

The Silent Scribes — The Mackenzie Collection and its
Contributors

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That which is seen by the eyes is a lie; that which is heard by the ears is also a lie.
Only through thorough investigation is there truth.¹

— Tamil Proverb, Unknown

i. Abstract

In the nineteenth century, Tamil scholarship and literary production underwent significant changes. The medium of prose writing gained currency, and set the stage for the newspapers, novels and scientific works that formed the core identity of Tamil literature in the twentieth century. This dissertation maps the production of some aspects of Tamil prose during this period, and argues that their development was not a linear process. This is evident in at least two prose genres of the early and middle nineteenth century: *carittiram* (historical literature) and *vacanam* (legendary prose). I present this dissertation in four Chapters. Chapter 1 analyses the *carittiram* genre of historical literature that was created by the South Indian emissaries of Colonel Colin Mackenzie. Mackenzie, a British antiquarian whose ambition was to reconstruct South India's history. He collected manuscripts and oral reports through his team of South Indian scholars. Today, this vast archive is known as the Mackenzie Collection. When Mackenzie died in 1821, the Collection fell into disuse and was dismissed by colonial researchers as worthless. Chapter 2 thus discusses the criticism towards the Mackenzie Collection by the British, focusing on two Orientalists, Horace Hayman Wilson and William Taylor, whose assessment of it was flawed. This chapter aims to contextualise the creation and subsequent perception of the Collection within the larger socio-political environment of colonialism, and argues that colonial hierarchies were the real reason behind its dismissal. Chapter 3 features a detailed survey of the *vacanam*'s grammar, and probes its likely provenance. Chapter 4 threads the *carittiram* and the *vacanam* together, arguing that they ought to have existed as parallel traditions. The Chapter then leads to the first rudimentary English histories of South India by Lakshmiah and Sreenivasiah, two of Mackenzie's emissaries, whose work paved the way for the idea of history and historiography that modern India holds. The dissertation concludes with an account of the impact of these writings in the production of modern Tamil prose.

ii. Preface and Acknowledgements

This project could very well have been a straightforward analysis and translation of the content of certain forgotten manuscripts in libraries across Chennai and London. Yet, my immediate interest was more in determining why they were forgotten, as was evident from their decrepit state. Most of the documents I saw during the making of this doctoral dissertation were at best, in terrible condition, and at worst, lost. Any exceptions were the result of serendipity, and even those were to be found only in the dustiest corners of old libraries, unvisited probably since they were first put there several decades ago. I thus realised that the premise of my work must be to find a

¹ Translated from '*kaṇṇāl kāṇpatum poy, kātāl kēṭpatum poy, tīra vicārippatē mey*', a folk proverb that Jean-Luc Chevillard shared with me.

means of preserving these and other manuscripts, or rather, to convince scholars of their value. As time went by and deadlines drew closer, I began to write this work with a strong, yet oblique research question — how does one evaluate the handling of a century-old manuscript when the manuscript itself is no longer extant? I leaned on one fundamental idea as my guiding light — that, as Sherlock Holmes said, there is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact. The fact was that somebody considered these manuscripts to be unworthy of preservation. On discovering who they were, this project wrote itself. Over the last three and a half years, I have studied their lives and thus learned the history of the written artefacts they created. The result is this dissertation, which hopes to serve as an account of the last hundred years of writing and archiving in South India, told through the several, elusive archival mistakes across catalogues and the catastrophic impact of British colonialism on Tamil literary production.

This work began in 2020, when the pandemic had just begun. As a result, the first few years of research relied almost solely upon digitised versions of manuscripts that were shared with me by my first supervisor, Eva wilden. I am grateful, first and foremost, to her. Her involvement and interest in my progress has been instrument to its completion, and I have learned so much along the way. I am also indebted to Sascha Ebeling, my second supervisor, whose excellent book *Colonizing the Realm of Words* has been the guiding light to my efforts with regards to the Mackenzie Collection, and has added much-needed nuance to my understanding of nineteenth-century Tamil literature. In Hamburg, I am fortunate and grateful for a team of colleagues who have also become close friends over the years. Thanks to Leo Rishi Nelson-Jones for his expert help with editing my English, and to Maanasa Vishveshwaran for cross-checking my translations. I thank Jean-Luc Chevillard, who spent many hours with me to formulate the grammar that comprises most of Chapter 3 of this work, among for the many other useful anecdotes from his own long career as a student of Tamil. I am also grateful to Emmanuel Francis-Gonze, who has helped me locate many important prose manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. To Giovanni Ciotti, I am indebted to his gracious teaching, and to his own work on colophons that aided my work immensely. I am also grateful to Suganya Anandakichenin, without whom my own difficulties translating my mother-tongue Tamil would have never been resolved. Thank you to Erin McCann, a dear friend and guide, for helping me structure this dissertation. Thank you also to Victor D'Avella, who helped build my foundations as a philologist. I am fortunate and privileged to have had the opportunity to read many complex Tamil texts with Indra Manuel, K. Nachimuthu, T. Rajeshwari, VG. Vijay Venugopal, S. Saravanan and T. Raja Rethinam in Pondicherry over the three and a half years it has taken to produce this dissertation. We spent many hours together on the challenging work by Nampi, which inspired in me a passion for the legends of Madurai. Needless to say, the Pondicherry readings are, for students of Tamil, some of the most important memories we make. There, I also met Charlotte Schmid, whose knowledge of Pāṇṭiya inscriptions has assisted this work greatly.

There are those that have helped within the field of Tamil Studies, and also those outside of it that have been just as instrumental in the completion of this

dissertation. I am grateful most of all to my parents, Vyjayanthi and Bhaskar for always buying me a book when I asked for one. I benefit equally from my brother Kedar's knowledge of Tamil environments, landscapes and wildlife, especially when I required a break after long hours at the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library. In Hamburg, I am immensely thankful for a chance to *abschalten* with Brigitte Ullrich-Schlüter, Bernd Schlüter and Renate Uckert, who have shared with me their expertise in horsemanship and riding, all the while patiently teaching me German and bringing me to fluency in the language. Their contribution to this work is in that they gave me a way to temporarily escape the many long months of home office, which determined the success or failure of many such projects during the difficult months of the pandemic. There are many more friends who have been involved in this project, whose names need not be mentioned — we are in touch, and you know that I am grateful.

To the institutions that have hosted this project, thank you for your trust in my abilities. I came to Universität Hamburg as a Masters student, and am thrilled to remain here to see my dissertation through. The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures has become a second home over these last four years — thank you to the many scholars whose valuable input has aided this project in many ways. I think first of my working group 'Facing New Technologies', where the preliminary ideas on my thesis were discussed enthusiastically. To name a few among a huge team of experts — thank you Dmitri Bondarev for your important, useful questions, to Michael Kohs who engaged with my writing and progress so eagerly, to Silsupa Jaengsawang from whose (very similar) research I learned to articulate my own, to Cornelius Berthold for always thinking of me when research discussions similar to my work took place in other working groups, to Franz Cramer, whose knowledge of colonialism enhanced my own arguments, to Christina Kaminski whose expert administration has ensured a smooth life for me in Hamburg, to Meryll Rebello, whose coordinating and moral support gave me (and many other doctoral candidates) a joyful work environment, and to Kaja Harter, a generous, knowledgeable scholar whose guidance was instrumental in my success. I must also acknowledge the expert leadership and kindness of Michael Friedrich, the head of the CSMC when I first began my project. Towards the end of 2022, Konrad Hirschler took on that role, and I am thankful for his engagement, interest and support in my work. I thank them particularly for generously approving my field trips, without which this project could not have been completed.

Finally, I am indebted to the memory of my Bharatanatyam dance and Carnatic music teachers Shyamala Mohanraj, Aniruddha Knight, A.R. Sundaram, T.R. Moorthy, Saraswathy Sankaranarayanan, Laurissa (and many more), for instilling in me the value of traditional knowledge. Through them, I learned to respect Tamil poetry and its transmitters, whether they perform it on stage, or recite it at court. This dissertation is undoubtedly a tribute to the long line of Tamil scholars, without whom I would have little, if anything, to say.

iii. A Clarification of Terms: Orientalism, Caste, and History

This dissertation often employs terms that are politically charged. As I speak extensively of colonial power-dynamics and their impact on South Indian manuscript cultures, the ‘label’, so to speak, of Orientalism to describe a specific kind of European scholarship in India, is frequently used. While I am aware of several contributions to the Orientalist discourse, the most famous of which is by Edward Said, I do not use the term ‘Orientalism’ with any implication of criticism. My dissertation strives only to tell the tale of South Indian scholars, and compensate for the silencing of their voices over the decades since their production of the Mackenzie Collection in the early nineteenth century. Thus, my perspective is based only on the perspectives that they shared in their writings, and their contribution to Tamil literature is thus the focal point of this work. In terms of using ‘Orientalist’ to refer to colonial scholars of Indian languages, I mean to only differentiate this particular kind of scholarship from the literature that was produced by South Indian scholars at the time. This differentiation is an important one to make, for as we will shortly see, the line between the coloniser and the colonised is often blurred in the making of the Mackenzie archive.

At the same time, I am conscious of the effect of colonialism on Indian literature and Indian culture as a whole. It was detrimental. Thus, I criticise many Orientalist scholars throughout my dissertation, but for their sub-standard scholarship only. I do not engage with the wider political concept of Orientalism, for that is a debate that must be left to more politically or historically centred projects. This is a manuscript project only.

This brings me to another term — caste. One of the challenges in choosing to work on a written project is its isolation from lived experiences. It is in fact the absolute absence of evidence of the lived experiences of the contributors of the Mackenzie Collection that determines the premise of my project — I can only argue for written evidence, for it is the only evidence. This does not mean, however, that the manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection did not interact with nor were they impacted by caste and caste-politics of their time. It is my belief that a more serious engagement with this portion of the Mackenzie archive is necessary, for a mere few lines does not do justice to the issue. Having said that, I acknowledge my own privilege and position as a young researcher, as an upper-caste person, and as a private citizen of India and condemn the rise of Hindu nationalistic (and thus caste-affirming) ideals in the last decade.

My condemnation of these ideals is deeply intrinsic to the environment under which Mackenzie and his collaborators operated. Today, the Modi government has ensured its rise to fame by blaming colonialism as the only source for India’s problems, thus denying its own complicity in the subjugation of minorities within India. The isolation of colonialism as the only culprit is denies caste-based and religious discrimination, and this has sadly become the identity that Modi has given India today. As I work on a colonial project in which I also often criticise the British colonial government of India, I wish to clarify here that this is not meant to add fuel to the arguments that Indian right-wing politicians make today. I work only on one instance of how textual evidence was shaped and warped by colonial intervention.

This is not meant to take away from the importance of critically dealing with casteist institutions in the country, regardless of India's current political realities.

In the creation of the Mackenzie Collection, as was the case in most interactions between the coloniser and the colonised, the majority of the Indian side of his project were members of the upper castes. This is reflected in the dialect of Tamil in which the manuscripts are written, and in their knowledge and access to the English language. There are parts of the Collection that deal with the caste system exclusively, such as illustrations (describing the attire of different Indian castes), and memoirs (describing the various caste and class groups of a region). I have not included them in my study, for it focuses solely on political dynasties, particularly, the Pāṇṭiyas. Additionally, given the exclusionary nature of caste, most anti-caste activists, themselves belonging to the lower or Dalit castes, have not been represented sufficiently in academia and academic circles. The only interaction with caste in the manuscripts in my study lies in that which is unwritten, and therefore unexplicit. It is not my expertise, nor my goal, to unfurl unwritten evidence. I therefore consult the work of primarily Dirks (2010) who documented the nature of caste before, during, and after colonialism.

In terms of my usage of words such as 'history', as opposed to 'legend', I do my best to maintain a neutral narrative. However, there remains a challenge in that, depending on who speaks, and about whom they speak, such words tend to bear the weight of bias. For example, British narratives on Indian 'histories' often dismiss them as 'legendary', while Indian narratives speak of 'legends' as historically sound. I am conscious of these connotations, and choose to speak of them as two equally valid modes of writing. Where further discussion is due, I explain my stance and provide supporting evidence.

iv. Conventions

All transliterations have been made according to the conventions established by the Tamil Lexicon. Quoted passages from both published and unpublished sources are left unedited, unless otherwise specified. The conventions that they use are therefore left untouched, and commented upon only where relevant. Most place-names retain their modern English spelling, such as 'Madurai' or 'Chennai', unless I transliterate/translate them from a Tamil passage. Proper nouns/names are spelled according to how that person has written their name down in manuscripts, such as 'Lakshmiah' or 'Sreenivasiah'. In order to differentiate general manuscript collections from the Mackenzie Collection, I capitalise 'Collection' when referring to Mackenzie's. As this project is meant to be accessible to those outside of the realm of Tamil philology or manuscript studies, all quoted passages in Tamil are transliterated into English script and translated. All translations are my own, unless otherwise specified. All quotations are unedited. I provide *[sic]* where it might seem to the reader that I have committed an error in my copying of a quote, such as in the case of a superfluous comma or capitalisation. Abbreviations are introduced within the dissertation. The first occurrence of words to be abbreviated are given in their expanded form, alongside the abbreviation that I then apply, for example, 'Tamil Lexicon (henceforth referred

to as TL)'. In my citations, all capitalised Roman numerals refer to the volume number of a series, and all Arabic numerals to the page number of the cited work. All small Roman numerals refer to a prefatory chapter of the quoted literature (For example, Taylor 1862:III:56 and Wilson 1828:xv). In Chapter 3, when I deal with certain grammatical aspects of Tamil, I use hyphens (to separate individual members of a compound, for example) and brackets (to demarcate optional letters in the spelling of a word) sparingly so that readers are not distracted. For example, what is written as 'kol(lu)-tal' in the TL is written by me as 'kol^ll^utal'. Quotation marks are used for passages extracted from works of secondary literature to emphasise that it is the opinion of the writer, while manuscripts are copied without quotation as I treat them as primary evidence (unless specified otherwise). Common abbreviations that are often-used are listed below:

a) Languages

Skt. - Sanskrit

Tam. - Tamil

Tel. - Telugu

b) Formatting:

Ed. - Edited

f. - Footnote

Ms. - Manuscript

p. - Page (in a paper manuscript)

r - Recto (in a palm-leaf manuscript)

Rep. - Reprint

Trans. - Translated

v - Verso (in a palm-leaf manuscript)

Vol. - Volume

v. Library Visits and Manuscript Catalogues

During my period of research, I visited two libraries — the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library (henceforth referred to as GOML) in Chennai, and the British Library in London, to look at the manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection. My trip to Chennai was in the midst of a Covid lockdown, in February to March 2022, as a result of which the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library was severely understaffed. Fortuitously, they were at the time completing their online catalogue of paper manuscripts in their collection. As all of the manuscripts in the Mackenzie archive are on paper (the original palm-leaves are either no longer extant or temporarily lost), I was able to access them online. Yet, I discovered that the shelf-numbers that the in-house librarians used and the shelf-numbers marked in the website seldom matched. The physical catalogue of the GOML (consisting of around thirty volumes) contains the most reliable means of tracing manuscripts in the

GOML. A large part of Chapters 1 and 2 of this work deal with this issue. I provide only tentative shelf-numbers, and in my bibliography of the manuscripts in Chennai, mark only those that can be found via a word search in the online catalogue. As we will see, the GOML catalogues are not always reliable. Of the relevant volumes of the catalogues of the GOML, I use only that which is titled Rangacharya *et al. Descriptive Catalogue of the Tamil Manuscripts in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras*. Of the several volumes (I have counted thirteen under this title), VII (1948), VIII (1953), XI (1955) and X (1955) deal with the Mackenzie Collection. The catalogue series called *A Triennial Catalogue of Manuscripts* was not used in the production of this work. It deals with manuscripts collected over a period of three years at a time, and the first period considered (in Vol. I, 1910-11 to 1912-13) is around a century after the Mackenzie manuscripts were collected. Thus, when I speak of *the* GOML catalogue, it is of the former set of thirteen.

I was at the British Library in May 2023, to look at the English-language portion of the Mackenzie Collection. Their online archive is very effective, and their staff knowledgeable. Yet, certain aspects of locating the manuscript one seeks must be clarified nevertheless. The bulk of the Mackenzie Collection is part of the India Office Library Collection, shipped around 1821 (right after Mackenzie's death) to London. The British Library has bound the Collection into fourteen volumes, named:

Mss Eur Mack Trans I: Class I. - Persian (1803-1819);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans II: Class II. - Tamul, etc. (Early 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans III: Class III. - Tamul. (1803-1826);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans IV: Class IV. - Malayalam. (1st quarter of the 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans V: Class V. - Kernada, Etc. (Early 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans VI: Class VI. - Tuluva, etc. (Early 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans VII: Class VII. - Telegu. (Early 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans VIII: Class VIII. - Telegu. (Early 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans IX: Class IX. - Mahratta, etc. (Early 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans X: Class X. - Sanscrit. (Early 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans XI: Class XI. - Miscelleaneous. (Early 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans XII: Class XII. - Letters and Reports. (1803-1821);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans XIII: Class XIII. - Inscriptions. (early 19th century);
 Mss Eur Mack Trans XIV: Class XIV. Javanese and Dutch, etc. (early 19th century).

Of these, the portions relevant to my research are Class II, Class II and Class XII. Class II and III contain the translations by Mackenzie's emissaries into English from the original Tamil manuscripts housed at the GOML. I have made some attempts to connect the two collections to each other, but have not always succeeded. It is worth keeping in mind that the provenance of the Mackenzie Collection as a whole is quite complicated. Many manuscripts have gone missing over the decades, and catalogues have done their best to compensate for missing evidence. Yet, several mismatches do occur, and I have tried as much as possible to connect all available evidence, so that readers and future researchers can navigate these archives with ease.

There are a few other manuscripts in the British Library that I have consulted, namely, the archive of written correspondences to and from Fort William, the stronghold of British rule in India. It was the Bengal government which became the British Raj that bought portions of the Mackenzie manuscripts and then distributed them across London and Chennai. The letters in which Palmer & Co., the company in charge of Mackenzie's estate after his death, sold the Collection to the Bengal government are located under the shelf-number IOR/F/4/713/19470. The shelf-number Add MS 52735 contains Mackenzie's letters to Cockerell, another British official in India at the time, about his regard for the Indian emissaries that worked under him. Mackenzie's hand is also seen in Mss Eur E118, where a few maps as well as impressions of his trips to Java have been noted down. Additionally, what are listed under 'Minor Collections' in the India Office Library of the British Library collection are the 'Wilson papers', in which Wilson's participation in the Mackenzie Collection is alluded to. I did not consult this in great detail, but it helped me draw a timeline of events between Mackenzie's death in 1821 and Wilson's publication of the first Mackenzie catalogue in 1828. The shelf-numbers for these letters are Mss Eur E301/11-15, and listed under 'documents' (as opposed to 'manuscripts') is Mss Eur D. 431, titled 'Wilson Papers'. These appear to be private letters that Wilson received from friends and colleagues during his time in India. All the details of these manuscripts are discussed extensively in my dissertation and are listed again in my bibliography, divided according to my own convention called 'Text Groups' that I introduce in Chapter 1.

0.0 Introduction — The Beginnings of an Archive

On the 2nd of September, 1783, Colin Mackenzie, an ambitious 29-year old man from Stornoway, Scotland, disembarked from the *Atlas* and entered the port of Madras for the first time. Like many young men from the British Isles, Mackenzie sought the wealth of the colonies to improve his family's prospects. Despite having been appointed as a military cadet only two months prior to his departure to Madras, he was dispatched almost immediately to serve the British East India Company, which was in the midst of a difficult war with Tipu Sultan of Mysore. His task was to survey Tipu's fortified lands, so that they may be easily captured in the future. These surveys were successful for two reasons. Firstly, in the Third Mysore War (1790-1792), the territories of Dindigul and Palghat were unequivocally captured by the British East India Company, a victory that would have been impossible without Mackenzie's investigation into the region's fortifications.² The British owed many more such victories to him.³ Secondly, surveying lands required Mackenzie and his colleagues to travel extensively. During those travels, he discovered a passion for archiving. This led him to collect some of the most valuable historical material on South India, thus creating what we know today as the Mackenzie Collection.

² Wolffhardt 2018:60-1.

³ Ibid.

Beginning as a military engineer, and then becoming surveyor *par excellence*, Mackenzie's career was extremely successful. He died on 8th May, 1821, around 38 years after his entry into the port of Madras, at the age of 67. At the time of his death, he was in possession of a vast archive that comprised 1,568 manuscripts in 15 languages, 2,070 regional histories and chronologies in four languages, 8,076 transcriptions of inscriptions, 2,159 translations of manuscript material into English, 79 plans, 2,630 drawings, 6,218 coins, 106 images, and 40 antique objects.⁴ It came to be popularly known as the Mackenzie Collection, and was sold by his widow Petronella for 100,000 rupees (10,000 British pounds) to the Bengal government.⁵ Since then, it has been divided between the India Office Collection of the British Museum in London, and the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library in Chennai (previously Madras).

Mackenzie's professional circumstances were atypical. He wished, as did many of his disposition, to come to India armed with a decent education,⁶ and a letter of recommendation for the Governor of (in this case) Madras,⁷ and to swiftly expand his wealth through investments with the British East India Company. However, his immediate employment in the Second Mysore War, and subsequently the Third Mysore War, compelled him to take a different path. He joined the Madras Engineers in May 1786⁸ under the direction of Patrick Ross. Ross was most famous for his rebuilding of Fort St. George in Madras.⁹ Ross, it appears, noted his talents as a surveyor and encouraged him to create maps for military use. Mackenzie's dedication to the Madras Engineers provided him with the means to hone his skills as a cartographer. Previously, due to the short-term employment contracts of British officials in the East India Company and because of existing maps being locked up in private collections, long-term surveys were difficult to coordinate.¹⁰ Mackenzie's arrival in India, paired with his patient disposition, meant that such projects could be taken on once again, and he began in 1788 with a survey of Guntoor.¹¹

⁴ Wilson 1828:15.

⁵ Blake (1991:144-5). A detailed breakdown of Mackenzie's income and expenditure and the circumstances of Mrs. Mackenzie's sale of the Collection are provided here. The original documents that conveyed these transactions were unavailable, as a result of which I have relied on secondary accounts such as Blake's.

⁶ Wolffhardt 2018:50 documents Mackenzie's rise to prominence as an employee of the East India Company. There was, as he explains (*ibid.*), a certain hope that young men from England were filled with in their travels to the East which was to improve their prospects. Most sought jobs in India for this very reason. Mackenzie was no exception.

⁷ Wolffhardt 2018:55.

⁸ Wolffhardt 2018:75:30f.

⁹ Wolffhardt 2018:76:34f. I have not been able to find the copy of the book by Massie that is cited here.

¹⁰ Wolffhardt 2018:76:49f.

¹¹ Alexander Dalrymple was a hydrographer and geographer, who published the *Oriental Repertory*, in which Mackenzie's military exploits are recorded. This is a useful, albeit dry book that provides the background to the story of the Mackenzie Collection — that all of this began with the intention of conquest.

By the early 1790s, he had earned enough to send funds to his sister in Stornoway, thus making her the richest woman there.¹² He served in the Third Mysore War (1790-92) alongside Lord Charles Cornwallis, the Governor-General of Madras, and in the Fourth Mysore War (1798-99) under the leadership of Arthur Wellington. In 1790, he was recognised officially as a surveyor and was commissioned by the British government to survey the Circar of Guntoor.¹³ By this stage, he was armed with equipment, staff, and finances, and had befriended several high-ranking British officials. He had everything he needed to conduct his surveys seamlessly. In 1800, he presented a proposal to the government to survey all of Mysore. That survey took several years to complete, and it was during this time that he built for himself a reputation as an antiquarian. His primary interests were monuments,¹⁴ which led him to inspect stone-inscriptions more closely. In 1798, he made the acquaintance of Kavali Venkata Boriah, a *dubashi*¹⁵ with the military paymaster of the East India Company, in Masulipattinam.¹⁶ Boriah, whose knowledge of South India was immense, encouraged Mackenzie to create, collect and preserve written histories of the region. His untimely death in 1803 at the age of 26 would have left an irrevocable void in Mackenzie's personal and professional life, if not for Lakshmiah and Ramaswami, his brothers. Like their deceased sibling, they too worked closely with Mackenzie as his translators and emissaries.¹⁷

In this way, Mackenzie reached the pinnacle of his career in 1815, when he was appointed the first Surveyor General of India.¹⁸ In 1819, he was promoted to colonel, but already showed signs of weakening health. In 1821, he died in Calcutta.¹⁹

0.1 After Mackenzie

¹² Wolffhardt 2018:6.

¹³ Wolffhardt 2018:58; Vibart 1881:284-5.

¹⁴ The one, very famous picture of Mackenzie is in front of the Jain shrine Shravanabelagola. See, for instance, the cover page of Wolffhardt 2018. See also Howes (2010:62-4), who has documented one drawing by Mackenzie of a Jain monument.

¹⁵ Nield-Basu (1984) states: 'The word 'dubash' [Urdu 'do + bhāṣ' 'two + languages'] or more properly 'dubashi', literally means a man of two languages or an interpreter. His professional role was that of a go-between or broker. His linguistic skills as interpreter and translator were essential to his role, but the usefulness of the dubash extended far beyond his knowledge of languages. In the households of the higher ranking Europeans in Madras, a dubash served as the head steward. For new arrivals to the town, he functioned as a kind of advisor, guide, broker, and inevitably moneylender.'

¹⁶ Ramaswami 1834:142-3. This is the only biography of Boriah. Secondary accounts such as Mantena 2009:15, Mantena 2012, and Wolffhardt 2018 are also valuable in reconstructing the histories of the Kavali brothers. As far as I am aware, an exact date or circumstance of Mackenzie's acquaintance with Boriah is unavailable.

¹⁷ See, for instance, Mantena 2009:15.

¹⁸ Mackenzie 1952:176-7.

¹⁹ Wolffhardt 2018:272.

Despite the many hurdles, Mackenzie secured for himself an income that would elevate his family's condition greatly, and provided the world of research with an archive so vast that it overwhelms even today's researchers, approximately 200 years later. There is therefore little to be said of his life and career, other than that it was full of success.

The aftermath of his demise, however, tells a different story — he left behind an archive that only he knew how to navigate, and only his personal assistants knew to use. Since his death, the Collection has been in disarray. It appears that Mackenzie, presumably occupied with the unpredictability of attempting something that had never been done before, did not have the means to think of the future of his archive. Scattered efforts ensured that the Mackenzie Collection was catalogued and stored in relative safety. His South Indian collaborators lost any prospect of employment after his death. A hollistic project on the Collection proved expensive at best, and tiresome at worst, due to the logistical complications that came with dividing its artefacts between England and India. Additionally, given that colonial autocracy governed South India in every way, unity between English scholars (or Orientalists) and South Indian scholars (Pundits) was difficult to establish. In such circumstances, Mackenzie would have been the glue that held these colliding worlds together. In his absence, research on the Collection became fragmented, save for a few feeble attempts here and there.

0.2 Work on the Mackenzie Collection

In the recent past, the situation has improved. After a slump of several decades, the Mackenzie Collection has once again evoked curiosity among scholars. Most notably, Trautmann 2006 and 2009 deal extensively with the Mackenzie Collection. He coined the term 'Madras School of Orientalism' (2006:1) to describe the two pillars of colonial knowledge in South India — the Mackenzie Collection, and the College at Fort St. George. (ibid.) He displays how colonial circumstances, ranging from political decisions to the institutionalisation of traditional knowledge, played a role in the outcome of Mackenzie's surveys. Mantena 2012 speaks in detail of the Kavali brothers and their unique relationship with Mackenzie. They were his interpreters, scholarly consultants and accompanied him on many tours around South India. She also discusses the origins of historiography in South India with respect to Mackenzie's work in Telugu regions. Dirks 2009, 2011 and 2015 deal with the socio-political dynamics of colonialism, and the consequences it has had on South Indian cultures. Dirks 2015 is one of the few sources that considers the corpus of written correspondences between Mackenzie and his Indian emissaries, stored today in the India Office archive at the British Library. Wolffhardt 2018 has written the only biography of Colin Mackenzie that describes his life before India. Based primarily on archival evidence (such as military records and written correspondences), he fills many gaps in Mackenzie's timeline (such as his early life), and resolves certain misconceptions in more popular accounts of him (such as his reason for becoming an antiquarian). One of those popular accounts is Wilson 1828's introduction to the Descriptive Catalogue of the Mackenzie Collection, which was also published as an

article in the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (1838:XII). It is a brief account of Mackenzie's career in India, based on a letter Mackenzie wrote to friend and colleague Alex Johnson. Mahalingam 1972 also contains a tribute to Mackenzie, which speaks of some aspects of his life. Cohn 1996 investigates the curious relationship between colonial knowledge and colonial power. He connects the quest for absolute authority to research projects in every field that cropped up under the auspices of the East India Company, and argues that the exploits of the Orientalist imagination ultimately hoped to create a political circumstance that was suited to preserving colonialist governance in India. Among these works, those that speak of Mackenzie hold additional value in that they contextualise his work in the larger environment of colonial India.

The manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection were collected, created and commissioned in the late 18th to early 19th centuries. This period is as significant as it is complicated. On one hand, several new genres and literary techniques emerged, often as independent traditions that avoided each other. On the other hand, a large portion of literary production was controlled and influenced by colonial presence, whose impact was felt for many generations to come. In order to understand the literary developments of this time period, I have primarily consulted Ebeling 2018. Additionally, Venkatachalapathy 2006a and 2006b examine the socio-political impacts of colonial economies on South India and its literary cultures. The latter speaks often of magazines, newspapers and comics — a reflection of rising print cultures, the direct successor of Mackenzie's paper manuscripts. Blackburn (2003) goes into greater detail about these print cultures, and their relationship with their political circumstance, be it the setting sun of British colonialism or the emergence of Indian nationalism.

This work attempts to study the Mackenzie manuscripts from a philological point of view. Unfortunately, most projects, including those that I listed above, speak of the Mackenzie Collection as a socio-historical phenomenon and not a textual one. This is achieved either through the depiction of larger situations such as the impact of colonial rule on South India, (Dirks 2011, 2015; Ebeling 2018) or through a specific discussion on Mackenzie (Trautmann 2006; Mantena 2012; Wolffhardt 2018). The absence of a study in which the manuscripts and their texts are the nucleus proved an impediment to my work.

I do however appreciate the difficulty in attempting a textual study. The Mackenzie Collection is far too large to be dealt with by a single person. The sheer number of manuscripts, let alone the diversity of subjects, demands an interdisciplinary, multi-lingual armada of scholars that must be willing to collaborate for long periods. This raises another concern: there is a massive void in evidence, owing to the fact that the Mackenzie manuscripts have neither been published, nor used, since their initial production. The exceptions are too minute to influence the situation as a whole.²⁰ Again, a single-handed effort cannot hope to compensate for this void in evidence. Studying the Mackenzie manuscripts also entails going back 200 years, for they have been untouched since then.

²⁰ Noted exceptions are Mantena 2009 and 2012, and Howes 2010.

In order to alleviate both difficulties — the lack of secondary sources, and the lack of updated manuscript research — I have chosen to conduct a case study of 13 manuscripts. This allows me to work without compromising on the quality of research, and to create a blueprint for future work on the Collection. The manuscripts I have selected share three common points — language (Tamil), genre (historical literature) and theme (Pāṇṭiya dynasty). I consult an additional 10 manuscripts, which consist primarily of written correspondences between Mackenzie and his South Indian emissaries.

As Tamil has the oldest literary tradition in the South, literary texts and treatises often recognise, and even enforce the idea that Tamil is older than it actually was at the time of their composition.²¹ In other words, Tamil literature emphasised the historicity of the language and its literary tradition. Despite this, Tamil texts did not differentiate between literary history and historical literature — a difference that was made only when historical enquiries under the Mackenzie project began. They took all prior literary works to be hyperbolic conjectures of true events which were not informed by the notion of ‘fact’ (versus ‘fantasy’). The idea of history, so far a compilation of glorified accounts, now became a matter of science. Questions of accuracy, factuality and consistency — questions that formed the very foundations of European inquiries into their own past — were now applied to Tamil writings. The objective, even insensitive way in which colonial scholarship approached the history of its colonised subjects laid the foundation for a an uninvolved, thus neutral kind of historical writing. Mackenzie’s emissaries imbibed this style, and the Collection thus contains early experiments in historiography, in which these European questions could finally be answered. Tamil’s awareness of its own past, based primarily on the Sanskrit Purāṇas, no longer sufficed in recounting its own history. Now, a fresh, and thus wholly unfamiliar, mode of writing had to be devised in order to accommodate the new demand for provable, conceivable fact. This mode of writing manifested in the form of three genres of historical literature, namely the *carittiram* (‘historical biography’), the *varalāru* (‘chronology’) and the *kaipītu* (‘family/local history’).

The manuscripts that this work discusses document the history of the Pāṇṭiyas, written as either *carittirams* or *varalārus*. Both genres display distinct features of their own. The *carittiram* is an elaborate narration, and the *varalāru* a succinct chronological enumeration, often dated, and devoid of descriptive prose. Ultimately, both aim to produce a history that is authentic, as a result of which they often given the combined nomenclature of *carittira-varalāru*, and present a chronology that is contextualised through a detailed background written in prose. The components of that narrative include, but are not exclusive to, a) connecting the ruling dynasty to a powerful deity and substantiating its claim to power by associating it with divine power, b) claiming that the capital of that dynasty is the source of that divine power, and c) validating their collective history by relating it to Purāṇic events. In the case of these 13 manuscripts, the ruling dynasty is the Pāṇṭiyas, and their preferred Lord is

²¹ I speak of a famous instance of the *varalāru* (roughly, chronology/history) in Nakkīraṇ’s commentary to the *Iraiyāṇār Akapporuḷ* under section 1.9 of this work. The ‘idea’ of history conveyed in most texts does not focus on finer details, but on the larger picture that extant Tamil literature is reminiscent of the former glory of Tamil, in which ‘the former’ is so old, that it is intangible.

Cuntarēcuvarar. Their seat is Madurai, the political capital of the dynasty and the location of the temple of the Lord. They are connected to the Purāṇas through Indra, who was banished to Madurai and absolved of his crimes only by worshipping its ruling deity, and through the Rāmāyaṇa, in which Rāma prayed to that deity on his way to Ilāṅkai, thus ensuring his heroic victory against Rāvaṇa.

Of the two genres that cover the Pāṇṭiya histories, the *carittiram* contains two key features. The first, as I have shown above, is its theme. A topic (in this case, the Pāṇṭiyas) is brought into a more tangible (i.e., historically authentic) format, and is discussed with regard to its importance to, and within, larger-than-life forces (Cuntarēcuvarar, Indra and Rāma). Then, the narrative shifts to Pāṇṭiya individuality — what each king did, who preceded him, who succeeded him, and who he conquered. The failures of some kings are also discussed, albeit rarely. The second, and in fact, more dominant feature is its mode of writing. It presents its narrative in plain prose, apparently for the first time in Tamil writing.²² Its goal is to give precedence to the content, and not the literary capabilities of the writer. In other words, it appears to represent the scientific and not the literary.

