s neck is blue, maṇimiṭṭaru and so-called Nīlakaṇṭha for having consumed the deadly poison, hālahāla produced by Churning the Ocean of Milk (infra. Rajarajan 2009: pl. VIa).
- The Lord presents the koṭukōṭṭi recital while at the same Devī is the spectator. It is an acrobatic karāṇa that later came to be linked with the mythology of Ālaṅkāṭu and Tillai. Called ūrdhvatāṇḍavam or lalaṭatilakam (Kalidos 1996: figs. 1-5, 7), it is a popular theme in the arts of Tamilnadu since the Pallava period to the Vijayanagara-Nāyaka (Kalidos 1996: 371-413, 1996a: 13-56, figs. 1-16; Rajarajan 2006: II, pls. 249, 252). In some of these illustrations, Devī is seated frighteningly and looks at the Lord’s unearthly dance. This idiom is later amply justified in the Tēvāram hymns:

Māmalaivēntaṇ makaṇmakila... niṇṇrāṭi (Tēvāram 1.39.7), “danced to cheer the daughter of the Hill [Himavān]”
Kālitaṇ kōpaṇ kuṇṇaiya ātiya kūṭṭuṭaiyāṇ (ibid. 7.70.4) “He is the dancer that presented a recital to appease the wrath of Kālī” (Kalidos 2006: 12-28).

- The Lord’s mien is smeared with the Holy Ash and he presents another recital called pāṇṭaraṅkam.
- It was he who stripped the tiger of its skin and put on its hide for his garment. He is decorated with the flowers of koṇṇai (Cassia fistula) and presents the karaṇa, kapālam.
- The invocatory poem also makes a note of the dance of Kūḷi later elaborated by Kāraikkālammaiyaṇ (Rajarajan & Jeyapriya 2013: 154-55) and Cayaṅkoṇṭar in Kaliṅkattupparaṇi.

If assigned to the 4th-5th century CE, the invocation understudy is one of the earliest relating to the Dance of Śiva. It may also be the first poem to incorporate the events relating to the sthala-māhātmya of Ālaṅkāṭu and Tillai. Interestingly, the Kalittokai poems are associated with Kūṭal/Maturai. This problem is open for further discussion and debate.

‘Aṇaṅku’

The divinity, whether malicious or benign, was aṇaṅku (Zvelebil 1979: 157-92). He had no human form and was called aṇaṅkaṇ (Kalidos 1999: 77). Not less than fifteen occurrences are listed in the Kalittokai (Ca. 2006: 383). These stand for “misery” (Kali. 23, 50, 55-57, 87, 104, 108, 130-131, 143 & 147) or the “afflicting divinity” (Kali. 48, 51). Aṇaṅku is of the common genre in Caṅkam literature, including the ‘Twin Epics’. Vidvān N. Subrahmanian (1990: 29-3) brings them under various categories.

- i) A damsel that allures men and kills them (Kuṇṇai 918, 1081); ii) “Fear” or the root of any “phobia” (Akam. 7, 20);
- iii) Varuṇaṇ, presiding God of neytal (Akam. 240); iv) Ghost or apparition (Kuruntokai 308); v) Frightening God (Puṇam.

14, 52), vi) A domestic God (Maturaikkāñci 164), vi) A fear-generating divinity, e.g. Kaṇṇaki equated with Kālī and Korṟavai (Cilampu. 20.38) and so on.

Certain hidden pointers to a mysterious Goddess called ‘Aṇaṅku’ in the Kalittokai are likely to refer to Kaṇṇaki; e.g., paliperūvum aṇaṅku “divinity receiving bali” (Cilampu 29, v. 16), nilai-uyar kaṭavuḷ (v. 10) “tall image of the Divinity on door jam”, and so on (Rajarajan 2016: 148). The Maṇimēkalai (6. 135, 150) testifies the two polarities of aṇaṅku; Ārūyirunṭa aṇaṅkō pēyō “The aṇaṅku or pēy (ghoul) devour dear human lives”, cf. Aṇaṅkum pēyum ārutiruṇṇā “Aṇaṅku and pēy do not feed on dear human lives”.

The Kalittokai brings aṇaṅku under the fear or phobia category; aṇciyatu āṇkē aṇaṅkākuṁ “fear” (v. 23), paliperūm aṇaṅku “demands bali/scapegoat or divinity receiving bali” (v. 51), ... miṇeṇa aṇaṅku “deceptive woman” (v. 56), aṇaṅkāki aṭarum nōy “physical ailment” (v. 57), poyccūḷ aṇaṅku “false declaration” (v. 87), yārkkum aṇaṅkātal “ghost” (v. 108), Peruṅkaṭal teyvam... nōkkuṅkāl nōkkuṅ aṇaṅkākuṁ “Sea God...is aṇaṅku (in the form of a maid)” (v. 130) and so on. Is it reasonable to generalize “miserics” that the “termagant” cause to men is symbolized in the form of aṇaṅku? This is because both wives and harlots take men to task in the Kalittokai. The wife scolds her man for visiting the harlot. The harlot scolds the man for not coming. Then, where to go? The situation reminds the popular saying, kūramal caṇṇiyācam koḷ. The pleasure of pain depends on the “woman” factor in the Kalittokai.

