

Notes on the *Narriṇai* (1-10)

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The notes below on the first ten poems of the *Narriṇai* start with the second. After this the regular order is maintained. It will be noted that poem 4 is passed over. In the margin of the respective poems other poems, or passages from them, are discussed: *Narriṇai* 18, 97, 112, 123, 135, 165, 228, *Akanāṇṇūru* 83, 124, 136, 140, 211, 216, 226, *Kuruntokai* 38, 148, 293, *Aiṅkurunūru* 187, 211, 347, *Kalittokai* 93, *Paripāṭal* 21, *Maturaikkāñci* (342), *Malaipaṭukatām* (219), *Puranāṇṇūru*, 236, 246, 280, 371. Unless indicated otherwise, the text used of the *Narriṇai* is the one edited and translated by Eva Wilden, which provides variant readings gleaned from five manuscripts and five earlier editions.

Narriṇai 2

The text of *Narriṇai* 2 as reconstructed by Eva Wilden reads:

*aluntupaṭa vīlnta peruntaṇ kuṇrat-
tolival īntiṇ ulavaiy aṅkāṭ-
ṭāru ceṇ mākkal cenniṇ erinta
cemmarut talaiya neyttōr vāya
valliyaṇ peruntalaik kuṇṭalai mālai
maraṇōkkum iṇṭivar īṅkaiya curaṇē
vaiyeyirraiyaṇ maṭantai muṇṇur-
rellitai nīṅkum ilaiyōṇ uḷḷaṇ
kāloṭu paṭṭa māri
mālvarai miḷirkkum urumiṇuṇ koṭitē.*

Her translation runs as follows:

The desert of Īṅkai trees climbing Īṇṭu trees
where in the evening the big-headed cub of the tiger
peers out of the hemp,
bloody-mouthed, (its) head stained with red,
as it has attacked the heads of people going the way
through the wilderness pretty with green twigs on the thriving, strong
date-palms by the hills of great cool that descended lastingly,
—to leave (there) in broad daylight
having in front (of him) the wonderful girl with sharp teeth,
more cruel than the thunder, which upsets the big mountains
with showers come with wind,
is the mind of (that) youth.

For the edition Wilden has consulted five manuscripts and five editions, and alternative readings are duly noted below the text. In this case, however, they would

have deserved closer attention. Take the phrase *marañōkkum* (*maral nōkkum*), “(the tiger cub) peers out of the hemp” for yet more prey, while its face is already smeared with blood from a previous kill. The reconstructed text and its interpretation raises several questions. For instance, as already mentioned by Wilden in a footnote, the verb *nōkku-* is not otherwise used in the meaning of looking for prey. Besides, a lion cub is too young, and frisky, to catch and kill men. Turning to the variant readings for *marañōkkum*, they include the following two, *māñōkkum* and *māñokkum*, the first part of which, *māñ*, involves reading *ra* in *marañ* as *ā*.¹ With the final *ñ* of *māñ* we are left with *ōkkum/okkum*. As in the case of *marañ/l* and *māñ* (*ra/ā*) the variants *ōkkum* and *okkum* are a matter of script; Tamil manuscripts write *o* and *e* for *o/ō* and *e/ē* respectively. With *okkum*, “which resembles”, the passage starts to make sense: the cute little tiger cub, its face smeared with blood, looks like a big, terrifying tiger (*māñ*).

Before giving a new translation of the poem, at least three other points will have to be dealt with, two of which are quite simple and can be handled quickly but the third requires a more detailed treatment. The first concerns the translation of *maṭantai munṇurru ... ilaiyōñ* with “the youth having in front (of him) the wonderful girl”. Grammatically, the absolutive *urru* in *munṇurru* is to be construed with the young man (*ilaiyōñ*), who is not pushing the girl from behind, telling her to hurry up, but is actually leading the way. Compare *munṇil-*, “take the lead, assume responsibility” (*TL*, p. 3306) and *munṇinru*, “standing in front of”, in *Narriṇai* 71, 5 and 147, 5. The second point concerns the phrase “in broad daylight” in Wilden's translation, which renders *el* in *elliṭai* in line 8. As mentioned by her in a footnote, the word means both “daytime” and “evening”. Against all odds Wilden opted for “daytime, while admitting that, as here (note *mālai*, “evening,” in line 5), scenes of a lovers's elopement are regularly set at night.

As said, the third point needs a more detailed discussion. It concerns *aḷuntupaṭa* in the passage *aḷuntupaṭa vīṇta*, which Wilden translates as “(the hills) that descended lastingly”. I, for one, however, fail to obtain a picture of hills descending lastingly. For her translation of *aḷuntupaṭa* Wilden seems to rely on the *Tamil Lexicon*, which on page 166 mentions the compound verb *aḷuntupaṭu-*, “to be longstanding, to have continued for generations”, with reference to *Maturakkāñci* 342: *aḷuntupaṭṭirunta perumpāñ irukkai*, “an old, well-established settlement of bards”.² *aḷuntupaṭu-* is of the same type as the verbs *kaipaṭu-*, “to fall in one's hands” or *valipaṭu-*, “to follow, worship”, which consist of a noun followed by the verb *paṭu-*. In these compound verbs it is the noun which carries the meaning. Unfortunately, a noun *aḷuntu* does not seem to be attested elsewhere in the Caṅkam poems. The *Tamil Lexicon* (p. 166) refers to Winslow's *A Comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary*, which on p. 49 refers to an unspecified passage in the relatively late *Kantappurāṇam*, in which it would mean “depth of water”, and to what may be a

¹ This type of alternative ways of reading the text is discussed by Wilden on pp. 7-8 of the introduction to the edition, quoting *māñōkkum* as an example. In A.V. Subramanian's translation (1989: 2) we find both *māñ*, “deer”, and *mara(ñ)*, “tree”: “youthful tigers [...] stalk for deer in the copse of trees”. N. Kandasamy (2008: 2), ignoring *maral/marañ*, translates *marañōkkum* with “cheetah cubs [...] look for beasts”.