The *carittiram* was an unusual addition to the existing world of Tamil prose literature. Prior to Mackenzie, prose seemed to function as the bridge between the literary exponent and the non-expert. Prose writings were likely study-guides for students learning advanced poetry. They were also summaries of older, complex literary works to be read during auspicious occasions. They could even have been used as writing practice for scribes in training. They existed only on the threshold of the exclusive literary circle of the *pulavar* (poet-scholar). Prose was for the merely literate, and poetry for the esteemed erudite. When Mackenzie began to commission manuscripts that contained histories of South Indian rulers, this dynamic was apparently questioned, leading to changes in the perception of prose. It became more accepted as a literary medium. It was seen now as the representative of science. It was no longer sub-standard, but crafted, as a poem was, finally fit to be circulated in more exclusive literary spaces.

Therefore, in terms of my research, the Mackenzie manuscripts are as much a study of Tamil prose as they are of Tamil historiography. Pillai (1904), Asher (1972) and Zvelebil (1975:231) provide a detailed timeline of the development of Tamil prose. Still, this topic is rather overlooked, likely on account of its long-standing reputation as a subsidiary of poetry. Thus, my main sources on earlier prose composition are unpublished, often mislabelled manuscripts across several manuscript libraries — the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library (GOML) (where a large portion of the Mackenzie Collection is stored), the Institut Française de Pondichéry (IFP) and the India Office collection in the British Museum (where the other portion of the Mackenzie Collection is stored). Of them, the GOML and the IFP contain the highest number of prose manuscripts in a variety of genres. Other libraries are considered for individual artefacts. The India Office collection contains, arguably, the most special documents. Mackenzie, the meticulous archiver, maintained written correspondences with his

²² The exception to this statement is the rich literary commentary tradition in Tamil. It has been documented in Anandakichenin & D'Avella 2020, and I have discussed it in Chapter 3 of this work.

Indian emissaries while they were on their travels. They are the only documents that could tell us more about Mackenzie's relationship with his assistants, and the identity of his writers. I have consulted a combination of secondary accounts of these documents, and where necessary, the documents themselves, and cite them where discussed in this work.

In general, those prose works that were written prior to Mackenzie's (and other colonial) collaborations are more straightforward re-tellings of earlier legendary literature composed in complex meter. They lent themselves to a more general audience for famous tales, and the flexibility of prose in general allowed them to improvise, change and shorten stories to their liking. Several genres of prose existed — the *vacaṇam* ('prose re-telling'), *katai* ('general story'), and *curukkam* ('summary'), to name a few. Unlike the genres in the Mackenzie Collection, these do not possess distinct features of their own. Additionally, they often resort to hybridisation — there are a multitude of texts that go by the names '*vacaṇa-katai*', '*katai-curukkam*', etc. That hybridisation certainly carried over to the Mackenzie documents, as we have '*carittira-varalāru*', for one. These genres, although never curated and stream-lined like the *carittiram* or the *varalāru*, survived into 20th-century print cultures. Today, given the ubiquity of prose, they no longer fit into one genre category. A hypothetical *Cilappatikāra Vacaṇam* from 300 years ago would now be printed as *Cilappatikāram* — the re-telling calls itself the source text, thus revealing that today's audience prefer the concise prose version to the highly ornamented, poetic original.

The precursor of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection are a handful of *vacaṇam* texts that provide accounts of the Pāṇṭiya rulers through a legendary re-telling of the *Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam* ('the sacred sports') (henceforth 'TVP'). It narrates through 64 Chapters the amusing exploits of Lord Cuntarēcuvar in Madurai and how he interferes in its affairs to diffuse any complicated situations. In it, he is in close proximity to the Pāṇṭiya rulers, and even manifests as the third in the lineage, ruling Madurai himself alongside Mīṇāṭci, his divine consort. He wins wars for the Pāṇṭiyas, builds cities for them, and protects their lineage by alleviating external threats. The TVP, a text composed by Perumparra Puliyūr Nampi (12-14th century), is arguably one of the most difficult works to read in the Tamil corpus. This would explain why it is yet to be critically edited²³ or translated in its entirety. The importance of Nampi's work faded, but his story survived. Its earliest Sanskrit counterpart, the *Hālāsya Māhātmya*, is now a part of the *Skanda Purāṇa* and is attributed to the 15th century.²⁴ Parañcōti (ca. 17th century) revived the TVP in Tamil, and popularised it. The TVP *vacaṇams* are based solely on his version, and do not reveal any knowledge of Nampi.

In my analysis, the TVP is an important factor to consider. It shows us what record-keeping in prose looked like before Mackenzie's notions of factuality were

²³ U. Vē Cāminātaiyar edited and published this text in 1906. He provided footnotes that contain translations, glosses and variants. They are useful, but not present for the whole of the TVP.

²⁴ Wilden 2014:24. Cf. Fisher 2017:244:62f: 'The earliest citations of the *Hālāsya Māhātmya* of which I am aware... occur in the *Varṇāśramacandrikā*, a late seventeenth-century theological treatise in Sanskrit on the role of caste in the selection of preceptors in the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta tradition.'

brought in to South India. It also shows us how the Pāṇṭiyas were spoken of before a more neutral stance — where cautious criticism of rulers was permitted, and their exploits less exaggerated — was preferred. The metamorphosis of legendary writing to historical is seen clearly on comparing the *vacaṇam* with the *carittiram*. The *vacaṇam* also bridges the gap between the highly ornamented composition of Parañcōti, and the sterile, scientific productions of the colonial period. It simplified Parañcōti's elaborate poetry, and set the stage for Mackenzie's histories to emerge. It ensured its own success by the already established fame of the stories it was based upon and through its curious linguistic characteristics that emulate spoken registers. The *vacaṇam* was composed in an amalgamation of spoken and written Tamil, and is not consistent in spelling, grammar or structure. It is largely improvised, giving the reader the impression that it was composed while being written.

Unfortunately, the *vacaṇam*, and most other prose genres, are neglected in scholarship. My main sources of consultation are manuscripts that contain *vacaṇams* of the TVP, such as Indien 291 (BNF), RE25375 and RE27530 (IFP). As for the TVP, it has been studied with reasonable enthusiasm. Wilden (2014:256) speaks of the *tamilccaṅkam* ('Academy of Tamil scholars'), the famous group of scholars at the Pāṇṭiya court that is said to have produced a large portion of (what is therefore called) the Caṅkam corpus, and epitomised literary composition in the Tamil world. Their story is an important part of Nampi's TVP (Chapters 15-20). This account provides a metahistory of the TVP until Parañcōti. Aravamuthan (1932, 1933) compares various accounts of the TVP, and constructs a Pāṇṭiya chronology on their basis. He also discusses older chronologies. He reveals, for one, that the making of a chronology was not restricted to court and temple records alone, but could also be established through the literary versions of the TVP. Particularly, Parañcōti's text displays the earliest experiments in constructing a chronology in Tamil²⁵ — he takes the 64 chapter-stories of Nampi and attempts to re-arrange them in a more historically viable order. This attempt connects back to the Mackenzie Collection in that it was likely its precursor. Mackenzie was not the first instance of historical curiosity in India, but the first cultivator of a Europeanised Tamil historiography. The idea of chronologising emerged prior to his contributions, but only became the heart of a movement towards reconstructing South India's histories during his project.

0.3 Scope

²⁵ This is keeping in mind that Parañcōti's text is in fact a transcreation (by which I mean it is a vague translation — simply put, it is based on the Sanskrit text but is not a direct translation of it) of the Sanskrit *Hālāsya Māhātmya* into Tamil. There, the chronology is provided for the first time. However, as Aravamuthan (1931:339) states: 'The author of the *Māhātmya* did not intend to write or to preserve history. If the tales contain some history, it is because such was the material that lay ready to his hand and not because he was eager for history. The chronological sequence which one associates with historical works was necessary to give unity to his work and he was too great a literary artist to deny himself the advantages of the historical method for fear that centuries later the matter-of-fact historian, devoid of all feeling for the romantic, would seriously scan his chronicle for traces of sober history.', it is worth noting that it was Parañcōti's text, and not its Sanskrit parent, that determined all future written histories of the Pāṇṭiyas, as I will show throughout the course of this work.

What began as a case study of a few Mackenzie manuscripts has thus turned into a larger analysis of the literary world of pre-modern South India. In order to convey the complexity of that world without losing detail, my dissertation begins with the Mackenzie manuscripts, and subsequently describes its place in the development of Tamil literature in the latter half of the second millennium. In Chapter 1 ('A History of a History') I start with a description of the 13 manuscripts on the Pāṇṭiyas in the Mackenzie Collection. I then present the three key features of the *carittiram* and *varalāru* genres — a) the introduction that connects the dynasty to the Purāṇas, b) the chronologies of kings (where present) among the 13 documents, and c) the elaborate descriptions of the kings themselves. I proceed to discuss the serious cataloguing issues of the Collection in its current state, as a result of which many works are now untraceable, and manuscript catalogues are not always helpful. In Chapter 2 ('Working on the Mackenzie Collection') I talk of the aftermath of Mackenzie's death. I first deal with the two Orientalists who consulted these manuscripts in their reconstruction of the Pāṇṭiya chronology — Horace Hayman Wilson, and William Taylor. Secondly, I speak of their complaints of historically erroneous information in the Mackenzie manuscripts and of many of their own serious mistakes. This Chapter is structured around their own published findings on the Pāṇṭiyas, among which are the descriptive catalogues of the Collection (Wilson 1828, Taylor 1862) that they produced. They are, among other things, dismissive of the quality of writing and historical authenticity of the prose in the Collection. I also speak of the other two catalogues of the Collection (GOML Catalogue - 13 volumes, and Mahalingam 1972), highlighting numerical errors and mismatched nomenclature that future scholars should be wary of.

Having covered the colonial period of documenting the Pāṇṭiyas, I revert to earlier times in which the TVP was the only main literary source of their history. I present a study of the *vacāṇam*, *curukkam* and *katai*, and speak of their interpretations of the TVP. In that light, I also raise two questions regarding the tricky topic of transmission — how did the *vacāṇam* make it to 20th century Tamil Nadu, but not the *carittiram*? And how did the *carittiram* have no impact on Tamil historiography, but become the template for fictional novels of the early 20th century? I construct my own literary timeline of both genres in hope of finding an explanation.

Chapter 3 of this work ('Writings in Prose: Looking Back in Time') speaks of the key features of the emerging medium of prose and how its writing is less spontaneous than it is presumed to be. Rudimentary prose, as I will show, makes no attempts to bring about formatting or orthographic consistencies, and thus appears to be a curious amalgam of both 'spoken' and 'written' Tamil registers. I argue in this Chapter that those inconsistencies were features of the *vacāṇam* and other prose registers, and not simply mistakes or disregard for rules. Subsequently, I tie them to their predecessors and successors, showing how they impacted and were impacted by their past and future. Additionally, I argue that they maintained respect for internal consistency — those manuscripts that are called *vacāṇam*, for instance, all present many similarities to other, if not all, *vacāṇam* manuscripts. A common literary structure may be observed in various examples that have had no apparent contact

with each other, and one case of two identical *vacanam* texts that summarise Parañcōti's TVP is seen, implying that they were transmitted as complete texts and not simply written down arbitrarily. This discussion leads to another — that the development of Tamil prose into the form that we have today was a centuries-long process. Another discussion is touched upon — what was the function of orality, and oral forms in early prose experiments? I argue that all attempts to standardise Tamil prose were in fact attempts to eliminate all signs of spoken (i.e., spontaneously or flippantly written) registers.

The concluding chapter (Chapter 4) of my dissertation ('Assimilating Evidence') attempts to tie the previous three together. Returning to the Pāñṭiyas, I speak of how their history was both handled and mishandled, but transmitted nevertheless. In that light, Mackenzie, who attempted to improve the standard of their history, unintentionally deteriorated it, for following his death, it fell into the hands of Orientalists who knew nothing of Tamil and little of the Tamil region's political history. This dissertation keeps in mind the general environment, both temporal and spatial, of South Indian literature — how the TVP has come into contact with several literary traditions across the peninsula, and how in turn, its transmission has been changed, updated and re-interpreted time and again. In that transitory process, the anomaly that we now call the Mackenzie Collection played its part and faded into the larger realm of South Indian manuscript cultures. The Mackenzie manuscripts, after all, belong to several worlds — the Tiruvilaiyāṭals of Cuntarēcuvarar, the Pāñṭiya dynasty, Tamil historiography, Tamil literature, colonial knowledge, native knowledge, the oral tradition, and the sanctity of Madurai.

Chapter 1 — A History of A History²⁶

1.0 The Pāñṭiya Manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection

The Pāñṭiya histories of the Mackenzie Collection are stored today in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai (GOML), largely in the form of paper copies created in the early 20th century from the original palm-leaves which are no longer extant. These paper copies were recently digitised, and have been uploaded online.²⁷ In my search for Pāñṭiya material, twelve documents that deal with them in varying degrees have emerged. As most of them are copies of since lost or perished originals, scribal or material identifications cannot help us trace them with certainty to the original Mackenzie documents. I thus reserve my judgement regarding their true origins until after my analysis is complete. There, I trace them

²⁶ Introducing these manuscripts is a challenge. Catalogues are often wrong, and each document possesses a host of shelf numbers that constantly change. After having introduced the manuscripts, I provide a table further below in this same section, in which this information is summarised. In order to resolve the confusion they create, I have dedicated the section after the table to a detailed discussion on the same.

²⁷ The GOML online repository is available under this link: <https://www.tamildigitallibrary.in/goml-data?language=tamil>. (Last date of access: 9th July, 2023].

through manuscript catalogues and early British colonial secondary literature on India. Still, there are three paper manuscripts that were surely part of the original documents commissioned by Mackenzie. They are D. 437 - a five-volume book titled *Pāṇṭiya Tēcattu Rācākaḷ Carittiram*, (*A History of the Kings of the Pāṇṭiya Country*), R. 2327 - a single volume titled *Maturai Pāṇṭiya Maṅṅar Carittiram* (*A History of the Kings of the Pāṇṭiyas of Maturai*) and R. 3184 - a single volume titled *Pāṇṭiya Piratāpa Vamcāvali* (*The Bloodline of Pāṇṭiya Heroes*). All three manuscripts hold different accounts of Pāṇṭiya history, suggesting that they were acquired from different sources that had no awareness of each others' existence. D. 437 is one among only two manuscripts in twelve about which we possess some verifiable background information. William Taylor, one of the cataloguers of the Mackenzie Collection, writes:

‘From memoranda²⁸ (I think the Colonel’s handwriting) it appears that these portions began to come into his hands in December 1809, and were immediately handed over to one Sreenivasiah to be translated; the last portion is marked as received 12th January 1810, and as translated March 1810, while No. 3 was translated 23rd September 1810, and No. 4 in November 1810; thus showing that information containing the College was earliest sought.²⁹’

I have been able to trace only one copy of D. 437, which is divided into two. The original is rather damaged, and many pages appear blank due to the extent of the fading of ink. This project therefore used the copy and consulted the original only to establish that both were in fact the same text. There are five volumes in D. 437, which are jumbled in the original — they are in the orders 3, 2, 1, 4 and 5. The copy restores the correct order. R. 0343 contains volumes I through IV, while R. 0347 contains volume V. R. 0343 possesses the title *Pāṇṭiya Tēca Varalārum, Pāṇṭiya Rācākaḷ Carittiramum* (*The Chronology of the Pāṇṭiya Kingdom, and the Biography of the Pāṇṭiya Kings*). R. 0347 goes by the title of *Kaliyukam Aracarkaḷ Peyar Mutaliyaṇa* (‘The names of Kings of the Kali Age, etcetera’).³⁰ R. 0343 claims to be Book. No. 17, while R. 347 is Book. No. 16. The scribe is identified as Sri. S. Krishnaswamy, who completed this copy on 19th March, 1917. It is a copy of D. 2749 (GOML catalogue, VII:2404). The description given in the catalogue (*ibid.*) is,

²⁸ There is some evidence that Mackenzie’s (identified here as ‘Colonel’s’) personal written correspondences are now part of the British Library archives. The premier article in Trautmann 2009, by Nicholas B. Dirks, called ‘Autobiography of an Archive’ speaks of this collection. However, I have not yet gained access to it, and must wait until I do to say more on Taylor’s remark. He himself does not speak of the matter with assurance, having stated here, ‘it appears that...’.

²⁹ Taylor 1862:III: 297. It is worth noting that Taylor observed that the information on the ‘College’, i.e., the *tamiḷccaṅkam* of Madurai, was coveted. We will revisit this point in later portions of this work.

³⁰ I have rendered ‘*mutaliyaṇa*’ (literally, ‘those that start with’) as ‘etcetera’ in my translation. The implication, based on my reading of the text, is that it provides a chronology of kings’ names, (‘*aracar peyar*’) but speaks also of other phenomena, such as battles, religious duties and geo-political features in long prose passages.

however, false. The catalogue claims that it is a copy of R. 347, and not in fact its continuation. (ibid.).

The circumstances behind the creation of this now divided copy are obscure, but we know that Taylor, who ordered many damaged Mackenzie manuscripts to be copied, did not commission this one. He says (ibid.):

‘It has seemed to me, by consequence, useless to incur the expense and labour of restoring this book, which can offer nothing new.’³¹

R. 2327 has been spoken of in both Taylor’s catalogue (1862:III:56) as well as the *Descriptive Catalogue of the GOML* (1948:VII:2390). The latter states that this manuscript was on palm-leaf, suggesting that it was the same, original document that Taylor handled. It is ‘much injured’ (ibid.), as a result of which a copy was made onto paper. That copy goes by the shelf number D. 3626 (ibid.:1955:X:3153), and claims to be incomplete. However, I have discovered that the copy that I have gained access to from the GOML online repository is indeed complete. It has the shelf number R. 11162 and is a portion of a multi-text manuscript whose bundle number is TR 1858.³² This is the only surviving copy that I have gained access to. Based on the limited transcription provided in the GOML catalogue, as well as Taylor’s enumeration of Pāṇḍiya kings in his catalogue entry to R. 2327, I am confident that these documents contain the same text.

The manuscript D. 3184, titled *Pāṇḍiyan Piratāpa Vamcāvali (The Bloodline of Pāṇḍiya Heroes)* is the most consistently catalogued. The entirety of the work is intact, and it appears to be a version of the TVP told in a more chronological perspective. It is rather likely that this is the manuscript described by Taylor under the entry No. 835 (1862:III:434-7³³). He says that it contains eleven sections, of which Section 2 shares a similar title to D. 3184: he calls it ‘Account of Pandya Pratāpa Raja of the Pandiya Deśam’, and points out that it is in fact a narration of the Pāṇḍiyas as a whole, and not the biography of one king whose name is ‘Pratāpa Raja.’³⁴ His description (‘The document contains an outline of the contents of the Madura

³¹ Taylor, like most of the Orientalists working on the Mackenzie Collection, was immensely condescending about the historical authenticity of such manuscripts. I deal with this in Chapter 2.

³² I am not yet aware of the significance of the bundle numbers provided in the shelf-marks of the GOML catalogue. The manuscripts that I am working on have already been separated according to text and catalogued subsequently according to the subject of the text. Thus, one would not, under normal circumstances, be able to piece together a multi-text manuscript using only the bundle-number as a reference. Perhaps it is a feature meant for the use of the GOML staff only. I mention it above only to illustrate that the bundle number usually precedes the shelf number in the label. I was not aware of this earlier, as a result of which I took one for the other, making it impossible to locate the manuscripts in catalogues (in which the bundle number is never provided).

³³ One must be wary of a mistake in the numbering of pages here (1862 edition). What is in fact page 434 is labelled page 134.

³⁴ He states, ‘This is not, as the title would appear to imply, the account of one king, but of the *Pandiya* race. Hence, *raja* is to be understood collectively or in the plural. Pratāpa is merely as an epithet signifying ‘celebrated’ or ‘illustrious’. (ibid.:435)

sta'hala purānam, down to the time of Kuna Sundara Pāndiyan...'³⁵) matches my own reading of D. 3184. The *Descriptive Catalogue of the GOML* (1953:VIII:2789) also attributes the shelf number D. 3184 to the text *Pāṇṭiya Piratāpa Vamcāvaḷi* (ibid.:1955:IX:2844) and matches both my own understanding of the copy I have access to and Taylor's catalogue. It is therefore fair to assume that this work is indeed from the Mackenzie Collection and that it has been transmitted and catalogued correctly.³⁶

Another manuscript, D. 436, also titled *Pāṇṭiya Tēcattu Rācākkaḷ Carittiram* is a curious one. It reminds one in style, binding and content to the Mackenzie manuscripts, but has not been described by any cataloguers of the Mackenzie Collection. Instead, it is assumed to be a copy of D. 437, which is false.³⁷

There are a few of manuscripts at the GOML that discuss the Pāṇṭiyas in passing. The Cōḷas, the most powerful of the three Southern kingdoms (the third being the Cēras), are the centre of these documents, and the Pāṇṭiyas are discussed from their point of view. Although I do not consult these manuscripts for information on the subject-matter, they are important to consider in rectifying cataloguing errors, as we will see shortly. The most significant manuscript is D. 3088, of which we only have copies today. It is, according to Taylor, the work of a well-known Christian scribe from Tanjore.³⁸ This explains why the narrative favours Cōḷa success against the Pāṇṭiyas — the two kingdoms were sworn enemies for centuries. Taylor writes:

‘This is a large book, composed for Colonel Mackenzie, by *Veda nayak*, who was pretty generally known as the Christian poet of Tanjore. (ibid.)’

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ The secondary title of this volume is ‘Manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection — *continued*. D. Nos. 3170-3377’. The previous volume (VIII) also contains a similar secondary title, but to other shelf numbers.

³⁷ See for instance *Descriptive Catalogue of the GOML* (1912:I:399-400): ‘Pāṇḍiyacarittiram, Entries: 436-437.’ The entry assumes that the two manuscripts are identical. See also Mahalingam (1973:I) ‘Manuscript No. 39: Madurai Pāṇḍya Rājākkaḷ Carittiram (palm-leaf manuscript containing 10 folios.); Wilson (1828:208 No. 7) Taylor, Vol. III:56-58...’ While this entry speaks of D. 437, it completely ignores D. 436, and the cross-references provided to both Wilson and Taylor are wrong. Wilson's cross-reference points to the wrong entry we find in his volume, that I have discussed in my introduction to this Chapter. The reference to Taylor points to the manuscript R. 2327, which I described previously as well. Moreover, Mahalingam states (ibid., Manuscript No. 39), ‘Taylor has published a summary of the Sthalapurāṇa with enough details in his *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*. Vol. I’. We know now that this publication of Taylor's has nothing to do with any of the manuscripts from the Mackenzie Collection. Thus, some evident confusion has taken place in the story of D. 436, so much so that it is difficult to determine where it came from.

³⁸ Taylor (Vol. III:41-42). It appears that Taylor has accidentally catalogued this work twice. The repetition is seen in ibid.:371, section 3.

‘[1] 1968-69ல் D. 2739 ஆம் எண்ணிலிருந்து படி எடுக்கப்பட்டது.’

‘It has been copied during 1968-1969 from the number D. 2739.’

However, D. 2739 is the manuscript I have introduced above that belongs to the Mackenzie Collection and is described by Taylor (1862:III:56). Thus, this copy in fact corresponds to D. 2765 in the Descriptive Catalogue of the GOML (1953:VIII:2693). The shelf number D. 2739 is confusing. Two copies of originals — R. 11162 from D. 2326, and R. 8116 from D. 3088 claim that they are copied from D. 2739. The description of the manuscript possessing the shelf number D. 2739 in the GOML catalogue (1948:VII:2390) points to No. 2327 (Taylor 1862:III:56). The remark here on D. 2326 is thus false.

The last manuscript that I include in my table is R. 0335 titled *Kaliyukamvaracarkaliṅ Attavaṇai* (‘An Index of Kings of the Kali Age’). It is the only one about which we receive absolutely no cataloguing information. It is a prose work with many gaps, suggesting that it was copied from a heavily damaged palm-leaf manuscript. It is 25 pages long and copied by S. Krishnaswammiayyah on 8th February, 2017. It has some information on the Pāṇṭiyas, as a result of which it has been taken into account. As R. 343 is not recorded in any catalogues, it was likely not part of the Mackenzie Collection. It has been considered here only for its style of writing which emulates the Mackenzie manuscripts, and the scribe who, as we have seen, has been the copyist for a few other works in the Mackenzie Collection.

Below is a summary of the key details on each manuscript I have thus far introduced, split according to text.⁴¹

| Text Group | Mss. Shelf-Mark(s) | Current Status, Condition | File Name in GOML Online Repository | Scribe, Date of Completion |
|------------|--|----------------------------|--|--|
| A | D. 437 (Original, all five volumes) | Extant, damaged | paaNTiyarcarrittiram_Tamil_TD_TD 0084 D 0437.pdf | |
| | R. 343 (Copy, first four volumes = ‘Book No. 16’) | Extant, good condition | paaNTiyateecavaralaa Ru_Tamil_TR_TR 0081R 00343-A.pdf | Same as R. 347 - S. Krishnaswamyayya, 19th March, 1917 |
| | R. 347 (Copy, fifth (last) volume = ‘Book No. 17’) | Extant, moderate condition | KaliyukamaracarkaLp eyarmutaliya2na_Tamil_TR_TR 0085 R 00347.pdf | Same as R. 343 - S. Krishnaswamyayya, 19th March, 1917 (?) |
| B | D. 2739 (Original) | No longer extant | | |
| | R. 11162 (Copy, Complete) | Extant, good condition | maturaipaaNTiyarcarrittiram_TR_TR 1858 R 11162.pdf | Nirmalātēvi, Vijayalaṭcumi, 19th February, 1980 |

⁴¹ In the list below, one must note that the file names are not always accurate. For example, D. 3184 is labelled ‘3284’ in the PDF.

| | | | | |
|----------|--|------------------------|---|---|
| C | D. 3088 (Original) | No longer extant | | |
| | R. 1518 (Copy, Complete) | Extant, good condition | tamizmummaNTalacarrittiravaralaaRu_Tamil_TR TR 0362 R 01518.pdf | T. N. Venkatachamiam, 14th July 1946 |
| | R. 1568 (Copy of R. 1518, Incomplete) | Extant, good condition | mummaNTalapaaNTiyarvaralaaRuTR_00369 R 01568.pdf | |
| | R. 8116 (Copy of R. 1518, Complete) | Extant, good condition | maturaipaaNTiyamanarcarittiram_Tamil_TR_TR 1739 R 00116-D.pdf | Narayanaswami Pillai, 12th December, 1968 |
| D | D. 3184 (Original) | No longer extant | | |
| | D 3184 (Copy with the same shelf number, Complete) | Extant, good condition | paaNTiyarpirataapavamaavaLi_Tamil_TD_TD 0216 D 3284 | |
| E | D. 436 (Original) | No longer extant | | |
| | D. 436 (Copy with the same shelf number, Complete) | Extant, good condition | Not found in GOML repository, but in NETamil Repository | |
| F | R. 335 (Original) | No longer extant | | |
| | R. 335 (Copy with the same shelf number) | Extant, good condition | KaliyukamvaracarkaLi2naTTavaNai_Tamil_TR_TR 0073 R 00335-D.pdf | S. Krishnaswamy Ayya, 8th February, 1917 |

Table 1: A summary of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection at GOML

1.1 General Archival Remarks

I have introduced a few conventions to this work in order to eliminate some of the archival ambiguities we encounter with the GOML collection. Firstly, I do not use the original titles given by the writers of these texts. They are often similar, but never the same, and cause quite some confusion. Secondly, I have re-grouped these manuscripts according to text. Thirdly, I have provided above the file name of each manuscript in the GOML repository in anticipation of what I was told when I visited the library in February 2022 and again in February 2023 — that the manuscripts cannot yet be located online through the file name, but that this will be possible at some point in the future.

Regarding my first point, let us take the example of Text Group C. There is no uniform title. The first copy (R. 1518) possesses the name *Tamiḷ Mummaṇṭala Carittira Varalāru* (‘A Historical Chronology of the Three Tamil Realms’), the second (R. 1568) *Mummaṇṭala Pāṇṭiyar Varalāru* (‘A Chronology of the Pāṇṭiyas of the Three Realms’), and the third (R. 8116) *Maturai Pāṇṭiya Maṇṇar Carittiram* (‘History of the Pāṇṭiya Kings of Maturai’). They are not the same, but are similar enough to confuse. The only uniform title is found in Text Group D (D. 3184), of which only one copy (same shelf number) exists. It is quite likely that more copies of

this text are extant, but are currently untraceable, for they are not catalogued under the same title.

As we will soon see, the Orientalists Wilson and Taylor, both of whom worked on the Mackenzie Collection, did not use any Tamil original titles, but referred to manuscripts through version of the title translated into English. Cataloguers from South India, namely, T. Chandrasekharan *et al.* (1955-1960:VII-XI) and Mahalingam (1972:I) also provide their own English title or generic Tamil title, which is just as ambiguous as those on the manuscripts. D. 437 is, for example, called *Madurai Pāṇḍya Rājākkaḷ Carittiram* (Mahalingam:1972:I:206). It is possible that these titles came from the originals, which were still extant at the time of these cataloguing projects. However, as we do not possess the originals anymore and rely only on the copies, the titles in the catalogues are misleading.

The reason why I have re-grouped these manuscripts according to text is to do away with these variable titles altogether. Different titles suggest different texts, but this is not the case in the Mackenzie Collection. Thus, for ease of understanding, I refer to texts based on their group, not on their title. This also allows me to speak of the text independent of the manuscript. While my project does acknowledge the importance of materiality (in this case, the formatting that ensues from the transition from palm-leaf and paper, discussed in chapter 4), my main focus is on textuality, cataloguing and provenance.

The GOML online repository is recent. In the beginning of 2021 (based on a conversation with a librarian at the GOML), the paper manuscripts alone were digitised and uploaded online. The site, although a remarkable step forward in manuscript studies, is rudimentary. There are limited means of searching for one's text — a search engine within the website allows one to locate texts according to title (ironic, for titles are rarely uniform!) or according to author (futile, for most texts are anonymous). The file name is not displayed in the dropdown of results. Rather, when one downloads a manuscript, the file name, which includes a generic title (often not the same as that in the dropdown), the bundle number, and the shelf number, is provided. The manuscript is saved on one's computer under the file name. Based on the same oral correspondence I have mentioned above, the GOML intends to enable a search for manuscripts based on the shelf-number and the file name. It is my hope that this is implemented by the time this work is published.

These archival complications speak to the provenance of the Mackenzie Collection, which has, to say the least, a complicated history. That history may be conveyed through a discussion on its composers and archivers, as is witnessed by the catalogues of the Mackenzie Collection, the secondary literature on the Mackenzie Collection, and the Orientalist scholars who published studies of the Collection. I deal first with the catalogues.

1.2 Cataloguing The Pāṇḍiya Material

A mystery that I am keen to solve is why the four catalogues of the Mackenzie Collection do not match. The earliest, Wilson (1828) has an unconventional way of

dividing texts according to their subject, making most of his entries cryptic.⁴² Taylor (1862) has corrected several of Wilson's errors in his catalogue, but appears to have excluded the Mackenzie manuscripts in his studies on the Pāṇṭiyas, a decision that I do not understand. The GOML Descriptive Catalogues (1912-1960) are the most accurate, but record far fewer number of Pāṇṭiya manuscripts than they actually have. Volumes VII-XI deal specifically with the Mackenzie manuscripts in Tamil. Finally, Mahalingam (1972:I) produces a catalogue of the historical manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection. Despite his acknowledgement of the vastness of the archive, many Pāṇṭiya manuscripts go unmentioned. Additionally, several errors in nomenclature are present.

One of the motives of writing this section is to inform potential future projects on the Collection's manuscripts about the difficulties of navigating an archive as complex as Mackenzie's. Thus, I present each catalogue individually, hoping to highlight the main concerns and to present a way to overcome them. Often, shelf-numbers are just as misleading as titles, due to three reasons. Firstly, different texts are thought to be the same (owing to similar titles) and are thus catalogued as one entry. Secondly, shelf numbers in the Mackenzie Collection have changed at least four times since Wilson's work. Thirdly, the current GOML catalogue provides two shelf numbers. One is the individual text's,⁴³ and the other, the bundle's. The shelf numbers usually begin with the letters D., R. or TR. This convention was adopted after the first volume of the GOML catalogue was published in 1912. The oldest shelf-numbers begin with 'D', and the original palm-leaves from the Mackenzie Collection are thus D. 3184, D. 436 and D. 437. All other manuscripts in Tamil contain an 'R'. The bundle number (T. R.), provided in the beginning of each manuscript indicates that they were composite manuscripts.⁴⁴ The first folio of each of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts I described provide a list of the other works in the same bundle, but no way of finding them. A solid explanation cannot be provided until each original manuscript is traced, if the original is still extant at all. I surmise that the original palm-leaves were also composite, as they were sourced by Mackenzie according to region and not text, and were thus copied onto paper. However, when the GOML began its cataloguing efforts, the original bundle number, although mentioned, was no longer useful in locating manuscripts digitally. The bundle

⁴² There is a fifth catalogue, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in European Languages belonging to the India Office — Mackenzie Collection*, which lists the Mackenzie manuscripts that were transported back to London. I speak of this later. It is a largely accurate catalogue, but is difficult to procure, as a result of which it is not part of this analysis. I gained access to it during my time at the British Library to look at the Mackenzie translations. See bibliography for more details.

⁴³ Here, I mean in fact the portion of the physical manuscript that provides a specific text. When it is still within the composite manuscript, I understand it to be a text within a manuscript (of whichever shelf number), among several other texts. The issue with the GOML collection is that composite manuscripts have later been separated according to text into several separate manuscripts. Thus, before they are split, I refer to them (as in this case) as 'text', and once they are split, as 'manuscript', for they are given their own shelf number.

⁴⁴ Cf. Brita & Karolewski (2021), and Friedrich & Schwarke (2016). The Mackenzie manuscripts were never multi-text manuscripts, but composite manuscripts. This means that they were later archived into bundles or files (I surmise that this is the categorisation that Wilson calls 'volume'), probably so that they may be transported with ease from Calcutta to Madras, and (some parts) even to London.

numbers and the shelf numbers are also rarely sequential. I am yet to find a cataloguing pattern that could clarify this circumstance. I am inclined to believe that a manual search is the only productive way forward.