In Sanskritic tradition, the god and demon are known as sura and asura. It is added those that consume the surā (wine) and soma (essence) –bānas are suras, and the asuras abstain from narcotic drinks:

Narvīṇai varaintārkkum varaiyārkkum (Kali. 98)

Mythologies (Bhāgavata Purāṇa, 8th ‘Skanda’) say the ‘Ocean of Milk’ was churned to share the amṛta (nectar or ambrosia) among the gods and demons. Maybe, the amṛta is different from surā and soma. The same ocean produced the hālahāla that Śiva drank and was known as Nīlakaṇṭha/Nīlakaṇṭaṇ (Tēvāram 1.42.5). Images illustrating themes are rare in South India’s art of which samples have been published (Kalidos 1989: fig. 53, Rajarajan 2006: fig. 71, Kalidos 2006: pl. XLV.1).

‘Dharma’

Tamil aṛam is the basic philosophy in all religions of the traditional Bhārata or Jambudvīpa/Nāvalantīvu (Cilampu. 17.3, Maṇi. 11.7). Dharma “Righteousness” appears in personified form, e.g. Dharmarāja among the Pāṇḍavas. It is added the best course of action for human beings is to follow the path of aṛam/dharma :

Arituāya aṛaṇeyti aruḷiyōrku alittalum

Perituāya pakaiveṇru pēṇārait teṛutalum (Kali. 10)

The Dharmādi-devatās are four. They are Yama (infra), Vāyu (infra), Īśāna and Indra (Śrītattvanidhi 1.4.26). They are counted under the dikpālakas “Directional Deities” of the Hindu tradition (Wessels-Mevissen 2001). The Kalittokai is not a nītinūl “didactic literature” such as the Paṭiṇeṅkīḷkaṇakku. Interestingly, one of the poems acquires the abstract form of Dharma (Kali. 132) saying:

Āṛṇṇatal eṇṇpatu oṇṇu alantavarkku utavutal

“The best accomplishment is to help the suffering”

Pōṛṇṇatal eṇṇpatu oṇṇu puṇārtāraip piṇiyāmai

“The best facilitation is not to eschew intimacy”

Paṇṇu eṇṇappaṭuvatu pāṭarintu oḷukutal

“Culture is to follow the worldly rule of law (established customs)”

Aṇṇu eṇṇappaṭuvatu taṅkiḷai ceṛāmai

“Love does not remonstrate the beloved”

Aṇṇu eṇṇappaṭuvatu pētaiyār col nōṇṇal

“Intellectuality is not to bear with the words of the foolish”

Cerivu eṇṇappaṭuvatu kūṇiyatu maṛāmai

“Modesty is not to conceal the truth and display the ego”

Niraivu eṇṇappaṭuvatu maraipirar aṇiyāmai

“Perfection is keeping away hidden truths from others (Maṛai “Veda”)

Muṛai eṇappaṭuvatu kaṇṇōṭātu uryirvauval

“Convention* is to establish dharma impartially”

* The British Constitution is unwritten; it operates by convention”

Porai* eṇappaṭuvatu pōrrāraip poruttal * cf. Kuṛaḷ 151-160

“Forbearance is not to cultivate hatred with even enemies”

‘Karpu’

It is the way of life prescribed for a Tamil woman. In the pan-Indian tradition, several women such as Sāvitrī, Anasūyā, Arundhadī and Sītā are famous in mythological lore as the chaste exemplar. In Tamil, we have the “Twin Epics”. Kaṇṇaki, Mātavi and Maṇimēkalai are the choicest models for womanhood in Tamil tradition. They are the living examples of aṛam in women (see below Arundhadī). Several poems in the Kalittokai (v. 15) are pointers of Pattiṇi, but there is no direct clue to link them with Kaṇṇaki:

Teyvattut tiṛamnokkit terumaral tēmoḷi

... vaiyakattu vāntarum karpiṇāl

‘Kali’ 38 invokes the ‘Cīrukuṭiyīrē cīrukuṭiyīrē’ in the same pattern as one finds in the Cilampu (24.11). The Kalittokai talks of the “cilampu”, women who worship their better half, Kuṛavar-maṭamakalir and so on. It appears as though it is a clue to Pattiṇi (Kali. 37.11-17). Karpu for the Tamils is a way of life and is teyvam. Cf.