² Cāminātaiyar's paraphrase runs as follows: *neṇūṅkālam aṭippaṭṭirunta periyā pāñcātiyīṇ kuṭiyiruppiṇaiyum*.

modern usage of the word for a ridge in which betel is planted.³ Furthermore, the *Tamil Lexicon* refers to a traditional lexicon, Cēṇṭaṇar's *Tivākaram*, which instance could, however, have been abstracted from the noun in the compound *aḷuntupaṭu-*. For all we may know, the instances in *aḷuntupaṭu-* in the Caṅkam poems present the earliest instances of the noun. However, the *Kantappurāṇam* meaning "depth of water" suggests a close relationship with the verbs *aḷuntu-*, "to be impressed, be immersed, be drowned", and *aḷuttu-*, "to press down, inlay" (*TL*, p. 166), and a hypothetical verb *aḷu-* underlying the three instances in Caṅkam poetry of the verbal participle *aḷuntu*. In addition, the *Tamil Lexicon* (p. 166) mentions the noun *aḷuvam*, which, among many other meanings, in *Malaipaṭukaām* 528 seems to be used in that of "depth". Burrow and Emeneau, in the *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* (no. 244), connect the verbs *aḷuttu-*, "to press down, immerse", and *aḷuntu-*, "to be immersed", with *āl-*, "to sink, be deep" (no. 338). In order to determine the range of contextual meanings of the verbs *aḷuntu/aḷuttu-* and *aḷu-*, below I will have a closer look at some of the instances in the Caṅkam poetic corpus. From it it will become clear that in *aḷuntupaṭṭirunta perumpāṇ irukkai*, "an old, well-established settlement of bards", we have to do with a metaphorical use of a verb which combines two concrete meanings, namely "to sink deep, be immersed in" and, as a result, "to get stuck".

Apart from the reconstruction of a verb *aḷu-*, which, as said, is met with at least three times in the Caṅkam corpus, the following discussion of the verbs *aḷuntu-* and *aḷuttu-* contains nothing new. It does serve, however, as a steppingstone for dealing with quite a number of problematic poems, passages and constructions. In doing so, I will more than once turn to poems from other collections than the *Narriṇai*. Before proceeding, one brief remark on Wilden's translations of the *Narriṇai* poems. For a more general critique of her approach, see my review article "Translating Tamil Caṅkam Poetry: Taking Stock", *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 115/4-5 (2020), pp. 287-303 (open access). In this particular case I would like to note once more how in her translations of pivotal words Wilden tends to opt for one, often the first, meaning supplied by the *Tamil Dictionary* and stick to it throughout the text, paying hardly any attention to the contexts. As a result, her translation of *aḷuntupaṭu-* was bound to go wrong. In her edition and translation of *Akanāṇūru* 83 (2018) she finally took the context into consideration, at least for this one expression, but for the *Narriṇai* (2008) this was too late.

The intransitive verb *aḷuntu-*

A good illustration of the meaning of the verb *aḷuntu-* is found in *Akanāṇūru* 140, 10-15:

kaṇ emakku
[...]
māmūtaḷḷal aḷuntiya cākāṭ-
ṭevvan tīra vāṅkun tantai
kai pūṇ pakatṭiṇ varunti
veyyav uyirkku nōy ākiṇrē,

³ If related to the verbs *aḷu-*, *aḷuntu-* and *aḷuttu-*, for which see below, it would, however, rather refer to a groove.

which may be paraphrased as follows:

The girl's eyes make me suffer and breath hard like the oxen beaten by her father in drawing his cart **stuck** in the thick mud.⁴

In *Narriṇai* 135, the wheels of a chariot bury themselves, instead of mud, deep into the sand on the beach. The passage 6-9, with the infinitive *aḷunta*, reads:

palcuram uḷanta nalkūr pariya
muḷaṅku tiraip putumaṇal aḷuntak koṭkum
vāluḷaip polinta puravit-
tērōr nammoṭu nakāav ūṅkē.

The village used to offer hospitality to whoever came along. This stopped after

he had come along in a chariot drawn by horses with white manes tired after having ploughed through many jungle tracts, the chariot's wheels **burying themselves deep into** the sand heaped up by the roaring waves, and he (having come to a halt) had started joking with us.⁵

The transitive verb *aḷuttu-*

The above meaning is supported by that of the transitive verb *aḷuttu-*, instances of which abound. Take *Puranāṇūru* 371, 22-23:

kaḷirrukkōṭṭaṇṇa vāleyiraḷutti
viḷukkoṭu viraiiya veṇṇiṇac cuvaiyiṇaḷ,

(the battlefield, where a demoness) feasts on white fat mixed with flesh **having sunk** her teeth in it, which are white like elephants's tusks,⁶

and *Akanāṇūru* 216, 13-16:

[...] *veḷvēl*
ātan eḷiṇiy aruniṇattaḷuttiya
peruṅkaḷirru evvam pōla
varuntuvar mātavar [...],

⁴ Hart's translation of the passage runs as follows: "It is those eyes that have given me this pain and made me sigh hard, suffering like the oxen at the hands of her father as they pull the cart sunken in the congealed mud" (Hart 2015: 151).