With the resources at hand, the only practical solution this project can offer is to resolve the errors that have occurred thus far. I attempt to break them down below and provide a summary of cross-references at the end. In order to do so, I first introduce each catalogue.

| Full Title | Author(s) | Year and details of Publication | Shortened title when cited in this work |
|--|--|--|---|
| <i>A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Manuscripts and Other Articles Illustrative of the Literature History, Statistics and Antiquities of the South Of India, Collected by the Late Lieut. Colin Mackenzie, Surveyor General of India.</i> | Horace Hayman Wilson, Colin Mackenzie, unnamed South Indian assistants | 1828 (first edition - book of two volumes; second edition - one book) | Wilson's <i>Descriptive Catalogue</i> |
| <i>Catalogue Raisonné of Oriental Manuscripts in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library</i> | William Taylor | 1862 (book of three volumes) | Taylor's <i>Catalogue Raisonné</i> |
| <i>A Descriptive Catalogue of the Tamil Manuscripts in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras</i> | M Rangacharya, Rao Bahadur (I); M. Rangacharya, S. Kuppuswami Sastri (II); S. Kuppuswami Sastri (III); S. Kuppuswami Sastri, P. P. Subrahmanya Sastri (IV); P. P. Subrahmanya Sastri (V); Syed Muhammad Fazlullah, T. Chandrasekharan (VI); Syed Muhammad Fazlullah Sahib, T. Chandrasekharan (VII); T. Chandrasekharan (VIII); T. Chandrasekharan (IX); T. Chandrasekharan (X); T. Chandrasekharan (XI) | 1912 (Vol. I); 1916 (Vol. II); 1921 (Vol. III); 1937 (Vol. IV) 1939 (Vol. V); 1948 (Vol. VI); 1948 (Vol. VII) 1953 (Vol. VIII); 1955 (Vol. IX); 1955 (Vol. X) 1960 (Vol. XI) | <i>GOML Descriptive Catalogue</i> GOML in Table 3 of this work |
| <i>Mackenzie Manuscripts Vol I (Tamil and Malayalam)</i> | T. V. Mahalingam | 1972 | Mahalingam's Catalogue |

Table 2: A summary of manuscript catalogues of the Mackenzie Collection

1.3 Wilson 1828 — Bridging the Gap Between Mackenzie and His Archive

The first catalogue of the Mackenzie Collection was written by Horace Hayman Wilson and was completed in 1828. It comprises two volumes,⁴⁵ of which the first contains an introduction by Wilson and a copy of Mackenzie's letter in 1817 to his friend Sir Alexander Johnston (1775-1849), the Chief Justice of Ceylon and co-founder of the Royal Asiatic Society. There, Mackenzie reveals his interest in learning more about India's past and is thus inspired to collect material on it. While his motive is honorable, and its results useful, it is unclear how they led him to conduct such a complex, time-consuming project. Wilson's introduction (1828:vii-viii)⁴⁶ states that Mackenzie, prior to his arrival in India, was sought by Lord Kenneth Mackenzie (last earl of Seaforth) and Francis (fifth Lord Napier) to prepare a biography of John Napier and his work on logarithms. Mackenzie, who was interested in Mathematics, took on this project, and his acquaintance with Lord Kenneth Mackenzie secured him a military position under the British East India Company. He slowly rose to the rank of Colonel in the Madras Army. After his arrival in India, he met Hester, (*ibid.*) the daughter of Lord Francis Napier. She was married to Samuel Johnson, a civil servant employed in Madurai (It was their son, Sir Alex Johnston, to whom Mackenzie wrote the letter published in Wilson's catalogue). Through Hester's introduction, Mackenzie acquainted himself with some Brahmins with expertise on Hindu mathematical traditions, and thus, it appears, began his interest in India's past.

Wolffhardt (2018), a more recent biography of Mackenzie, paints a different picture. He speaks of Mackenzie's successes in a more pragmatic way, emphasising that they were achieved only after many initial years of toil in India. Although the goal was to secure a more stable future for his family back in Scotland, he was unable to obtain promotions at the pace at which he had originally hoped. He arrived as a junior military man, and joined the Madras Engineers. During the Third Mysore war (1789-1792), his curiosity for the land that he was still new to grew, and the desire to collect its antiquities was thus born. It was many more years before this desire materialised. The story of Napier's patronage, although true, is given lesser importance here than in Wilson's account in determining Mackenzie's fate as an archiver.

I take Wolffhardt's account to be closer to the truth, for he even consults circumferential archival data such as military history records in British India and general political trends during the British colonial period to verify his portrayal of Mackenzie. Wolffhardt tells us how this private letter, written by Mackenzie to a close friend, 'became a kind of 'official' version of his life' (2018:4):

⁴⁵ There are two editions (1828) of Wilson's catalogue — a single volume and one that is split into two volumes. The latter is preferred by scholars, including the other cataloguers of the Collection. My citations are based on the former single catalogue, as this edition is open-access and more legible.

⁴⁶ Wilson (*ibid.*) writes, 'For some time, before [Mackenzie] came to India...he was employed by Francis, the fifth Lord of Merchistown, in searching for, and getting together, all available information respecting the knowledge possessed by the Hindus of Mathematics in general and of the nature and use of Logarithms in particular. This was done with a view to enable that nobleman to write a life of his ancestry, John Napier, the inventor of English Logarithms...Mr. Mackenzie, desirous of prosecuting his oriental researches in India, then applied for and through the influence of Lord Seaforth, whose protégé he also was, obtained an appointment as Cadet of Engineers on the Madras Establishment of the East India Company.'

‘In his later years Mackenzie came to regard his contribution to research on Indian geography, culture and history as his life’s most important achievement. He himself contributed to the construction of a myth that depicts his life as geared to one single goal...The story of his life that Mackenzie told in the years before his death was that of a selfless researcher whose life’s work was discovering and collecting Indian history, culture and geography. So the only autobiographical retrospective he ever wrote is primarily a look back at the history of his collection. His life before he arrived in India, in 1783, is only mentioned in a few subordinate sentences; and his first thirteen years on the subcontinent, which were of little importance for this collection and are described only in passing, seem to represent a period of almost inexcusable failures.’

This passage suggests that Mackenzie wrote only what he wished his legacy to be. In contrast, Wilson speaks of a military man whose archive sufficed to speak for his character. His failures were disregarded and his successes celebrated.⁴⁷ Regardless of the truthfulness of each account, both biographers acknowledge one crucial difficulty. In 1815, when Mackenzie was appointed the Surveyor General of India, he left Madras to Calcutta, and the Collection went with him. This proved a hindrance to the progress of the project. In his only published letter, Mackenzie wrote of these issues (Wilson:1828:10-1):

‘I will only further just notice the effect of this removal [to Calcutta] on the enquiries and Collection here described. The people reared by me for several years, being natives of the coast or the southern provinces, and almost as great strangers to Bengal and Hindoostan as Europeans, their removal to Calcutta is either impracticable; or where a few, from personal attachment (as my head Brahmin, *Jain* translator and others) are willing to give their last proof of their fidelity, attended with considerable expense; and without that assistance, most of what I had proposed to condense and translate from the originals in the languages of this country, could not be conveniently or at all, effected at Calcutta.’

Mackenzie died on 8th May, 1821 in Calcutta, and his widow Petronella sold the Collection for a price of 20,000 rupees to the Bengal Government. At this stage, hardly any information on the Collection was available. Horace Hayman Wilson thus

⁴⁷ See for instance, Wilson 1828:11: ‘By the means thus described a collection was formed at a considerable cost of time, labour and expence [*sic*], which no individual exertions have ever before accumulated, or probably will again assemble.’ I argue in the following chapter, that Mackenzie’s failures were in his not protecting the future of the Collection. After his death, there was disarray, and petty squabbling. Mackenzie, who perhaps assumed and wished that the Collection would fall into the hands of his Indian collaborators (specifically, the Kavalali brothers), did not take into account colonial and racial dynamics at the time, despite how prevalent they were during British rule in India. Lakshmiah was entirely denied acquisition of the Collection, which therefore fell into the hands of a string of incompetent Orientalists. While this is more a general, colonial failing, and less a personal failing of Mackenzie, he did not offer any clarity at all on the inheritance of his Collection, which I find strange. Wolffhardt’s biography touches upon many more failures which need not define Mackenzie today, but are certainly intriguing to consider.

took up the task of making a descriptive catalogue, enabled by the body of assistants that had previously aided Mackenzie. He states (Wilson 1828:12):

‘The officer who succeeded Col. Mackenzie as Surveyor General,⁴⁸ professing no acquaintance with the subject of Col. Mackenzie’s antiquarian collections, and expressing his wish to be relieved of all charge of the establishment connected with them, it became a matter of some perplexity how it should be disposed of, in contemplation of its becoming the property of the Company. As no other person in Calcutta, [*sic*] was inclined to take any trouble with such a collection, or perhaps so well fitted for the task, as myself, I offered my services to the Supreme Government to examine and report upon the state of the materials. The offer was accepted, and the manuscripts and other articles of the collection were transferred to my charge. I then learned that the native agents had set to work upon the Colonel’s death to make short catalogues of the articles and books accumulated, and these were completed under my supervision.’

Therefore, ‘[a]s no other person in Calcutta was inclined to take any trouble with such a collection...’, Wilson took on the task. Here, we see already that interest in this archive had dwindled, aggravated by its distant location in Calcutta. The resultant descriptive catalogue was completed in 1828⁴⁹ and claims to account for the entirety of the Colonel’s Collection. The Collection was moved back to Madras in 1848⁵⁰ and stored in the College of Fort St. George: a symbol of colonial power and the mainplayer of colonial knowledge in South India.⁵¹

The two biographies of Mackenzie by Wilson and Wolffhardt, although different in most ways, have one thing in common — they bridge the gap between Mackenzie, the man, and the Collection, his archive. Wilson’s catalogue marks the end of the man and the beginning of research on the archive. The completion of

⁴⁸ According to the website of the Survey of India (<https://surveyofindia.gov.in/pages/ex-surveyor-generals>), John Hodgson succeeded Mackenzie in 1821 and served in this post until 1823. [last date of access: 09.07.2023]

⁴⁹ Mahalingam 1972 (I:xxiii) dates Wilson’s catalogue to 1838. However, I assume that this is a printing error and that 1828 was meant.

⁵⁰ Wilson 1828:xvi: ‘In 1858... the ‘Mackenzie Collections’ again came before the public in connection with the ‘East India House’ and ‘Browne’s Manuscripts,’ the collection having been meanwhile in 1847, retransferred to the ‘College Library.’ The Browne manuscripts refer to the (primarily) Telugu manuscripts from the East India House Library in London that were catalogued by Charles Philip Brown, a Telugu grammarian. They were sent back to India, and are now also part of the GOML. Brown took on this project at the request of Wilson. (See Schmitthenner 1956:125: ‘Wilson encouraged him [Brown] to catalogue a large collection of Indian palm-leaf manuscripts in the East India House Library’.)

⁵¹ Here, it is worth mentioning that the majority of manuscripts of the Collection is in Chennai, but all illustrated material, written correspondences and translations into English were taken to London. One explanation as to how the Collection was divided is that those documents that were considered most ‘useful’ by the British were taken to London, while those that were perceived to hold little research potential — the historical manuscripts, for example — were left behind in India. I speak of this later — indeed, it was Wilson’s decision to split the Collection, as is conveyed in Blake (1992:liv) ‘...on Wilson’s recommendation, most of the materials in the languages of south India were sent in 1828 to the Madras College Library where it was thought they would be of more use than in Europe.’

Wilson's catalogue is perhaps the only factor that ensured that the Collection did not slip into oblivion, having been all but forgotten in Calcutta.

In his catalogue, Wilson divides the Mackenzie written material linguistically and records 13 languages.⁵² Manuscript No. 7 (corresponding tentatively to Text Group A in my table earlier) has been provided under the category 'Tamil Books'.⁵³ Within this section, the only other relevant Pāṇṭiya material is the 'Entry No. 27 — Periwoliyār Purāna, palm leaves,⁵⁴ which appears to be the same as the *Tiruvīlaiyāṭal Purāṇam* of Parañcōti. The catalogue entry says that this is the translation of the *Hālāsya Māhātmya* (in Sanskrit), and the only known Tamil translation of this text is that of Parañcōti's.⁵⁵ However, why the more common title of '*Tiruvīlaiyāṭal Purāṇam*' has been replaced by the otherwise non-existent '*Periwoliyār Purāna*' is unclear. I have not found any parallels for this name of the work and wonder, once again, if this is the result of a mistake in cataloguing.

Another peculiarity of Wilson's cataloguing is that although the majority of the material has been divided linguistically, other categories also exist. Of note is 'Local Tracts', of which the Tamil portion begins on page 417, and 'Manuscript Translations, Reports, &c' on page 499. The former category does not reveal any obvious difference from the category 'Tamil Books'. One may assume that the difference is made according to how the manuscripts were procured — the category 'Tamil Books' may represent those works that were commissioned directly by Mackenzie, while 'Local Tracts' are those that were procured from existing collections during the surveys. The content of the manuscripts under 'Local Tracts' comprises geneologies of minor rulers from specific regions. Another explanation is that 'Local Tracts' is a rough translation of '*kaipītu*' and/or *vamsāvali*, the prose genres that dealt with ancestry of prominent families of the South Indian region. Wilson provides an English title to these works, but not the original Tamil name, with names such as 'Geneological Accounts' or 'Accounts', beside the name of a ruling/prominent dynasty. Here, under the category '7' is manuscript number '3', whose given title is 'The actions of the former *Rajas* of the *Pandya Mandalam*, *Chola Mandalam* and *Tonda Mandalam*'.⁵⁶ It is likely that this manuscript corresponds to Text Group C in my table. Under the category '24' is manuscript number '2', titled 'Geneological Account of *Pandya Pratāpa* Raja of *Pandya Desam*'.⁵⁷ This would surely correspond to Text Group D in my table. Under the category 'Manuscript Translations, Reports, etc'⁵⁸, significant entries are '1' and '3'. '1' has the title 'The

⁵² See Wilson 1828, 'Contents'

⁵³ Ibid.:208.

⁵⁴ Ibid.:194

⁵⁵ I disagree, however, that Parañcōti's Tamil text is a direct translation of the Sansrit version. I prefer to use the term 'transcreation', which I have explained and justified in 25f.

⁵⁶ Ibid.:420.

⁵⁷ Ibid.:428.

⁵⁸ Ibid.:499.

Vamsavali or genealogical account of the dynasties of the *Chola*, the *Chera* and the *Pandya* kings’, (translation of Text Group C?) and ‘3’ ‘An account of the *Pandya* Rajas’ (translation of Text Group A or B?). There is no more information on which of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts in the Collection were translated. Also under this category, under the number ‘2’, is ‘1’. The history of three Rajas, the *Cholen*, the *Cheran* and the *Pandyan*.⁵⁹ This might be a translation of Text Group C, in which case it was considered important and translated twice. Wilson’s catalogue does not seem to include Text Groups E and F, suggesting that they were not part of the Mackenzie Collection.

Wilson’s category is rather cryptic. Entry number ‘7’ (ibid.:208) speaks of a 13-volume series on the Pāṇṭiya kings. It is unclear whether these 13 volumes are in addition to those works on the Pāṇṭiyas that are listed under other categories, or if there is an overlap. The 13-volume series is in ‘a. Paper — b. Palm leaves’ (ibid.) but it is unclear which volume is in which medium. The nuance of the category ‘Local Tracts’ is difficult to determine. Similarly, despite the variety of categories, a vast volume of the Pāṇṭiya collection has simply been put under one entry (ibid.). This speaks for a prioritisation of genres over the individual manuscripts in the collection. I look to Wilson’s work only to verify which of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts I have consulted came from the Mackenzie Collection. As we will see when I discuss Taylor’s catalogue, a catalogue that heavily criticises this (and other) entries, Wilson was prone to making easily avoidable errors. It is possible that several manuscripts were neglected from his work, and just as many were recorded twice. For the Pāṇṭiya material, I dismiss both his categorisations, as well as his explanations of the texts — they create far more chaos than they resolve.

1.4 Taylor 1862 and his *Catalogue Raisonné*

William Taylor was handed over the Mackenzie Collection in 1836 as a result of a rather unfair correspondence between Lakshmiah and the British Raj of India. Wilson (1882:xiii-xiv) writes:⁶⁰

‘...in March 1830, the Committee of the Madras Literary Society and Auxiliary of the Royal Asiatic Society asked the [British] Government to transfer to them the Mackenzie Collection, then lying “in a confused and utterly useless state in the

⁵⁹ Ibid.:500.

⁶⁰ The 1882 (second) edition of Wilson’s catalogue is published with an anonymous introductory article titled ‘Lt. Col. Colin Mackenzie, C.B., and the “Mackenzie Collection”’ from which this passage is drawn (Wilson 1882:vii). The secondary title of the 1882 edition (‘...To which is prefixed a brief outline of the life of Col. Mackenzie and of the steps taken to catalogue and utilize his collection.’), might indicate that the author(s) of this passage preferred to remain anonymous, or that the introduction was the result of a collective effort by the publishers (Higginbothams & Co., Madras). The 1828 edition cannot be found anywhere. For convenience’s sake, due to the fact that the 1882 edition in fact says on its cover that it is printed in 1828, I cite this work in general as ‘Wilson 1828’, but this passage as ‘Wilson 1882’. The proof that there is an issue with dating the edition is due to an anachronistic comment (Wilson 1828:xv) that reads, ‘...services of the Rev. William Taylor, an oriental scholar of some note, since deceased...’ William Taylor died in 1878 or 1879.

[Madras] College Library.” They hoped to extract much interesting and valuable information from “this mass of papers.” But, in consequence of their limited finances, they proposed to select only one or two subjects to begin with... This idea of utilizing the manuscripts originated with one of Col. Mackenzie’s Pandits, C. Vencata Luchmiah, who offered to continue the prosecution of his master’s unfinished researches, and to examine and arrange such papers as were collected by him.’⁶¹

This article goes on to say (*ibid.*:xv):

‘For six years more the Madras portion of the Manuscripts [*sic*] remained unutilised in the archives of the Madras Literary Society as it had previously in the College Library. In June 1836, Pandit C. Venkata Luchmiah again revived the subject of his being permitted to continue Col. Mackenzie’s researches throughout this Presidency with the aid of the Government. His offer was submitted to the Madras Government to the Supreme Government, now designated the Government of India; and that authority referred it for the opinion of the Calcutta Auxiliary of the Royal Asiatic Society. The Committee of Papers of that Association intimated that they had no faith in Luchmiah’s pretensions or qualifications for the work, and strongly urged the propriety of securing the services of the Rev. William Taylor, an oriental of some note, since deceased, “for the thorough examination of the Mackenzie records.”... Mr. Taylor having expressed his willingness to undertake the work, was granted by the Government an allowance of Rs. 400 per mensem for 18 months as remuneration to himself and for the maintenance of a small establishment of Assistants [*sic*]. Mr. Taylor commenced his undertaking in about July 1837 and completed it in September 1838.’

William Taylor was thus handed the Collection, which was presumably still in a state of disarray and was tasked with publishing parts of the Collection itself, alongside explanations. The result was a series of six ‘Analytical Reports’ in the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (VII-XIII).⁶² In 1862, he published the three-volume *Catalogue Raisonné of Oriental Manuscripts in the Library of the (late) College of Fort St. George*, in which the third volume deals with the Mackenzie manuscripts.⁶³ During this time, the Mackenzie Collection underwent several changes, of which the most important was its transportation back to the archives at Madras.⁶⁴ According to the full title of Taylor’s *Catalogue Raisonné*, we know that

⁶¹ It is strange that the state of the Mackenzie Collection was this pitiful in 1830. Wilson’s catalogue was released two years prior with the sole aim of bringing order to the archive.

⁶² These ‘Analytical Reports’ are dealt with in Chapter 2 of this work.

⁶³ Volume I describes the ‘East India House Manuscripts’ (1862:I:1) and Volume II ‘Donative Manuscripts’ (*ibid.*:II:1). The latter focuses primarily on Śaiva philosophy and medical topics. The former is a *mélange* of manuscripts acquired over the years by the East India Company and stored at their headquarters (East India House) in London.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Cohn (1996:85-6).

the manuscripts were stored at the library of the College at Fort St. George, even though the College itself did not exist anymore.⁶⁵ Taylor's primary contribution towards the Mackenzie catalogues is his identification and correction of Wilson's errors. In the entry to R. 2327 (Text Group B) (Taylor 1862:III:56-9), Taylor writes:

‘The ancient Pandiya history having become a subject of some useful discussion, adapted to sift out the truth, is a circumstance, which perhaps invests the above brief document with more consequence, than otherwise would belong to it. In Wilson's Des. Cat. Vol. 1, p. 196, Art. VII. the entry occurs “Pandyarajakal (a) paper (b) palm leaves[”]. The manuscript above abstracted is the palm leaf copy. This was translated by me a considerable time since; and not then having had such acquaintance with the Des. Catalogue, as I have since obtained, I could not tell how to reconcile the discordancy that was discovered, and waited till I should meet with the other copy. This I have lately done. It is quite another work, differing in title, in size and in contents. How the two could have been classed together, as two copies of the same work, I do not presume to determine. Suffice it to state, that the abstract given in the Des. Cat. is entirely deduced from the large paper manuscript, and that the contents of the preceding palm leaf manuscript are silently passed by...

‘It may be noted that in neither of these two documents is there any mention of a *Marava* conquest, and ascendancy over the *Pāndiya* kingdom. The document (or more than one, if there be more) having such mention, will be discussed in due order...Let this circumstance not be forgotten, whenever the history of the *Pāndya* dynasty is attempted to be finally adjusted.’

This passage tells us that R. 2327 (Text Group B) is the manuscript that Wilson calls ‘Entry No. 7’, but the description is of Text Group A, namely the manuscript that is now called D. 437. Most of Wilson's description aligns with the story of the TVP, upon which D.437 is based. There is, however, no mention of a Marava conquest in it — in fact, the destruction of the Pāṇṭiyas is not at all discussed. The narrative concludes with a detailed account of the *maturai tamīlccaṅkam* ([The Famous] Academy of Scholars). Wilson need only have casually looked through the manuscript in order to avoid this mistake.

Text Group B speaks subtly of Pāṇṭiya destruction. The last Pāṇṭiya king (Cavuntarapāṇṭiyaṅ in R. 11162) is unable to produce an heir and thus adopts a Nāyaka prince. The Prince's children thus take over the kingdom and rule as Nāyakas, and the Pāṇṭiya name fades. Taylor has, in his catalogue, provided a chronology of the Pāṇṭiyas and talks of the Nāyaka adoption. Importantly, he (and the text itself) speak of a Muslim invasion that weakened the Pāṇṭiyas greatly. It was due to this that they were defenseless against the Nāyakas. The adoption was an attempt to subvert this threat, but was unsuccessful.

Taylor's entry No. 797, on page 297 corresponds to Text Group A. His description falls under the category ‘2nd Family. Manuscript Books. A. Tamil Language and Character’. The order of the five chapters are jumbled into 3, 2, 1, 4

⁶⁵ Taylor's full title reads: *Oriental Manuscripts in the Library of the (Late) College of Fort Saint George*. See, for instance, Trautmann 2009 for the contribution of the College of Fort St. George.

and 5 consecutively, and Taylor had noted this. He also observed that the contents have been derived from the TVP, which he calls the ‘*st’hala [sic] purána*’ (ibid.). My impression is that these books were likely bound incorrectly in hasty preparation for the journey from Calcutta to Madras.

Text Group C is documented by Taylor (1862:III:41) as manuscript No. 2322. After the Text Group D, this is the only manuscript about which some details on its acquisition are provided (ibid.):

‘This is a large book, composed for Colonel MacKenzie [sic] by *Veda nayak*, who was pretty generally known as the Christian poet of Tanjore. He was the author of some useful works; and of this book, and the *Chola Purvica charitra*, bearing somewhat of an historical character. In this book there are statements concerning the *Pandiya* and *Chola* kingdoms, and the *Tonda mandalam* or region bounded on the South by the *Pálár*, north by *Cálahasti* and range of mountains, east by the sea, and west by the ghouts [sic] [=ghats, i.e., the Western ghats].’

Taylor notes that this version heavily favours the Cōlas and mocks the Pāṇṭiyas, their sworn enemies — unsurprising, given the region from which its author hailed. A controversial claim is relayed in this text — that the Śaiva temple in Madurai, now one of the most famous in the South, was nothing short of a crypt for a deceased king, hyperbolised as a holy place. Veda Nāyak, who also writes later of Egypt as the birthplace of the Brahmin caste, is not taken seriously by Taylor (ibid.). However, the very end of the text contains a biography on Kulottuṅka (‘The Epitome of the Cōla Clan’) Cōla and his successor Atirājēntiraṅ, who ruled for mere months before he lost the kingdom to the Veṅki (= Eastern Chalukya) dynasty, which Taylor felt was more reasonable (ibid.).

D. 3184, corresponding to Wilson’s ‘2’ under ‘Local Tracts’, is documented in Taylor’s catalogue (ibid.:435) under ‘section 2.’ of an eleven-section manuscript with the shelf number ‘No. 835’. A brief description (that is in line with my own understanding of the manuscript) has been provided. In this manuscript, the name of Arjuna of the Pāṇḍava clan is evoked as well. His son, named ‘Peppuruvaṅ’, is married to the Pāṇṭiya king Malayattuvacaṅ’s daughter, thus connecting (and validating) Pāṇṭiya rule to the Mahābhārata. (ibid.) The only other remark he makes on its content is to state that it is not the biography of one king called Piratāpa, but a general history of the Pāṇṭiyas.

The general accuracy of Taylor’s catalogue allows for productive research. His work becomes more difficult to justify when he presents his own histories of the Pāṇṭiyas, which I discuss in the following chapter.

1.5 GOML Descriptive Catalogue

The full title of this work is *The Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras*. The volumes that document the Mackenzie Collection are VII until XIII. There are a total of 13 volumes of the Tamil collection at the GOML. According to the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Public

Libraries (Tam. *potu nūlaka iyakkam*), the entire collection of the GOML comprises 50,180 palm-leaf manuscripts, 22,134 paper manuscripts, and 26,556 rare printed books.⁶⁶ The documents in this library are primarily from the collections of Mackenzie, C.P. Brown⁶⁷ and Professor John Pickford.⁶⁸ After 1947 (the year of Indian independence), the government of Tamil Nadu took more efforts to collect and document written artefacts, as a result of which the library has since grown to the size that it is today. According to the GOML website, it was founded in 1869.

The Mackenzie portion of the GOML catalogue is based primarily on Taylor's efforts (1862). The shelf numbers are, however, updated to suit current conventions, but this catalogue provides (usually) accurate cross-references, so that an entry may also be located in Taylor's catalogue.

Text Group A (found in GOML:1912:I:399-400) is presumed to be the same as Text Group E (D. 436). Therefore, D. 436 is introduced, and the entry for D. 437 merely mentions that it is a copy of D. 436. This is completely false, but this error could tell us something useful — that D. 436 was indeed part of the Mackenzie Collection, even though it is missing from the previous two catalogues. Otherwise, it would not have been presumed to be the same as D. 437, a Mackenzie document that Taylor has written about.

Having said that, there is a likelihood that neither of these two manuscripts were thought to be from the Mackenzie Collection. They are categorised under the genre '*katai*' (1912:I:xiii), which was primarily associated with fictional re-tellings, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 3. Possibly, the complicated logistics of transporting the Mackenzie Collection resulted in the mislabelling of certain manuscripts, among which these are but two examples.

Text Group B is represented in the manuscript no. 2739 (*ibid.*:1948:VI:2390). The entry is accurate, as well as identical to Taylor's (1862:III:56). Text Group C is represented by two apparently different sets of manuscripts. The first is D. 3088 (GOML:1953:VIII:2693), which corresponds to Taylor's No. 2322 (1862:III:41). The GOML Catalogue gives a reference (GOML:1953:VIII:2686), in which this text is deemed to be the same as another, namely D. 2765 (*ibid.*:1948:VII:2417). Here, the same cross-reference to Taylor is once again provided. However, the entry for D.

⁶⁶ This is an official Tamil Nadu Government statistic published on the website of the Directorate of Public Libraries — <https://tamilnadupubliclibraries.org/government-oriental-manuscripts-library-and-research-centre/>. No date is provided. The same statistic is published in the website of the GOML (<https://www.tnarch.gov.in/government-oriental-manuscripts-library-and-research-centre>). As the entirety of the GOML collection has not been catalogued, the numbers on the GOML Descriptive Catalogue are inaccurate. I have not been able to find a more specific analysis of language distributions of the palm-leaf and paper manuscripts.

⁶⁷ Brown's contribution to the GOML collection is in several Sanskrit and Telugu works, brought by him to India from the East India Library in London. The manuscripts there belonged to the collection of Dr. Leyden who apparently travelled India between 1803 and 1811. Brown would later go on to catalogue the Telugu manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection. (Source: Padmanabhan, G. "History on Palm-Leaves and Paper" In: *The Hindu*, May 27th, 2014.)

⁶⁸ Professor John Pickford was a student of Monier-Williams, the esteemed Sanskritist, at Oxford University. He was a professor of Sanskrit at Presidency College in Madras until 1872. This information has been taken from a variety of sources, namely Pickford 1871, and stray notes on the internet. (<https://whowaswho-indology.info/4787/pickford-john/>. [last date of access: 09.07.2023]).

3088 in the GOML catalogue also states that this is the same manuscript as in Taylor's No. 812 (1862:III:370-371). Taylor provides a reference back to No. 2322, confirming that the two manuscripts contain the same text.

In both instances, catalogues are comprehensive. However, there is great potential for confusion when cross-references are provided only uni-directionally. Of the two manuscripts No. 2322 and No. 812, the latter cites the former, but the former does not cite the latter. I discovered No. 2322 first and therefore could not locate any other copies. The GOML catalogue has resolved many of these issues by generally citing all copies in each entry.

Text Group D is catalogued in GOML:1955:IX:2844. The cross-reference to Taylor is a single one, as a result of which we can be certain that no other copies exist.

While the GOML catalogue is generally successful, it creates two difficulties. Firstly, it does not record its own copies, and secondly, later-made copies are given altogether different shelf-numbers. Both these issues are exemplified in Text Group B. The original, D. 2739 (Taylor No. 2327), is a manuscript that is no longer extant. Its only remaining paper copy is R. 11162, which cannot be found in any catalogue. I located it only after hours of manually searching through the online repository. Consequently, I wonder how many manuscripts I may have overlooked, due to human error, that will not be verifiable.

20th-century copies of Mackenzie manuscripts usually provide a reference on the first page to Taylor's catalogue, which they called 'Taylor No.'. Strangely, the GOML takes into account the finding of the catalogue entry through the manuscript, and not the other, more logical way around. In other words, if one were to locate a manuscript, they could not do so through the catalogue. Instead, if one chances upon the manuscript they are looking for, a shelf number is given on the first folio or page of it. Moreover, many references are wrong. For example, R. 8116, a later copy of Text Group C, is cited to be a copy of D. 2739, which belongs to Text Group B.

Several other baffling cases present themselves as one attempts to track down any of the Mackenzie manuscripts. I have found the GOML catalogue to be a labyrinth, often misleading and rarely helpful. My recommendation would be to use Taylor's catalogue in deciphering correctly what each manuscript contains, and to use the GOML catalogue to verify Taylor's entry *after* the manuscript has been located. As for a means to locate the manuscripts themselves — a months-long search through the bowels of the GOML website is apparently the only way to be certain.

1.6 Mahalingam 1972

Mahalingam produced a two-part catalogue of the Historical Manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection. The first part deals with Tamil and Malayalam manuscripts, and comes with a glowing biography of Colin Mackenzie. At the very outset (Mahalingam 1972:I:i), he states:

'Colonel Colin Mackenzie is a distinguished member of this brilliant galaxy of Indologists on whom the unknown Orient exercised a strange fascination.'

He proceeds to introduce the Collection itself, in which he points out a situation that could explain the many of the aforementioned errors — that the Mackenzie manuscripts have generic titles that often do not match the content of the manuscript. He says (*ibid.*:xxvi):

‘One important difficulty with which the study of some of these manuscripts is beset is that occasionally the accounts given have no connection whatsoever with the titles of the manuscripts, *viz.*, the manuscripts “Genealogical account of Bode Nāyaka” (Poligar) actually refers to the submission of a portion by the villagers of Mudukaḷattūr and Sikkal taluks to the Company Sarkar (East India Company, due to heavy loss caused by tanks in the rainy reason [sic], so that sluices and bunds may be constructed.’

There are a few discrepancies in his catalogue. Much like his predecessors, Mahalingam too wrongly assumes that Text Group A (namely, D. 437) and Text Group E (namely, D. 436) are the same. He makes a cross-reference to Taylor which points to Text Group B (Taylor:1862:III:56-58’) and not to A or E. Either the one reference is a mistake, or he believed that Text Groups A, B and E were all the same.

There is one portion of Mahalingam’s catalogue that is hard to explain. According to Wilson, the number of Tamil books under the category ‘Local Tracts’ is 43. Mahalingam’s list documents only 36 (1972:2-199). I discovered this mismatch while searching for manuscripts that belong to Text Group D. In Wilson’s list, this Text Group is represented under Manuscript No. 24 (Wilson 1828:428), as section 2 of a composite manuscript. Mahalingam records this text as No. 22 (1972:143), omitting in his list Wilson’s Manuscript No. 2 and Manuscript No. 22.

Text Group F is omitted here as well. That it is absent from all the catalogues implies that it was never a part of the Mackenzie Collection. While I always suspected it to have been a later creation, it is interesting to note that it emulates the chronology style (that we will learn more about shortly) of which I have found no examples prior to the Mackenzie projects. Below is a summary of the cross-references for each manuscript in the four catalogues that I have thus far analysed. I proceed then to speak of the salient features of the historical genre(s) found in the Mackenzie Collection, and what it tells us about a changing perception of historiography in South India.

| Text Group | Summary of Mss. | File Name in GOML Online Repository | Scribe, Date of Completion | Representation in Catalogues |
|------------|---|--|---|--|
| A | D. 437 (original, all five volumes, extant, damaged) | paaNTiyarcarriram_Tamil_TD_TD 0084 D 0437.pdf | | Wilson 1828:208:499:no. 3? Taylor 1862:III:297 GOML 1912:1:399-400 Mahalingam 1972:206:No. 39 |
| | R. 343 (copy, first four volumes = ‘Book No. 16’, extant, good condition) | paaNTiyateecavaralaaRu_Tamil_TR_TR 0081R 00343-A.pdf | Same as R. 347 - S. Krishnaswamyayya, 19th March, 1917 | |

| | | | | |
|----------|--|--|---|--|
| | R. 347 (copy, fifth (last) volume = 'Book No. 17', extant, minimal damage) | KaliyukamaracarkaLpeyarm utaliya2na_Tamil_TR_TR 0085 R 00347.pdf | Same as R. 343 - S. Krishnaswamyaya, 19th March, 1917 (?) | |
| B | D. 2739 (original, no longer extant) | | | Wilson 1828:208:499:no. 3? Taylor 1862:III:56-9 GOML 1948:VII:2390 Mahalingam 1972:I taken to be the same as D. 437 |
| | R. 11162 (copy, complete, extant, good condition) | maturaipaaNTiyarcarrittiram_TR_TR 1858 R 11162.pdf | Nirmalātēvi, Vijayalaṭcumi, 19th February, 1980 | GOML 1948:VII:2391 |
| C | D. 3088 (original, no longer extant) | | | Wilson 1828:203/420: translation no '1'? Taylor 1862:III:41/371? GOML 1948:VII:2417/ VIII:2693 Mahalingam 1972:I:199 |
| | R. 1518 (copy, complete, extant, good condition) | tamizummaNTalacarittirav aralaaRu_Tamil_TR TR 0362 R 01518.pdf | T. N. Venkatachamiar, 14th July 1946 | |
| | R. 1568 (copy of R. 1518, Incomplete, extant, good condition) | mummaNTalapaaNTiyarvaralaaRuTR_00369 R 01568.pdf | | |
| | R. 8116 (copy of R. 1518, extant, good condition) | maturaipaaNTiyamannarcarrittiram_Tamil_TR_TR 1739 R 08116.pdf | Narayanaswami Pillai, 12th December, 1968 | |
| D | D. 3184 (original, no longer extant) | | | Wilson 1828:428 Taylor 1862:III:435 (section 2) GOML 1955:IX:2844 Mahalingam 1972:I:143 |
| | D 3184 (copy with the same shelf-number) | paaNTiyarpirataapavamcaavaLi_Tamil_TD_TD 0216 D 3184 | | |
| E | D. 436 (original, no longer extant) | | | GOML 1912:I:399-400 Mahalingam 1972: taken to be same as D. 437 |
| | D. 436 (copy with the same shelf-number, complete, extant, good condition) | Not found in GOML repository but in NETamil repository | | |
| F | R. 335 (original, no longer extant) | | | |
| | R. 335 (copy with the same shelf-number) | KaliyukamvaracarkaLi2naTavaNai_Tamil_TR_TR 0073 R 00335-D.pdf | S. Krishnaswamy Ayya, 8th February, 1917 | |

Table 3: A summary of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts at the GOML, and their representation in catalogues

1.7 Is There a Productive Way of Navigating the Mackenzie Collection?

Based on the information I have shared above, I have observed that the most productive method to locate manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection is to find them first on the online repository and then in the catalogues. There are genre-divisions in the repository, and manuscript titles show up as an alphabetically arranged list once a genre is selected.⁶⁹ Most of the Mackenzie manuscripts are copies, and the originals were made either on palm-leaf or on inferior-quality paper. The copies usually have one colophon — the first page contains the copyist's name, the date of completion, and the current shelf-number and/or corresponding number on Taylor's catalogue (called 'Taylor No.'). The last page of the copy repeats the name of the copyist and sometimes mentions the name of the editor. The search on the online repository is slow, but it is more productive than using the GOML catalogue. Most of the Mackenzie historical manuscripts may be found under the categories 'history'⁷⁰ and '*kaifiyat*'.