Karpuk kaṭampūṇṭa itteyvamallatu

Porpuṭait teyvam yāṅkaṇ ṭilam (Cilampu.15.143-144)

Karpiṇ koḷuntē porpiṇ celvi (ibid. 16.91)

Śiva

Śiva is Kaṇicciyōṇ (wielder of maḷu/ṭaṅka Tamil Lexicon [TL] II, 705) who with great fury is said to have toppled the mūveyil/tripuras (Kali. 1). The castles were demons, avuṇar. Śiva’s eyes are three, and the tritīyanetra is said to have burnt down the triple-forts. Śiva’s emblems were maḷu/ṭaṅka and vāl/khaḍga “sword” (Kali. 85). The maḷu was fire-issuing, and so the Lord called eritikaḷ-Kaṇicciyōṇ whose tiara consists of the crescent, cūṭiya piṛai (Kali. 102.25-26). It is humorously added the Lord that wears a garland of koṇṇai flowers had lost his insignia on the tiara, i.e. the Crescent:

... cūṭiya/Kāṇṇ tiritarum kollō maṇimiṭṭarṛu

Māṇmalark koṇṇaiyavaṇ (Kali. 141)

Śiva banner bears the bull-insignia, Āṇēṛṛukkoṭiyōṇ (Kali. 25). References to iṭapam/vṛṣabha and iṭapakkoṭi/vṛṣabhadvaja are plenty in the Tēvāram (Rajarajan 1996: 305-10). The author has reported a mūlabera in the Pallava model temple close to the Shore Temple at Māmallapuram (ibid. figs. 1-3). In Tamil tradition, the Vṛṣabha is known as Mālviṭai “Viṣṇu-Bull” (Tēvāram 1.56.7). Interestingly, Devī is the younger sister of Viṣṇu in the Cilappatikāram (12, ‘Vēṛu’ 3), ‘Tiruvamārkiḷaiyāl’, and at the same time rides the ‘Arimālciṇaviṭai’ (ibid. ‘Vēṛu’ 9).

Śiva was seated on the Kailāsa, and merrily playing with his mistress, Umā. At that time a ten-headed arakkaṇ attempted to lift the hill. He was a pious devotee of the Lord and tried to uproot the hill and transplant it into Laṅkā. The Lord was furious and trampled his thumb to thwart the attempt (Kali. 37). A bolt theme in Indian art, its classical impressions are found in the Ellora and Elephanta caves (Kalidos 2006: II, pls. IV, XV, XXV). The early temples in Tamilnadu are called after Kailāsanātha, e.g. Kāñci.

The Lord as Half-woman, ‘Pacuṅkaṭ-kaṭavul’ broke the chest of the God that mounts the buffalo, Yama and fed Kūḷi with blood (Kali. 100. 24-26). Yama was the God of Time, Kāḷaṇ “Time”. His arrival causes misery to people (Kali. 142); Kāḷaṇpōl vanta kalakkam. Yama (south) and Vāyu (north-west) are guardians of the directions. Vāyu is Vaḷi (Kali. 143.40).

Viṣṇu

He is popularly Māl/Tirumāl or Māyōṇ in Tamil tradition. The Paripāṭal extols the glorious form of the Lord in six long poems (Rajarajan et al. 2017b: 140). Māl in archaic Tamil is “Mā-ayōy” (Paripāṭal 3). The hero in ‘Kali’ 20 is called ‘Mā-al makaṇ’ which may stand for either Māl or his son, Manmatha. Manmatha’s banner bore the fish-insignia, makara-dhvaja, and called mīṇēṛṛuk-koṭiyōṇ (Kali. 25) or Kāmaṅkoṭi (Kali. 83). The word, māl gives several meanings such as “faint”, “confusion”, “illusion”, “greatness”, “glory”, and “sexually provoking” (Tamil Lexicon V, 3174-75). Viṣṇu is such a handsome personality that makes one “faint”, cf. Cokkanāṭaṇ/Śiva. Māyōy had such a majestic personality that his broad

chest resembles that of a vast mountain, iṇaivaṇappiṇ Māyōy (Kali. 107). His weapon is the nēmi/cakra, and his favourite jewel is the vajrayantimālā: cerumiku nēmiyāṇ tārpoḷa (Kali. 126).

The Lord’s major feat was measuring the three-world; visiting the yāgaśālā of Mahābali as Kuṛaḷ/Vāmana (Dwarf) and magnifying as Trivikrama/Tirivikkiramaṇ (Periya Tirumoḷi 9.9.5). A coveted theme in the hymns of Ālvārs (cf. Tiruppāvai 3, Ōṇkiyulakaḷanta uttamaṇ; Kalidos 1983: 4-6), it is rarely inducted in the Kali. 123. The Lord, who measured the three worlds, is “milk-white” that is Baladeva:

Ñālamūṇṇu aṭittāya mutalvaṛku mutumuṛaip

Pālaṇṇa mēṇiyāṇ ...

This poem attributes the function of Trivikrama to Balarāma.

Kṛṣṇa in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (‘Skanda’ 10) is the hero of several tours de force. He has dislodged the Mallas “wrestlers”, and plucked the tusks of wild elephants, Kuvalayapīḍa-vadham (Kalidos 2006: I, 42-47). The “mallar” and “kolyāṇai” (Kali. 133) stand for “Muṣṭikāsura-Cāṇūramalla-yuddha” (cf. Kṛṣṇāṣṭottaram epithet 68) and “kuvalayapīḍa”.