⁵ Wilden: "the chariot [...] that revolved so that the new sand by the thundering waves was impressed (by its wheels)".

⁶ Hart and Heifetz's translation reads: "Where a terrifying demoness, with teeth shining like a boar's [sic] tusks, chews and relishes white fat mixed with flesh" (Hart and Heifetz 1999: 213). In this translation *aḷutti* is not represented.

Those women will suffer like the large elephants from the shining spears Ātan Eḷiṇi **has driven into** their bodies.⁷

Yet another instance, from the *Narriṇai* itself, is found in 18, 2-4:

[...] *mūvaṇ*
muḷuvali muḷḷeyiraḷuttiya kataviṛ
kāṇalan toṇṭi [...],

Toṇṭi, situated in the grove on the sea shore, the doors of its city gates **set with** Mūvaṇ's strong and pointed teeth.

Theoretically, the grammar allows another interpretation, namely that it is Mūvaṇ who had hammered the teeth in the door panels. In either case, however, no information is supplied on those activities, most likely a battle, through which Mūvaṇ had lost his teeth or else had managed to lay his hand on other persons's teeth. A further complication is that the present reference to Mūvaṇ appears to be the only one in the entire Caṅkam corpus and it is unclear what exactly his relationship was with Toṇṭi or with the king of that city. In line 5 the latter is referred to by the term Poṛaiyaṇ, that is "the Poṛaiyaṇ", or "the Mountain king", used for Cēral kings.⁸

In a footnote Wilden apologizes for her rather strange translation: "the warriors [...] close (their) eyes [...] in the encampment of the Poṛaiyaṇ [...], the leader of Toṇṭi by the seashore grove, *in anger over Mūvaṇ pressing together (his) fully strong thorn teeth*" (my italics). She adds that there would be no other poems mentioning the custom of fixing the teeth of one's enemies on the doors of the city gate. This, however, is not true. Another instance of this custom is found in *Akanāṇūru* 211, in particular the passage 13-15. However, as in the previous poem, the question whose teeth are fixed on the gate doors by whom is not immediately clear. Below, for an analysis of the situation lines 7-17 of the poem are quoted:

paṇipaṭu cōlai vēṇkaṭatt umpar
moḷipeyar tēettar āyiṇum nalkuvar
kuḷiyiṭaik koṇṭa kaṇṛuṭaip perunirai
piṭipaṭu pūcaliṇ eytātoliyak
kaṭuñciṇa vēntaṇ ēvaliṇ eyti
neṭuñcēṇ nāṭṭil talaittārp paṭṭa
kallā eḷiṇi pallerintaḷuttiya
vaṇkaṇ kataviṇ veṇmaṇi vāyil
matti nāṭṭiya kalkelū paṇitturai
nīrolittaṇṇa pēer
alar namakkoliya aḷap pirintōrē.

Hart's translation (2015: 217) runs as follows:

⁷ Hart translates: "When Ātan Eḷiṇi [...] took his white spear [...] and buried it in the chest of a great bull elephant, its agony was no more than the pain these women will feel" (Hart 2015: 222-223).

⁸ Or has it been built on *poṛai*, "burden", and a kind of loan translation of the name Bhāra-ta? As to Mūvaṇ, to venture a highly conjectural analysis of this rare name or term, might it not have been formed on the basis of *mūvar*, "the three great kings", for the Pāṇṭiya, Cōḷa and Cēra kings?

[I]n the land where he has gone, even the language has changed.
 It is beyond Vēṅkaṭam with its cool groves
 [...]
 Yet he will be kind to us. When unlearned Eḷiṇi was hunting
 and elephant herds with their cows and calves
 were caught in pits and made a clamor, he failed to come
 when summoned and the great king, enraged,
 ordered an army to go after him.
 They caught him in a far distant land, pulled out his teeth,
mounted them (*aḷuttiya*) in the fearsome door at the gate of Veṇmaṇi,
 and Matti set up his stone there by the cool bay.
 The water roars there, as loud as the gossip
 that is all we have left, weeping because he went away (my italics).

In Hart's interpretation Eḷiṇi was killed as he had defied the great king's orders. His teeth had next been fixed on the door panels of the entrance gate to the city of Kaḷār. Matti, the king of this town (for Kaḷār, see *Akanāṇūru* 6; *veṇmaṇi* describes the gate as "set with bright precious stone"), would next have erected a hero stone to the memory of this so-called hero. Hero stones are monuments set up at boundaries – here at the town's entrance gate – in memory of warriors who have died in its defence. However, again in Hart's translation, Eḷiṇi had fled to a faraway country, where he was killed and his body mutilated. Either the hero stone in question had not been dedicated to Eḷiṇi or it are not his teeth that had been fixed on the door.