In the instance that only a catalogue entry is needed without having to look into the manuscript, I would advise reading the manuscript anyway. As I hope to have shown already, errors are frequent and shelf-numbers change constantly. In this case, locating the manuscript on the repository is a bit more challenging, but not impossible. One must search for a general name and then specify the search criteria. For example, I looked first for '*carittiram*' and '*varalāru*' and then found the manuscripts that speak of the Pāṇṭiyas under 'P'. We are yet to formulate a perfect cataloguing system for the Mackenzie Collection. Several joint efforts will be required to produce an accurate catalogue that is user-friendly. The GOML has assured me (during my visit there in February 2021) that the palm-leaf manuscripts will also be digitised and uploaded soon. It is my hope that I can shed some more light on the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts' history and provenance once the older versions on palm-leaf (if at all extant) become available online.

1.8 Salient Features of the Historical Genres in the Mackenzie Collections

The Collection's focus was to create an archive of historical manuscripts that would have allowed Mackenzie to reconstruct an authentic version of Indian history.⁷¹ At this time, several changes were being seen in the treatment of the Dravidian group of languages among Orientalist scholars. Most notably, In 1812, Francis Whyte Ellis established a College within the premises of the Fort in order to train East India Company officials in Indian languages. Through Ellis' interactions

⁶⁹ The list is organised in Tamil alphabetical order, but the entries themselves are in Latin script. One has to search for '*cōla*' under 'c' and 's'. One must be wary of overlaps.

⁷⁰ There are three 'history' categories among the genres due to spelling errors. They are 'history', 'hsitory' and 'hitsory'. The latter two list only one manuscript each, while the first contains the bulk of the Mackenzie historical manuscripts.

⁷¹ Cf. Wilson (1882:ix): '...accident rather than design gave [Mackenzie] a fresh impulse to the prosecution of his purpose of collecting manuscripts and information bearing on the Literature and History of India.'

with his Tamil teaching staff in this College emerged the founding theory of Dravidian Studies: For the first time, he posited that Dravidian languages did not originate from Indo-Aryan languages and are their own language group. He published ‘The Dravidian Proof’⁷² in 1816, a work that was unanimously accepted. In this light, the Mackenzie Collection, a largely Dravidian archive, began to invite some attention, fortuitously having been moved back to Madras, the epicentre of Dravidian knowledge at the time. A newfound desire to learn Tamil grew over the next two decades. On one hand, the ‘discovery’ of a second language group in the Indian subcontinent meant a new sphere of research for which groundwork needed to be done. On the other, it was a chance for Orientalists to establish themselves as pioneers of a ‘new’ field, just as Sanskrit studies was becoming overcrowded. The two pillars of Orientalism in South India — Ellis’ College, and the Mackenzie Collection — are aptly called the ‘Madras School of Orientalism’ by Trautmann (2009, for instance). Wilson (1828) notes the remarks made by Ellis and Babington⁷³ on the Tamil language:

‘It (Tamul) is not derived from any language at present in existence, and is either itself the parent of the *Telugu*, *Malayalam* and *Canarese* languages, or what is more probable, has its common origin with these in some ancient tongue, which is now lost, or only partially preserved in its offspring.’⁷⁴

These circumstances created a wave of interest in Dravidian studies, captured, for instance, by Trautmann 2009. Thus began more enquiries into the world of Tamil, spearheaded by Wilson and Taylor (in terms of the Mackenzie Collection) and Ellis (in terms of the College of Fort St. George).

In this light, a number of manuscripts, as we have seen above, were collected, commissioned and catalogued, so that they may be used as source-material for such Orientalist projects. It appears, for reasons not entirely clear to me, that the Pāṇṭiyas were a particular point of interest among these Orientalists. We will visit their handling of these texts shortly, after I have attempted to decipher some of the salient characteristics of the manuscripts themselves. My reasons for introducing this portion of my work with the British interest in Dravidian studies is to establish the

⁷² For a reproduction of this text, see Trautmann (2006:243).

⁷³ Benjamin G. Babington was also the translator of Costantino Guiseppe Beschi’s *Grammatica Latino-Tamulica Ubi de Vulgari Tamulicae Linguae Idiomatice* கொடுந்தமிழ் from Latin into the English *A Grammar of the Common Dialect of the Tamil Language called கொடுந்தமிழ்*. He was employed as a civil servant in British India and appears to have worked with Ellis, although the passage I quoted does not provide any citations. For more information on Babington, see his biography by the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland on their website: <https://royalasiaticsociety.org/benjamin-guy-babington-1794-1866/> [Last date of access: 09.07.2023].

⁷⁴ See Wilson (1828:18-9). A more detailed discussion ensues on the high probability of Tamil being born out of a language group independent of Sanskrit. For the subject at hand, I do not deem it relevant to quote the entire passage, but would advise caution to those interested in reading further — they contain many racist opinions of the ‘barbarity’ of the Tamils, whose ‘primitive tongue’ (ibid.) was refined through the more ‘enlightened people’ (ibid.) of the North.

circumstance of Tamil studies at the time— a new world of research had just opened up, from which a uniquely collaborative effort was born. It is difficult to know from our position in the 21st century what exactly that collaboration entailed, but as I will argue in Chapter 3, the concept of a historical genre in the form that we see in the Mackenzie Collection did not exist earlier. This is why I chose to focus on the Pāṇṭiya corpus. It is one topic in Indian history that has little external (such as archeological) evidence when compared to the study of other Southern kingdoms such as, say, the Cōlas.⁷⁵ A large amount of information on the Pāṇṭiyas is derived from literary sources, for they associated quite early already with the preservation of Tamil literary heritage.⁷⁶ Studying these Pāṇṭiya histories is therefore an exclusively literary project, and I do not engage much with the debate on historical authenticity of these manuscripts. The point that interests me in particular is the historiographical formatting that potentially only came from British participation. That formatting was certainly enhanced by the fact that Tamil authors were in the preliminary stages of learning to write on paper, having done away with the *pothi* format of palm-leaf manuscripts. The result of this new formatting circumstance was the introduction of page numbers in Arabic, paragraph breaks, consistent orthography, titles and subtitles, and margins, to name a few.

I begin my analysis of these manuscripts with an open question — do ‘*carittiram*’, and ‘*varalāru*’, as these works were called, represent genres, or are they mere descriptions of content? I proceed then to speak of the phenomenon of ‘authenticating’ a history. The composers of the Pāṇṭiya histories have, it appears, taken efforts to validate their claims of the Pāṇṭiya dynasty by connecting them to the Purāṇas and/or to conflicts with their contemporaries. I then speak of the chronologies that are included in most, but not all, of the Text Groups. The chronologies reveal a sensitivity towards producing more organised information, but their calculations fall short of tangible time periods. The average reign of a Pāṇṭiya king is 2,000 years and the kingdom (according to Text Group B and D) was in power for 44,000 years. There are many inconsistencies, and many inaccuracies, as is expected of any and all first attempts. The study of these historical manuscripts, I hope, reveals to us the relationship between British and Tamil scholars, as they attempted to write Indian histories for the first time. The Orientalists were students of India’s past, and their Tamil collaborators, students of European historiography — a unique circumstance, to say the least.

1.9 *carittiram* and *varalāru*: Genres or Descriptions?

⁷⁵ There are notable Pāṇṭiya copper plates and inscriptions that have been taken into account by historians. Here are a few important sources: The Velvikudi plate (ca. 8th cent. CE) speaks of a Pāṇṭiya grant in the village of Velvikudi. The other two inscriptions that are noteworthy are the one at Malayadikkuruchchi (in Tirunelveli district) and Madurai. For a full account of Pāṇṭiya evidence in epigraphic and numismatic sources, see Raman 1972. See also Mahadevan 2003, wherein the earliest Pāṇṭiya inscriptions are identified and described. I am grateful to Charlotte Schmidt for these references.

⁷⁶ For a literary analysis of Pāṇṭiya history, see Wilden 2014. For a historical Analysis, see Sastri (1955:1).

The works of historical prose in the Mackenzie Collection usually go by a compound name comprising two the terms — *carittiram* (‘historical biography’) and *varalāru* (‘chronology’) — to produce ‘*varalāru-carittiram*’ or ‘*carittira-varalāru*’. There are some exceptions, such as Text Group D which calls itself a *vamcāvaḷi* (‘bloodline’).⁷⁷ Fundamentally, it too is a chronology and thus does not differ in content and presentation from the *varalāru*. Perhaps it is the historical nomenclature of a specific region. In all the Tamil manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection, researchers must be wary of the fact that the title on the cover folio/page is different from the title given before the introduction. In order to avoid confusion, I have provided above only the titles on the cover, if required. My impression of these internal inconsistencies is that titles did not function as technical or formulaic[fn?] indicators of the subject. Instead, they were general remarks on the content of the manuscripts. They simply intended to tell us that these works were historical in nature. The cataloguing inconsistencies that I have hopefully clarified in the above section are, I believe, because of these inconsistent, often alluringly similar or completely mismatched titles⁷⁸ — *Pāṇṭiya Carittiram*, *Pāṇṭiya Tēca Carittiram*, *Pāṇṭiya Varalāru*, and so on. For example, D. 437 (Text Group A) and D. 436 (Text Group E), although different texts, are thought in every catalogue to be the same because their titles are identical. R. 0335 (Text Group F), on the other hand, does not speak of the rulers in the Kali Yukam⁷⁹ as is ascribed in the title, but of Purāṇic Gods’ exploits. It emulates the Mackenzie format, but does not appear to have belonged to the Collection. In this light, I prefer to understand the *carittiram* and *varalāru* as the two components of a ‘complete’ history — the former details kings’ lives and exploits, and the latter provides a chronological list of kings. No one manuscript, despite having one or the other name, has only one or the other feature. Thus, a *carittiram*, despite being called so, has both explanation and chronology and *vice versa*.⁸⁰ The names of these genres are not to be taken as descriptive of their content, but suggestive of their goals to produce historically viable works. I henceforth speak only of the *carittiram* as the ‘umbrella’ genre for historical prose in the Mackenzie Collection, as the majority of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts go by this name. The three manuscripts that call themselves *varalāru*, namely R. 8116 *Maturai Pāṇṭiya Maṇṇar Varalāru*, R. 2568 *Mummaṇṭala Paṇṭaiya Maṇṇar Varalāru*, and R. 1515 *Tamil Mummaṇṭala Maṇṇar Varalāru*, (Text Group C) contain elaborate prose passages,

⁷⁷ Literally, ‘genealogy-garland’. Given the new title, I have translated it differently to the ‘*varalāru*’, but in content, the two are identical.

⁷⁸ Cf. Mahalingam 1972:xxvi. ‘One important difficulty with which the study of some of these manuscripts is beset is that occasionally the accounts given have no connection whatsoever with the titles of the manuscripts...’ [already quoted this, do i need it again?]

⁷⁹ Briefly, the Kali Yukam (>Skt. Kali Yuga) in Hinduism is the fourth and most terrible Yuga (eon) of all. It is preceded by the Dvapara Yuga, which, according to Purāṇic sources, ended with the death of Kṛṣṇa. The Kali Yuga began 5,123 years ago and has 426,877 years left. It will be followed by the Kṛta Yuga. (Matchett, *et al.*: 2003:390)

⁸⁰ There are also poetic *carittirams*. The Skt. word *caritra*, which is the name of a Kāvya genre (e.g., *Rāmacaritra*, *Buddhacaritra*) was as such taken into Tamil, but used first to denote poetic works. I speak of this transition in Chapter 4.

which would be expected only of a *carittiram*. It is therefore difficult to justify that they are independent genres, for their titles appear to be used interchangeably. Text Groups A and E, on the other hand, go by the name *carittiram* and provide no chronology at all. In an example I showed above of R. 1518 [cf.], the English translation of the Tamil descriptive title (*‘pāṇṭiyamaṇṭalam...paṇṭaiyamannar varalāru*) is ‘The charittirams or Actions...’ Until more examples are discovered, in which clearer genre-based divisions may be observed, I take the ambiguity to indicate a general inclination towards the historical, intending only to set it apart from the literary.

The only explanation that speaks for the *carittiram* being its own genre is that it set the stage for the earliest Tamil novels which went under the same name. This phenomenon, explored in Ebeling (2018:205), focuses on one of Tamil’s earliest novels, *Piratāpa Mutaliyār Carittiram* (‘The Biography of Piratāpa Mutaliār’) by Vētanāyakam Pillai. It is interesting to note that the *carittiram*, formulated once as a scientific genre, now became the torchbearer of Tamil fictional novels.

The addition of the term *varalāru* is not clear in the Mackenzie context, but we know of it as a historical tool from earlier Tamil literature. The earliest and most famous instance of a *varalāru* is in Nakkīraṇ’s (also known as Naṅkīraṇ) commentary to the *Iraiyaṇār Akapporuḷ* (henceforth IA), a treatise on Akam poetics.⁸¹ The commentary contains the first description of the three *tamiḷccaṅkams*, of which the first two perished in a tsunami that engulfed their capitals (Teṇmaturai, and Kapāṭapuram respectively). Finally, the third and last Caṅkam was formed in Madurai, the capital of the Pāṇṭiyas that is generally thought to be the same as the modern city of Madurai in Tamil Nadu. Naṅkīraṇ calls his account the ‘*muccaṅka varalāru*’ — the history of the three Caṅkams. The last of them, he explains, included, among others, the father of Tamil grammar Akattiyaṇār,⁸² and the author of the *Tolkāppiyam*, Tolkāppiyaṇār. The third Caṅkam is fervently discussed in all accounts of the TVP — Nampi talks of Naṅkīrar, Kapilar and Paraṇar, the three most significant poets of the Pāṇṭiya court, in Chapters 15-20 and of how they often disagree with each other. The authorship of the IA is attributed to Cuntarēcuvarar himself, who wrote the treatise in order to compensate for the fall in quality of Tamil scholarship, whereby texts could not be understood anymore due to the extinction of explanatory treatises. The same Nakkīrar, the commentator of the IA, is the star-poet of Nampi’s story, who is employed by Cuntarēcuvarar to shed light on his complex treatise. The legend of the Caṅkam continues into Parañcōti’s version of the TVP as well. Many of the Pāṇṭiya histories in the Mackenzie Collection include these

⁸¹ The IA is a text that is essential to discuss with relation to the TVP, and I will do so in Chapter 3 of this work. For now, the IA is a short treatise on the poetics of love-situations (Tam. ‘*akam*’ ‘inner’) in Tamil literature that has been transmitted with an elaborate commentary by Nakkīraṇ. This commentary includes a history (called ‘*varalāru*’) of Tamil literature which is widely accepted in Tamil cultures even today. For a more elaborate discussion on the IA and its role in the context of this historical account, see Wilden 2014 (p. 216 ‘The *Caṅkam* Legends’).

⁸² See Chevillard 2012 for a detailed account on Akattiyaṇār’s role and contribution as part of the pantheon of Tamil.

legends, in order to (probably) remind audiences that the saviors of Tamil literary knowledge were the Pāṇṭiyas.⁸³

I would surmise that *varalāru*, a term comprising *varal* (occurrence) and *āru* (way, path) was a functional addition to the title that meant to indicate the presentation of a history that had been organised in a chronological manner. (Nakkīraṇ uses this word in reference to the lineage of scholars in the *tamiḷccaṅkam*.) Thus, when Mackenzie’s project began, *varalāru* became the obvious choice of word to describe a ‘chronology/genealogy’. Its transmission was ensured by its practical applicability — when a demand for historical literature rose, what else could it be called, except a ‘*varalāru*’?

The *carittiram* has a less local origin. Its etymology, from Sanskrit *caritra* (‘story’, ‘history’, ‘biography’), is easy to explain. However, it is unclear exactly when, and for what purpose, it began to be used. Prior to Mackenzie, I have detected

| Text Group B | Text Group D |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Cōma Cuntara [1] | Cōmacuntara [81] |
| Karpūra Cuntara [2] | Karpūracuntara [82] |
| Kumāra Cēkara [3] | Kumāracēkara [83] |
| Kumāra Cuntara [82] | Cuntara [84] |
| Cuntara Rāca [83] | Cuntirarāja [85] |
| Caṅmukarāca [84] | Caṅmukarāja [86] |
| Mēru Cuntara [85] | Mērucuntara [87] |
| Intiravaṅma [86] | Yintiravarmma [88] |
| Cuntira Kulatīpa [87] | Cuntirakulātīpa [89] |
| Mīṅakētaṅa [88] | Mīṅattuvaca [90] |
| Mīṅattuvaca [89] | Makāttuvaca [91] |
| Makarattuvaca [90] | Mārttāṅṭa [92] |

nothing of the *carittiram* in Tamil. This is not to say that it did not exist, but only that it was not preserved. The Sanskrit *caritra*, used in the very same sense as Mackenzie’s Tamil *carittiram*, presented a biography and/or history of an eminent person. We therefore know that the concept was adopted into Tamil historical writing without alteration, but we do not know when. I do not spend much time investigating this point, for origins and etymologies are too vague an endeavour for terms as omnipresent as *carittiram*. Several explanations could be presented and argued, but it is difficult to identify the most plausible or befitting, of all. Finding an explanation also does not necessarily help our current cause, which is to understand the *carittiram* better. What we know is, the *carittiram* of the Mackenzie Collection appears to have

⁸³ It is worth re-iterating here, particularly in lieu of my most recent statements, that the portion of the Pāṇṭiya histories that contained the Caṅkam legend was probably the most coveted. (Taylor 1862:III:297). It is therefore interesting to note that the historical value of the Pāṇṭiyas lay in their contribution to Tamil literature and not in their political exploits.

no direct predecessors that bore the same name.⁸⁴ However, there are other *carittiram* documents, ones that perhaps had no awareness of Mackenzie's work, that may be found in other manuscript collections, such as RE47866a *Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇe Paṭṭinattār Carittiram*, EO0607 *Pōjarājan Carittiram*, EO0781 *Śrīpāṣyakārativya Carittiram*, TAM 350 (of the Tiruvāvaṭuṭurai collection) *Vacucarittiram*, RE10543 *Uttararāmacarittiram*, and RE9822 *Māṇikkavācakarcarittiram*, and Indien 428b *Tērūntacōḷaṅ Carittiram*.⁸⁵ This could indicate that the *carittiram* was not a novel phenomenon whose origins may be attributed to Mackenzie's Indian scholars, but that it was a larger literary genre that was, for unknown reasons, not preserved. Much like the *varalāru*, I take the *carittiram* to be a genre that developed due to its function — histories needed to be written, and when they were, they needed to be named.

The exact nuance of 'carittiram' and 'varalāru', particularly in how they differ from one another, is unclear. I am inclined to understand them as two components of historical writing. The *carittiram* fulfils the narrative part through elaborate, details prose accounts, and *varalāru* the technical, formulaic part through the establishment of a timeline. There are as many *carittiram* manuscripts as there are *varalāru* manuscripts. As the titles on the Mackenzie manuscripts are, for the most part, misleading, a reliable statistic can only be produced by reading the introductions and colophons of each manuscript.

The *varalāru* and the *carittiram* may have been used technically in order to convey the functions of a specific genre. They may just as likely have been used as a casual label indicating the subject of history. Both possibilities point to the same end — that they deliberately differentiated themselves from literary genres such as *vacaṇam*, *katai* and *curukkam*, which focused on converting metrical texts into prose. I compare the prose literary genres and these historical works in Chapter 3.

1.10 Key Features of the *carittiram*⁸⁶ — Presenting 'Authentic' Histories

It is essential in any historical writing to present verified sources. In the Pāṇṭiya histories of the Mackenzie Collection, this has been done by connecting the origin of the Pāṇṭiya dynasty to perceivably ancient Purāṇic records, such as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, or more pertinently, the *Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam*. In terms of history (that is, content), the glory of the Purāṇas suffices to confirm the glory of the Pāṇṭiyas — that their antiquity, unperceivable in terms of calculable time, is synonymous to their importance as the rulers of Madurai. It also enables the Pāṇṭiyas to be placed within a larger context of historical sources, thus validating their rule and their contribution. All the 13 Pāṇṭiya manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection contain an introductory

⁸⁴ The direct predecessor of the *carittiram* was the *vacaṇam*. I discuss the *vacaṇam* and other older prose genres in Chapter 3. The point I wish to bring forth here is that the genre name 'carittiram' did not exist before Mackenzie, as far as manuscript evidence shows. Admittedly, this might be due to the lack of preservation of older *carittiram* manuscripts, and the history of the *carittiram* thus remains an open question.

⁸⁵ Many thanks to Eva Wilden for making me aware of these manuscripts.

⁸⁶ In this analysis, I exclude the contribution of the manuscripts in Text Groups E and F. It is difficult to say for certain that they were even part of the Mackenzie Collection, and my reading of them has confirmed that they have nothing to add to the histories of the other Text Groups.

paragraph that conveys this Purāṇic connection. It often begins with a statement such as *paṇṭaiya-kālattil* ‘in ancient times’ or *pūrva-kālattil* ‘in older times’, evoking, it would seem, antiquity through its ambiguity. These introductions choose between two thematic structures. The first is to confirm the holiness of Madurai, the seat of Cuntarēcuvarar, and to thus portray the Pāṇṭiya kings as the chosen guardians of this sacred land. The second is to trace the Pāṇṭiya genealogy to godly or demi-godly origins. The distinction between Purāṇic and political is difficult to make, but perhaps that was intentional. The idea of Pāṇṭiya glory is rooted in the inclusion of spiritual prowess, and the Pāṇṭiyas are thus described as glorious in both respects.

Take, for instance, the introduction of Text Group B, in which the Pāṇṭiya lineage is traced to *piramatēvar* (Brahma):

[p. 1, taken from R. 11162, the only surviving copy.⁸⁷]

cakala puvaṇaṅkalaiyuṅ ciriṣṭiccuk koṅṭirukkīra piramam tēvaruṭaiya pakal āyiram catir yukattil — patiṇālu maṇukkaḷ ovvoruttarukku 71 catiryukamāka — patiṇālu maṇukkaḷum inta pūmaṅṭalam āḷukaiyil — anta maṇukkaḷil 9 maṇuvākiya rai vita maṇu yinta pūmaṅṭalam āḷukaiyil yintap pūmaṅṭalattiṅ aṅpattāru tēcattilum aṅpattāru rācākkal neṭi-ilum — anta maṇuvamicattil piṛanta pērkaḷ cūriya kulattāreṅrum cantira kulattāreṅrum āṅtu vantārkaḷ. — atil inta pāṇṭiya tēcattaic cantira kula rācākkalil pāṇṭiyarāṅtu vantārkaḷ.⁸⁸

Of the 1000 aeons, which is [but] one day for Pīramam Tēvar who was creating all the worlds — each of the 14 Maṇus having 71 eons each — during the rule of those 14 Maṇus on earth — among those *maṇu*-s, the ninth *maṇu* [who is] *naya-vita-maṇu*, in [his] ruling of this world, in the lineages of the 56 kings of all 56 countries in this world — the people who were born in that *maṇu*’s lineage, called those of the *cūriyakulam* and those of the *cantirakulam*, were ruling. — In that, the *pāṇṭiyars* of the *cantirakula* ruled the this *pāṇṭiyatēcam* were ruling.

Similarly, R. 8116 (Text Group C) relates Madurai, the holy city, to the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This text introduces itself through a rudimentary contents page, wherein a line on each chapter is provided. Here are these lines:

[p. 1, para. 1, taken from R. 8116 due to better legibility]

⁸⁷ I am certain that this is the copy of the original, as the limited transcription provided in the GOML catalogue (1948:VII:2391) matches the passage quoted.

⁸⁸ This excerpt is also a classic example of how early scientific prose functioned syntactically. Certainly, it is awkward when translated, owing to the lack of finite verbs in individual clauses and unprecedented subject changes. I discuss these syntactical features in the final chapter of my thesis, as I felt it important to include for future efforts. For now, my translation aims to bring out only the connection between Brahma and the Pāṇṭiyas. For clarity, I have introduced hyphens between phrases, so that my translation can be compared to the original text.

mutalāvatu — muṅ pūruvam inta irāṭciyan teṅṭavāraṇiyan tārūkāvāṇai, caṭāyuvāṇam, vetavāṇam, mirukaṅṭavāṇam, parattuvaracar vaṇam, potikai vaṇamenru meluṅ collippaṭṭa aṅekam peruṭaittāna. vaṅāntiram.

iraṅṭāvatu pūruvakālattilirāmaṅ cītai yilaṭcumaṇaṅ...ayyottiyiliruntu patiṅālu varuṭaminta vaṅattile vaṅavācam paṅṅinārkaḷ. civaṅinta vaṅattile āyiram varuṭan tapacu paṅṅināṅeṅru muṅṅorkalār...-collappaṭṭum. paṅcapāṅṭavāḷ paṅṅiraṅṭu varuṭam vaṅa-vācam- paṅṅinārkaḷ.

The first — Previously, this kingdom possessed many names that were, Teṅṭavāraṇiyan Tārūkāvāṇam, Caṭāyuvāṇam, Vetavāṇam, Mirukaṅṭavāṇam, Parattuvaracarvaṇam, Potikaivaṇam, and more. [added in retrospect: also] Vaṅāntiram.

The second — In ancient times, Rāmaṅ, Cītai, [and] Yilaṭcumaṅ, they exiled in the forest for 14 years, from Ayyotti. It is said by [our] ancestors that Civaṅ performed penance for 1000 years in this forest. The Paṅcapāṅṭavāḷ (the five Pāṅṭavas) lived here for 12 years.

Text Group C tells us that the daughter of Arjuṅaṅ from the Pāṅṭavas married a Pāṅṭiya prince:

[p. 11, para. 2, taken from R. 1518 due to better legibility]

inta pāṅṭiyaṅ vaṅkiṣattil oru peṅ — Alliyaracāṅi yeṅkiṛa peṅṅai — Yarcuṅaṅ kaliyāṅam paṅṅināṅ. intap pāṅṭiyaṅ vaṅkiṣam ilamākiya vilāṅkait tīvam niṛai koṅṭār.

In this Pāṅṭiya lineage, Arjuṅaṅ married — a girl — a girl called Alli Aracāṅi. Those of the Pāṅṭiya lineage, [thus] took over Ilaṅkai known as Īlam.

Several observations can be made from these introductory passages. Firstly, priority is given to the ubiquity of the Pāṅṭiyas. They are descended from Brahma's Manūs, their capital goes by several names (and is thus familiar to several cultures), their region was the place of exile of Rāma, and even the Pāṅṭavas lived in their forests. Secondly, the introductory passage, particularly in the second instance, gives us a rudimentary 'contents' page, in which demarcations such as '*mutalāvatu* (the first)' and '*iraṅṭāvatu* (the second)' denote the Chapters to come and their order of occurrence. Thirdly, the idea of antiquity is clearly evoked. The *Rāmāyaṅa* and *Mahābhārata*, for one, took place at a time so ancient that it is no longer tangible. This is particularly interesting, given that the idea of a history, it would seem, would be to create a connection between events so that they may be studied coherently. However, the exaggeration of dates in Tamil literature is well-known, even

ubiquitous.⁸⁹ It would seem that the writers of the Mackenzie manuscripts attempted to cater to two sets of readers at the same time — the British, whose demand for dates and chronologies was satisfied later in the narrative, and the South Indian, to whom antiquity was (and perhaps still is) synonymous to greatness.

Another common feature is the body of the *carittiram*, which provides a detailed account of the most prominent kings of the lineage. This portion, largely in accordance with the TVP legends, accepts Cuntarēcuvarar himself as one of the Pāṇṭiya rulers, alongside his consort, Mīṇāṭci. However, the one factor that differentiates the *carittiram* from other legendary accounts is that all *carittirams* unanimously end the Pāṇṭiya lineage with the adoption of a prince called Vicuvaṇāta Nāyakar, thus ending the Pāṇṭiya name and given rise to the Nāyaka period of rulership. Depending on the manuscripts, this adoption was carried out to secure a Nāyaka alliance against a Muslim invasion (by someone named Mullā in one account), to compensate for the inability to produce an heir of their own, or to recover from a war against the Cōḷas. Two of those accounts are:

D. 2739 (Text Group C) [p. 14]⁹⁰

...avarkaḷukkuc cantatiyillātatiṇāl vicaya raṅka cokkanāta nāyakar cīriya takappaṇ paṅkāru tirumalai nāyakar pēraṇākiya vijaya kumāramuttut tirumalai nāyakarai mēle eḷutiya⁹¹ mīṇāṭciyammāl puttirasvīkāram paṇṇikkoṇṭu rācciyapāram paṇṇiṇārkaḷ.

Because they had no heir, Mīṇāṭciyammāl, who was described earlier, adopted Vijaya Kumāramuttu Tirumalai Nāyakar, who was the son of Paṅkāru Tirumalai Nāyakar, who was the younger uncle of Vicaya Raṅka Cokkanāta Nāyakar.

D. 3184 (Text Group D) presents only a slightly different account of this:

[p. 57/113]

...vaṭakkē yirunta tulukkaril mullāvenru voruttar vantu kulavarttaṇa pāṇṭiyanuṭaṇē caṇṭai paṇṇi rācciyaṅkaṭṭikkoṇṭu tēvālayaṅkaḷ pīrammālayaṅkaḷellām kaṭṭi tulukkar matamē tecamellām pīrapalam paṇṇikkoṇṭirukkīra pōtu...malaiyāḷattu cīmaiye pōyiruntārkaḷ.

⁸⁹ Time in these histories is often exaggerated, and/or unspecified. We will see shortly how the average ruling period of a Pāṇṭiya king (according to Text Groups B and C, and even D) is 2,000 years, and that *carittirams* often begin with statements that are or are akin to ‘*pūrvakālatil*’ ‘in a previous time’. This tells us that it did not really matter *when* something happened, as long as it happened at an inconceivably earlier period to the time of writing of these histories.

⁹⁰ D. 2739 is no longer extant. This portion has been taken from the limited transcription available in the GOML catalogue (Vol. VII, p. 2390).

⁹¹ According to this account, Mīṇāṭciyammāl was the wife of Cuntarapāṇṭiyaṇ. The same story of adoption is repeated twice in this account, of which I have provided the latter. Given the importance of this adoption, I surmise, it has been repeated.

Among the Tulukkar who were in the North, when one man called Mullā fought with Kulavarttana Pāṇṭiyaṅ, annexed [his] kingdom, barred the divine and other places of worship, and spread the Tulukkar religion, [the Pāṇṭiyas] took cover in the Malaiyālam district.

The end of the Pāṇṭiya lineage is relayed thus:

[p. 120]

pāṇṭiyaṅ...taṅakku cantatiumillai. taṅ kulam virttiyillāmal pōṇapaṭiyiṅālē — taṅakkup piṅkālam rācciyam catturukkaḷ apakarittuk koḷḷap pōkiṅārkaḷ enru vicuvanāta nāyakkarait tāṅē puttira śrīkāramāy paṅṅikkoṅṭu mīṅākṣiyammaṅ cannatiyil paṭṭaṅkaṭṭi tammuṭaiya rājamuttirai yellām koṭuttu...

The Pāṇṭiyaṅ had no descendants. As his clan had gone without a successor, thinking that enemies will, in the future, snatch away the kingdom, he adopted [for] himself Vicuvanāta Nāyakkar, having granted his title [to him] in the sanctum of Mīṅākṣiyammaṅ, having given him his own royal seal...

There is some evidence to back these claims. For one, the invasion of Malik Kafur in 1311 left the Pāṇṭiyas weak beyond repair. The invasion was so brutal that the ongoing war of succession between Cuntara Pāṇṭiyaṅ and his brother Vīra Pāṇṭiyaṅ had to be paused. The invasion lost the Pāṇṭiyas their capital Madurai, and they were thus forced to retreat to Teṅkāci in the Old South Arcot region. It would be their last capital. Simultaneously, the Nāyakas, an off-shoot of the powerful Vijayanagar dynasty in the Deccan region, gained power in the South. In 1529, Vicuvanāta Nāyak took Madurai and was named its warden. Thus began the Madurai Nāyaka dynasty.⁹²

Through these accounts, we learn that the truth of Pāṇṭiya decline is concealed behind a story of compromise — the Nāyakas were made into Pāṇṭiyas through adoption. In this way, Nāyak success is a result of Pāṇṭiya generosity and not Pāṇṭiya defeat. In terms of writing histories, we learn that the truth may be extracted from surrounding narratives, as a result of which the absolute dismissal of these manuscripts as historically erroneous is not at all necessary. My own impressions are reflected in Sastri (1955:21):

⁹² This brief account is a summary of many detailed explanations: Michelle (1995), Sathyanathaiyar (1991:48-89) and Lal (1950) and Sastri, K.A.N. (1927). These histories have been written in accordance with epigraphic and numismatic sources. See, for instance, Sathyanathaiyar (1991:65) in which the discovery of the Pāṇṭiya emblem (the fish) in Nāyak coins speaks for a brief alliance between them and Sastri, K. A. N. (1927, Chapter 1, 'Introductory Sources') in which sources are discussed as a whole. Sastri (ibid.) argues that literary evidence is faulty, for it is often exaggerated. Thus, he traces the external sources that may tell us a more accurate story of the Pāṇṭiyas and elaborates on them in the beginning of his book. As one of the earliest modern historians of South India, Sastri's methodology has been adopted by most successive historical attempts, including those others that have been consulted in the making of this work.

‘In all Indian literature there are few professedly historical works...While furnishing valuable hints on comparatively recent times, say from 1200 onward, they are nothing more than a farrago of legends for the earlier times and contain too many inaccuracies and distortions to be used by themselves without the testimony of other more trustworthy sources.’

1.11 Royal Genealogies

As an extension of this effort to authenticate Pāṇṭiya histories, many accounts produce a chronology. None of them are the same, but elaborate on the exploits of the same particular kings. The general format of the chronology is as a long list of rulers which is interrupted by passages of prose describing a particular king. I have observed that the chronology has two functions — firstly, it adds substance to the claim of authenticity. Secondly, it displays the longevity of the ruling clan. In continuation of Sastri’s observations above, only some portions of the chronology are historically viable when compared with external sources such as epigraphy and numismatics which Sastri (*ibid.*) called ‘more trustworthy...’.