An interesting legend pertains to the Festival of Kāma that is celebrated in north India as ‘Vasantotsava’. Kāma’s festival with a feast was celebrated in Nāṇmāṭakkūṭal, ‘vēṇilviruntu’ (Kali. 91.65-68). The ‘Kāmavēḷvīḷavu’ (Kali. 26), ‘Intiravīḷā’ and ‘Pattiṇi Festival’ were common during the ancient phase of the history of Tamilnadu. It is noted in the Tiruppaṇimālai (v. 80) as a festival celebrated in the Great Temple at Maturai in the month of Cittirai for which the Putumaṇḍapa was built (Rajajaran & Jeyapriya 2013: 141) by Tirumalai Nāyaka (Rajajaran 2006: 26). ‘Kali’ 34 makes a note of ‘Villavaṇ-vīḷavu’, Kāma who takes the sugarcane bow, and pañcabāṇa consisting of five scented flowers. He is cilai-vallān “expert archer” (Kali. 142).

A rare note pertains to the necklace of Lakṣmī, Ceyyavaḷ-aṇi (Kali. 27). In mythology, the necklace of Viṣṇu is famous as ‘Vaiyajantimālā’. The Lord also is fond of vanamālā/tuḷacimālai (Liebert 1986: 316). The necklace of Viṣṇu’s consort is new information.

Baladeva, the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa, is Orrakkulaḷoruvaṇ that wears a single ear-pendant, eka-kunḍala (Kali. 25). Baladeva takes the nāñcil/halā plough-share for his weapon, and so-called Nāñcilāṇ/Halāyudha (Kali. 35).

Few poems in the mullaikkali (vv. 100-116) are set in the pattern of the ‘Āycciyarkuravai’ in Cilampu. However, the major theme projected is the “Bull Fight” (cf. Cilampu. 17, ‘Koḷu’ and ‘Eṭuttukkāṭṭu’) by which the hero embraces a bull to take the hand of a girl (Kali. 101). The āyar are happy to dance the kuravai in honour of their “teyvam” in the land of Pāṇḍiyas:

Kuravai taḷi yām marapuḷi pāṭi/Tēyā vīḷuppoukaḷt teyvam paravutum

Mācīlvāṇ munnīrp paranta toṇṇilam/Āḷum kuḷamaiyoṭu puṇarnta

Enkō vāḷiyar im malartalai ulakē (Kali. 102. 74-78).

The āyaṇ (cf. pulliṇattu-āyaṇ Kali. 112) and āycciyar are getting ready the erumaṇṇam (Kali. 107) for a Bull Fight. The hamlet is Cīrukuṭi (Kali. 107, cf. Cilampu. 24.11). The bulls in various colours come prancing (Kali. 103-104); one looks white like the palm-tree bearer Baladeva, the other is utter black like Māl, one is tawny like the three-eyed Śiva and one is pale-red like Murukaṇ, and Aṇaṇkuṭai-vaccirattōṇ, Indra (Kali. 104). A hero pounced on a bull that was of the moon’s colour that was released from the clutches of the snake by the Lord-blue, i.e. Viṣṇu (Kali. 103.37-38, 104.71-72). ‘Ēṛutaḷuvutal’ was a celebrated vīḷā “festival” undertaken by the āyar of those times. The prize for the victory was the hand of a girl with whom the hero was in love. Today it is celebrated in the Tamil month of Cittirai as jallikkāṭṭu. The heroes are awarded modern gadgets like televisions, grinders and other household utilities, not girls. Zvelebil’s (1962: 196) terms callikkāṭṭu ‘copper or silver coins, medals, or pieces of precious metals fasted to the horns of the bull’, on the occasion of the bull baiting festival seems to be a more apt definition. The common terms for bull baiting in Caṅkam classics are, ēṛutaḷuvutal ‘to capture a bull at large as proof of bravery in ēṇu-kōḷ contests’ (TL, p. 573); ēṇukōḷ ‘taking the bull’; ēṇukōḷ ‘bull-capture’.

Brahmā

The Lord in charge of Creation in Hindu mythology is supposed to have been born at the time of Cosmic Genesis:

Toṭaṇkaṇkaṇ tōṇṇita mutiyavaṇ (Kali. 1)

‘Mutiyavan’ is interesting because it means a grandsire, a pantaloone. According to Hindu tradition, the age of the running Brahmā is fifty-one, which means not so old for a human being but according to mythology, each day of Brahmā

consists of a kalpa, i.e. 4,320 million years and a night of another kalpa (Basham 1971: 325). He is supposed to live for 100 years; $4,320 + 4,320 \times 326 \times 100$ years. It is no wonder he is called a 'Mutiyavaṇ'; millions old.