I doubt if Hart has correctly handled the grammatical construction of the poem, which, admittedly, is far from simple. As I see it, the appreciation of the grammatical construction of the text hinges on two phrases. The first is *talaittārp paṭṭa* [...] *eḷiṇi*, which, as seen, Hart takes to mean something like "Eḷiṇi, who was caught by the advance guard of the army". It could, however, also mean "Eḷiṇi, who had joined the advance guard of the army," which was fighting in a faraway country (*neṭuñcēṇ nāṭṭil*). He did so, obeying the order of the great king (*vēntaṇ ēvaliṇ eyti*). The contents of the king's order is presented in the lines 9-10, which ends with the phrase *eytātoliya*, i.e., *eytātu oliya*. As I see it, we have to do here with a so-called auxiliary verb construction consisting of a verbal participle and an auxiliary. The auxiliary *oli-* expresses among other things that the speaker is unhappy or dismayed with the situation described in the main verb and is relieved it is over (Steever 2005: 247-250). In modern Tamil the auxiliary is without exception attached to the regular verbal participle, not, as here, with the negative one (Steever 2005: 72-74). In Old Tamil, however, or at least here in *eytātoliya*, it is attached to a negative verbal participle. In the few other instances in Caṅkam poetry which I have been able to find (Steever, p. 248, n. 11 mentions their existence but does not provide any examples), the negative of the verbal participle is comparable to "expletive not" in the following English sentence: "I doubted that it sholde not please some gentylmen" (Caxton, 1490, preface to *Eneydos*).⁹

The verb *oli-* attached to a negative verbal participle.

⁹ For expletive "not", see van der Wurff (1998).

So far, in Caṅkam poetry I have been able to find three more instances of the construction. The first instance is found in *Puranānūru* 236, line 7, which reads: *oruṅkuvaral viṭātolikeṇak kūri*. In the poem the bard Kapilar remembers how Pāri had dismissed him, saying that he did not want the bard to accompany him;¹⁰ the second instance is found in *Puranānūru* 246, line 2: *celkeṇac collātolikeṇa vilakkum*. In the poem King Pūtapāṇṭiyan's widow is speaking to so-called noble men (*palcāṇṇīrē*) who try to prevent her from mounting her husband's funeral pyre: "you, noble men, who try to prevent me (from mounting my husband's funeral pyre), telling me to stop telling you to let me go";¹¹ the third, final, one in *Narriṇai* 165, lines 5-9, reads:

[...] *kunra nāṭaṇ*
aṭaitaruntōrum arumai taṇakkuraippa
nappuṇarvillā nayaṇ ilōr naṭ-
panṇav ākukav eṇṇāṇ
*olkātolimati palkiṇa tūtē.*¹²

Every time the boy arrives at the place where he is to meet his love, he is met by a friend of her's who tells him that it is difficult for the girl to meet him:

Every time the man from the mountains arrives and I explain that there are difficulties, he reacts, saying that if a meeting between her and him is indeed not possible, for him a love life like that of people who have no compassion for each other will not do instead.¹³

In the poem's last line the friend then says to the girl (in a rather free paraphrase):

"Stop worrying. It is just a matter of more hard work by a messenger like me."¹⁴

To understand the above passage one has to turn to the first part of the poem. It describes hunters who are worried by the fact that their arrows lack the speed to kill a wild cow. This is most probably due to their sentimentality: the cow's loving glances

¹⁰ Hart and Heifetz's translation reads "You told me I had to stay here." (Hart and Heifetz 1991: 147). Note the *sandhi* in *olikeṇa* (*olika eṇa*) and in *celkeṇa* (*celka eṇa*) and *olikeṇa* (*olika eṇa*) in the next two examples. See also *Paripāṭal* 21, line 41, quoted below.

¹¹ In the translation by Hart and Heifetz the details are lost: "You do not let me go, you do not allow me to put an end to my life!" (Hart and Heifetz 1999: 151).

¹² Among the variant readings for the final line I have preferred *olkātolimati* above *olkātolī mikap*.

¹³ For *nayaṇ*, "compassion, sympathy", see *nayaṇil* in *nayaṇil paratavar*, fishermen who lack "sympathy" with fishes (*Akanāṇūru* 187, 22), *nayaṇiṇ mākaḷoṭu ... avaiyē*, the *sabhā* full of people without sympathy (*Narriṇai* 90, 11-12). Note how Wilden consistently translates *nayaṇ* with often meaningless "longing": "this assembly crowded with people without longing". See in this connection also *Kuruntokai* 327, 1-3: *nalkiṇ vālu nalkūrtōrvayi nayaṇ ilar ākuta naṇṇeṇa uṇarnta kunra nāṭaṇ raṇṇiṇu naṇru*. It describes a man who thinks it is okay to have no compassion with people who are poor, living from what they are given. Compare Wilden: "who realised 'good (is it) that there are those free from longing'".

¹⁴ Wilden: "The man from a land of hills,/ [...] – while (we) talk to him about the difficulties whenever he arrives (?), he does not say:/let (this) be like the intimacy of those who have no longing',/without uniting with us./ Stay behind without weakening. The messages have become very many."

(*amar kaṇ āmāṇ*) make them hold back.¹⁵ However, they ascribe it instead to the influence of a malevolent god and embark on a hunting expedition to collect prey to propitiate this demon with. They seek a solution for the problem in more of the problem. The same type of "treatment" is proposed by the messenger in the second part of the poem, namely more of the same ineffectual interventions.

After this we may return to *Akanāṇūru* 211 at the point where we left it, namely where Eḷiṇi had obeyed the king's order to stop tracking the wailing produced by distressed elephant cows after the herd including calves had got trapped in pits, and he next found himself in the advance guard of the king's army campaigning in a faraway land. Apparently, on his return he brought with him the teeth of the many enemies he had killed during this campaign. They were fixed on the door panels of the city gate, enhancing the heroic image of the local warriors. At the same gate the king of the town had installed many hero stones, monuments for heroes who were prepared to give their lives in the defence of the town and in retrieving the goods stolen by robber-rivals.