As we saw above, connecting the Pāṇṭiyas to the Purāṇas is an effective means of ‘proving’ their antiquity. In order to argue for that antiquity even further, a long, often repetitive list of kings is provided. The average number of kings is 72, while the maximum is 129. Of the five text-groups in this study, no two chronologies even remotely match. As they are too elaborate, and of hardly any historical or literary consequence, I do not reproduce the chronologies themselves in this work. Many, such as William Taylor, have attempted to look further into them, but more recent advances in the field of Pāṇṭiya history (such as Sastri 1927) easily disproves them.

While some aspects of the chronology, particularly those that provide information on relatively recent (i.e., latter half of the second millenium) rulers, have some element of truth in them, the chronology as a whole appears to have been written somewhat arbitrarily. Throughout these histories, the Pāṇṭiyas have been treated as a political phenomenon first and a ruling dynasty next. It does not therefore matter what each Pāṇṭiya ruler is called, nor who his successor is. It matters only that the clan-name was kept alive for several thousands of years and declined gently through Nāyaka adoption. Thus, the purpose of the chronology appears to be no more than ‘filler’ — the longer the list, the stronger the claim of Pāṇṭiya greatness. The list is therefore baseless.

The most exhaustive chronology is that of Text Group B, in which 129 Pāṇṭiya kings have apparently ruled for 44,000 years. The shortest is that of Text Group D, in which the total number of kings is 36, and no durations are provided. The ‘important’ rulers that are described through prose remain the same, although they are a different number in the list each time. For example, Cavuntarapāṇṭiyaṅ, the last who bore the Pāṇṭiya name, is number 104 in Text Group B and number 36 in Text Group D. He adopted Vicuvaṅāta Nāyak, and the kingdom henceforth bore the Nāyaka name. Similarly, Kulacēkara Pāṇṭiyaṅ is understood to be the founder of the Pāṇṭiya dynasty, having descended either from one of the 14 Maṅus or from an unidentified

origin simply called the *cantirakula* (lunar clan) (Text Group A). He arrived in the forest of Madurai and began to build the city on Cuntarēcuvarar's instructions.

Arguably, the most politically charged period of Pāṇṭiya rule was during their conflict with the Cōlas. All Text Groups speak of Pāṇṭiya victory over the Cōlas except for Text Group C, for it was written by Veda Nayak of the Tanjore (Cōla) region. The premise of the Pāṇṭiya-Cōla battle is mentioned in all accounts but details are supplied in Text Group B. Kāntāracēta Cōlaṅ and Rācēntira Pāṇṭiyaṅ wished to make an alliance through marriage. The daughter of the Cōla king, Paṛuvēntu Pimpāṅnai, was married to the Pāṇṭiya army general and heir, Rācacimma Pāṇṭiyaṅ. The Cōlas, dissatisfied with their limited influence over the Pāṇṭiya region, arranged a vicious attack that led to much bloodshed. The Pāṇṭiya king was on the very verge of defeat when Cuntarēcuvarar emerged with food and drinks to refresh his army and fresh weapons with the seal of Madurai. The Pāṇṭiyas were victorious, and the Cōlas retreated to Kāñcipuram, their capital. Text Group C writes instead of the resounding victory of the Cōlas, the main cause for the eventual demise of the Pāṇṭiya lineage.

In terms of structure, the chronologies are interrupted with prose passages that convey significant events, such as the battle with the Cōlas. Each account prefers to furnish its own details and speaks of its own preferred kings. The only portions of

each text that remain unanimous in their narration is the story of the first three kings. The founder Kulacēkara Pāṇṭiyaṅ. His successor is Malaiyattuvaca/Ukkira Pāṇṭiyaṅ, to whom Cuntarēcuvarar appears in a dream, urging him to build a military stronghold in Madurai. He produced no male heirs with his Queen consort, Kāñcaṅamālai, but a daughter with three breasts called Taṭātakai. A seer instructs the king to marry his daughter off, saying that the third breast will disappear when she finds the right match. Thus, Taṭātakai marries Cuntarēcuvarar himself and becomes the third and only female ruler of the Pāṇṭiya dynasty. These accounts are undoubtedly from the TVP (Parañcōti Chapters 1, 2 and 3) and their popularity may be the reason for their consistency — no alternate origin-story has ever been formulated for the Pāṇṭiyas.

Table 4: A comparison of two similar chronologies from Text Groups B and D

1.3 A Summary of Text Group A

Text Group A contains a spiritual account of the Pāṇṭiyas. They are connected inherently with the *dharma* (religious duty) of Saivism through Cuntarēcuvarar, the incarnation of Śiva in Madurai. The first 14 pages explain that the Pāṇṭiya dynasty exemplified expertise in the Śaiva Āgamas, and their success was purely due to Cuntarēcuvarar's grace. The bulk of this text is an enumeration and explanation of the

aṣṭamahāsiddhis (eight superior abilities).⁹³ The Pāṇṭiyas are well-versed in the knowledge of these *siddhis* and rule due to their power. There are many passages of praise to Cuntarēcuvarar, often several pages long.

In order to confirm Cuntarēcuvarar's pervasive powers, the then Cōḷa king Kāntāracēta Cōḷaṇ approaches the enemy territory of Madurai in disguise, so that he may worship at Cuntarēcuvarar's feet. Cuntarēcuvarar, who recognises him and compliments his cleverness, promises him safe passage back to his capital of Kāñcipuram.

The Pāṇṭiya king is in communication with Cuntarēcuvarar purely through visions and dreams. Matters of statecraft, finances, and alliances are discussed between the apparition (described as *ākācavāṇi* — ‘a figure from the sky’) that is Cuntarēcuvarar and a sleeping Pāṇṭiya king. In one such encounter, Cuntarēcuvarar tells Kulapūṣaṇa Pāṇṭiyaṇ of Kāntāracēta Cōḷaṇ's presence in their land. The Pāṇṭiya king takes the opportunity to successfully attack and dispel the Cōḷa king and his companions. The failed marriage story, also seen in Text Group B, results in Pāṇṭiya victory, despite Pāṇṭiya fault — the young prince was not faithful to his wife, the Cōḷa princess, and she ordered her father to come and take over Madurai.

Every opportunity to digress from the main narrative is taken. In recounting the details of the bloody battle between the two parties, the following picture is painted by the author of this text:

[p. 38, taken from R. 347 due to better legibility]

rettamāṇatu oru āṛāka pīravēcittatu. atilē, āṇaikaḷuṭaiya talaikaḷum atinūṭaiya muṇṭaṅkaḷum kutiraiyūṭaiya talaikaḷum māṭukaḷuṭaiya talaikaḷum maṇuṣāḷuṭaiya talaikaḷ uṭalukaḷum yintap pīrakāramāyi mitantu pōṇatu. yeppaṭi iruntatu enṛāl, āttukaḷilē mīṇaṅkaḷum mutalaikaḷum pōratu pōle tōṇappaṭtutu. yippaṭi rattamāṇatu. cūriya utaiya mutalkkoṇṭu pakalile patinaṅcu nāḷikai varaikkum yuttam naṭantatu.

That which was blood flowed like a river. In it, the heads of elephants and their foreheads (?),⁹⁴ the heads of horses, the heads of cows, the heads and bodies of humans floated away in this manner. If you ask, ‘What was it like?’, it appeared like the movement of the fish and crocodiles in the river. In this way, the blood was formed. Having begun at dawn, the battle took place during daytime for fifteen days.

⁹³ According to this version, the eight *siddhis* (which correspond to the list of the eight ‘classical’ *siddhis* enumerated in Subramuniyaswami, S. 1997) are *aṇimā* (the ability to reduce oneself to atomic sizes), *makimai* (the ability to expand the body to superlarge sizes), *lakimā* (the ability to become weightless), *karimā* (the ability to become dense or heavy), *pīrāṭṭi* (the ability to appear within seconds in any location in the world), *pīrākāmiya* (the ability to fulfil desire), *īccittuvam* (the ability to influence anyone) and *vāciṭṭuvam* (the ability to control the natural elements).

⁹⁴ Both *talai* and *muṇṭam* have the meaning of ‘head’. A literal translation would therefore be ‘...the heads of elephants, and their heads’.

The battle-scene ends with the victorious return of the Pāṇṭiya king to Madurai, where he is greeted on the streets by women who present him with pearl and ruby garlands.⁹⁵

This manuscript seems to represent the transitional phase of Tamil historiography. It cannot resist adding elaborate literary passages that are unnecessary to the main story, but still produces a somewhat structured history of the Pāṇṭiyas. The chronology, a feature that we will see in every other Text Group, is absent here altogether. This is likely due to the fact that this manuscript was acquired by Mackenzie in the early stages of his archiving project,⁹⁶ when he was not yet in a position to ask authors for exactly what he required. Taylor remarks (1862:III:297) that the portions containing information on the ‘Madura College’ (ibid.) was the ‘earliest sought’. Book No. 3 of this five-part series contains the information on the Madura College or the *tamiḷccaṅkam*. It was the first part to reach the hands of Mackenzie and explains the strange order of this transference (3, 2, 1, 4 and 5) — Mackenzie received these books in the order of what information he thought was most valuable.

To discern that which is ‘valuable’ or ‘invaluable’ is a discussion that I start in the next chapter. In the meantime, Text Group A is valuable to this project for its documentation of a transitional period in historical writings in Tamil. Vestiges of an older system, in which literary elaboration is prized, are still seen here, but within a framework of technical (i.e., scientific) writing. This text may also tell us about a potential misunderstanding that occurred between Mackenzie and his collaborators. He asked for histories, which he may have explained as the narration of facts. We receive in this copy not historical facts, but lists of the *aṣṭamāsiddhis*, of the circumstances of each king, and of the inner workings of war (there are several pages also dedicated to battle formation, the abilities of the cavalry, and the advantages of an elephantry). Mackenzie, who wanted a chronological history, instead received some kind of a *longue durée* study of history. Details on worship, culture and statecraft are provided, but no timeline can be detected. The idea of history was already changing, but these writers had not quite internalised the new system.

The Chapter on the *tamiḷccaṅkam* displays in particular the influence of the TVP. There is no doubt that the source-text of these *carittirams* is the TVP of Parañcōti. The most sensational portion of his text, one that is cited even today as the pinnacle of Tamil literary cultures is the story of the three (among 48 or 49, depending on which account) scholars known as Naṛkīraṅ, Kapilar and Paraṅar. They sat on the *caṅkappalakai* (Academy bench) and wrote exquisite poems for the Pāṇṭiya king in Madurai. The account relayed in the *carittiram* is identical to that of the TVP. Thus, while the concept of history was indeed changing, information was still sourced from legendary works, such as the TVP. Mackenzie therefore sought

⁹⁵ This is definitely not the complete account. Unfortunately, the rest of this text is far too illegible in both manuscripts (D. 437 and R. 347) and missing from R. 343, as R. 347 is its continuation.

⁹⁶ Taylor (vol. iii, p. 297): ‘[This manuscript] contains a selection of stories from the Madura *st’hala* [sic] Purana, transmitted, in five different portions, from Madura to Colonel McKenzie [sic] at an early period of his researches;’

history, but acquired only a re-arranged account of legend, in which some technical information was provided.

1.12 A Summary of Text Group B

This text has been favoured by William Taylor (1862:III:56). He speaks of its chronology and takes the ending to be historically viable — the Nāyaka prince was heir to the Pāṇṭiya dynasty, adopted so that he may protect the kingdom from Muslim invasions. There is no information on the acquisition of this manuscript, but its brevity (i.e., absence of literary digressions such as those in Text Group A) speaks to its relatively later completion. The backbone of this text is a chronology comprising 129 kings. Taylor counts the chronology from king number 92 onwards and provides the list in his catalogue entry to this manuscript (ibid.:56-57). He shortens his list to only those kings that were said to have ruled in the Kali Yuga.

The interesting part about Text Group B is that it actively avoids incorporating stories from the TVP into the historical narrative. The obvious candidates, such as the story of the founding of Madurai (when Cuntarēcuvarar tells the Pāṇṭiya king in a dream to build a city in the Kaṭampa forest) and the events of the Tamil Academy are omitted completely. There is no mention of the Caṅkam at all and no mention of the glorious contribution of Cuntarēcuvarar in the war against the Cōḷas. Instead, the narrative begins with the claim that the descendent of Brahma's Maṇu is the first Pāṇṭiya king, who clears out the forest region and build a military stronghold. The TVP is alluded to only in pages 2-5, wherein the incidents are mentioned with areference to the Pāṇṭiya ruler at the time. For example:

[p. 2 - taken from the copy R. 11162]

apiṣēka pāṇṭiyaṇ. atil māṇikkam vittatu, varuṇaṇ viṭṭa kaṭalai vatta ceyttatu, nāṇ māṭak kūṭal āṇatu. [3] yellām valla cittarāṇa, kallāṇaikkuk karumpu koṭuttatu, āka tiruviḷaiyāṭal. āka 5.

Apiṣēka Pāṇṭiyaṇ. During that [period], those Tiruviḷaiyāṭals [holy sports] were the selling of the ruby, the drying of the ocean that Varuṇaṇ [God of Rain] released, the becoming of 'Nāṇ Māṭa Kūṭal [the confluence of the four structures]'⁹⁷, the becoming of the ascetic who was skilled in everything, the giving of the sugarcane to the stone-elephant. In total, 5.

The need to authenticate Pāṇṭiya history by total exclusion of legendary sources is interrupted only in this portion, suggesting perhaps that these writers could not resist supplying at least some information on the stories they knew so well.

⁹⁷ The word 'māṭam' in this well-known formula 'nāṇ-māṭa kūṭal' is somewhat vague. The corresponding TVP chapter in later prose versions speaks of the creation of Madurai, when four rain-clouds from each cardinal direction unite in the sky and rain on the drought-stricken Madurai, thanks to the magical powers of the Pāṇṭiya king. Popular stories understand the Māṭam to be a fort with four pillars so tall, that they caught the rain-clouds as they congregated over Madurai and made them rain. The phrase 'nāṇ-māṭa kūṭal' ('kūṭal' being confluence) is today used as an another name for Madurai. I speak of this further in Chapter 3.

There might be a more functional reason for the citation of the TVP in this instance — that Parañcōti’s version of the story served as a compass that helped orient researchers of the Pāñṭiya kingdom towards a basic chronology. Thus, each king is cited alongside the stories that allegedly took place during his reign.

An interesting passage of prose interrupts the chronology during the reign of Atula Kīrti Pāñṭiyaṅ. According to this text, he faced the loss of the Pāñṭiya name due to his inability to find a wife. Thus, his successors were born of concubines (‘*vaippāṭṭi*’ — literally, ‘woman for keeping’), and the land suffered because of it. The whole kingdom was subsequently lost, except for the seven seas and four hills — Āṇaimalai (‘elephant hill’), Nākamalai (‘snake hill’), Pacumalai (‘cow hill’) and Ṛṣapamalai (‘bull hill’). At this point, the Lord Cuntarēcuvarar had completed 48 Tiruviḷaiyāṭals. Then, Kīrtti Pūṣaṇaṅ, a descendent of the Akattiyar clan, was nominated by Cuntarēcuvarar to rule. He was crowned by Akattiyar himself. Thus, the Pāñṭiya line survived. Kīrtti Pūṣaṇaṅ was the last Pāñṭiya ruler of the Dvapara Yuga. With the beginning of the Kali Yuga, during which 38 kings rule, comes Taylor’s list and a possibly more historically viable chronology. The Pāñṭiya name dies out with the adoption of the Nāyaka.

In terms of writing history, there is a clear attempt to avoid the Purāṇas as sources. However, the TVP is still used as a reference-point to mark the achievements of kings and the time-period in which they ruled. Despite this, it is several steps closer to being a historical document than the version we encounter in Text Group A.

1.13 Summary of Text Group C

Text Group C possesses three copies. We know that its author was Veda Nayak from Tanjore, and this is reflected in his Cōḷa-centric narrative. The most interesting portions of this work are those in which Veda Nayak’s flippant writing-style is observed. For one, he claims that there is no use in citing the origins of the city/kingdom of Madurai:

[p. 22, taken from R. 1568 due to superior legibility]

anēkam irāṭcatar inta vaṅattilē iruntārkaḷ enru collappaṭum. inṅnam anēka kāriyaṅkaḷ pēcavum eḷutavum vēñṭiyiruntālum, avaikaḷaik kāṭṭa ivviṭattilē avacaramillai.

It is said that there were many demons in this forest. Even if there are several more factors that should be spoken of, or written about, they are not important in this place.

Still more amusing is Veda Nayak’s take on Rāma of the Rāmāyaṇa, one of the most beloved heroes of Hindu cultures. He accedes to what seemed to have been a popular understanding of the time — that Rāma passed by Madurai on his way to Ilaṅkai (Sri Lanka). Yet, he has a very different idea of what brought about Rāma’s success and popularity in the subcontinent:

[p. 23, taken from R. 1568 due to superior legibility]

maṇuṭaṅ ceyta pāvaṅkaḷ ellām tīrum enru [p. 24] poyyai mey pōlē yeluti yantap purāṇattai irāmaṅākīra irācā vaṭakkē uttarāti tēcamellām parampap paṇṇinaṭiṅālē — vaṭatēcattil uḷḷa irācākkal, pirapukkal, eḷiyavarkal, valiyavarkal, cakalamāṇam maṇupiracaikaḷ aṅaivōrum taṅkaḷ mēlāṇa ṅāṅakkaṅṅākīra putticipācinuṭaiya tantirattiṅālē mayaṅki — eḷitāyc corpak kāriyattiṅālē — attānai kōṭi pāvamellām tīrukirateṅru purāṇam collikirattiṅālē — itait tāṅē pattiyōṭē ceytu pāvattai mulutum pōkkip punṇiyattai yaṭaintu aritāṇa mōṭcattai yelitākap pera vēṇum enru poyyai meyyenru nampi — akkālam tuvaṅki ikkālam maṭṭum maṅuṣa kulam puttikeṭṭu pōccutu.

Because the king Rāma propagated fantasies all the way to the Northern countries, having presented the lies as truth saying ‘all the sins of man will be eliminated!’ — the kings, nobles, weak, and strong, the entirety of humanity collectively having been vexed by the hex of the aforementioned ghoul of the brains with [only] eyes of truth, — due to these questionable/precarious actions [performed with] ease, because the fantasies say, ‘all those crores of sins will be eliminated!’ — having done exactly this with dedication, [thinking that they were] driving away all the sins, [they] having believed the lies to be truth, thinking ‘[we] must obtain the rare redemption of the soul, having obtained this good-fortune’ — that time-period having begun, upto this time-period, the brains of the human clan are rotten.

This passage is noteworthy for many reasons. Firstly, it uses the word ‘*purāṇa*’, associated popularly with magical truths of the distant past that established human civilisation, as a matter of fantasy and conjecture. The semantic flavour of ‘*purāṇa*’ here is in stark contrast to the other, Hindu, scribes, who comfortably name their sources to be Purāṇic. Secondly, one does not often find a critique of Rāma and the Rāmāyaṇa. In terms of these writings that call themselves historical, it is interesting to see how much two accounts vary solely on the religious affiliation of their author. Taylor (1856:III:17) comments on this writer’s work as ‘bearing somewhat of a historical character’. He also says (*ibid.*):

‘The whole of the statements are too much tinctured by the author’s personal sentiments and opinions, and by adoption of sentiments received from Europeans: as for example, that the Brahmins originally came from Egypt. In some cases his conjectures and hypotheses are very bold.’

The diversity in literary accounts thus far tells us that writing history was still scattered and largely determined by the circumstance of the author. The opposite is observed in those literary traditions of the time that were non-historical, as we will see in the case of the *vacāṇam*. Regardless of the region in which the text circulated, there was a unanimous understanding that it must be preserved in accordance with its oldest (i.e., original) version.

1.14 A Summary of Text Group D

Much like Text Group B, this also appears to be a well-rounded historical account. Here too, the chronology serves as the backbone of the work. The Pāṇṭiya dynasty ends with the adoption of Vicuvaṇāta Nayak, and only insignificant differences between this version and B may be spotted. In terms of its historicity, it is the most sensational account of all. By sensational, I mean that it is the closest of the four histories to the TVP. For example, unlike the other Text Groups, this one pays much attention to the birth and rule of Mīṇāṭci as the third and only female monarch of the Pāṇṭiyas, deified as the divine consort of Cuntarēcuvarar. Five pages have been dedicated to her story. Additionally, the story of Arjuna, one of the Pāṇḍavas, is detailed — he falls in love with a woman from the Nāka tribe and enters through his marriage to her the *nākalōkam* (‘the world of the Nākas). It is on his way back into the regular world that he runs into Cittirānkatai, the Pāṇṭiya princess, with whom he falls in love. They marry and produce a son, Peppuruvaṇ, who becomes the heir to the Pāṇṭiya throne. It is only after this marriage that Arjuna becomes a devotee of Cuntarēcuvarar, leading him to find his more famous marital alliance with Subhadra, the younger sister of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This author makes bold claims indeed!

A lengthy passage that summarises the story of the Bhagavat Gīta then commences — Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna discuss life-philosophies as they head for battle with the intention to rid the world of tyranny. Brothers fight against brothers, many die, but the Pāṇḍavas prevail and continue to rule to the end of their days. A shift of scene is then introduced:

[p. 56/111]⁹⁸

appāl peppuruvākaṇaṇ makā parākkiramacāliyākavum makākīrttivāṇākavum cakalamāṇa tēcattu rājākkalaṇiyum yuttattilē jeyittu taṇakkuk kāṇikkai koṭuttukkoṇṭu varumpaṭi ceytu avar veku kālam rācciyam paripālaṇam paṇṇikoṇṭiruntāṇ. appāl avaruṭa kālattukkup piṛkālam rācciyam paṇṇiṇa pāṇṭiya rājākkalāreṇṇāl, anta peppuruvākavākaṇaṇ kumāraṇ cōmacuntarapāṇṭiyaṇ.

Accordingly, Peppuruvākaṇaṇ, as a mighty and famous person, having conquered the kings of all countries in battle, making [it] so that they give [him] tribute, he was performing his kingly duties for a long time. In that context, If one asks, ‘Who were the Pāṇṭiya kings that ruled after the period of his rule?’ [it was] that Peppuruvākavākaṇaṇ’s son Cōmacuntara Pāṇṭiyaṇ.

Thus, the Pāṇṭiya dynasty survived despite the destruction of the world as is described in the Mahabhārata and despite the elimination of most other kingdoms of

⁹⁸ In this manuscript, there are two page numbers provided. The former (p. 56 in this case) is probably the original number, and the latter (p. 111) has been inked in later. Presumably, the page numbers increased when this manuscript was bound together with several others. I cannot confirm that this is the case, as I did not have the opportunity to see this manuscript in person. The scans do not convey any details about the position/order of the manuscript in the bundle.

the subcontinent! The title of this work, *Pāṇṭiya Piratāpa Vamcāvali*, is perhaps to be taken more seriously than I had initially imagined — it is indeed an account of the heroism of the Pāṇṭiyas. I am yet to find a more complimentary account of the dynasty.

1.15 Common Points — Dating And Chronologies of Text Groups B and D

For the most part, Text Group D is a re-telling of the TVP that aims to emphasise the importance of the Pāṇṭiyas within its narrative. Yet, its narrative bears many similarities to that of Text Group B. The beginning of the greatness of Madurai is attributed to the legend of Indra’s curse (from the TVP), but the origin of the Pāṇṭiyas is their descendance from Raivata Maṇu, just like in Text Group B. It might suggest that Text Group B is incomplete — i.e, that the original contained the Indra legend too, but was not considered worth preserving once it was added to the Collection. The chronological lists in both Text Groups are similar for the kings in the Kali Yuga. Moreover, the dates provided besides each king are identical. I assumed in the beginning that these dates were arbitrary, and just another means of authenticating the Pāṇṭiyas without substance. Yet, if two independent texts whose accounts otherwise differ altogether have the same total number of years of Pāṇṭiya rule (44,000) and the same duration of each ruler’s life, could they point to a formalised historical practise in South India prior to Mackenzie? Or, could they at least have sourced their chronologies from a formal record that we no longer know of?⁹⁹ Here is an excerpt of the chronology from the Kali Yuga onwards from both Text Groups, wherein the dating is an exact match, even though the chronology itself deviates in one instance:¹⁰⁰

| Text Group B | Text Group D |
|---|---|
| Malaiyattuvaca Pāṇṭiyaṅ [2] - 6,700 years | Malaiyattuvaca Pāṇṭiyaṅ [2] - 6,700 years |
| Cauntara Pāṇṭiyaṅ [3] - 60,000 | Taṭātakai/Mīṇāṭci Legend [3] - No Date |
| Ukkīrakumāra Pāṇṭiyaṅ [4] - 4,400 | |
| Vīrapāṇṭiyaṅ [5] - 8,400 | Vīrapāṇṭiyaṅ [4] - 8,400 |
| Apiṣēka Pāṇṭiyaṅ [6] - 4,800 | Apiṣēka Pāṇṭiyaṅ [5] - 4,800 |
| Vikkīrama Pāṇṭiyaṅ [7] - 4,600 | Vikkīrama Pāṇṭiyaṅ [6] - 4,600 |
| Rāca Cēkara Pāṇṭiyaṅ [8] - 9,700 | Rāca Cēkara Pāṇṭiyaṅ [7] - 9,700 |

⁹⁹ Over a century later, Sastri (1927:21) points to there indeed being some temple chronicles like the *Maduraiittala Varalāru*, and the *Śrirangam Kōyil Oḷugu* that could possess some historically viable information. Small hints like these could lead us to temple records that are usually inaccessible to the public, but may have more relatable accounts of ruling dynasties. Mackenzie himself, in his explorations to find new manuscripts, was met with the difficulty of originals being concealed, while more vague, fantastical stories were granted to him. I speak of this also in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁰ These are excerpts from R. 11162 (Text Group B) and D. 3184 (Text Group D) respectively. Text Group D reports a longer, more ancient chronology, as a result of which king number 81 corresponds to the very first Kali Yugam king in Text Group B.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Kulōttuṅka Pāṇṭiyaṅ [9] - 9,300 | Kulōttuṅka Pāṇṭiyaṅ [8] - 9,300 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|

Table 5: Comparative list of kings and their year of reign in Text Groups B and D

Or, are we looking at a mere coincidence? After all, those who worked on the Collection were not many in number. Maybe some writers were familiar with their colleagues and were in the habit of exchanging notes. However, what strikes me as strange is that the only factor in common between the two accounts is the numbers. The chronologies do not match, and have only some identical portions. The mismatched portions suggest that the varied accounts were not aware of each other, but were organically written approximations of a common source. That common source is unavailable to us today, and proof of its existence is meagre.¹⁰¹ What is more, analysing the Mackenzie manuscripts based on comparison is anyway a rather imprecise endeavour — we know too little of the circumstances behind their creation to know what aspects to compare and what to take as unique. For now, I leave this to be an open question.

1.16 Common Points — *Mahābhārata*¹⁰²

Authenticating Pāṇṭiya rulership, as I have argued above, is an important component of writing their history. In all Text Groups, there is an eager mention of the Pāṇṭavas with relation to the Pāṇṭiya kings, but none as poignant as those of Text Groups C and D. In Text Group C, Alli Aracāṇi, the Pāṇṭiya princess, marries Arjuna to produce an heir who conquers Ilaṅkai. In Text Group D, Malaiyattuvacaṅ produces the daughter Cittirāṅkatai, who takes Arjuna as her husband. Their son Peppuruvaṅ is the heir to the Pāṇṭiya throne after his grandfather.

The two main questions that arise from the incorporation of the Pāṇṭavas is, why the Pāṇṭavas, and why a marital alliance? Applying Ocham’s Razor here would tell us that these authors simply wished to connect the most glorious of conquerors to the Pāṇṭiyas. Indeed, this is a viable explanation. But the exact details of the marriage appear to be a result of one common account that became quite popular during this time. The Pāṇṭiyas did what their rivals, the Cōḷas, did¹⁰³ — they infiltrated the greater, Northern rulers and combined their dynasties to produce a stronger, more

¹⁰¹ The ‘disappearance’ of older manuscripts in the GOML is sadly a common occurrence. Through oral correspondance with Eva Wilden, it has come to my attention that the palm-leaf manuscript D. 458 with the prose text *Caṅkattār Carittiram* (‘The Biography of the Caṅkam Members’) is missing, even though a published version is available of it, from the GOML. Thus, I am not discounting the possibility that the Mackenzie sources were also informal (i.e., uncatalogued) additions to the Collection, but vanished over time. For a brief discussion on this unfortunate event, see Wilden 2015:95 (of the volume).

¹⁰² It is worth noting here that the connection made between the Pāṇṭiyas and the Mahābhārata is also seen in the first millenium Pāṇṭiya copper plate in Cinnamannūr, [finish this]

¹⁰³ For the most part, the Pāṇṭiyas and Cōḷas were bitter enemies. While Sastri for instance notes the Pāṇṭiyas’ political enemies to be others such as the Chalukyas (see Sastri, 1955, p. 41), the literary versions (including the TVP) generally see the Cōḷas as the greatest threats to the Pāṇṭiyas. Wilden 2014 (p. 247) ‘One would be tempted to surmise, but this is mere speculation, that [the TVP of Nampi] was meant to be a sort of Pāṇṭiyaṅ literary counterattack against the Cōḷas and their *Periyapurāṇam*.’ I am confident that this is more than speculation, as I hope to show in Chapter 3.

diverse successor, with claims wider than just the southern peninsular region. That source is undoubtedly the *Villipāratam* — a translation of the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* by Vyāsa, composed by a Vaiṣṇava scholar from Śrīvilliputtūr known as Villiputtūrālvār.

Here is an excerpt from this text (1:24):

[*cōlaiyil tōliyarutaṅ viḷaiyāṭa vanta*
pāṅṭiyaṅ makaḷ cittirāṅkataiyaik kaṅṭu,
*vicayaṅ kātal koḷḷutal]*¹⁰⁴

vētiyarōṭu a-kāvil ilaiapp- āri irunta aḷavil
miṅ kuḷāmpōl
tātiyarum cēṭiyarum taṅ cūla, cilai mataṅṅaṅ taṅi cēvikka,
cōti ari cilampu ararṛra, tuṅai neṭum kaṅ cevi aḷappa,
toṭi-tōḷ vīci,
āti aravintai eṅa nirupaṅ makaḷ viḷaiyāṭarṅku āṅku vantāḷ.

[The victor obtaining the love of the Pāṅṭiyaṅ's daughter Cittirāṅkatai, having seen her when she came to play with her female friends in the grove.]

To the extent that the exhaustion had abated (literally, cooled off) in that forest with sages,
 Like a bolt of lightning,
 As attendants and servants circled her, as the God of love with the bow served silently (literally, on his own),
 As the anklets with luminous metal bits tinkle, as the companion's long eyes extend to the ears,
 She, the daughter of the king, called Āti Araviṅtai (= Alli Aracāni),
 Her shoulders full of bangles, came over there to play.

The incorporation of the *Villipāratam* tells us something of the source-material of these histories. The TVP, understood to be the most comprehensive literary account of the Pāṅṭiyas, was also presumed (by Taylor and Wilson, for one) to be the only source for these Mackenzie histories. It seems, however, that the source-material was drawn from this other Tamil Purāṇa in circulation.

1.17 The Mackenzie Collection — The Site For Early Historical Experiments

The world of history, as I hope to have shown through my analysis above, was still restricted to a handful of sources. The style of prose, which represents an early

¹⁰⁴ This phrase is an addition made by the editor to provide context for the reader. As far as I am aware, it is not part of the original text.

form of historiographical writing in Tamil, is still in its early stages of development. The primary audience was Mackenzie and his team, and they attempted to extract historically sound information from these elaborate texts. The contribution of these early historians is, however, marred by the absolutism with which their texts were judged — were they historical or not? I dedicate the following Chapter of this work to analysing those judgements, and attempt to track the development of South Indian historiography from a broader perspective. For one, to assume that the Mackenzie Collection was the *only* early Tamil source for historical works is not accurate. A sensibility towards history and historical record-keeping always existed in Tamil cultures, as it did in all cultures. It was not, however, the definition of history that suited a colonial idea of the subject. In fact, the idea of history itself as ‘factual’, an idea that we may take for granted today, is not applicable to these works. We must see the Mackenzie Collection as an experiment of adaptability first, and then of historical production. Existing literary practises such as prose-writing in Tamil, combined with tools such as chronologies, dates and biographical data, saw themselves as historically viable until the British said that they were not. The Mackenzie Collection was therefore the first time in which Tamil historical writing needed to present itself in a more Europeanised fashion. Prose, the language of science, is standardised to a large extent — when I present my analysis of early prose works, inconsistent grammatical application, orthography, and other anomalies that were considered normal and acceptable at the time, will make it clear that the *carittiram* and the *varalāru* were a giant leap for Tamil prose in terms of standardisation. Similarly, the organisation of a work into an introductory passage in which a historical background is painted, a main body in which individual biographies are relayed and a chronology in which those biographies are contextualised in time, is seen for the first time in these Mackenzie manuscripts, but the information itself existed earlier, just in a different format. One could rightly argue that that earlier format was somewhat unintuitive, but I advise caution in this regard — from our current ideas of history and historiography, one that has been internalised in the world of Tamil for at least two centuries, it is difficult to adapt oneself to a format that is anything else.

Chapter 2 — Working On The Mackenzie Collection

2.0 The Aftermath

After Mackenzie’s death in 1815, there was a great deal of nonchalance towards the Mackenzie Collection, driven by several immediate and non-immediate factors. Following Wilson’s attempt at cataloguing the Collection in 1828, one would have expected scholars to come forward and consult these manuscripts in their historical research. Yet, this did not happen. This Chapter of my dissertation is dedicated to investigating the reasons behind the receding popularity of the Mackenzie Collection, and subsequently, the few, largely ineffective, attempts in (re-)creating histories of South India by consulting these manuscripts. Through this investigation, I hope to

clarify many issues regarding provenance, authorship, and documentation of the Mackenzie histories.

In the Chapter 1, I have discussed the content of each Text Group and hope to have shown the four pillars with which a newly emerging idea of Tamil history was built: 1) the authentication of a history by connecting it to the Purāṇas, 2) the closeness between royal and divine entities, 3) the frequent exaggeration of duration of rule and antiquity of the royal family, and 4) the assimilation of these descriptions in the form of a conclusion, in which Pāṇṭiya decline is (accurately) attributed to political tension between Islamic invaders and a wrongly executed alliance with the Nāyaka rulers. Clearly, these represent early historical experiments. Fact was mixed with fiction, and the distinction between the two was a matter of opinion. On one hand, the British saw in these attempts something regressive, for the exaggerated dates and Purāṇic origins stood out to them. On the other hand, the unnamed Tamil scholars who were probably trained in history from a literary, and/or biographical perspective, were only doing what they knew — to present fact within fiction, so that both may survive. One may be tempted to presume that the result of these different opinions was a misunderstanding and that the Mackenzie manuscripts were thus deemed unhelpful. Yet, I maintain that British scholars never really read these manuscripts as a result of which their harsh comments on them are unreasonable. This draws us away from discussing the content of the manuscripts, and towards analysing the context in which they were created.