Murukaṇ

Several of the poems in the Kalittokai are situated in the hilly environment; maybe of the Western Ghats, cf. Veṇvēlāṇkuṇṇu (Cilampu. 29.13); cf. Neṭuvarai (Kali. 48). 'Kali' 38 is in praise of the God residing on the Hill that could be none other than the Lord of Kuṛiñci. The hill is the main personality in the poem (Payamalai, Tavirppāṇmalai, Paṭuvāṇmalai, Tuṛappāṇmalai, Eṇpāṇmalai and Cemmalai), and its presiding God causes troubles to the lovers, nōyceytāṇ. The Lord is finally called Malaikilāvōṇ (Kali. 38-39) or Malaināṭaṇ (Kali. 44.9, 16-19). The elephants in the hilly abode of the Lord are compared to aṣṭadikgajas that guard the directions, ticaikāval (Kali. 46). The festival of Ālamarcelvaṇ took place with viḷāk-kālkōḷ (planting the pillar), an event to declare the commencement of the festival (Kali. 82).

A heated discussion takes place between the hero and his mistress (Kali. 92). He had gone away to amuse himself with a prostitute. When he came home, the wife asked him where he was. He bluffed saying he went to a God's temple. The question here is "Who is God?" It is an interesting discussion:

Avaruḷ ekKaṭavuḷ maṛṛak Kaṭavuḷaic ceppīmaṇ [l.10]

The hero says it was the God that "demands its dues" (ceymuṛai vanta kaṭavuḷ) or the God for whom pūppali/puṣpāñjali (cf. Cilampu. 28.231) was offered. He specifies that God resides in the [Paraṇ]Kuṇṇam who dislodged the demon, Cūr [ll. 25-28], and that he is called Cevvēlāṇ/Cevvēl.

The connection between Agastya (Tam. Akattiyar) and Skanda (Tam. Kantaṇ) - Murukaṇ is another important component in the synchronistic point of Sanskrit and Tamil. Sage Agastya is popularly believed to have come from North to South, he was a great scholar in Sanskrit and learnt Tamil from the guruguha teacher Skanda/Murukaṇ, later he was treated as a champion and a symbol of Tamil learning. The Vedic sage perfectly teaches the Tamil mythic legends of which the Sanskritic purāṇic sources, are the carriers of south Indian practice with its typical ideas (Shulman 1980: 8).

Goddesses

To begin with, the heroine of the poem is compared to Vaṭamīṇ "Northern Star" (Kali. 1) that is Arundhadī, wife of ṛṣi-Vasiṣṭha, the exemplary model for conjugal fidelity. Kaṇṇaki in the Cilappatikāram (1.27, 63) is 'Vaṭamīṇ' and Aruntati. In Tamil tradition 'Kaṛpu' is personified in the personality of Kaṇṇaki, the "one-breasted"; cf. 'Vēṅkaik-kaṭavuḷ...Orumulai aṛutta tirumāvuṇṇi' (Naṛṇai 216) and 'Muṛṛāmulaivāḷ' (ibid. 312, cf. Cilampu. 22, 'Veṇpā'), the story of which is elaborated in the Cilappatikāram (Rajarajan 2016: chaps. IV & V).

Korṛavai is Korṛi, which means "Victory"; Korṛikkup pēyṇōṭit tāṅku (Kali. 88), which means a message was told to Korṛavai by her aide Pēy or Kūḷi. These divinities were carnivorous. Those residing in banyan trees are noted in a poem that feeds on the scattered parts of the heroes killed in Bull-Fight (Kali. 105).

Viṣṇu incarnated as Mohinī to help Śiva from the machinations of dust- demon, called Bhasmāsura, and it was also intended to distribute the amṛta at the time of 'Churning the Ocean of Milk'. Several celestial nymphs played a role in Hindu mythology and were at the service of the gods. Raṃbhā seduced Viśvāmitra; Urvaṣī was the mother of Agastya and Vasiṣṭha (Dowson 1998: 263, 327) and Tilottamā. Urvaṣī and Tilottamā created by Brahmā by uniting tilāmśa (minute particles of diamonds - Mahābhārata, "Ādi Parva", chap. 215; cf. Mani 1996: 789) are comparisons for the āyar girls that fall in love with the bull-fighting heroes (Kali. 108). Names do not mention Urvaṣī and Tilottamā, and they are iruvar "the two".

The Hindu Temple

The Cilappatikāram (5.170-73, 9.9-20, 14.7-12) presents minute details of the temples in Pukār and Maturai (Jeyapriya 2004: 291-302). Temples are denoted by the words, kōyil, kōṭṭam, nakaram, niyamam and paḷḷi. These temples were dedicated to Śiva and Murukaṇ(kōṭṭam), Viṣṇu (niyamam), Baladeva (nakaram), the Jains (paḷḷi) and the kings palace was a kōyil. 'Kali' 83 notes 'Kaṭavuḷ-kaṭinakar', Temple of the God. It is not said to which God the temple was meant. The same poem makes a note of the 'Kāmaṇkoṭi' (dvaja, Flagstaff of Kāma), and so it may be inferred it was a temple for Kāmavēḷ (cf. Cilampu. 9.60), Kāmavēḷ-kōṭṭam. Kalittokai (27.24, 30.13, 35.14) refers to Kāmavēḷ-viḷavu or Villavaṇ-viḷavu, regular repeated festival of Kāma or vasantotsava. It seems to have been celebrated all over the Tamil country since ancient period.