The woman in the poem is left at the mercy of a town of ruthless warriors situated in a territory infested by robbers. Eḷiṇi, however, had to be reprimanded by the king. He was wasting his time with an activity unworthy of a warrior, namely hunting elephants caught in traps. The woman speaking in the poem expresses the hope that on his return from the military campaign, if indeed he manages to return alive, he will compensate her for the grief she is suffering during his absence; she hopes it will be something better than the enemies' teeth, which, however, is unlikely with such men as live in her town.

The intransitive verb *aḷu-*

Beside the verbs *aḷuntu-* and *aḷuttu-*, treated above, in the Caṅkam corpus I have found altogether three instances of the related verb *aḷu-*. One is *Narriṇai* 124. In it a woman tells her husband that she is unable to bear life in his absence and begs him not to leave her. The rainy season has arrived, a period when she needs him most at home. Moreover, all the wealth he expects to collect during his travels abroad will not make good the pain he made her and himself suffer. The wife does, however, understand the attraction: silver everywhere just for the taking, but warns him that what looks like molten silver in the deep holes made by the hooves of deer is just rain water.

oṇril kālaiy aṇril pōlap
pulampu koṇṭuraiyum puṇkaṇ vālkkai
yāṇum ārrēṇ atu tāṇum vantaṇru
nīṅkal vāḷiyar aiyav īṅkai
mukaivīy atiraṇ mōṭṭumaṇal ekkar
navvi nōṅkuḷampaḷunteṇa velliy
urukkuṇu koḷkalaṇ kaṭuppa viruppura
teṇṇīrk kumīḷiy iḷitarun
taṇṇīr tataii ninra polutē,

¹⁵ Hāla's *Sattasāi* includes a number of poems depicting hunters who during their marriage have become too sentimental to kill animals. For examples, see Khoroché and Ticken (2009: 170-173).

In the following translation the descriptive parts have been skipped:

Like the *anril* bird during the absence of "the one",¹⁶ I cannot bear loneliness. The season has started in which fresh rain water is abundantly available, filling me/you with a desire (*viruppura*) (for family life/for wealth), as (in this season) the hard hooves of deer, because they sink very deep (*aļunteņa*) in the sand, form what looks like (*kaļuppa*) little barrels filled with molten silver.¹⁷

The next passage, *Paripāṭal* 21, 39-45 reads as follows:

*tālnīr imiļcuṇai nāppaṭ kuļittavaṇ
mīnīr nivanta viṛaliļai kēļvaṇai
vēy nīr aļuntu taṅkaiyiṇ viṭukeṇap-
pūnīrpey vaṭṭam eṛiya puṇai perā-
tarunilai nīriṇ avaṭuyar kaṇṭu
koļunaṇ makīl tūṅkik koypūm puṇal vīlntu
taļuvun takaivakaittut taṇparaṅkunru.*

As all the scenes in the *Paripāṭal*, this one is set at a festival, in particular a festival taking place in a river at the foot of Mountain Paraṅkunru.¹⁸ A woman is swimming in the river but due to the fast-flowing water has difficulties to stand up and keep her balance (*arunilai nīriṇ avaṭuyar*). While she keeps herself floating, she asks her husband to come down in the water (*aļuntu*) and hand her a bamboo rod (*vēy*). However, he misinterprets her intention; he thinks that she wants to have a hollow bamboo rod for spouting fragrant or coloured water at other people, and gives her some other disc-like (*vaṭṭam*) machine to do this. When he next sees what the real problem is he jumps into the water (*puṇal vīlntu*) and holds her in a tight embrace. And so everybody is enjoying himself at the festival.

As to the meaning of the verbal participle *aļuntu*, it may be asked if the wife asks the husband to come into the water or just to come down from the river bank to be able hand her a bamboo rod. As can be seen, I have opted for the first scenario: the fact that only on second thought the husband jumped into the water does not mean his wife could not have asked him to do so in the first place.¹⁹

The third, and final, instance is found in *Kalittokai* 93, 14-15

¹⁶ For the expression "the one" referring to the male half of the *anril* bird couple, see *Akanānūru* 50, 11-12: *maṇai cēr peṇṇai maṭivāy anri ruṇaiyoṇru piriyiṇun tuñcā kāṇ*, "Look at the *anril* bird with a curved beak in the palmyra tree by our house. If its mate isn't with it at night, it can't sleep" (Hart 2015: 60).

¹⁷ Wilden failed to recognize *aļuntu* as a verbal participle and took it to be a noun meaning "depth", but subsequently did not know how to fit it into the sentence. For the construction *aļuntu eṇa*, see Rajam (1992: 914) and Lehmann (1991: 125). Wilden's translation runs as follows: "I cannot bear the sorrowful life of staying in the grip of loneliness, as the *Anril* bird at the time it is not one (with its mate), and it has come by itself [*tānum vantanru*], don't leave, may you live, lord, – in the time that lasts, full of cool water, when the clear water descends in bubbles, to arouse longing, as a vessel taken to melt silver, a depth under the strong hoofs of the doe, on the high sand dune with wild jasmine in blossoms (and) the buds of mimosa."