For that purpose, it is imperative that a broader set of circumstances is discussed, of which the most significant is colonialism and the power-dynamic its agents enforced. With this in mind, the debate on what is ‘fact’ as opposed to ‘fiction’ was determined not by the creators of the manuscripts, but by their audience. This also resulted in a warped idea of historiography. I maintain throughout this work that a historiographical format was adopted by Tamil writers,¹⁰⁵ but the content of the manuscripts themselves was not necessarily historical. Introductions, distinct chapters, titles and sub-titles, pagination, and paragraph-breaks can be found. All of these features are a far cry away from the erstwhile formatting conventions found in palm-leaf manuscripts. Ultimately, the reception of the Mackenzie Collection by Orientalists was determined not by the content of the manuscripts, but by the power-dynamic between colonial scholars and their Tamil collaborators. This should become clear when I show how the manuscripts themselves were never thoroughly read. Thus, claims of historical error on the Tamil collaborators’ part were never resolved/corrected in the histories that colonial scholars subsequently produced. The colonial attempts were therefore just as factual (or just as fictional!) as those of their predecessors, but with one key difference: colonial scholars indulged in criticising the

¹⁰⁵ Although I referred previously to these writers as historians, that could lead to some confusion in the present argument, where I hope to shed light on the varied perceptions of ‘history’ as a subject, and thus, ‘historians’ as creators. The colonial audiences simply did not consider their Tamil collaborators to be ‘historians’ but called them ‘native scholars’, ‘native gentlemen’, and in more generic terms, ‘writers’. The word ‘history’ does not emerge in reference to them. Although I argue that this is unfair, it would not be productive to use terms that I believe are more unprejudiced, for this Chapter focuses on that very prejudice and the impact it had on this literary environment.

Tamil works and used this criticism in their historical arguments to show that they had produced something better (i.e., more historically accurate).

While the Mackenzie Collection was being used as the foundation for a colonially constructed history of South India, it also represented the first organised historical project by Indian scholars. The two parties, and by extension, their works, co-existed in an environment of mutual suspicion and found it impossible to collaborate. On one side was Horace Hayman Wilson and William Taylor, the ‘official’ custodians and cataloguers of the Mackenzie Collection, as well as Mackenzie’s British contemporaries who may have been its earliest European users. On the other was a host of Indian assistants to Mackenzie, consisting mainly of the five Kavali brothers — Boriah, Lakshmiah, Ramaswami, Narasimhalu and Sitayya.¹⁰⁶ The first three brothers became the true successors of Mackenzie’s work and methods, despite the resistance they faced from the colonial government. Boriah was Mackenzie’s emissary from the very beginning of his surveys, Lakshmiah his first (and only) historian and epigrapher, and Ramaswami a writer and biographer. From a distance, one sees the transference of Mackenzie’s vision into those who worked most closely with him, thus ensuring that his legacy (and the subject of South Indian history) lived on. Yet, I hope now to analyse the circumstances under which these many scholars worked with a more critical eye, so as to understand why that vision did not live on after all.

2.1 Knowledge and Power

Nicholas Dirks aptly writes: ‘The more the British believed they could know India — with that peculiar colonial intransitivity that made it possible for them to think the more they knew the less the native could know them in turn — the more, of course, they doubted their knowledge.’ If the acquisition of knowledge meant gaining power for colonial rule, the Mackenzie Collection was evidently not seen as a storehouse of knowledge or at least, of *useful* knowledge. This perception, as I understand, stemmed from a unique set of circumstances that the Collection embodied. Mackenzie himself was an unconventional addition to colonial scholarship. He was not an Orientalist, nor had he learnt any Indian language. Yet, his illustrious military career, paired with a penchant for archiving, meant that he was able to quickly collect material from all corners of the sub-continent. However, it also meant that the handling, interpretation, and publication of that material was to be carried out by someone else. Simultaneously, the alleged ‘usefulness’ or ‘uselessness’ of the material in the Collection was never up for debate — among colonial intellectuals, the characterisation of these histories as too fantastical was prevalent, and was thus taken as the only, and therefore absolute, impression. The cause for this dismissal appears to lie in the quest for knowledge among the British, which was primarily to fulfil their administrative goals: understanding the region of India was the key to

¹⁰⁶ Mantena (2012:95). The last two brothers were relatively less involved with the Mackenzie project than the first three. Lakshmiah was, arguably, the most productive contributor and assistant to Mackenzie, surpassed by Boriah, whose career was cut short due to his early demise at the age of 26.

ensuring that it remained under their control.¹⁰⁷ From this perspective, the Mackenzie Collection appears to hold little value. It speaks primarily of minor rulers and feudal chiefs, known otherwise as Poligars,¹⁰⁸ and tells their stories in a quasi-historical manner. No information on their territory, administration or economy is provided. The occasional hard fact appears, but usually only with regards to nomenclature and/or paternity. Simply put, they were the conventional way in which eminent families maintained records of their ancestors, and those families were too minor to have an impact on a large imperialist political formation such as that of British India.

The perception of the Mackenzie Collection was complicated further by a fundamental misunderstanding of what colonial scholars called ‘Indian history’. What they should have taken into account was that they ought to have tried to understand a *pre-colonial* history of India. However, their own role in the matter prevented them from understanding history from a non-colonial perspective and only encouraged their support towards colonial causes. This resulted in a disengaged, even disdainful approach, in which the colonial side largely did not do its part. The greatest archiver of South Indian manuscripts, Mackenzie, was a man who did not know any South Indian language. The first cataloguer of the Collection, Wilson, knew only Sanskrit. William Taylor’s work on the Mackenzie manuscripts, although wrought with error, was accepted only on account of the privileged position and resulting reputation he and his Orientalist predecessors enjoyed. This narrative speaks only to an awareness of individual challenges on the British scholars’ part and not to the inability to recognise histories written about, and according to, the insights of Tamil scholars that functioned outside of (or despite) colonial thinking.¹⁰⁹ The result was that the archive was heavily criticised, but not its colonial compilers.

In this light, if we consider these historical writings to have been misunderstood by the British, an interesting line of thought emerges — what if the writers comprehended Mackenzie’s instructions perfectly, but chose regardless to write as they saw fit? Likely on account of Mackenzie’s own lack of proficiency in Indian languages, the writing process of his South Indian collaborators was largely independent of his input. Those documents that were collected during the surveys were also written without a colonial audience. Thus, having been able to maintain autonomy over the presentation of their histories, these South Indian writers could

¹⁰⁷ See Wilson (1828:499). This section deals with the translations of some Mackenzie manuscripts and reports collected by Mackenzie’s emissaries during their travels. Apart from a few exceptions, the most translated genre of works relates to the land ownership, represented here in the form of maps, memoirs of Poligars and accounts of forts.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Poligar’ is the anglicised ‘*pāḷaiyakkārar*’ literally, ‘those of the area’, implying smaller rulers.

¹⁰⁹ By this, I mean the idea of Tamil scholars’ lack of patronage from British scholarship, which changed in South India only with Mackenzie’s efforts. It is inaccurate to state that Tamil scholars of the time were so removed from colonial environments that they did not affect them. I speak of this a little more in the following passage. However, here, I speak only of the logistical circumstances under which Tamil scholarship continued under colonialism — their literary productions were disengaged from any British audiences, and they continued to maintain an exclusive (= traditional) intellectual circle. The scholars themselves were therefore likely influenced by colonial environments, but the nature of their scholarship was not.

even have intended for Orientalists to be misled. Their (so-called) fantastical accounts may have been a subterfuge that was meant to protect their own knowledge, in anticipation of its misuse. Perhaps, they even predicted the dismissal of their work that was to come, knowing that the writings they produced were at odds with the British quest for establishing intellectual superiority over India. After all, the idea of perceiving Indian histories as erroneous, and therefore inferior, was well-suited to the colonial agenda. The pre-conceived criticism by the British could very well have been a small advantage to these Tamil writers. Given the ongoing material changes that the colonial administration was making,¹¹⁰ these Tamil scholars would have understood the political implications of their writing. Furthermore, Mackenzie's previous military role, and subsequent stationing as Surveyor of Madras Presidency, left no ambiguities regarding the utilisation of the knowledge he aimed to acquire. I suggest that the Tamil writers of the Mackenzie documents were aware of the power they wielded, and kept it in mind while making their contributions to the Collection.¹¹¹

It appears that Mackenzie himself was conscious of this. His suspicion is noted by Dirks in the following passage:

‘...[Mackenzie] assumed that non- or quasi-historical genres, such as prophecies and popular stories, were less historical than they might otherwise have been in order to disguise their political and therefore dangerous nature.’¹¹²

Mackenzie remained suspicious of histories that were provided to him, and wrote of, ‘Historical information with more apparent freedom than could be addressed to Oriental Sovereigns...’ (ibid.). He also wrote, ‘If during the Survey you can get any notices of the History of the Country in Canara [=Karnatak], it would be preferable to a made up Persian account as being more original.’ (Ibid.).

Mackenzie's assumptions were not misplaced for two reasons: firstly, there was some level of apprehension on the part of Indian scholars in sharing their

¹¹⁰ Between 1799 and 1815, during which Mackenzie was working on his archive, a number of socio-political, economic and educational reforms were being conducted in British India. Most of them were pervasive throughout class and caste barriers and must have been known to the intellectual class of people that worked for Mackenzie. Warren Hastings (1732-1818), the first Governor of the Presidency of Fort William (Bengal) and the Governor-General of India from 1773, ensured that several administrative changes were made. Arguably, this is the first time that the sub-continent was considered a singular, political entity. Thus, many changes that were made in the Madras Presidency came from a remote geo-political location, but were felt throughout the South.

¹¹¹ I make this suggestion on the basis of manuscript evidence I found in the British Library. Their collection also contains the written correspondences between Mackenzie and his Indian emissaries, as well as official papers that document the handling of the Collection after Mackenzie's death. The three specific portions of evidence that relate to the suggestion made here are: the absence of certain manuscripts that were claimed to be translated/consulted in the Mackenzie index of Horace Hayman Wilson (the cataloguer); the letters by two emissaries (Srinivasaiah and Lakshmiah) that list out the exact origin and fate of the manuscripts they acquired during their travels; and not translating some historically viable manuscripts but translating only their more legendary/fantastical counterparts. This is a very important portion of my work and is discussed in Chapter 4.2 in detail.

¹¹² Dirks 2011:88.

knowledge with the British. Secondly, there was an equal level of apprehension on the part of the British in the authenticity of the knowledge that was indeed shared with them. Such circumstances were not uncommon during Mackenzie's career. James Morton (1783-1865) quotes John Leyden (1775-1811) in his biography of him, where he notes the tensions between scholars at the College of Fort St. George. Leyden, having been duped several times by Brahmin scholars who claimed to teach him Sanskrit, but instead cheated him, expressed this in one of his journals (Morton:1810:lxv):

‘...It would be amusing to recount the tricks, and unfair practises [*sic*] that have been attempted to be played off on me. I have had a Bramin engaged to teach me Sanscrit, who scarcely knew a syllable of the language. I have had another attempt to palm Hindostani on me for Mahratta. I have had a Bramin likewise attempt to impose a few Slogas, which are in the mouths of everyone, on me, for the translation of an ancient inscription in the Canara character.’

He goes on to say (Morton 1810:lxvi):

‘The prejudices of the Bramins have, however, relaxed very little in our [= Madras] presidency, and excepting Mr. Ellis, there is scarce a person that has been able to break ground in this field of literature. Major Wilks, acting Resident at Mysore, informed me, that some years ago, incited by the example of Wilkins and Sir William Jones, he attempted to study Sanscrit at Madras, and exerted a great deal of influence very unsuccessfully. The Dubashes, then all-powerful at Madras, threatened loss of cast and absolute destruction to any Bramin who should dare to unveil the mysteries of their sacred language to a *Pariar Frengi*. This reproach of *Pariar* is what we have tamely and strangely submitted to for a long time, when we might with equal facility have assumed the respectable character of *Chatriya*, or *Rajaputra*.’¹¹³

The ‘prejudices of the Bramins’, as stated by Leyden, extended in both directions — to those above and below them in the social order. They were suspicious of the British and historically ungenerous with sharing their knowledge with members of lower castes. Their exclusivity, even insularity, allowed their success as literary custodians and was only threatened when a power that was above them (the British) emerged and demanded knowledge. Within this social hierarchy was also a linguistic one — Sanskrit, considered superior and divine, was exclusively studied

¹¹³ *Pariar* (derogatory), ‘outsider’, is a word (now considered a casteist slur) that is directed towards those who are not included in the four-tiered caste-system. It simultaneously denotes the player of the funeral drum, a task that is considered uncivilised in South Indian society. The drum is called ‘*parai*’. This usage is not to be confused with ‘*Paraiyar*’ of Caṅkam literature, who played the drum on royal occasions and enjoyed a privileged position in society. *Frangi* is the corrupted, Hindi (then called Hindustani) and Urdu word *phirangi* (singular) (‘foreigner’) which refers to Europeans. In his realisation of being called *Pariar*, it is somewhat amusing to note that Leyden wished to identify within the caste-hierarchy, but in a higher position, such as that of a *Chatriya* (>*kṣatriya* ‘ruling/warrior caste’) or *Rajaputra* (>*rājaputra* ‘royal descendant’/royal clan-name that is now simply ‘Rajput’). Cf. Mantena 2012 p. 87.

and taught by Brahmins, to Brahmins. Thus, those that studied Tamil or other non-Sanskritic languages,¹¹⁴ were considered less erudite.

Kahane (1981:358) speaks of the social location of the Brahmins under colonialism, stating that:

‘British infiltration into India provided the Brahmins with an opportunity to improve their position. The British pattern of education, with its emphasis on the humanities and non-manual vocational studies, was generally accepted by the Brahmins as an avenue by which they could sustain their traditional status [as the highest caste] while transforming themselves into a modern elite.’¹¹⁵

Kahane continues to explain (ibid.) how the compatibility between the British sense of ‘tradition’ and the Hindu ideal of the Brahmins being total holders of knowledge ensured the latter’s success in modern India.

In this light, it is unsurprising that the custodians of traditional knowledge deemed it necessary to protect their literature from the British. With respect to Mackenzie’s surveys, Mantena (2012:69-70) also points us to the difficulties of Boriah’s assistant Nitala Nainah when he attempted to procure manuscripts on Mackenzie’s behalf. On one occasion, Nitala Nainah was obstructed by two Brahmins who refused to give him any information on some valuable manuscripts. Yet, he also wrote of his success at procuring several *kaipītus* at Erode and Dhauraupoorum (?) (ibid.), where he also copied several stone inscriptions.

Mackenzie’s social location was unique — he managed to penetrate an exclusive circle of knowledge and collected several histories, despite being a direct representative of the British Raj.¹¹⁶ As a high-ranking, popular officer of the British army, he was welcomed among senior members of the British government. Simultaneously, he was accepted by many Brahmins, who then worked for his cause. This could be because Mackenzie himself was critical of British colonial rule. Having been born in Stornoway in Scotland during a time of great resentment towards the English,¹¹⁷ it is possible that his trip to India was planned with pure (that is, non-colonial) intentions and that his induction into the British Army was

¹¹⁴ I prefer here to avoid the term ‘vernacular’, as has been used to describe Tamil with relation to Sanskrit. It has been brought to my attention that ‘vernacular’ assumes the superiority of Sanskrit as *the* language, while others are simply peripheral. Moreover, at this stage of Western scholarship in India, a clear understanding that Tamil was an ancient language in its own right with no origins from Sanskrit had not yet materialised. Thus, I resort to speaking of Tamil as a ‘non-Sanskritic’ language in this respect.

¹¹⁵ There are also other works that speak of Brahminism and Brahmins’ affinity to adjust to colonial environments. See, for instance, O’Hanlon 2017, Dirks 2001 and Washbrook 2008. To my knowledge, no one has yet spoken of specific hierarchies within the Brahmin community depending on a presence/lack of an education in Sanskrit.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Dirks (2001:104): ‘As much as Mackenzie was clearly an instrument of British imperialism in India, as T. V. Mahalingam [1972, introduction] so succinctly put it, his life and his collection stand at a bit of an angle to many aspects of early colonial rule.’

¹¹⁷ See Wolffhardt (2018:27) ‘An Island in Transformation.’ Unsurprisingly, Mackenzie’s Scottish hometown was not in favour of the English.

only a stepping stone to a future of archiving. Thus, he stood in between two opposing forces — the colonial and the colonised.

2.2 Reviewing Colonial Literature on the Pāṇṭiyas

A preliminary reading of the Pāṇṭiya material confirms that the provision of vague, exaggerated history was a purposeful act. In order to widen my view on Pāṇṭiya history, I looked outside of the Mackenzie Collection to find TVP prose manuscripts in the BNF and the IFP.¹¹⁸ On comparing their versions of the Pāṇṭiya lineage to those 13 manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection, I observed that the principle modes of narration remained the same — the names of kings and places, the linguistic characteristics of early Tamil prose, the general framework of the story, and the importance of establishing the Pāṇṭiya capital as an especially powerful holy place were consistent in all versions. What changed was only the presentation of the information — spellings were more uniform, European formatting techniques (such as the addition of paragraph breaks) were followed, and the order of events was changed to approximate a chronology, presumably in the hope of satiating the colonial appetite for a ‘usable’ history.

If we momentarily set aside the question of the authenticity of these histories, and focus only on their making, we realise that the application of colonial historiographical notions to Tamil (and other South Indian) writing was but a smokescreen to conceal the real intention behind their content. To therefore explain away alleged error on the part of Tamil scholars is insufficient — an understanding of their concern about the people to whom their hereditary knowledge was being passed on, people who, in all other spheres, were working towards the erasure of South Indian cultures, must be considered when speaking of their intentions. In simpler terms, I give them the benefit of the doubt in my work and do not assume that the incompatibility of their histories with European expectations is due to their inability to understand Mackenzie’s requests. The ‘political, and therefore dangerous nature’ (ibid.) of historical writing was anticipated and accordingly protected by early Tamil historians.

In my remarks above, I do not wish to imply that the South Indian contributors to the Mackenzie Collection were complicit in an underground intellectual movement against the British. Rather, I wish to make two points: one, that resentment towards colonial ideals must have extended towards Mackenzie, despite his Indian interpreters’ acceptance of him¹¹⁹ and regardless of the work that he did; and two, that the foundational techniques of colonial historiography were carried out perfectly by the Tamil writers, showing that they did not misinterpret Mackenzie’s instructions.

¹¹⁸ These TVP prose manuscripts will be the subject of the next Chapter of this dissertation. For now, they may be described as prose re-tellings of earlier, more complex versions of the TVP.

¹¹⁹ For instance, Wolffhardt (2018:125) writes about Mackenzie’s willingness to extend help to the Kavali brothers. He also notes (ibid.:14), that ‘...a certain caution is to be called for when describing Mackenzie’s project as ‘colonial’ if this attribute is meant to signify content rather than context’. The colonial context is thus obvious, but the content of the manuscripts represents a far less asymmetrical power-dynamic.

I suggest that these circumstances set the stage for a ‘new age’ in historical thinking in the 20th century, which witnessed the production of histories written at last with a prioritisation of fact — that is, fact as a mode of writing and not as a mode of narration. With increasing hatred towards the British came a change in readership of historical works. The Mackenzie Collection, for one, having already been established as a futile endeavour, forced colonial intellectuals to surrender the dream of an European historical reconstruction of India, and no other such project was ever undertaken. Most scholars focused instead on linguistic and literary topics, leaving a decades-long void in the production of historical information, and specifically of political histories.¹²⁰ The ‘failure’ of the Mackenzie reconstructions functioned thus as a cautionary tale for future colonial efforts in the field of Indian history. Although this proved to be disastrous for the reputation of the Collection, and, by extension, its contributors, it bore fruit elsewhere — the void could be filled by Tamil scholars in a newly emerging, independent India.

The three historical genres in the Mackenzie Collection were *carittiram*, *varalāru*, and *vamcāvali*. As I have shown earlier, the difference between the three is difficult to determine. Yet, they are distinct from the histories of minor kings (Tam. ‘*kurunilamaṇṇar*’) which went under the name ‘*kaipītu*’ (from Urdu *kaifiyat*). The former three categories focused on much larger, more significant dynasties (such as the Pāṇṭiyas), while the latter was a much more small-scale political history. The Pāṇṭiya manuscripts, as we saw, were most frequently called ‘*carittiram*’ or ‘*varalāru*’ or some combination of both, and ‘*vamcāvali*’ in one case. They were reviewed and worked on first by Horace Hayman Wilson and then by William Taylor, both of whom ignored the *kaipītu*, probably because they spoke only of minor rulers. Their published works on the Pāṇṭiyas are summarised in the table below:¹²¹

| Full Title | Author | Year and Details of Publication |
|---|----------------------|--|
| <i>Oriental Historical Manuscripts in the Tamil Language</i> (2 Vols.) | William Taylor | 1835, Madras. Focuses solely on the Pāṇṭiya kingdom, which Taylor calls ‘the ancient kingdom of Madura’. |
| “Historical Sketch of the Kingdom of Pāṇḍya, Southern Peninsula of India” | Horace Hayman Wilson | 1836, published in <i>The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland</i> |

¹²⁰ Essentially, the last person to work actively on the Tamil portion of the Mackenzie Collection was William Taylor, who last published on it in 1862 (i.e., his *Catalogue Raisonné*). Following this, written histories in the Mackenzie Collection were hardly touched. The next significant historical effort in South India in English came from K. A. Nilakantha Sastri (1892-1975), who published first in 1929, several decades after Taylor. Mahalingam 1972 (p. xvii) states that the other famous historical work, ‘A History of India’ by Elphinstone (1841), was written in consultation with the Mackenzie Collection, but I have not located any reference to Mackenzie in Elphinstone’s book. In 1822, Aaron Arrowsmith published the *Atlas of India* based on the geographical material collected during Mackenzie’s surveys. Wilson (1828:8) provides a more comprehensive list of works that used the Mackenzie Collection. Yet, given the size of the Collection, the list is rather short.

¹²¹ For editorial details, see bibliography.

| | | |
|---|----------------------|--|
| “Supplementary Note to the Historical Sketch of the Kingdom of Pandya” | Horace Hayman Wilson | 1837, published in <i>The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland</i> |
| Mackenzie’s Letter to Sir Alex Johnson - Introduction to Wilson’s Descriptive Catalogue. | Colin Mackenzie | Published as part of the Introduction to Wilson’s <i>Descriptive Catalogue</i> in 1828. Written in 1817. |
| Series of Reports in <i>Madras Journal of Literature and Science</i> : 1. “First Report of Progress made in the Examination of the Mackenzie MSS., with an Abstract Account of the Works examined.”, Vol. 7 (1838:1) 2. “Second Report of the Progress made in the Examination of the Mackenzie MSS., with an Abstract Account of the Works examined.” Vol. 7 (1838:277) 3. “On the Site of Kurkhi.” Vol. 7 (1838:379) 4. “Third Report of Progress made in the Examination of the Mackenzie MSS., with an Abstract Account of the Works examined.” Vol. 8 (1838:1). 5. “Fourth Report of Progress made in the Examination of the Mackenzie MSS., with an Abstract Account of the Works examined.” (Published twice) Vol 8, 1838:215; Vol. 9, 1839:1. 6. “Fifth Report of Progress made in the Examination of the Mackenzie MSS., with an Abstract Account of the Works examined.” Vol. 10, 1839:1. 7. “Sixth Report on Mackenzie Manuscripts (Concluding Section).” In: <i>The Madras Journal of Literature and Science, Vol. 13</i> (1844-5:57). | William Taylor | 1838-45 (Vols. 7-13), in the <i>Madras Journal of Literature and Science</i> . |

Wilson’s work is probably the earliest colonial acknowledgement¹²² of the Pāṇṭiya dynasty.¹²³ Prior to his 1836 publication mentioned in the table above, Wilson’s 1828 catalogue¹²⁴ of the Mackenzie Collection contains a brief introduction to the Pāṇṭiya kingdom, based on a false identification of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts of the Collection that I pointed out in the previous Chapter. Let us first revisit some

¹²² Cf. Wilden 2020:92 (of volume): ‘This period saw the first attempts at Indian historiography in Western languages, such as Wilson’s ‘Historical Sketch of the Kingdom of Pandya from 1836.’

¹²³ I speak specifically of ‘colonial’ awareness, for there is much evidence to suggest that the Greco-Roman empires were aware of, and even in business with, the Pāṇṭiyas. For instance, Sastri 1955 (pp. 25-27) speaks of foreign accounts of South India, citing Megasthenes (350 BCE?), a Greek historian, who by Wilson’s account (ibid.) ‘gives a quaint account of the Pāṇḍyan kingdom’.

¹²⁴ I did not add Taylor and Wilson’s catalogue to the table, for they have already been discussed at length with relation to cataloguing issues in the GOML. Still, I refer to them in this Chapter, where necessary.

portions of it, if only to display the extent of the errors that occur. Then, I will engage with Taylor's many attempts at reconstructing Pāṇṭiya histories, focusing on his efforts to rectify the mistakes that Wilson had committed.

2.3 Horace Hayman Wilson and the Mackenzie Collection

'In the absence of any account prepared by the collector, the following catalogue may be received as an attempt to convey some accurate notion of the nature of the collection. And a short view of some of the principal conclusions that may be derived from its contents. It will be necessary however in the first place to explain the circumstances under which the catalogue has been prepared, that no censure may attach to the compiler for not performing more than he has endeavoured to accomplish, or for undertaking a task to which he acknowledges he brings inferior qualifications, the languages of the South of India never having been the objects of his studies.'¹²⁵

In this passage, Wilson speaks of the circumstances behind his latest endeavour. Here is another excerpt from his introduction where he elaborates... elaborates further in his introduction the way his project went on, despite his unfamiliarity with South Indian languages:

'The various languages of the Peninsula being unknown to me except as far as connected with Sanscrit, I had no other mode of checking the accuracy of the natives employed in cataloguing the manuscripts, than to direct the preparation by them of detailed indices of the works in each dialect. These indices were accordingly compiled and translated, and their results again compressed into the form in which they will be found in the following pages, the accuracy being verified by such collateral information as was derivable from some of the translated papers in the collection, or from printed works of an authentic character. Although therefore some of the details may be occasionally erroneous, I have every reason to hope that the account of those books which I could not personally verify by perusal, will be generally correct, and worthy of some confidence.'¹²⁶

On reading these statements, one may be compelled to think that Wilson was aware of his own shortcomings and that he did everything he could to ensure at least that the indices (which are the titles of documents derived from Mackenzie's own list of manuscripts — I speak of this in the end of this section) were in order. However, this is not the case. Firstly, there is an issue with translated titles, as seen in almost every catalogue of the Mackenzie Collection (with the exception of the GOML Descriptive Catalogue). Secondly, the classification of manuscripts into several categories seems to be rather unintuitive. Thirdly, many manuscripts' titles (with shelf marks) do not match their description.

¹²⁵ Wilson 1828:11.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*:12.

As had been pointed out in Chapter 1, the Tamil titles of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts are misleading, for they are so similar. It is therefore understandable that cataloguers have largely done away with them, either settling for shorter English titles that are rough translations of the original Tamil or shortened versions of the original Tamil titles. Yet, the alternate titles do not solve the problem of identification, but only create additional ones. In Wilson's catalogue, the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts are largely referred to as 'Pāṇḍya Rājakkal', whose titles are too vague to identify, and the description a mixture of Text Groups B and C. The only clear identification is manuscript '1' under the category 'manuscript translations, reports, etc.' (ibid.:499), titled 'The *Vamsaveli* or genealogical account of the dynasties of the *Chola*, the *Chera* and the *Pandya* kings.' Here, he certainly means Text Group C, but that does not call itself a '*vamcāvali*'.

This brings up an additional issue — the classification of similar-themed manuscripts across several categories. To my knowledge, the Pāṇṭiya material in the Mackenzie Collection contains the same historical narrative with the same style and presentation as I have shown already. It is therefore puzzling to note that Wilson describes one set of manuscripts under 'Tamul Book' (1828:208, '7. Pāṇḍya Rājakkal'), the other under 'Manuscript Translations, Reports, Etc. (ibid.:499, '1. The *Vamsaveli*...*Pandya* kings.')

and yet another under 'Local Tracts' (ibid.:428, '2. Genealogical account of *Pandya Pratāpa* Raja of *Pandya Desam*.')

These errors speak for the dysfunctionality of Wilson's indices, which, by his own admission, were the only means for 'checking the accuracy of the natives employed in cataloguing the manuscripts...' (ibid.:11) — accuracy was not checked, but hindered through confusing descriptions with the wrong titles, and by separating similarly-themed manuscripts into dissimilar, unclear categories.

This brings me to another point: Wilson is also inconsistent with his terminologies and translations. While this is understandable (we saw earlier how the original Tamil titles are not consistent either), it makes it still harder to identify manuscripts clearly. Presumably, he himself did not benefit from the terminologies he introduced, but it did not matter — I argue later that he did not even consult the Mackenzie manuscripts. In his translated titles, he switches between the nomenclatures 'Account', 'Genealogical Account', 'History', and others, much in the way the Tamil contributors to the Mackenzie Collection went between '*carittiram*', '*varalāru*' and '*vamcāvali*'. Perhaps the end result is that these categories which the modern reader may be tempted to look into are nothing more than casual subject-markers. In that case, one can be certain that the value of the title lies not in its explanation of the subject, but in its nomenclature that would have helped it be identified in catalogues. The fact that Wilson only takes the former into account shows that he did not really think about the navigation of his own catalogue. His usage of his own English terms such as 'Account', etc., are not direct translations from the Tamil '*carittiram*' etc. A '*carittiram*' is not always translated as 'Account', or, a '*vamcāvali*' not always 'Genealogical Account'. No one Tamil word corresponds to one translation, and Wilson uses the English words interchangeably. This does not benefit the title and content of the manuscript, and in fact makes his catalogue even harder to navigate. It only aggravates the existing

issue of the Tamil terms being non-technical and misleading. As a general note, his numbering system is also awry. Taylor (1862) introduced, and for good reason, his own system that greatly eases the usage of his catalogue. The indices that Wilson used were likely a system of his own, based on Mackenzie's own system that he had kept for his own reference, but the numbers (usually single-digit, with no further explanations) are not useful. For example, if one looks for, say, 'Manuscript 7', there is a manuscript of this number under each sub-heading of his catalogue (such as 'Local Tracts' or 'Translations'). As I have shown already, the division of titles is rather unintuitive. Thus, it is likely that the same manuscript could have been catalogued twice under two different numbers, or that Wilson separated manuscripts that belonged together into several categories — either way, we now have little way of knowing whether any manuscripts went missing.

Wilson's effort also extended outside of the domain of archiving. He even wrote a history of the Pāṇṭiyas on the basis of the Mackenzie manuscripts in 1836, called *Historical Sketch of the Kingdom of Pándya, Southern Peninsula of India*. In his introduction (1836:1), he states:

‘The following sketch of the history of the principality of Pándya, one of the earliest political divisions of southern India, was compiled several years ago, from documents contained in the manuscript collections of the late Colonel Mackenzie. It was prepared before the completion and publication of my catalogue of those collections, with the assistance of such further materials as a more thorough examination of its authorities might have supplied.’

The documents that Wilson bases his history on are translations of material in the Mackenzie Collection (or so he claims). Yet, not a single manuscript in his bibliography matches any of the Mackenzie manuscripts. The mismatch is both in formatting as well as in content. As we will see shortly, William Taylor provides a detailed criticism of the content of Wilson's work. I will therefore deal with issues regarding content when I speak of Taylor's response and his own work on the Pāṇṭiyas. Here, I am keen to resolve the matter of source-material and of formatting.

Firstly, Wilson presents his bibliography under the title 'List of Manuscript Translations referred to in the preceding Accounts with reference to the Pages, &c of the Appendix to the Description of the Mackenzie Collection' (ibid.:1836:241). Under this is a list of 28 manuscripts, of which only seven seem to pertain directly to the Pāṇṭiya lineage. Those manuscripts are (Ibid:1836:241-2):

- ‘1. Vamsāvali of the Chola, Chera, and Pándya Dynasties, extracted from a MS. in the possession of Kalinga Raya: and translated from the Tamil by R. Clarke, Esq. cxxviii. Vol. i. Art. 1.
2. Genealogy of the Pándya Rájas from the Madura Puranam, composed by Parunjothi. Translated by Srinivasia Brahman. Ibid.i.12.

3. Origin of Madura, with a List of the Kings (List No. 2¹²⁷), and the Limits of the Country. Translated from a Tamil MS. communicated by Mr. Hurdis, by Srinivasia. Ibid. i. 9.
4. List of the Kings of the Pándya from the Teruvaleyadal, or Madura Purána. Extracted and translated by Kavele Venkata Lakshmya. MS.
5. List of the Kings of Pándya, extracted from the Hálásya Mahatmya of the skanda Purana. MS.
7. Madura Puranam; or, Teruvaleyadal of Paranjoti Tamburan. Translated from the Tamil by a native interpreter. Tamil MSS. Or class 3, No. 28. Ibid. [cxxviii. i. 8]
8. [Madurai?] Puranam, or Ancient History of Madura. Tamil MSS, or class 3, No. 28. Ibid.
11. Pándya Rájá Kal; a History of the Kings of the Pándya Desa. Translated from the Tamil. MSS. Class 3, No. 27. cxciv.
13. Varaguna Cheritram; a History of Varaguna. MSS. Class 3, 26. cxciv.
19. Sketch of the History of Madura. Cxxxii. Vol. iv. 17.
28. Rájá Cheritra; or, History of the Princes of the South. Translated from the Tamil by Srinivasia.’

As seen above, most manuscripts above are accompanied with a series of numbers, probably denoting its location in the Collection. However, as Wilson made this list before he made his catalogue, it is difficult to trace exactly which manuscript he is talking about. What we can be certain of is that he has only used translations, and I attempt thus to match these manuscripts to the translations he lists in his catalogue. In the catalogue (Wilson 1828:499), 75 manuscript bundles, each containing a miscellaneous combination of texts, are mentioned. They are, as per the title of this section, translations of important texts in the Collection and reports from Mackenzie emissaries on their travels, where they sometimes noted down an oral history to add to the Collection. Of these 75 bundles, I have located a few Pāñṭiya-themed manuscripts that were translated. Yet, the list of translated manuscripts in the British Library catalogue do not match Wilson’s catalogue, nor can the original Tamil manuscripts be found in the GOML. I talk about the British Library manuscripts further on in this Chapter.

Where did Wilson get this information from, and where did the Tamil originals go?