Maya (Cilampu 2.12) was the divine architect, builder of palaces and temples. The Kuṇavāyir-kōṭṭam (1.1) was a monastery in the western part of the city of Vañci. Temples for Śiva, Murukaṇ, Baladeva, Trivikrama and Indra (5.169-173) flourished in the city of Pukār. The Jain temple was Arukantāṇam (10.13). The hermitage of Kavunti-aṭikaḷ was known as Kavuntip-paḷḷi, a school-cum-orphanage monastic settlement (10.36). The temples also included those for the Kalpavṛkṣa / Amarartaruk-kōṭṭam, Airāvata / Kaḷirracu-kōṭṭam (5.143), Baladeva, Sūrya, City Goddess, Śakti-āyudha, Vajra/Vaccirak-kōṭṭam (5.141), Puṇṇaṇaiyāṇ “God on the Outskits of the village”, Pācaṇṭacāṭṭaṇ (Śāsta holdoing noose), and Itākinī are noted in the ‘Kaṇāṭṭiramuraittakātai’ (ll. 9-21, Jeyapriya 2004). Before leaving the city, Kōvalaṇ and Kaṇṇaki visit the temple of the reclining Lord on the snake, Maṇivaṇṇan-kōṭṭam (10.9-10). The ‘Intiravikāram’ in the city was visited by the celestials (10.13-14). Aiyai-kōṭṭam (11.216, 12.4) was the temple of Korṇavai, Goddess of the pālai tract. Such temples existed in dense forests and on strategic places as the gateways of forts in cities. The glorious temple of the God of Destruction, Śiva was found in the city of Maturai; Arunteṇar-kaṭavuḷ-akaṇperuṇ-kōyil (13.137).

‘Mahābhārata’

Events of the Mahābhārata appear sporadically. Among the Dvādaśa[12]-Ādityas, one was Bhaga. He was blind. Like him, Dṛdarāṣṭra was also blind (Kali. 24). His 100 sons were wicked fellows. They hatched a conspiracy to kill the five sons of Pāṇḍu. They built arakku “lac” or “wax” or “wax”, persuaded the Pāṇḍavas to live in the perishable palace and tried to kill them by fire. Vāyuputra, Bhīma saved the helpless by his mighty arms (Mahābhārata, ‘Ādi Parva’, chap. 147). The Pāṇḍavas are called “Aivar”, and Bhīma “Vaḷimakaṇ”.

Duryodhana was a terrorist, dharmadrohin. He was foremost among the 100 Gauravas. His thigh was smashed in the Great Bhārata War by Bhīmasena (Mahābhārata, ‘Śalya Parva’, chap. 58, v. 47). ‘Kali’ 50 compares this event with a fierce elephant that gored a panther.

‘Kali’ [100.18-20] dealing with “Bull Fight” compares the heroism of a bull-man with that of Bhīma who cleaved the chest of Duśśāsana (neṇcam piḷantiṭṭu) who dragged Draupadī by her locks of hair (Mahābhārata, ‘Karna Parva’, chap. 83).

Aśvatthāmā undertook a mid-night expedition to kill Dṛṣṭadyumna who had killed his father, Droṇācārya (Mani 1996: 68) and wreaked his vengeance (Kali. 100.30-32).

Epilogue

The last poem in the Kalittokai (149) concludes the book with many thanks to Śiva. The book ends where it began. To quote,

ayantikaḷ naṇuṇkoṇṇai alaṅkal amteriyālāṇ

iyāṅkueyil eyappiṇanta eripōla...piṇāṅkunīr caṭaikkaṇṭattāṇ...

uruvaēṇṇu ūrtiyāṇ...pututtiṅkaḷ kaṇṇiyāṇ poṇpūṇ ṇāṇṇu aṇṇa...

arumpeṇal ātiraiyāṇ...

The Lord is decorated with a wreath of koṇṇai. He generated a new fire to burn down the tripuras and absorbed the waters of celestial Gaṅgā. He is the rider of the Bull. His name is Ātiraiyāṇ, Ātirai (cf. the Ārudra Festival in Śiva temples) being auspicious to the Lord.

From the above summary of the Kalittokai poems, it may be understood that the mythologies of the pan-Indian order and the typical Tamil idioms have gone a long way in the making of a cosmopolitan picture. The Tamils had no inhibition in taking from others and shared their ideas with others. In certain cases, the pan-Indian myths were altered to suit the Tamil taste, e.g. Baladeva was viewed as Trivikrama. ‘Kaṇṇu’ and Kaṇṇaki are typical Tamil thoughts (Rajaraman 2020). ‘Dharma’ is pan-Indian remoulded to suit Tamil culture. Thus, the Tamil and Sanskritic mythological and legendary ideas have moved like the warp and woof in ancient Tamil literature. References to the Mahābhārata events are ample, and at the same time, no event on the Rāmāyaṇa is discernible. The semblance between the narratives of Kalittokai and Cilappatikāram may suggest a date of proximity to the epic. It all depends on where we fix the Cilappatikāram and Maṇimēkalai. Several layers of poems may be found in the Kalittokai, as is the case with Puṇam 400 and Akam 400. The earlier stratum may get back to the BCEs and the later stratum around 400 CE.