¹⁸ On the festival scenes in the *Paripāṭal*, see Tieken (2001: 170-182).

*nāvuḷ aḷuntu talai cāyttu nī kūrum
māyamō.*

The poem consists of a dialogue between lovers, in which the man explains why he had not shown up at the assignment: he said he was visiting the temple, at which the girl asks him which god it was who has left that mark on his chest. She opens the inquest with a rhetorical question if he is not just deceiving her, speaking as he does with his head bent down and *nāvuḷ aḷuntu*, literally "immersed or stuck in(side) the tongue". I have not been able to find other instances of this expression but on the basis of the context assume that the man had mumbled to avoid that his lover could confront him with his own words.

aḷuntupaṭu-

Wilden's translation of *aḷuntupaṭa* as "lastingly, long standing" has been based on the *Tamil Lexicon* which renders *aḷuntupaṭu-* with "to be longstanding, have continued for generations" with reference to the passage *aḷuntupaṭṭirunta perumpāṇ irukkai* (*Maturakkāñci* 342). We have clearly to do with a contextual meaning which combines the notions "deep, firmly rooted, difficult to eradicate". In *Malaipaṭukatām* 219: *aḷuntupaṭṭalamarum puḷakamal cāral* we seem to have to do with these latter, more concrete meanings. The passage describes a mountain slope covered with mountain maddar. This man-sized plant is known for its long, ramified root system that can reach to a depth of 3 to 4 m. According to the commentator Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar *aḷuntupaṭṭu* refers to this aspect of the plant: *kiḷaṅku tāḷa vīḷntu acaiyum malaiyerukku neruṅkiṇa pakkamalaiyil* (p. 628). The maddar forms a practically impregnable (*alamaraḷ*), firmly planted (*aḷuntupaṭṭu*) shrub.

Besides these two instances of the verbal participle there are two of the infinitive, one of the verb stem and one in which the textual sources vary between the infinitive and verb stem having a kind of adjectival function. The infinitive is to be construed with a following verb, the verbal participle *pūṭṭi*, in *Akanāṇṇuru* 83, 3-9:

[...] *piṭi kāṇattalarak-
kaḷirrukkāṇrolittav uvakaiyar kali ciṟantu
karuṅkāl yāttuk koḷuṅkompu piḷantu
perumpoḷi veṇṇār aḷuntupaṭap pūṭṭi
neṭuṅkoṭi nuṭaṅku niyama mūtūr
naṟavu noṭai nallir putavumutar piṇikku[m],*²⁰

With a loud hullaballo the uncouth young men had separated an elephant calf from its mother, who was left wailing in the forest. They put a light-coloured rope round its black leg, bored a hole (*piḷantu*) in a thick pole, pushed the rope through the hole, **making sure it was tied securely**, and stationed the

¹⁹ In Gros's translation it is the wife's hands that sink in the water: "Tends un bambou à mes mains qui s'enfoncent dans l'eau".

²⁰ *nallir* in *naṟavu noṭai nallir* instead of *nellir* in Wilden's edition. Possibly, her laptop "remembered" *Akanāṇṇuru* 60, 4, *uppu noṭai nellir mūral veṇ cōru* and *Naṟṟiṇai* 254, 6, *uppu noṭai nellir*. For *nallir*, see The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society's edition (Tinnevely, 1970).

calf at the foot of the door of the house in the old town where toddy is sold, advertised by large banners;²¹

and *pāya* in *Narriṇai* 112, 6-9:

*mākkataṇ mukantu maṇinirattaruvit-
tālṇīr naṇantalaiy aḷuntupaṭaṭ pāya
malaiy imaippatu pōṇ miṇṇic-
cilaival ērroṭu cerintav immaḷaikkē,*

(I do not welcome) these rain clouds which, having drawn water from the great sea, arrive with loud thunder claps and lightning, resembling mountains with water flowing down forming waterfalls flashing like jewels, **so that large areas are completely flooded.**²²

Before turning to a possible third instance of *aḷuntupaṭa*, I like to discuss *aḷuntupaṭu* in *Narriṇai* 97, 1-4, in which it is construed with a following noun, the form and nature of which it describes as being deep:

*aḷuntupaṭu viḷuppuṇ vaḷumpuvāy pularāv
evva neṇcatteḥkerintāṅkup-
pirivir pulampiṇa nuvalun kuyiliṇun
tērunīr kelīya yāru naṇi koṭitē,*

The clear water of the swollen river (announcing the rainy season) is more cruel than the cry of the cuckoo which speaks of feelings of loneliness in the absence of one's lover. It feels as if a spear is thrust into one's wretched heart which (has not healed yet and) is still oozing a slimy fluid from a **deep** wound (sustained on the battle field).²³

²¹ Hart: "men take an elephant calf leaving its young mother [...] to trumpet through the forest. [...] Happy and proud of themselves, they split thriving branches of black-trunked marām into large strips and with the white twine they make they bind the elephant calf tight, [...] tie it at the threshold of a fine house where palm wine is sold in their ancient town with[...] tall waving banners" (Hart 2015: 95, which with the South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society's edition reads *karuṅkāl marāattak* for *karuṅkāl yāttuk*). Wilden: "young (soldiers) [...] rejoice as they make the elephant bull calves stay behind, with much ado, while the [...] youthful elephant cows wail in the forest, tie (their) black legs, splitting the rich branches, fastening (them) tightly with the white bark in big strips (and) fetter (them) in the entrances (of places) with paddy as the price for toddy in the old village with a market place where long banners sway" (Wilden 2018: 519).