In order to find answers, I looked into some of the names of Mackenzie’s emissaries and translators mentioned above. For example, ‘Srinivasia Brahmin (nos. 2. And 28)’ was the translator whose work Wilson claimed to use above. There is mention of him from Taylor’s (1862:III:56) catalogue entry to Text Group A —

‘...it appears that these portions began to come into his hands in December 1809, and were immediately handed over to one Streenevasiah [*sic*] to be translated;’

It is unlikely that the ‘Sreenivasia’ mentioned in Wilson’s work and ‘Streenevasiah’

¹²⁷ Wilson also provides three different chronologies (that are called ‘lists’ here) of the Pāñṭiyas. They are currently superfluous and will be dealt with when the content of his (and Taylor’s) history is discussed.

in Taylor's work, both claiming him to be the translator of Pāṇṭiya manuscripts, are different. Yet, both manuscripts mentioned in Wilson's list are not from the Pāṇṭiya histories in the Tamil part of the Collection at the GOML, but from the ubiquitous *Tiruvīlaiyātal Purāṇam* of Parañcōti Muṇivar, of which perhaps hundreds of versions existed even back then. There is a particular issue with naming Sreenivasiah here. According to Taylor (*ibid.*), he is in fact the translator of Wilson's no. 11 above. I have noted this during my investigation into at the portion of the Collection at the British Library. The original translation is lost, and all that remains is a copy by Lakshmiah (shelf mark: Mss Eur Mack Trans III.27). There is no way to confirm its original authorship, as the manuscript listing Sreenivasiah's translations has been missing since 1934.¹²⁸

The translations of the Mackenzie histories in the British Library have further confirmed the issues in Wilson's catalogue. The 28 manuscripts listed are part of a larger volume with the shelf mark 'Mss Eur Mack Trans III - Tamil', which contains a total of 90 translations from the original Tamil. Of them, Nos. 26, 27 and 28, correspond to No. 13, 11 and 8 respectively in Wilson's list above. Of them, only No. 11 in Wilson's list was translated and made it to his index. Yet, the index card is empty and only mentions the title of 'Pāndya Rajakkal'.¹²⁹ I managed to find the translation (also only a copy by Lakshmiah) there, and it is clearly that of the five-part D. 437 (Text Group A). The index of Wilson is titled 'Abstracts of the Mackenzie & Other Mss.' The entry for Pāndya Rajakkal (p. 75) is one of the few entries that does not contain an abstract and merely reads as follows:

Index of the Pandya Rajaghall Charitra Sangraha.
Names of the Pandyan Kings from Kulasakhara to Kunapandyan — 3
Ditto Somasundara Pandyan — 6
Ditto Visvanadha Naikar — 10

Based on other, more complete entries, the number on the right side is the number of folios/pages dedicated to corresponding topic. I cross-checked it with the three Pāṇṭiya translations mentioned in Wilson's list, which are also in the British Library. None of them match. I surmise that the manuscript was lost at the time of the making of this index (around 1821-2, probably right after Mackenzie's death), and an Apocryph was submitted in its place by Mackenzie's erstwhile emissaries, namely, Nos. 8 and 13 in Wilson's above list. The proof for this is in the fact that no

¹²⁸ This manuscript is listed in the online catalogue of the British Library under the shelf mark Mss Eur Mack Trans XII.71 'List of Books, translated by Srinivassiah (1810s)', and is marked as 'lacking'. I confirmed with the staff of the British Library that this means that the manuscript is lost. There is therefore no straightforward way of checking exactly which translations were made by whom. The next manuscript in this volume (Mss Eur Mack Trans XII.72: List of Books translated by Suba Rao (1810s)) is also missing. Most unfortunately, the original journal of Boriah (Mss Eur Mack Trans XII.74) has gone missing too. In the following section, I will speak of how it is rather unlikely that Sreenivasaih translated the Pāṇṭiya manuscript that Taylor speaks of, but was in fact responsible for the translation of others.

¹²⁹ This manuscript is found under the 'Wilson Papers' in the India Office Collection of the British Library, under the shelf mark Mss Eur. D. 431. It is considered a 'record', and not a manuscript, although it is handwritten. Thus, it is among the 'Wilson Papers' collection, and not the Mackenzie Collection/India Office Archives.

original version in Tamil exists in the GOML (but several other Tamil Pāṇṭiya histories do) and that even if they have gone missing since, they should have made it to Wilson's catalogue or at least the index upon which his catalogue was based.

Wilson's index is listed in the *Catalogue of European Manuscripts in the India Office Library* (1937:II:1169), under the heading 'The Wilson Mss'. The entry reads thus:

'(ii) Abstracts of MSS in the Mackenzie Collection, from which were prepared the notices in the catalogue, published in 1828. A few items belonging properly to the previous section,¹³⁰ have found their way into these volumes.'

Relating to this, the catalogue further states (ibid.:1170):

'For the proper understanding of the first two sections [of which the second is the Mackenzie Collection] named above, it is necessary to describe Wilson's methods, which are explained in *Works*,¹³¹ III, pp. 5-6, as regards the first section. Each MS. was first examined by an Indian pandit, who drew up a detailed abstract of the contents, styled an index, which was then translated for Wilson by one of a band of young Bengalis who had been educated at the Hindu College. Wilson corrected the index and marked the passages which he required to be translated. The translation was carried out by the same young men, following the pandits' explanations, and after the correction three fair copies of it and of the index were prepared. The work was not completed...and some of the Puranas not having been indexed or translated.'

It then describes the specific treatment of the Mackenzie Collection (ibid.:1171):

'This method was modified for dealing with the MSS. of the Mackenzie Collection, many of which were in characters of languages unknown to Wilson. He accordingly retained the services of the English-knowing Madrasi staff, whom Colonel Mackenzie had brought to Calcutta, and employed them in preparing abstracts on the same likes, but in the majority of cases of so short an extent as merely to indicate the general nature of the contents. Several fair copies were made of these, but as Wilson retained them instead of distributing them, they are all to be found in this collection. No translations are extant, but it is apparent that, deeming certain MSS. to be of considerable interest, he obtained more information about

¹³⁰ The previous section (ibid.) reads '(i) 541-594. Abstracts of the two great epics and of a number of Puranas and Upapuranas, and translations of selected passages.' Given Wilson's expertise as a Sanskritist, I would surmise that these are Sanskrit abstracts that he made on the basis of manuscripts outside of the Mackenzie Collection. The integration of some manuscripts from this section into the subsequent one is probably due to the presence of Tamil Purāṇas that retain the original Sanskrit title, such as Mahābhārata. It is difficult to tell, for Wilson did not make a clear transcripitory difference between Sanskrit and Tamil in his catalogue and secondary works.

¹³¹ In this catalogue, *Works* is the abbreviated title for *Works by the late Horace Hayman Wilson* in twelve volumes. I can confirm that this citation is incorrect, as per the 1862 edition. These pages are the first pages of the Preface by Reinhold Host (dated to October 18th, 1861) and speak only of Wilson's early life and career in India.

their contents than was available in the abstracts for preparing the notices in his catalogue. Some of the staff employed, especially the only one whose name appears in these MSS., C. T. Soobiah, a Bramin, were deficient in knowledge of English, and Wilson corrected certain abstracts almost to the extent of rewriting them. After the work of cataloguing was completed,... [the Mss] in Dravidian languages were sent to Madras, where they were apparently neglected for a long time and suffered some loss and damage. Ultimately a somewhat unsatisfactory catalogue of them, with numerous misprints, was prepared by the Rev. W. Taylor, and most of the MSS. analysed in this collection can be identified in it. The cataloguing of the MSS. in Dravidian languages in Madras on modern lines is unfortunately far from complete, but, though the volumes issued so far fail to give any information about the provenance of the MSS. described, it has been possible to identify some of the abstracts with the entries in them relating to Telugu and Tamil MSS. A list of the manuscripts sent to Madras was supplied to the East India Company, and is to be found in Bengal Public Consultations, 1828, Range xii, 37, 15th August, Nos. 94 and 95; it is arranged according to the numbers in Wilson's catalogue, giving the corresponding numbers of the MSS. in the Mackenzie Collection, but there are so many copying mistakes in the latter column that the list has been of little use in cataloguing the abstracts. The chief value of this section is for clearing up doubtful points in some of the notices in Wilson's catalogue, when the material from which they were prepared was faulty, and for tracing the fortunes of the MSS. in Madras, as well as for the correction of Taylor's catalogue.'

This large passage brings into context the story of the Mackenzie Collection just as Wilson took charge of it. We now know, for instance, that Wilson possessed the manuscripts ('...Wilson retained them instead of distributing them...' (ibid.)), which, although questionable at the time, is probably why they are still extant. The passage also claims that '...no translations are extant...', but this is unclear — the Mackenzie translations are, for the large part, intact and also in the British Library.¹³² Perhaps, Wilson commissioned his own translations of the Mackenzie histories, which have since been lost. What remains in the British Library is thus what Mackenzie himself asked to be translated.¹³³ Having said that, however, there

¹³² The entirety of the Mackenzie translations are to be found in the British Library under the shelf mark 'Mss Eur Mack Trans: Colin Mackenzie Papers: Translations (1821)'. Under them are twelve 'classes' of manuscripts, labelled largely according to the language from which they were translated. In my project, I have used Classes II and III, for they contain the translations from the Tamil historical manuscripts. Class XII is also relevant, as it contains the written correspondences between Mackenzie and his emissaries. I am not sure on what basis this comment was made. This edition (Volume II, Part II of the catalogue) is dated to 1937, while the Mackenzie translations were documented in the first volume of the same catalogue, published in 1916. See below for a possible explanation.

¹³³ This could explain why his index does not match the translations that are in the British Library — the commissioner of the index and the supervisor of the translations were two different people.

is little indication of Wilson having commissioned his own translations.¹³⁴ This brings us to another fact pointed out in the above passage (*ibid.*) ‘... Some of the staff employed, especially the only one whose name appears in these MSS., C. T. Soobiah, a Bramin, were deficient in knowledge of English, and Wilson corrected certain abstracts almost to the extent of rewriting them...’ Soobiah knew Tamil (and probably Telugu), but no English. Wilson knew English, but no Tamil or Telugu. How could their working together be expected to bear fruit, when neither one could communicate with the other? Additionally, the fact that a list of manuscripts that were ‘sent to Madras was supplied to the East India Company’ is interesting, but no longer open to being investigated, as the exact list has since gone missing. Palmer & Co., the company that executed Mackenzie’s will after his death wrote several letters to Fort William in Calcutta (the capital of the British Raj), in which they suggested a cost for the Collection and offered to send it to them. This information is found in the manuscript IOR/F/4/713/19470 titled ‘Colonel Colin Mackenzie’s collection of books and manuscripts relating to the East Indies is forwarded to London.’ It contains copies of letters between Palmer & Co. and Charles Lushington, Secretary to the British Government in India, in Calcutta. The copy of the letter is intact, but the list of manuscripts/volumes that was supposed to be enclosed is lost. It reads as follows:

Messrs Palmer and Co.

Calcutta 3rd Sept. 1821. To C. Lushington Esquire, Secretary to the Government

Sir,

At the request of the Executive of the Estate of the late Colonel C. Mackenzie Surveyor General, we transmit to you the enclosed Lists of Malay, Javanese, Dutch and English Manuscripts, and Dutch Book [*sic*] which were collected during the late Colonel’s life time at his private expense and which the Executive [illegible word] which his Excellence the most noble Governor General Council to adhere to the taken on the part of Government at whatever valuation those appointed by Government for the purposes may pact when them.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Wilson (1828:12) writes: ‘The various languages of the [Indian] Peninsula being unknown to me except as far as connected with Sanscrit, I had no other mode of checking the accuracy of the natives employed in cataloguing the manuscripts, than to direct the preparation by them of detailed indices of the works in each dialect. These indices were accordingly compiled and translated, and their results again compressed into the form in which they will be found in the following pages, the accuracy being verified by such collateral information as was derivable from some of the translated papers in the collection, or from printed works of an authentic character.’ Thus, he claims to have only asked for translations of the indices, and cross-checked them on the basis of the translations commissioned earlier by Mackenzie. Thus, I am uncertain which translations have since been lost, as per the large passage quoted above.

¹³⁵ This is a transcription I made while in the British Library, under certain time constraints. All errors are mine. The same applies to the transcription of the following letter. No page/folio number is provided in the document.

On 1st April 1822, there is yet again a reference to the list of Mackenzie's manuscripts in a letter from Bengal, and presumably Fort William, the capital:¹³⁶

Extract Public Letter from Bengal dated 1st April 1822.

Para 97. In the month of September last, Messrs Palmer and Company forwarded to us a list of Malay, Javanese, Dutch and English Books and Manuscripts belonging to the Estate of the late Colonel Mackenzie and offered them to Government at such valuation as it might put on them, we appointed Mr. W. B. Martin, of the Civil, and Mr. J. Crawford of the Medical Service, a Committee for the purpose of examining the Books and Manuscripts in question, and of reporting their opinion whether it would be advisable for Government to purchase any of them on account of the Honorable [East India] Company. The Committee were at the same time desired to state their sentiments with regard to the pecuniary value of any of the Books and Manuscripts which they might select.¹³⁷

Thus, we can be certain that a list was enclosed, but I have not been able to find it. In a sense, it would have been the first preliminary catalogue of the Collection, and one could have relied on the number of manuscripts it had, for it was on that basis that a monetary price of the Collection was determined. The earliest extant 'catalogue' is therefore Wilson's index. Sadly, the Pāṇṭiya material was documented with no explanation, but I have found some more information on it through the written correspondences of Mackenzie's emissaries, also preserved in the British Library. I speak of it in detail in a later section of this Chapter.

Initially, I had believed that Wilson was more inclined towards the legendary *Tiruvīlaiyāṭal Purāṇam* than to the Pāṇṭiya histories in the Collection, but did not want to admit his preference, as it would question his competence. This seemed to be the case, based on the secondary history of the Pāṇṭiyas he wrote (Wilson 1836). Now, after having had the opportunity to review the Mackenzie documents in the British Library, I have realised that there is a greater possibility of Wilson having been duped by Mackenzie's erstwhile emissaries, who were disgruntled at having to work for a new master who did not reveal any interest towards Dravidian languages or histories, nor to their personal and financial well-being as Mackenzie once had.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ This letter is also documented in IOR/F/4/713/19470.

¹³⁷ Paragraph 99 of the same document states that three boxes of the Collection were received by the British Library. It reads as follows: 'The books etc. contained in there separate boxes marked nos 1, 2, 3 have been received into the Library [and] will be forwarded to your honorable court by one of the first homeward bound ships of the ensuing season.' The letter is addressed to 'the Examiner's office' in London. The above extracts have been taken from a copy of the original letter, which I could not trace in the British Library.

¹³⁸ According to Cohn (1996:83), 'Wilson...seems to have dismissed most of Mackenzie's staff, undertook the task of organising and publishing a catalogue of the papers [= the Collection]...' If he really showed such disdain for Mackenzie's staff, who were by all accounts happy under their employment from Mackenzie, it is unsurprising that they would cheat him.

The study of the Collection's circumstances, namely, the efforts of William Taylor, who around this time (1836) began to engage with the Mackenzie papers, speaks for the outcome of Mackenzie's documents and former employees. Wilson and Taylor did not see eye to eye in the handling of the Mackenzie Collection and freely criticised each others' works. Taylor's research attempts followed those of Wilson.

2.4 Taylor's Response To Wilson's Work¹³⁹

William Taylor (1796-1881?)¹⁴⁰ was given the task of cataloguing some of the manuscripts at the College of Fort St. George. This catalogue was called *Oriental Historical Manuscripts in the Tamil Language* and had two volumes. Its primary goal was to bring to attention the interesting features of the ancient kingdoms of South India, as described in the manuscripts. Here, Taylor claims to focus on the Pāṇṭiya kingdom in Madurai (Taylor 1835:I:v). His introduction is a brief history of the Pāṇṭiyas that I have found largely matches with the histories described in the Mackenzie manuscripts. Regarding their provenance, Taylor states (ibid.:xvii) that they were in one Mr. W. C. Wheatley's possession, a 'confidential employé [*sic*]' of Governor Lushington, the Collector of the District of 'Ramnad, Tinnevelly and Madura'. Sir Alexander Johnson, a powerful friend of Mackenzie, wrote to him of Mackenzie's work and asked him to help Mackenzie decipher the documents he was collecting. Wheatley obliged and acquired three manuscripts that became the topic of discussion in Taylor's work.

Much like his predecessor Wilson, Taylor does not give us the Tamil titles of the three texts he has consulted. He too has preferred to replace them with generic English titles that read as 'Pandion Chronicle, Supplementary Manuscript, and Carnataca Dynasty.' He claims (ibid.) that they are 'entitled distinctively', yet I will argue shortly how these manuscripts cannot be found in his own catalogue (1862). He also observes that all three manuscripts bear the same handwriting and prints alongside his analysis an unedited transcription of the manuscript he calls 'Pandion Chronicle'. As far as I have been able to tell, this is his first professional interaction with the Mackenzie Collection.

¹³⁹ This sub-section deals with a publication of Taylor in 1835, in which he criticises Wilson 1836. I would surmise that Taylor had a copy of Wilson's work before it was published, for the time-frame otherwise does not make sense.

¹⁴⁰ According to Penny (1904:362), William Taylor was born and bred in Madras in 1796 and died in 1881. However, Taylor's book *Madrasiana* (1889, 3rd edition) which was published under the pseudonym W. T. Munro, states that Taylor was born around 1796 and came to India around 1814.

I can confirm that the Pandion Chronicle is not a Mackenzie manuscript. It is not in any catalogue of the Collection.¹⁴¹ Thanks to Taylor's provision of a transcription, I have compared several independent passages of this text to the Mackenzie manuscripts and have found that they do not match. The same questions that I raised upon realising Wilson's ignorance of the Mackenzie manuscripts are thus also poignant here — how could it be, that the only two scholars who reconstructed Pāṇṭiya histories, claiming to use the Mackenzie manuscripts as their primary sources, missed out on using those manuscripts, but chose other manuscripts instead?

Much like Wilson's choice, Taylor too has opted to work with a manuscript that is almost exclusively legendary and heavily based on the TVP. Taylor's analysis of this manuscript (1835:5) begins with an English discussion on the origin of the world and is akin to the introductory portion of the TVP, wherein the duration of the four *yukams* is mentioned. Chapter 2 (ibid.:11) speaks specifically of the Pāṇṭiya kingdom. The story is on par with the alleged divine origins of the holy place of Madurai — Intiraṅ is cursed for having disrespected his guru Yamaṅ and is sent down to the Kaṭampa forest, where he repents for his crimes through worshipping Cuntarēcuvarar. Cuntarēcuvarar appears to him, absolving him of his crimes and establishing the holy place of Madurai amidst the Kaṭampa forest. The narrative that follows is a re-telling of the *Tiruvīlaiyāṭal* ('holy sports') of Cuntarēcuvarar.

Unlike the manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection, Taylor's 'Pandion Chronicle' is in fact more similar to a manuscript I located in the IFP library. I mention it here only to state that Taylor did not use a completely unknown source like his predecessor Wilson, but the circumstances behind his choice of manuscript is further complicated by the fact that it is found in another collection altogether. I will discuss the similar manuscript in the following chapter. For now, the entirety of his analysis of Pāṇṭiya history is but an English version of the TVP.

In the second volume, Taylor's introduction tells us that he was now beginning to search for history. In this light, he mentions Wilson's catalogue (ibid.:II:ii) and criticises Wilson's inferences on the Pāṇṭiyas, that he claims are the direct result of 'his admitted want of acquaintance with the Tamil language.' He then states (ibid.):

'Among the Mackenzie MSS. at the College, no documents bearing on the Pandiya-desam have been found at all worthy of comparison with the three leading ones in this work; that is, to the best of the Editor's judgement on this point.'

¹⁴¹ While one might argue that the manuscript has gone missing before 1835, when Taylor's engagement with the Collection began, I would have expected his *own* catalogue to acknowledge the manuscript that he calls Pandion Chronicle. I have checked the GOML, the British Library, and every catalogue of Mackenzie. Such a manuscript certainly existed, but it was not a Mackenzie manuscript. I speak more of this in my conclusion with respect to how the Collection a) became a 'scapegoat' for the scholarly justification of stray/inaccurate manuscripts such as that of Taylor, and b) therefore became the roof under which dishonest reconstructions of history were endorsed.

Firstly, the documents that are dealt with in this second volume are not named in his introduction. Thus, I could not tell which three manuscripts he had consulted. Rather, his volume is a secondary history on the basis of several manuscripts, whose titles are not provided. Secondly, it is interesting to note that the Mackenzie manuscripts are, by his own declaration, not worthy of comparison with the ones he has indeed used. This leads to another issue regarding the history of these manuscripts — where did he get them, and why exactly were the Mackenzie histories insufficient? Thirdly, he claims that these decisions are the result of his judgement, but if the purpose of constructing a history of the Pāṇṭiyas is maintained, why did his judgement guide him to a TVP manuscript in the previous volume?

The first Chapter of the first volume begins with an account of governors in the Pāṇṭiya region, along with which a transcription of his source-manuscript is provided. I could not find this manuscript in the Mackenzie Collection, nor a translation of it in the British Library. Additionally, the content of both manuscripts, and consequently, of his analysis, is the Nāyak rulers who came to Madurai only after defeating the Pāṇṭiyas. Subsequently (ibid.:51), Taylor revisits the three manuscripts he used in volume I. Here, he yet again provides an analysis that says little of the Pāṇṭiyas and much about seemingly random anecdotes from the Purāṇas, ranging from Paracurāma's story to the descendents of the king Mayūravarmaṇ. This Chapter is relevant to my work in that it also contains a scathing review of Wilson's 'history' of the Pāṇṭiyas (ibid.:63):

‘The errors which we have perceived, in parts of Mr. Wilson's most valuable Descriptive Catalogue of the Mc.Kenzie MSS. at Calcutta, lower our feeling of confidence in results derivable from the whole; important as they are, in the character of an approximation: and having seen and conversed with one of the individuals on whom Colonel Mc.Kenzie, and ultimately Mr. Wilson, must have depended for accounts of the contents of the Tamil Manuscripts, would by no means deduct from such a depreciated feeling.’

Taylor then draws up an account of the Pāṇṭiyas (ibid.:75), where he maintains that Wilson's chronology of Pāṇṭiya rulers is inherently false — his dating of the king *Kuna-Pandya* is wrong, his allegation that the Jains rose upon the downfall of the Buddhists (ibid.:76) comes without citation, and that his claim of the origins of the kingdom of Madurai in the 3rd or 4th century CE is far too recent Taylor provides two Pāṇṭiya chronologies (ibid.:87), one taken from 'Pandion Chronicle', and the other from 'Supplementary Manuscript'. I have discovered that chronologies are the easiest way to trace and compare these manuscripts. In order to see whether Taylor's sources are indeed the Mackenzie manuscripts, I searched his *Catalogue Raisonné* and discovered a third chronology there, for the entry No. 2327 (= Text Group B) (Taylor 1862:III:56). It matches the chronology of 'Supplementary Manuscript'. However, Taylor states that this Mackenzie manuscript is an *additional* manuscript that provides this chronology. (ibid.:58) stating, 'Here, however, is at least *one* other manuscript, which contains the same evidence as the

Supplementary Manuscript'. This indicates that there were in fact two manuscripts containing the same chronology, but the one belonging to the Mackenzie Collection was not used in Taylor's earlier work. As for the Pandion Chronicle, it is not part of the Mackenzie Collection, but bears similarity to prose re-tellings of the TVP in the IFP, much like the manuscripts that Wilson preferred to use.

According to the same entry in the *Catalogue Raisonné*, Wilson is accused of another error, one that I touched upon in the previous Chapter. Here is a more meticulous account of it:

'The ancient *Pandiyā* history having become a subject of some useful discussion, adapted to sift out the truth, is a circumstance which perhaps invests the above brief document with more consequence, than otherwise would belong to it. In Wilson's Des. Cat. Vol. I, p. 196¹⁴²...The manuscript above abstracted is the palm leaf copy. This was translated by me a considerable time since; and not then having had such acquaintance with the Des. Catalogue, as I have since obtained, I could not tell how to reconcile the discordancy that was discovered, and waited till I should meet with the other copy. This I have lately done. It is quite another work, differing in title, in size, and in content. How the two could have been classed together, as two copies of the same work, I do not presume to determine. Suffice it to state, that the abstract given in the Des. Cat. is entirely deducted from the large paper manuscript, and that the contents of the preceding palm leaf manuscript are silently passed by.'

Specific accusations towards Wilson's methods are then made (*ibid.*):

'Allowing for some preceding kings, the list given of those in the Kali Yuga offers a point of observation.¹⁴³ Profesor Wilson in an Appendix to his sketch of *Pandiyān* History, published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, in the midst of a condescending notice of my 1st Vol. of Or. Hist. M.SS. seemed fully disposed to reject altogether the evidence of the supplementary Manuscript, contained in that volume; because, as he stated, it differed in the names of the *Pāndiyān* kings, from all other manuscripts; and this statement being accompanied with an imposing list of authorities attached to the sketch, might seem to render it conclusive. Here, however, is at least *one* other manuscript [see above]...Allowing (as both manuscripts do) for some preceding kings, and beginning with *Sóma Sundara*, the list of names is the same in both documents; with a variation only as to the twentieth, herein named *Vaculáparana*, and in the Supplementary Manuscript *Macutavárdanam*. In other respects, as to names and numbers of

¹⁴² This corresponds to Wilson 1828:208 in the single-volume edition.

¹⁴³ Taylor refers here to his own list, as found in the manuscript to which this description belongs (Text Group B in my system). The list on the manuscript is far longer than the one he provides here, as he claims to take into account only those kings that have ruled since the beginning of the Kali Yuga. I can confirm that there is no explicit declaration in the manuscript that these kings ruled during the Kali Yuga. Taylor must have thus based his decision on conjecture, or his assistants might have provided him with this information.

names...both authorities accord. Let this circumstance not be forgotten, whenever the history of the *Pāndiya* dynasty is attempted, [*sic*] to finally be adjusted.’

In simpler terms, Taylor accuses Wilson of dismissing the evidence of this manuscript (Text Group B), on account of the fact that there were no occurrences of the same chronology elsewhere. Taylor then presents the ‘Supplementary Manuscript’ as a parallel, stating that this is grounds for the chronology to be taken seriously. He also urges future efforts to consider the evidence of the Supplementary Manuscript (‘let this circumstance not be forgotten...’), yet does not tell us where he procured it.

2.5 Wilson’s Response To Taylor’s Criticism

Wilson published the ‘Supplementary Note to the Historical Sketch of the Kingdom of *Pandya*’ in 1837, in the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (1837:VI), which functions as a short justification towards Taylor’s criticism of him. The most salient point made is with regards to the source and location of the manuscripts he used in his analysis. He says, (ibid.:388):

‘I trusted to translations — written translations alone; never to verbal information or interpretation. The translations were the work as frequently of Europeans as of native scholars, as specified in the list attached to the Sketch; and in the instance of the authority on which my statement depends, was the performance of R. Clarke, Esq.’

Regarding Taylor’s specific objections of Wilson’s account of the origin of the Pāṇṭiyas, Wilson responds thus (ibid.):

‘Madura and the Pandya kingdom are essentially the same; and whether it was founded by a native of Oude, named Pandya, as I have it, or by an agricultural Pandion from the north, as Mr. Taylor states, does not appear to me to be so exceedingly different, that, where the latter occurs it can be said that there is no warrant for the former. The difference, as far as it extends, appears to be that of translation; and the question of accuracy depends upon the relative competency of the translators. Admitting, however, that Mr. Taylor’s version is correct, it does not follow that there were no traces whatever [*sic*] of such an interpretation as I have followed, and which, though not perhaps literally, is substantially the same with his own.’

The first of the two quoted passages reveals that one R. Clarke was the translator of the manuscript that Taylor objected to as Wilson’s source. According to Wilson (1837:242), R. Clark translated only one of the manuscripts that Wilson had used, namely, ‘1. Vamsavali of the Chola, Chera, and Pāndya Dynasties, extracted from a MS. in the possession of Kalinga Raya: and translated from the Tamil by R. Clarke, Esq. cxxviii. Vol. i. Art. 1.’ (ibid.) If this manuscript is textually the same as those

of Text Group C, as I proposed earlier, then Wilson’s citation is false. Moreover, he has made a crucial error in the statement ‘... founded by a native of Oude, named Pandya, as I have it, or by an agricultural Pandion from the north, as Mr. Taylor states,’ (see above). In fact, it is Wilson (1836:201) who states that the Pāṇṭiyas came from an agricultural Pāṇṭiyaṅ from the North, while Taylor quotes the story of the *Tiruvīlaiyātal Purāṇam* (1835:11). There is no mention in either account of ‘Oude’. Instead, Wilson (1828) himself claims earlier that the origin of the Pāṇṭiyas was in ‘Oude’, where he mistakes ‘Oude’ for Ayodhya and not Awadh.¹⁴⁴ He states (ibid.:34):

‘After the annihilation of the barbarian chiefs, who had resisted the spread of the new doctrines, and the appointment of friendly monarchs both in Kishkindha and in Lanka, Rāma returned to Ayodhya, but the consequence of his incursion was the resort of individuals from his native dominions, pilgrims as it is said, but as it is admitted, eventually colonists. Two of their chiefs Pāndya and Tayaman Nale, both of the agricultural caste and both from Ayodhya, laid the foundations of the Pandyan and Chola kingdoms.’

And then later, states (ibid.:203):

‘...Caveri [river] was first cleared and occupied by a colonist from *Ayodhya*, or Oude...’

Furthermore, if the manuscript he speaks of (1. Vamsavali...by R. Clarke...’ - see above) really does denote Text Group C,¹⁴⁵ I can confirm that their account of the origin of the Pāṇṭiyas is entirely different. As I have shown in the previous Chapter, this Text Group speaks of the *Rāmāyaṇa* first. Yet, it does not claim that the origin of the Pāṇṭiyas is in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and only suggests that the kingdom of the Pāṇṭiyas was where Rāma, Cītai and Leṭcumaṇaṅ resided during exile. It states that once Rāma was crowned in Ayōttiyam, a traveller called Cētu was granted the blessing of Parattuvāca Rīṣi to build a city further south:

[taken from R. 8116 due to superior legibility; p. 7]

*avvīṭattilē vaikai yeṅkīra vārraik kaṅṭ- anta vārr- aruk- āṅmayil irunta kāṭṭai veṭṭi
veḷiyākkī taṅ vaṅkiṣa pantuvaṅka[l?] vuraṅṅ muṅraiyāraik koṅṭu paṭṭaṅamum
araṅ- [p. 8] maṅaikaḷumukittu...*

¹⁴⁴ In colonial nomenclature, ‘Oude’, is generally used for ‘Awadh’, a region in (now) Northern India that was annexed to British-Indian territory in 1856. One of the cities within it was Ayodhya. I was surprised to see Wilson’s ignorance towards the more specific name Ayodhya, for it is Rāma’s capital city in the *Rāmāyaṇa* — a text that he as a Sanskritist should have been familiar with.

¹⁴⁵ I have also cross-checked with the other Text Groups. Wilson’s account does not match. As I had discussed them already, I felt it would suffice to display only one example of his errors here.

In that place, having seen the river called Vaikai, having cut down the forest that was in the vicinity of that river, having taken [along] related people [and] kinsmen, having completed [building] a city and palace...¹⁴⁶

Wilson's errors are, at this stage, unjustifiable. Given Taylor's knowledge of Tamil, he made his own translations of manuscripts as opposed to using existing translations.¹⁴⁷ Wilson, on the other hand, could not have worked without translations. This brings about an additional issue: if efforts were indeed taken to translate the manuscripts that Wilson lists in his work, and some of those translators were members of Mackenzie's team by other accounts, how could it be possible that the translations do not match Wilson's history? Currently, I can think of three explanations: firstly, that the manuscripts he used are now lost, and secondly, that Wilson did not read translations, but relied on oral reports even though he claimed he did not. Thirdly, we will see later that he attached little value to translations into English that were made by Indians and thus preferred R. Clarke's.¹⁴⁸ I believe that there is truth in all three statements, as is reflected in the words of Cohn (1996:83):

‘Wilson had little interest in maintaining Mackenzie's staff, except as they were concerned with Sanskrit and Persian... Wilson, although he had little knowledge of the languages involved, and who seems to have dismissed most of Mackenzie's staff, undertook the task of organizing and publishing a catalogue of the papers, with excerpts, which appeared in two volumes of over eight hundred pages in Calcutta in 1828.’

Indeed, if Wilson had dismissed the staff that was familiar with the Mackenzie manuscripts and was left to his own devices in dealing with a vast collection, whose scripts and languages he did not comprehend, it is nearly impossible not to commit the errors that he did. Additionally, there is little to no evidence to suggest that R. Clarke understood Tamil properly — we will see soon that competence in Tamil by the British was a rare, hopelessly challenging phenomenon for all parties involved. We may only surmise that he was a little better at it than Wilson. Simultaneously, there is a possibility that several manuscripts went missing before or during Wilson's acquisition of them. Cohn (ibid.:85) also states:

‘Although the bulk of the Mackenzie Collection was in Calcutta in 1823, when Wilson began to work on it, some of it already was known to be lost or missing. In 1808 Mackenzie had sent seven volumes described as “Memoirs of the Survey of

¹⁴⁶ As is typical of this style of prose, the finite sentence is further down and is completely unrelated to this statement, ending with *cāppiṭukīratu* ‘eating’ (neuter-singular form, (p. 8). Thus, I have omitted it from this quote.

¹⁴⁷ The full title of Taylor 1835 is: *Oriental Historical Manuscripts in the Tamil Language - Translated; with Annotations. By William Taylor, Missionary. In Two Volumes.* In the following page, he makes a dedication, wherein he refers to himself as ‘The Translator and Editor’.

¹⁴⁸ Wilson 1837:388: ‘I trusted to translations — written translations alone; never to verbal information or interpretation.’

Mysore to London” as well as two volumes of maps. In 1827 Charles Wilkins, the librarian of the India Office [in London] could not locate these. Wilson, as he had finished sections of the catalogue, dispatched, in 1823 and 1825, portions of the collection to London.’

As I have explained in the previous Chapter, a small error in cataloguing could easily lead to the loss or misplacement of a manuscript. There is no reason to state that this did not happen with many of the manuscripts that Wilson used. However, the only way to ascertain whether the manuscripts he analysed are indeed lost is through a manual search at the GOML. Although such an undertaking far exceeds the scope and magnitude of my project, I hope that one aspect regarding the treatment of the Mackenzie Collection is now evident — that Wilson, its first cataloguer, and analyser, had little to add in terms of historical clarity and only set the study of the Mackenzie manuscripts back several years due to misleading errors that were disguised as scientific opinions.

2.6 William Taylor As Lakshmiah’s Replacement¹⁴⁹

While I am in agreement with Taylor’s critique of Wilson’s work, there are some issues that he has created as well. His catalogue (1862) is far more accurate and is the basis of the GOML Descriptive catalogue. The only serious error spotted (and already pointed out in the previous Chapter) is his assumption that D. 436 and D. 437 are the same text. Yet, there is a certain sympathy one must have towards him in this case — he was working at a time when the only secondary resource was Wilson’s catalogue.

Despite his unfamiliarity with navigating the Mackenzie manuscripts, he was appointed their custodian in Lakshmiah’s place. Lakshmiah, who wished to take on the late Mackenzie’s work, was at this stage well-equipped to do so. He was Mackenzie’s confidante, friend, translator and emissary. He knew Mackenzie’s vision and wished to carry it forward. Yet, Prinsep (1836:440) states:¹⁵⁰

‘The qualifications of Cavelly Venkata for such an office, judging of them by his ‘abstract’ or indeed of any native, could hardly be pronounced equal to such a task, however useful they may prove as auxiliaries in such a train of research’.

He also states (ibid.:441):

¹⁴⁹ Taylor’s studies on the Mackenzie manuscripts would later be published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, as well as separately in *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*. In the former journal, he published only two volumes that I analyse in the present section, and in the latter, a series of reports that are dealt with in the following section. Taylor was also a member of the Madras Literary Society, his name appears in print in the latter journal as ‘Rev. William Taylor...member of the Madras Literary Society’.

¹⁵⁰ James Prinsep (1799-1840) was an Orientalist and the founding editor of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. He studied Brahmi and Karoshti scripts.

‘This gentleman [Taylor] has already gone deep into the subject. At a great expense and sacrifice of time, he has published a variety of “*Oriental Historical Manuscripts*” in the original character and in translation, with a connective commentary, shewing their bearing on the general history of the country.’

Both statements are to be taken only as the display of colonial hubris, for they did nothing for the field of research. Taylor, who published two volumes of around ten manuscripts, was now given the task of dealing with around 5,000 manuscripts that Lakshmiah had likely already familiarised himself with.