NOTES

- 1) The Cēra-Cōla-Pāṇḍyas and Satyaputras occur in the Aśokan Edicts, e.g. Gīrnār dated in the 3rd century BCE (Mookerji 1972: 223). Choḍa Pāḍa Satiyaputo Ketalaputo ā Taṃbapaṃonī... is the original from the Gīṇār Edict (Kathyavāḍa peninsula in Gujarāṭa). The Tamil Brāhmī inscriptions c. 200 BCE to 200 CE have been recently dated by Radiometric analysis to 490 BCE (Rajaran & Yatheeskumar 2013: 179-95). If 200 BCE to 200 CE is the date for Caṅkam classics, my question is whether the Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions and Edicts of Aśoka are earlier in point of time. The poems in 'Akam', 'Puṛam' and 'Kali' should be individually examined to date each of the hymns. Few of these may date back to 500 or 1000 BCE, coinciding with the coming of the Āryans (c. 1500 BCE) and the departure of the Drāviḍians from the Indus valley to the Far South. A lot of mist hovers the pre-history of the Tamils from the Indus Valley to the Tāmiraparaṇi Valley.
- 2) The 'Vēṭṭuvavari', 'Āycciyarkuravai' and 'Kuṇṇakkuravai' in the Cilappatikāram are digests of mythologies from the Devīmāhātmyam, Harivaṃśa and Kumārasaṃbhava or the Mahābhārata (cf. Rajarajan 2016 & 2014). Besides borrowing from the Sanskritic epics and purāṇas, Tamil had contributed its share; e.g. Devī is supposed to wear a gland of koṇṇai (Cassia fistula) and tuḷavam (Ocimum sanctum) in the 'Cilampu' (12, 'Vēru' 10). Devī shattering the wheel-demon, Śakaṭāsura sent by Kaṃsa is floated in the Cilampu (12, 'Vēru' 22), which is new to Sanskrit. Prof. Raju Kalidos (2006: chap. I & Kalidos et al. 1995: 171-86) believes there is no Indian culture without Tamil and Sanskrit. Both are interwoven with the Indian tradition like the warp and woof.
- 3) Women gossiping seems to have been an ancient habit. Thus a charming girl in Kalittokai says her love looks like "a robber and has inherited the burglar's ethos" (kaḷvarpōl nōkkinum nōkkum... kuṇaṇ uṭaiyaṇ v. 25), "a shameless person" (ēe iṭtu oṭṭaṇ ṇaṇilaṇ v. 26), ēe ellā ("you...you...you" that is very common in contemporary movies – see above) and so on.
- 4) A specific note to Vaṭamoli "norther language" appears in Kali. 24. Zvelebil (1974: 15) points out "The relatively long poems of Akam allow scope for references to heroic episodes; there are 288 historical and quasi-historical allusions. We have references to the Nandas (251, 256), to the Mauryas (69, 281, 375), to the Yavanas (148), to many kings and chieftains of Tamiḷnāḍu; there are echoes of purāṇic legends, and several Indo-Aryan loanwords."
- 5) Text followed for the citations from Kalittokai is Cuppiramaṇiyaṇ 2006. However, the number starts without taking into account the invocation, Kaṭavulvāḷttu.
- 6) Iḷaṅkō enumerates the eleven dances performed by the gods and goddesses such as koṭukōṭṭi (Śiva), pāṇṭaraṅkam (Pārati/Bhārati – Sarasvatī?), alliyam (Kṛṣṇa), mal (Māyōṇ), tuṭi (Murukaṇ), kuṭai (Murukaṇ), kuṭam (Trivikrama), pēṭi (Kāma), marakkāl (Māyavaḷ/Māyā), pāvai (Tiru/Śrī), kaṭaiytam (Ayirāṇi/Indrāṇi) and so on. For further reading on Kūṭṭaṇ-Nāṭarāja, cf. Rajarajan 2014a & 2018.
- 7) This mythology was later grafted with the Citampaaramāhātmya (Kulke 1970).
- 8) The dances of Śiva are said to be 108 of which the choicest were seven, and so the Lord called Saptatāṇḍavamūrti in Kāraṇāgama. The seven tāṇḍavas are Ānanda-, Sandhyā-, Umā-, Gaurī, Kālīkā-. Tripura-, Saṃhāra- (Śrītattvanidhi 1.3.17-23). Kapāla-tāṇḍava seems to be an unmatta type of dance that Kāpālikas (Kalidos 2006: III, 33-35 citing the Mattavilāsaprahasana) present, noted in the Nāṭyaśāstra no. 14 (Soundararajan 2006: 153-78).
- 9) Kūḷi is an assistant of Kālī who dances in the deadly burial ground, eating corpses.
- 10) It is a redundant theme in the hymns of the Āḷvārs (Rajarajan et al. 2017). The Lord Viṣṇu who incarnated as Mohini to distribute the amṛta is Amutamkoṇṭaperumāṇ (Periya Tirumoli 6.10.3).
- 11) Cf. Bhāratiyār: Tarumattiṇ vālvutaṇṇai cūtukauvum/Tarumam iṛutiyl vellum "Evil may crunch the righteous; eventually the righteous will win (the race)".
- 12) Māṇ/mṛga "deer" and maḷu/ṭaṅka "battleaxe" are emblems typical of Śiva; śaṅkha "conch" and cakra "disc" (cf. tikiri in Kali. 6) for Viṣṇu, and akṣamālā "rosary" and kamaṇḍalū (cf. karakam in Kali. 8) "pitcher" for Brahmā.
- 13) A miniature relief on the theme has been reported from the Mahākūṭeśvara temple at Mahākūṭa, close to Badāmī, Tamil Vātāpi in Upper Karnāṭaka (Kalidos 1991: 214-20, figs. pls. I-II).
- 14) Mīṇēru stands for the male fish, mīṇ "fish" (makara, mythical "shark") and ēru "bull".