²² I have adopted the variant reading *pāya*, an infinitive, for the verb stem *pāy* in Wilden's reconstructed text. Wilden translates *aḷuntupaṭa* with "lastingly": "[T]his rain [...] flashing [...], spreading lastingly in a vast area water that comes down from sapphire-coloured waterfalls, drawing from the great sea". *maḷai* does not mean "rain here," but dark "rain clouds," which after having drawn water from the sea resemble mountains.

²³ Instead of *pirivila pulampi* in Wilden's reconstructed text I have opted for the variant reading *pirivir pulampiṇa*. Wilden's translation of the passage reads: "Much more cruel, as a lance thrust into a troubled heart, the wet mouth of a longstanding, terrible (?) wound not drying, than the Koels that lament (and) talk, they not separated, is the river filled with clear water."

For *viḷuppuṇ* as a wound sustained on the battlefield and as such marking a real warrior, see *Akanāṇūru* 363, 12 and *Puraṇāṇūru* 93, 15, 180, 4 and 233, 7.

In *Narriṇai* 228, 6-9 Wilden's reconstructed text has *aḷuntupaṭa*. There is, however, also a variant *aḷuntupaṭu*, which could, as in the preceding instance, be taken to describe a gorge (*viṭar*), which by itself is already deep, as "deep":

[...] *peruṅkai vēlam*
verikoḷ cāpatterikaṇai verīy
aḷuntupaṭu viṭarakkattiyampum
eḷuntu vīḷ aruviya malaikiḷavōṇē,

The man from the mountains, where water splashes up and down (and) in the **deep** (*aḷuntupaṭu*) gorges the noises are heard of long-trunked elephants in which, terrified by the arrows of fanatic hunters, they have sought refuge.

The infinitive *aḷuntupaṭa* will instead have to be construed with the verb *iyampum* and may express noises that stay deep-down in the gorges and are not heard by the hunters searching elephants.²⁴

Finally, the phrase *aḷuntupaṭa vīḷnta* in *Narriṇai* 2, it would describe mountains with very long (and probably also very steep) slopes, going along which must have cost many a traveler his life. It may have been at the feet of such mountain slopes that the lion cubs, which are still too young to catch and kill men themselves, found the dead bodies of travellers to play with and got their faces smeared with blood.

Narriṇai 1

The last line of this poem reads"

ciṛumai urupavō ceypariyalarē.

Wilden does not really know how to fit the phrase *ciṛumai urupavō* into the text, or who or what is its subject. She offers two interpretations, or translations, one in which a great man (*puraiyōr*) is the subject ("Will he have baseness?"), the other in which it is friendship (*kēṇmai*) ("Will they (the friendships) have baseness"), which are both mentioned earlier in line 5 (*puraiyōr kēṇmai*). As I see it, however, the subject is *ciṛumai*, "do meanness or mean things happen (*urupavō*)?", and this sentence as a whole is the object of *ceypu ariyalarē*:

Mean things, they (the aforementioned *puraiyōr*) do not know how to do them.

We are dealing with an idiomatic construction described by Wilden herself in Wilden (2006: 95-98, 2018: 178).

²⁴ Wilden (with *aḷuntupaṭa*): "the master of the mountain of waterfalls descending from high, where the elephant bull with large trunk [...] sounds lastingly inside the clefts, being frightened by the arrows shot by the frenzied (?) bow).

Narrinai 3

Wilden's translation of the first two lines of the poem runs as follows:

(Where the children play) in the dappled shade of a Neem tree with parched base (and) sky-touching long branches, where a kite in labour is suffering.

The translation requires three brief comments. In the top of the Neem tree, its trunk (1 *arai*) scorched by the sun, a kite has found a safe place (2 *uyavu*) to lay its eggs (3 *in*). For the verb *in-*, see *Kuruntokai* 38, 1-2:

kāṇa mañṇaiy arai in muṭṭai
veyiloṭu mucuviṇ kurulaṭiy uruṭṭum,

The young of the langur monkey rolls an egg a peahen has laid on a rock in the hot sun,

and 148, 3: *pōtīṇ koṇrai*, "the *koṇrai* putting forth buds."

Narrinai 5

In the first part of the poem the cold rainy season is described as a period in which nature after a long dry spell revives and flourishes. The interpretation of the second part of the poem has, however, proved to be problematic:

[...] *arcirak kālaiyum*
aritē kātalarp pirital inru celav-
ikupeyal tarūum vāṭaiyoṭu
mayāṅkitaḷ maḷaikkaṇ payanta tūtē,

as can be gathered from Wilden, who offers two translations:

A In time of the cold season too [-um] [...] separating from the lover (and) going today [*inru celavu*] is difficult: rain eyes with dishelleved [sic] petals have brought forth message, along with the north wind, which brings showering rain,

B ... difficult (to pass on is) it – the message that (her) eyes with dishelleved [sic] petals have turned pale, along with the north wind, which brings showering rain, (because of) the lover's separating (and) going today [*inru celavu*].

Note, however, that, apart from anything else, to make the translations grammatically possible Wilden has added the word "and" between *pirital* and *celavu*. Other options should be considered, one, I will try out here, being to take *inru* instead of meaning "today"²⁵ to mean "without". The delightful picture of the rainy season painted in the

²⁵ Kandasamy (2008: 4) has "today" as well. In Dakshinamurthy's (2001: 6) and Subramanian's (1989: 6) translations *inru* is lost or represented by the randomly inserted word "now".

first part of the poem is completely turned around: "for lovers during that season *celavu* (or infinitive *cela*) is difficult without at the same time suffering the pain of *pirital*".