- 15) Cf. Periyālvār Tirumoli 3.7.1-8: mālurukiṇṇāl and Nācciyār Tirumoli 14.3: mālē ceyyum maṇāḷaṇ. Vide, Rajarajan, Jeyapriya & Kalidos 2017.
- 16) Vāmana/Trivikrama is fourth among the daśāvatāras; the rest to follow are Nṛsiṃha, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa (or Buddha) and Kalki (Rajarajan 2021). For an amplification of these avatāras in the Ālvārs’ hymns see Rajarajan et al. 2017. Nammālvār rebukes Vāmana as vaṇcaṇ for having deceived Mahābali, ‘Kuṛaḷākiya-vaṇcaṇ’ (Tiruvāymoli 3.8.2).
- 17) Kalittokai 103
 Vāṇura ṇṇkiya vayanṅkuoḷir paṇaikkotiṭip
 Pālṇiṇa vaṇṇaṇpōl palitirtta vellaiyum
 Porumuraṇ mēmpaṭṭa polampunai pukaḷnēmit
 Tirumaṇu mārpaṇpōl tiṛalcāṇra kāriyum
 Mikkuoḷir tālcaṭai mēvarum piṛainutal
 Mukkaṇṇāṇ uruvēpōl muranmiru kurālum
 Mākaṭal kalakkuṇ mākoṇra maṭaṅkāppōr
 Vēlvallāṇ niṛaṇēpōl veruvantu cēyum...
- 18) It is a “Bull-baiting festival” (Tamil Lexicon VI, 3866). The meaning of jalli is not to be found in Sanskrit, Hindi and Oxford English dictionaries. Sure the word has anything to do with “frivolity”.
- 19) These ideas later came to be incorporated in the Tiruviḷaiyāṭar Purāṇam. Cf. Rajarajan & Jeyapriya 2013: fig. 13. The garbhagṛha of the Sundarēśvara shrine was fitted with the aṣṭadikgajas ‘eight elephants of a quarter of the sky’, during the Nāyaka period. The eight elephants are Airāvata, Puṇḍarīka, Vāmana, Kumuda, Añjana, Puṣpadanta, Sārvabhauma, Supratika (Libert 1986: 80).
- 20) The conversations of Kālī, and Kūḷi and Pēy are better narrated in the Kaliṅkattupparaṇi.
- 21) Mohinī was an aṃśāvatāra of Viṣṇu such as Sanaka, Garuḍa and so on. These are different from the daśāvatāras such as Matsya, Kūṛma, Varāha, Kalki et alii.
- 22) ‘Nakar’ would suggest it was a nāgara type of vimāna, one among the basic Indian temple types; others being drāviḍa, veśara and so on (Kalidos 1989: chap. III, Hardy 2012; figs).
- 23) Maya is the celestial architect. Māya is Viṣṇu. Māyā is Devi, cf. Māyavaḷ. This is an eye-opener to those that do not follow diacritics.
- 24) They were Dhātā, Mitra, Aryamā, Rudra, Varuṇa, Sūrya, Bhaga, Vivasvān, Pūṣā, Savitā, Tvaṣṭā and Indra (Mani 1996: 86). They were sons of Kaśyapa (Mahābhārata, ‘Ādi Parva’, chap. 66). Foremost among the Ādityas is Sūrya, called Pariti, cf. Paritiyam-celvaṇ (Kali. 25).
- 25) Mani (1996: 68) quotes a Malaiyāḷam source and says a cyclopean apparition blocked the way of Aśvatthāmā. He had to pray to Śiva and obtain a divine weapon to kill the enemy.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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