(but) during this entire (-um in *kālaiyum* = Skt. *apī*) period for lovers it is difficult to go abroad and not experience the pain of separation, with the north wind that brings torrential rains and contacts depending on messages conveyed by (or: messengers with) trembling lashes and eyes dark like rainclouds.

Narriṇai 6

muṇāatu at the end of line 6 introduces a situation, described in lines 6-11. The speaker would like to have someone who could announce him so that the girl upon his arrival (*vantaṇam eṇavē*) does not, as in her confusion she did at earlier occasions (*muṇāatu ... perumpēturuvaḷ*) ask who this man is (*ivar yār eṇkuvaḷ allaḷ*).²⁶

Narriṇai 7

The poem exemplifies the Sanskrit figure of speech *svabhāvokti/jāti*, for which, see Gerow (1971) and *subhāṣitaratnaśā* 1148-1191.

Narriṇai 8

The word *pakai*, "enmity" in such phrases as *palpūm pakaittaḷai* has produced a variety of translations depending on the respective contexts. Thus, Selby (2011) translates *pakai* in *Aiṅkurunūru* 211, 3, *ceyalaiy ampakaittaḷai vāṭum*, with "you're eyeing it [this gorgeous dress ... woven from the leaves of the mast tree] **as if it were an enemy** ...", and in 187, 3, *neytal ampakaittaḷaip pāvai*, with "they will not weave leaf dresses for their dolls **from anything other than the leaves of the blue lily**". Hart and Heifetz (1999) translate *ampakaitteriyal* from *Puraṇānūru* 280, 12 with "garland of **war**" and from *Akanānūru* 136, 27, *parūuppakaiy aṁpar kurūuttotai nīvi*, Hart (2015) translated "she took off her large garland of āmpal whose colorful flowers **were in her way**". For this translation he based themselves on the commentary provided by one of the modern editors of the edition. For the instance in 226, 3, *ampakai maṭivai*, he based himself on another editor, translating "dresses of leaves and flowers with **clashing colors**". Wilden's translations of the instances in the *Narriṇai* and *Kuruntokai* are based on this same image: *Narriṇai* 8, 2, *palpūm pakaittaḷai nuṭaṅkum alkul*, "with hips where foliage is swaying **in contrast with** many flowers", 123, 6-7, *taṇṇaruṇ kāviy ampakai nerittaḷai aṇiperat taii* (see practically the same line in 96, 8), "when (you) knit together, to get a decoration, foliage [*taḷai*] (and) calyxes [*neri*], **in pretty contrast**, of the cool fragrant blue

²⁶ Wilden: "the forest ... where the ripe fruit by the road in front [*muṇāatu*] becomes the food for the inexperienced animal".

water-lily," and *Kuṛuntokai* 293, 5, *vayal veḷāmpal ampakai nerittalai*, "so that the **contrasting** calyx (and) foliage of the white water-lily [slap against her thighs]."

An interesting compound in this connection is *pakainarampu*, which refers to strings of a lute producing dissonant notes. The use of *pakai*, "enmity" in combination with *talai*, a dress or garland made of leaves and flowers covering a woman's thighs, *maṭivai*, idem, and *toṭai*, a garland, may somehow be compared with "riot" in "a riot of colours. However, it need not in each case apply to a mixture of colours, it may also refer to a tangled web of flowers of one particular type. Furthermore, as I understand it, *neri* in the above examples does not refer to the calyx of a flower, but describe the *talai* as showing an arrangement (*neri*) of a tangled web (of, for instance, white water-lilies)

In line 7, of the two variants, *tā(a)ya* and *tā(a)y*, Wilden opts for the infinitive *tā(a)ya* instead of the verbal participle *tā(a)y*, in which case its subject would be *cēru*, "mud". However, in her translation the water-lilies are the subject, which assumes the verbal participle.

Narriṇai 9

Lines 5-6:

porippūm punḱiṇ elirrakaiy oṇmuri
cuṇaṅkaṇi vaṇamulaiy aṇaṅku koḷat timiri,

may be compared with *Aiṅkuṛunūru* 347:

avarō vārār tāṇ vantaṇrēy
elirrakaiy ilamulai poliyap-
porippūm punḱiṇ muri timir polutē,

or, in Selby's translation (2022):

He has not come still,
but the time has come
to make a paste (*timir*) of the sprouts (*muri*)
of the beech tree (*punḱiṇ*),
its blossoms like puffed rice (*porippūm*),
which will enhance (*poliya*) the great beauty (*elirrakai*)
of young beasts (*ilamulai*).

Narriṇai 10

Wilden did not know how to fit in *ivaṭkē*, the final word of the poem, and placed it in the very first sentence: "if the breasts should slacken **to her**". Actually, the construction of the poem is very simple:

Even if her breasts will begin to sag (line 1: *vaṇamulai taḷariṇum*) do not leave her (line 4: *nīttal ōmpumati*) so that for her (*ivaṭkē*) the promises you made (lines 8-9: *nin ... naṇmoḷi*) will come true (line 9: infinitive *tēriya*).

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Malaipaṭukatām

See *Pattuppāṭṭu*.

Maturaikkāñci

See *Pattuppāṭṭu*.

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