Taylor’s direct relationship with the Mackenzie Collection began in 1835 with the publication of *Oriental Historical Manuscripts in the Tamil Language* in two volumes. In it, he approaches the Collection in the way that it was intended to be approached — as a reference point for colonial historians who wished to view Indian history through a sharper lens. Thus, his analysis contains a few select manuscripts that speak of the erstwhile political circumstances of South India. Yet, he speaks little of the political history of the South, and a lot about the *Tiruvīlaiyāṭal Purāṇam*, which appears to me somewhat counterintuitive for a man who criticised it elsewhere as ‘very little better than a tissue of falsehood’.¹⁵¹ In reality, the bulk of his analysis is a re-telling of the TVP, much like that of Wilson’s.

2.7 Taylor’s Findings

William Taylor published his reports on the Mackenzie manuscripts in a series of six articles in the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (henceforth MJLS) The first report was published on 18th January, 1838 (MJLS:VII:1). In terms of the fate of the Mackenzie Collection, Taylor reveals to us two important pieces of information — firstly, that several of the Mackenzie manuscripts were already in a state of deterioration, and secondly, that portions of the Collection were already missing.¹⁵² For the ten years that passed between Wilson’s catalogue and Taylor’s report, little has been discovered with regards to the location, movement, and usage of the Mackenzie Collection. Clearly, the manuscripts were treated with a combination of neglect and disdain, or as Dirks puts it, had ‘gathered more dust than ink’ (1996:105).

Although little is known of the fate of the Collection in these ten years, I have attempted to compile, through secondary literature, a timeline. Wilson temporarily abandoned the Mackenzie Collection soon after his catalogue was finished and took up only part of the Pāṇṭiya histories as a topic for publication in 1835 — or rather, he *claimed* to take them up, as I showed earlier. Cohn

¹⁵¹ Taylor 1862:III:58.

¹⁵² Taylor (1838:1): ‘...the principle which guided me...was to select...those books which were in the worst state for the earliest examination and restoration.’; *ibid.*:2: ‘I have also been sorry occasionally to find whole papers, and, in some cases, parts of papers, taken away or cut out, when, where or by whom it is impossible to say; but the result is much to injure the collection.’

(1996:85-6) is, to my knowledge, the only author who has attended to the fate of the Collection in this intermediary period. He says,

‘Although the bulk of the Mackenzie Collection was in Calcutta in 1823, when Wilson began to work on it, some of it already was known to be lost or missing. In 1808 Mackenzie had sent seven volumes described as “Memoirs of the Survey of Mysore to London” as well as two volumes of maps. In 1827, Charles Wilkins, the librarian of the India Office, could not locate these. Wilson, as he finished sections of the catalogue, dispatched, in 1823 and 1825, portions of the collection to London. At the completion of his work in 1827, he sent all the works in Persian, Sanskrit, and Burmese, along with the plans, drawings, coins and 106 images of Indian gods in silver, copper and brass, to London...Also dispatched were five “large pieces of sculpture on stones from Amaravati”...Wilson had also sent the materials classified as Local tracts, the accounts of the histories, stories and descriptions taken down by Mackenzie’s collectors from local priests, chiefs and local scholars, to Madras, where they were placed under the charge of the Madras Literary Society.’

Additionally, Mantena (2012:105-6) writes that the Mackenzie manuscripts were sent from Calcutta to Madras in the care of Kavali V. Ramaswami. Thus we can see that Wilson, having agreed to make the Mackenzie catalogue rid himself of the Collection immediately after its completion. It is then clear how Taylor acquired the privilege of working on the Collection — the Madras Literary Society,¹⁵³ having rejected Lakshmiah’s request of working on the Mackenzie manuscripts, took on William Taylor on Prinsep’s recommendation. The reports themselves are not remarkable — they convey a weak approximation of the original manuscripts, which serve no purpose to a reader such as myself, who far prefers the original Tamil. Yet, the timing of this work is significant, for he began his work 24 years before the publication of his *Catalogue Raisonné*, telling us that these reports were his first real access to the Mackenzie Collection. This raises two questions — if the Collection had been transferred only recently to Madras, what did Taylor base his 1835 publication on? As I have shown, his work claimed to be based on Mackenzie manuscripts, but it does not appear to be possible that it could have been. Secondly, if one does give Taylor the benefit of the doubt, it is possible that, during the movement of the Collection to Calcutta in 1815 on account of Mackenzie’s promotion to Surveyor General of India, certain manuscripts were left behind in

¹⁵³ According to Ramanathan (1997:1), the Madras Literary Society was founded by Sir John Newbold and Benjamin Guy Babington in 1812, and in 1833, started *The Journal of Literature and Science*. The insular world of Madras Orientalism would have ensured that James Prinsep’s views on the matter of Mackenzie’s succession percolated to the founders and editors of this journal.

Madras.¹⁵⁴ This tells us that Wilson left those manuscripts out, having worked only from Calcutta,¹⁵⁵ or, that Taylor wrote of these manuscripts without being explicit about their location. Either way, one of these two Orientalists was unclear about his association with the Mackenzie manuscripts.

Taylor's first report (completed on 18th January, 1838:VII:9) is on those manuscripts that are in a precarious condition. His report is divided according to language. Of note is only one phrase which contradicts the reason for his selection over Lakshmiah as the candidate for the Mackenzie project. He could not have 'familiarised himself' (Prinsep 1836:40) with the Mackenzie manuscripts, for he, by own admission states:

'I have now been engaged for two months in the work of examining, collating, and (as far as needful) restoring the Mackenzie Manuscripts confided to me by authority of Government, under date of 6th June last;..'

If the government provided him the manuscripts on the 6th of June, 1837, exactly what work was Prinsep speaking of that Taylor had completed?¹⁵⁶ If it had been his 1835 publication, I have already shown that he did not use Mackenzie manuscripts there.

Subsequently, he provides a second report, published in the same volume, titled 'Sketch of the Malayan Peninsula', wherein he draws up a history *longue durée* of the natural resources of the region. He writes of biodiversity, but as is typical of colonial scientific writing, emphasises the economically valuable pockets of the region, such as coal-mines and tin. The third report (1838:VIII:1) conveys summaries of some royal genealogies. He then provides an overview of the manuscript (ibid.7)'10. *Pandya-rajakalpūrana Charitra*, or ancient narrative of Pandiyan kings.—No. 107, Countermark 71.' This corresponds to Text Group B (cf. Taylor 1862:III:56). He writes (Taylor 1836:IV:9) that 'the manuscript was considerably injured by insects, and I therefore had it restored upon paper.' His elucidation of this manuscript is identical to his catalogue entry for the same manuscript (1862:III:56), but added here is his criticism of Wilson's work. My reading of this text (in R. 11162) matches Taylor's account. Following this, he

¹⁵⁴ As an additional point, the only details we have of the movement of the Mackenzie Collection are the copies of the letters (quoted earlier), which only speak of those manuscripts that were moved to London. I am currently unclear of the exact movement of the local-language manuscripts of the Collection. They went with Mackenzie to Calcutta and were transferred to the GOML's predecessor in Madras, the College of Fort St. George. Given the vastness of the Collection, I would surmise that not everything was transferred at the same time, and the manuscripts that were considered most useful by the British took precedence and were transferred through the efforts of Palmer & Co. to the India Office Library in London.

¹⁵⁵ This would explain the meagreness of Wilson's index, particularly with relation to the Pāṇṭiya histories. Yet, that explanation is not satisfactory, for how then was Text Group A so meticulously translated into English and the original still extant?

As quoted above (Cohn 1996:86), the manuscripts were since 1827 in the hands of the Madras Literary Society. Yet, I am unsure whether that can be taken for granted, as that only assures us of the Madras Literary Society's awareness of and control over the Mackenzie Collection and not of Taylor's specific interest in them.

writes of a manuscript in Text Group A, and here, his account is identical to his catalogue entry (1862:III:297). In Vol. IX 1839, p. 1, a fourth report is published, in which Telugu and Sanskrit manuscripts are discussed. While the content of his analysis is not relevant to my project, its circumstances are. The editor of this volume was Charles Phillip Brown, a noted Telugu grammarian whose magnum opus was *A Dictionary — Telugu English* in three volumes (1852-4). He was also tasked with working on the larger Telugu portion of the Mackenzie Collection. Some of his inferences were published in later volumes of this very journal. In a later instance (see Mantena 2012:82), Brown called Taylor ‘an ignorant, illiterate man’, likely due to having found many errors in his descriptions of the Telugu manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection.¹⁵⁷ Taylor, who built his historical reputation on the errors of his predecessor Wilson, was not criticised often in his (usually) under-educated Orientalist circles. Yet, Brown, whose reputation as a polyglot genius preceded him, was able to tell the difference.

Taylor’s fifth report (1840:X:1) consists once again of an overview of the Mackenzie histories in Telugu, followed by more brief accounts of Marathi and Sanskrit manuscripts. The sixth and final report (1840:XI:86) is a continuation of the fifth in that it also recounts certain manuscripts in the Collection, this time in the languages Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Pali and Prakrit. After the first report, he no longer gives us an explanation of his choice of manuscripts and appears to choose them at random.

Upon scouring through his analyses of Mackenzie histories, a few observations come to light. Firstly, Taylor is neither a historian, nor an Orientalist, but only a mediocre translator of manuscript material. He floods most of his narratives with observations of his own that are made without evidence, and the actual substance of the article — that is, the parts that represent the material in the manuscript — is meagre and under-represented. One wonders what the motivation behind his decision to work on the Mackenzie Collection is. Perhaps it is as simple as Dirks’s (2001:83) explanation — that ‘William Taylor...attempted, without success, to use the collection to predicate his own claim to Orientalist status.’ This is seen most significantly in his 1835 publication. Is it possible that he lied about his association with the Mackenzie manuscripts in order to gain favour over Lakshmiah? In any case, Taylor’s work did little for the Mackenzie Collection. As for his later *Catalogue Raisonné*, it proved useful, but not without drastic mismatches and errors. Secondly, one realises that Taylor’s scope is rather limited. He snatched the opportunity to work on the Collection, thus depriving Lakshmiah of the same. Yet, he produced no history, nor actual analysis of any of the Mackenzie manuscripts. Much like Wilson, he relied on the general colonial mindset of suspicion towards the colonised to popularise his opinions, as opposed to the substance of the manuscripts he claimed to use. In other words, rather than writing of the Mackenzie manuscripts, he wrote of what he, and by extension, the colonial populace, thought of South India. His descriptions of manuscripts,

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Dirks (2001:105): ‘...they hired Taylor, a missionary in Madras and self-professed Orientalist, who can only be judged, even in nineteenth-century colonial terms, as at best a poor scholar and more accurately as an eccentric and incompetent antiquarian.’

although their veracity is difficult to confirm without looking through each Mackenzie document, are succinct, relaying only the most basic information that the text within it conveys. His historical reconstructions, however, raise many points of criticism. While the reconstructions themselves are hardly worth reading, his comments on the existing historical discourse in India at the time encapsulates his thoughts on the matter. He believes, for example, that Mackenzie's native assistants were 'not the most intelligent' (Taylor 1862:I:xv), that many Indian sovereigns 'had ruled with feeble or iniquitous sway' (1839:I:vii), and that '... abhorrent is the Indian mind, especially in the sacerdotal and literary class...' (1836:I:xii). He objects heavily to many aspects of Indian life, such as the celebration of erotic poetry, stating that, 'it is a cause of regret that there is any occasion for this heading ['erotic'], but it cannot be helped and must be borne... [They are] worse than novels tolerated in Europe' (ibid.:x). He later states, 'A still worse kind of books are those which relate to the worship of the female energy of the universe;' (ibid:x). In one of his early reports (Taylor 1839:IX:118-22), he appears to have made a cultural history of certain sects of the South Indian people, ostensibly based on the Mackenzie manuscripts. I would have thought that an account of a people relayed a translation of the contents of the manuscript in question, but in fact, these accounts are limited to Taylor's opinions on various tribes and sects in South India. No citation, nor manuscript/shelf number is provided in these portions of his report. There is therefore little to be said about his historical analyses, except that they are neither historical, nor analyses.

My criticism of Taylor lies less in his mistreatment of the Collection directly (as is in the case of Wilson) and more in his mistreatment of the subject of Indian history, and by extension, its conveyors. His views on Indian history, antiquity and origin are far-fetched, problematic, and racist and have been discussed already by others.¹⁵⁸ Here, it is only worth mentioning that his historical explanations are based on the belief that the best attributes of Indian cultures originated and developed elsewhere, and that those origins are in places that colonial thought regarded as superior or equal to their own cultures.¹⁵⁹ Although my area of study lies in the manuscripts first and in the social histories next, William Taylor's approach to the Mackenzie Collection indeed blurs the line between the two disciplines. He transplants his views on Indian culture into his views on the Mackenzie manuscripts, due to the people that created them. In doing so, he dismisses the histories they write, even though they do not differ in content from his own works. As a matter of fact, they speak of history, and he speaks of the TVP. Therefore, his work does not conform to the idea of history that he claims it does, even by his own understanding. This speaks further to my key arguments in this Chapter — that colonial dominance was what determined the success and transmission of the Mackenzie Collection and that the power of historiography is far greater than the power of history.

¹⁵⁸ See, for instance, Cohn (1996:86-9). See also Trautmann 2006.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Cohn 1991:87.

2.8 Acquiring the Pāṇṭiya Histories

One of the questions my dissertation hopes to answer is how the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts fell into disuse. I attributed it earlier to cataloguing mistakes on mainly Wilson's part and have since found proof of it. During my visit to the British Library, I had the chance to investigate Taylor's claim (1862:III:297) that Sreenivasiah translated the manuscripts of Text Group A in March-September 1810, shortly after which they arrived in the hands of Mackenzie. Here is the passage, quoted for the second time in this work:

‘From memoranda (I think the Colonel's handwriting) it appears that these portions began to come into his hands in December 1809, and were immediately handed over to one Sreenivasiah to be translated; the last portion is marked as received 12th January 1810, and as translated March 1810, while No. 3 was translated 23rd September 1810, and No. 4 in November 1810; thus showing that information containing the College was earliest sought.’

Several correspondences from Sreenivasiah to Mackenzie are preserved in the collection of letters and reports in the British Library (shelf mark: Mss Eur Mack Trans XII), most of which are missing now. Most importantly, the list of translations done by Sreenivasiah has been marked missing, but another document (also contained within the sheets of Mss Eur Mack Trans XII), probably written by Sreenivasiah, enumerates the books he collected and translated, alongside other details of his travels.¹⁶⁰ The only mention of Madurai in these letters was by Lakshmiah, who was at the time travelling throughout the Tamil region. He updated Mackenzie on everything he did during the day. This letter is the only extant one that mentions Madurai, dated to between March and December 1804.¹⁶¹ It seems, he arrived at Mamandur from Madurai:

[p. 61] ‘...thence next day came to Chenapatam (= Chennai?) there I enquired some account of the Moosulman (= Muslim) mosque. Thence we came by Madore (= Madurai) to Mandum (= Mandam) at Madure I got the Stalapooranum of this place, I inquired the accounts of the Angraharum of Mundum and some other astronomy Books, the chief learned people of the place promised me that they would send all the account of their Angraharum to Siringapatam to your (= Mackenzie's) honour.’¹⁶²

He does not, however, state that he collected anything in Madurai, nor does he mention maintaining correspondences with Sreenivasiah. In fact, in all 84 letters

¹⁶⁰ xf. f123.

¹⁶¹ Mss. Eur. Mack Trans XII.9. ‘Report of Caveli Lakshmiah [Cavelly Venkata Lechmiah], from 1st March 1804 to 25th December 1804 (1804)’.

¹⁶² One sees that Lakshmiah's English, although sufficiently clear, was prone to run-on sentences. I did not think it necessary to emend his writing as I only quoted small passages.

contained in the British Library, none of Mackenzie's emissaries seem to have written about their collection of certain manuscripts in Madurai. Although many letters themselves are missing, their titles are preserved through the British Library catalogue, through which I have attempted to retrace Sreenivasiah's steps which are documented further below. In the meantime, Mss Eur Mack Trans. 66 titled 'List of Books collected by Srinivassiah on the journey of Utramarur and Konjevaram (1810s)' is also missing. Yet, in the same document as quoted above, (Mss Eur Mack Trans XII.17), dated to the 9th of August, 1804, Lakshmiah writes:¹⁶³

'9th. I received a letter from Kelasapathy from Madura enclosing the history of Summenda Swamy wherein he mentioned that he got plenty of Coirn (= coir) Books, which was stopped by him as he cannot send them by Tappall (= Tam. 'tappāl', by post) without your honour[']s permission. [He] just be expecting for your Command that he may send it or not by Tappal also he told me that he would go within a few days to Ramanaudam (= Ramanathapuram?) to get plenty of the information and return back soon to Madoora.

10th. Instant my master sent a memorandum to send to Madura and to enquire for myself here which I entered in my memorandum Book and this day I send a Lascare (= lascar) with a Copy of the Memorandum to Madura to Kelasapathy directing him to go to Madira in straight and bring all the Coirn Books and another Books, whatever he gave to his hand from them I told him to come by Chedumvaram (= Chidambaram) and bring all the Books from Natalanayana (= Nitala Naina) also my master send another memorandum which he received from the brother of Paguroy (= Babu Rao?) For me to inquire the astronomical Books.'

Several days later, Lakshmiah writes:

'26th. I got a letter from Nataka Nayanah wherein he enclosed some account of the Chidambaram Pagoda on the 27th[.] Instant[ly] I got a letter from Kalashapathy from Madira wherein he proposed to go to Dindegull district to collect the historical information there for master.'

Thus, it seems that in 1810, Lakshmiah was nowhere near Madurai. Sreenivasiah was, on the other hand, somewhere near Kanchipuram, as per the title of the now missing Mss Eur Mack Trans XII.23 titled 'Report of Srinivassiah on a journey to Konjevaram 15th May 1810 (1810)'. His next report is Mss Eur Mack Trans XII.28, titled 'Report of Srinivassiah from the 24th April 1811 to the 28th February 1815.' I speak of this in a moment.

One wonders under what circumstances Mackenzie's emissaries worked. Attempts made by Lakshmiah to procure manuscripts from Madurai are seen above, but there is no confirmation of their acquisition, nor any confirmation of Sreenivasiah's receipt of them to be translated. Regardless of who exactly translated them, the present question is, why were they not explicitly written about,

¹⁶³ All unclear readings such as 'Coirn' and 'Sumvedda Swamy' are discussed in the following page.

when the emissaries were generally meticulous in their reports to Mackenzie? Could it be mere coincidence that the Madurai manuscripts went unmentioned, or were they collected by accident?

Lakshmiah's letter (August 9th, 1804, quoted above) gives us the most information on manuscripts from Madurai. From him, we learn that a bound book (here called 'Coir Book', probably due to the material with which the volumes were bound) was waiting in Madurai to be collected by one Kailashapathy (presumably, one of Lakshmiah's local contacts), who then hesitated to send such a precious volume by post. Kailashapathy then informed Lakshmiah (on 26th August, 1804, quoted above) saying that he would travel from Madurai to Dindigul district to collect even more information. Based on this, I would surmise that 'Summenda Swamy' in Lakshmiah's writing (9th August, 1804) is shorthand for Cuntarēcuvāra Cuvāmi, the main deity of the Madurai temple and the protagonist of the TVP, derived from Cuntaracuvāmi. This is a common abbreviation used for him even today. The resultant manuscript is surely D. 437, whose translation is discussed below.

The lack of clarity regarding the provenance of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts is worrying, for it suggests the loss of many other precious manuscripts through misunderstandings and cataloguing errors. As a parallel, another history that is mentioned in the passage quoted above is that of Chidambaram. Yet, all that remains of this history is an incomplete translation of only four folios found in the British Library, under the shelf mark Mss Eur Mack Trans III.84. Taylor (1862) makes no mention of a history of Chidambaram in Tamil. I would suggest that these manuscripts were collected, but were later lost through a combination of the dangers of travel and successive cataloguing mistakes. I suggest in my conclusions that the Mackenzie Collection's most well-preserved manuscripts were those that were from the Mysore province, where Mackenzie himself was for most of his time during the surveys, and those manuscripts and inscriptions that were collected in his physical presence (such as those of Mamallapuram and Java). It is important that a project matching his emissaries' travelogues and letters to the early catalogues of the Collection is conducted in the future. This could also be the solution to the original missing lists made by Palmer & Co., prior even to Wilson's index. Keeping this in mind, one wonders who Sreenivasiah was and in what capacity he was employed by Mackenzie. It seems he was a copyist of manuscripts for Mackenzie and travelled between Kanchipuram and Tanjore from 1808 to 1810. In Mss Eur Mack Trans XII.17, he complains of the local collector hindering his copying activities in a Pagoda.¹⁶⁴ As for Sreenivasiah's activities regarding the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts, an account titled 'The Particular Contents of the historys [*sic*] which [were] Translated by Sreenivasiah' can be found as No. 56 of Mss Eur Mack Trans XII, dated to 1812.¹⁶⁵ Sreenivasiah has written in great detail of his activities under Mackenzie's employment. He writes, for example, of his own illnesses ('in

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Dirks 2001:102.

¹⁶⁵ These three pages have not made it to the catalogue. I located them manually, but each page contains at least four different page numbers, and there is no productive way at the moment to guide future readers to the right pages.

the meantime my Body swelled & I was very dangerous krefs (= cramps?) For about 4 months'), his mother's passing ('23 January I took leave for the funeral ceremony of my mother's death'). His academic activities after this were as follows:

From 1st March to the 30th 1813 — I finished a history of Puttanam Pilla and Varagoona Pandia Raja.

From 1st April to the 3rd May 1813 — I finished history [*sic*] of Pandiyan Cheran and Cholun.

From the 1st May (?) to the 30th December 1813 — I finished the whole Book of Madura Pooraanum of 64 chapter [*sic*].

By Sreenivasiah's own account, he completed not what Taylor claimed he completed, but rather, three less significant texts on the Pāṇṭiyas. I have been unable to find the Tamil original of the first ('history of Puttanam Pilla and Varagoona Pandia Raja'), and the third ('Book of Madura Pooraanum of 64 chapter'), but the translations are intact at the British library. Mss Eur Mack Trans III.26 corresponds to the first, but is signed by Lakshmiah. It also appears to be a very rough copy, and does not seem comparable to the fair copies of other works of Lakshmiah that have an altogether different cursive writing. As for the next document (Mss Eur Mack Trans III.27), it is a large, 94-page long document that is a close translation of Text Group A (containing five books). It begins with the rough handwriting of Sreenivasiah (for book one of five), and it seems that Lakshmiah then takes over and makes a fair copy of all five. I would think that the rest of Sreenivasiah's translation has since gone missing, but the fair copy by Lakshmiah has been preserved. At the very end is Lakshmiah's signature. Sreenivasiah has not identified himself in this text. The third document (Mss Eur Mack Trans III.28) corresponds to the third entry of Sreenivasiah's account (provided above). It is essentially a summary in English of Parañcōti's TVP. Here, it does not seem unlikely that the original version went missing, for (as I had suggested earlier), the text was so popular that several versions must have been available to translate.

Here is a step-by-step summary of the difficulties in tracing the history of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts. During Mackenzie's time, only Text Group A was translated into English, either by the joint effort of Sreenivasiah and Lakshmiah, or the former made the rough (= first) version, and the latter the fair (= second) version. Alongside a translation of Text Group A was that of a history of Varakuṇa Pāṇṭiyaṅ ('Varagoona Pandia Raja' as Sreenivasiah writes above) and someone called 'Pattanam Pilla' (*Paṭṭaṇam Piḷḷai*, the son of the city), whom I cannot yet identify with certainty. The original is lost. Then there was the English summary of Parañcōti's TVP (mentioned above). This original too is lost, or currently hidden amongst the multitude of Parañcōti's texts that the GOML has. I was unable to find the exact one from which the translation was made. These had been made during Mackenzie's lifetime.

After 1821 when Mackenzie died, Horace Hayman Wilson took over the project. He first worked with an index (with abstracts) based on Mackenzie's notes, wherein he wrote an unspecific entry that reads 'Index of the Pandiyaghal Charitra Sangraha'. No abstract is there. In 1828, his catalogue marked the presence of Text Groups A and D in the original language (Tamil) and the three translations that did that Sreenivasiah writes about above. However, the translations do not match any of the Text Groups. Wilson's catalogue put the translations under 'local tracts' (discussed already in Chapter 1.3).

In 1836, Taylor attempted to create a history of the Pāṇṭiyas, but used three manuscripts that he claimed came from the Mackenzie Collection, but did not. This is proven by the fact that his own subsequent catalogue of the Mackenzie manuscripts does not include them. The attempt sidelined Lakshmiah's request to take charge of the Collection. It also produced a history that only created conflict with Wilson's attempt in 1835-6 and lacked a documented, productive historical discourse. In 1862, Taylor released his catalogue, where he broke Wilson's misconception that Text Groups A and B are the same. He documented the remaining Text Groups in the original language in his catalogue, but failed to match them to his own translations (that he claimed to have made), to the existing translations in the Mackenzie Collection that are now in the British Library, and to the account by Sreenivasiah (excerpt provided above) in which he claims to have translated only one of the six Text Groups.

The provenance history of the Mackenzie manuscripts is thus not straightforward at all. The way that they were handled in general suggests that there was no respect for the work that Mackenzie's emissaries did. This is seen in Wilson's firing of them and in Taylor not using Sreenivasiah's accounts and translations. Wilson's ignorance of Tamil and the Pāṇṭiyas during the making of his catalogue (and for that matter, even in 1836 when he produced a secondary history of the Pāṇṭiyas) was a convenient way to 'hide' these discrepancies, which I am certain the Indian collaborators were aware of. Had Lakshmiah been allowed to work alongside Taylor later on, these errors could have been remedied. Yet, his exclusion from the project meant that these errors went unnoticed.

In the present day, given the division of the Collection between England and India, the GOML descriptive catalogue (to its credit) has accounted for the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts with accuracy (except for the assumption that D. 437 and D. 436 are the same, which I disproved earlier). On the other side of the world, the British Library has accounted for every translation it received by producing an accurate (but non-descriptive) online catalogue. It appears that my current attempt is the first and only one that questions why the two catalogues do not match, when they were in fact made by the same people, at the same time, under the same project. There is also a need to solve these issues for other sections of the Mackenzie Collection, which, at best, would reveal viable histories that have fallen into disuse through stories such as the one I have told, and at worst, provide an interesting map that would re-emphasise how colonial dynamics proved detrimental to both the creation and preservation of valuable manuscripts.

2.9 Mackenzie and His Successors

One of the issues when dealing with the Mackenzie Collection is that Mackenzie himself did not plan for the aftermath of his demise. It is my impression that he intended to have Lakshmiah and other senior South Indian collaborators take on his project and carry it forward. Sadly, he did not speak of this explicitly, having said little more than freely admitting his dependence on them to conduct his surveys. One instance of his actions may speak towards his goals. Howes (2010:67) writes of his wishes to honour the late Boriah, whom he mourned and missed. He wished to construct a monument in his name near Madras beach and approached Francis Whyte Ellis, the head of the College of Fort St. George, to write him a poem in Tamil that would serve as an epitaph. The result was that Ellis' completed poem was so complex that it could not be understood by a native Tamil expert that Mackenzie showed it to. He inferred from this that 'the high Tamul and poetic language is not easily understood by the generality of Malabars [= South Indians] and that there are few in fact that understand it.' This ostensibly made him understand that his clique of South Indian scholars was a specially educated one. Ellis himself, a man who spent considerable time mastering the Tamil language (in all its registers, I might add), heavily criticised the exclusion of native voices in the Orientalist work that was being done in his day. He wrote (ibid.:65) that there was no means by which the average Orientalist could produce anything novel in the field of Indian languages. He, and some of his contemporaries, criticised the dealings of the Serampore Press, where publications did not involve the expertise of South Indian contributors.¹⁶⁶ Howes writes that Ellis was perhaps inspired by Mackenzie's successful collaborative efforts (ibid.:67). I propose that this in fact functioned the other way around: Ellis, who knew the trials of learning a language as difficult as Tamil, made Mackenzie more pessimistic about working without South Indians. Wolffhardt (2018:227) writes '...Francis Whyte Ellis...had been employed in important civilian posts in various provinces of the Madras Presidency since 1806, was already supporting the work of Mackenzie's Indian co-workers at the time of the Mysore Survey, and was perhaps, as Mackenzie himself later wrote, the first to become aware of the priceless value of his cooperation with Indian assistants.' Mackenzie, a man who knew India only through the lens of his Indian collaborators, did not see how his project could move forward in any other way. His awareness of the world of research outside of his own, insular project was less keen. Although he maintained correspondances with many of his Orientalist contemporaries, he was perhaps the only one that provided them with raw material for their research.¹⁶⁷ In never explicitly stating his plans for the future of his archive, Mackenzie's wishes, now unknown, were overridden by the general environment of colonial curiosity — several successors, two of whom I have

¹⁶⁶ The Serampore Mission Press in Calcutta was a Danish missionary effort that operated from 1800 to 1837, and was responsible for the publishing of the Bible in Indian languages. See, for instance, Naik & Nurullah (1974:41-44).

¹⁶⁷ Howes (2010:64) writes of his correspondences with other Orientalists of his time, such as Ellis, Buchanan and Leyden.

analysed at length above, took the absence of an heir as an opportunity and excluded entirely the team of South Indian scholars left behind by Mackenzie.

Mantena (2012) writes of the three Kavali brothers as encapsulating the three outcomes of the Mackenzie Collection that Mackenzie himself wished for. Boriah was the historian-ethnographer (ibid.:99), Lakshmiah the antiquarian (ibid.:104), and Ramaswami, the writer (ibid.:110). Mackenzie's relationship with them determined the quality, authenticity and production of historical works in the Collection. There is evidence to suggest that Mackenzie maintained a cordial, respectful association with his contributors, despite being a military representative of the colonial government.¹⁶⁸ However, this relationship, or as Trautmann says, 'exchange of ideas',¹⁶⁹ was an exception and not a rule. Successive colonial scholars such as Wilson and Taylor did little to acknowledge the debt of knowledge that they owed to these South Indian scholars. In order to present a more honest encapsulation of the intellectual relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, Mantena (2012:22) resists the use of 'collaborator' when referring to Mackenzie's South Indian assistants. She states that "...collaboration" as a model of intellectual inquiry...is not suggestive of the exclusionary strategies that kept Indian mediaries at bay from inclusion into a global scholarly community. When we iron out the differences between the British and the Indians, we lose any sense of what colonialism as a political form might have been.' In this light, she further explains that '...by highlighting the institutional and ideological constraints placed on the individual ambitions of native intellectuals, we gain a more nuanced understanding of the encounter between intellectual practices and, ultimately, the reception of intellectual ideas.'

Mantena's above clarifications are the precursor to a discussion on the Kavali brothers, whose lives and research is one of the focal points of her book. She highlights the issue of Lakshmiah's exclusion from the colonial intellectual realm, where her argument resonates with my own — that Lakshmiah's rejection from the Mackenzie project was a glaring symptom of misplaced colonial hubris (ibid.:21-2). In this light, I must clarify the necessity of using 'collaborator' in my work, despite agreeing (with Mantena, for one) that it ignores the hierarchical exclusion of Indian scholars. To speak of Mackenzie's assistants as his collaborators is my attempt to elevate them to the status of 'equal' to Mackenzie and other colonial intellectuals at the time. This is in order to alleviate the notion that they worked for the British and suggest instead that they worked *with* them — a dynamic that I do not attribute to British benevolence, but to South Indian resilience. Here, the need to 'elevate' is in itself an acknowledgement of the existence of colonial power-dynamics, for it re-invokes the dominance of the British. I also use 'collaborator' to neutralise the harsh tone employed by colonial

¹⁶⁸ See, for instance, Mantena (2009:129).

¹⁶⁹ Trautmann 2009, blurb.

scholars to refer to their Indian assistants¹⁷⁰ and to defy the neglect and/or criticism that Taylor and Wilson, for one, placed on Indian histories. Furthermore, since my work investigates literary history, the intellectual product (and not the relationship) is the nucleus of my research. Since the main constituent of that intellectual product is Tamil manuscripts, they are, as I see it, better described as the product of ‘collaborative’ efforts, for any other term — say, ‘inferior’ or ‘subserviant’ — implies that Indian scholars under colonialism composed and wrote exactly as they were told — an idea that I deemed unviable in the beginning of this Chapter. Additionally, these collaborative efforts proved to be the primary source of research for Wilson and Taylor. Their scepticism surrounding the written material produced through those collaborative efforts was a clear result of colonial scholars not doing their part in the collaboration. Thus, questions of historical accuracy were British complaints towards British mistakes. ‘Collaboration’, as I have used thus far, would therefore suggest mutual credit, but not mutual accountability.

2.10 The Fate of the Kavali Brothers

None of the Kavali Brothers were given the chance to publish on the Mackenzie Collection. Boriah, the eldest brother who died at the young age of 26, was immortalised in the 1809 publication of ‘Account of Jains’ (1809), where his extensive interviews of members¹⁷¹ of the Jain community led to the first colonial awareness of the Jain religion.¹⁷² There is no doubt that Boriah’s account of the Jains is far more scientifically viable than anything written by Wilson or Taylor. One need only read it to see that. Given Boriah’s affinity to the study of the Jains, this was one of the few fields that Mackenzie had a chance to explore during his life. The famous portrait of him, in fact, is taken in front of the Jain shrine Śravaṇa Beḷagoḷa in (now) Southern Karnataka.¹⁷³ Kavali Venkata Ramaswami, the third of five brothers, later wrote a tribute to Boriah, who died of illness in 1803. (Ramaswami 1834:144). It could be said that he was India’s first Indian surveyor. It could also be said that Boriah’s work exceeded that of his Orientalist ‘colleagues’ because it took into account the voices of the region. He interviewed a priest in Mudgeri who belonged to the Jain community, and that formed the basis of his account. On the contrary, Taylor (here, it is futile to speak of Wilson) relied on

¹⁷⁰ Wilson (1828:13): ‘The value of the latter [Translations into English in the Collection] is diminished by the very imperfect manner in which most of them have been executed, the English being frequently as unintelligible as the origin: with a very few exceptions the translations are the work of natives alone’. Cf. Cohn (1996:84), who disagrees: ‘Luchmiah’s original monthly reports for 1804 provide an excellent account of how the varied materials were obtained. The reports are in Luchmiah’s handwriting, in English, which although somewhat ungrammatical — he had difficulties with tenses — are quite clear and understandable.’

¹⁷¹ Cf. Mantena 2012:100.

¹⁷² Cf. Wilson (1882:8). ‘...the papers relating to the *Jains* were the most novel and important, and first brought to notice the existence of a Sect, which is very extensively dispersed throughout India, and includes a considerable portion of its most respectable and opulent natives.’ Additionally, Shuhbring (2000:1), who has produced the most comprehensive account of the Jains in literature, acknowledges Boriah’s work as the earliest research on the Jains.

¹⁷³ Cf. Wolffhardt 2018:5.

manuscripts alone in his reconstruction. I spoke earlier of written histories working as a subterfuge and will speak soon of the concept of historical prose being novel during the beginning of the 18th century. Both points speak for the unreliability of written prose or rather, the relatively higher reliability of the spoken word. Boriah was able to recognise that, and his methods were therefore more fruitful. Additionally, it was Mackenzie's hope that the future of his project would rest in the hands of Indians. He did not predict their outright exclusion and therefore had no chance to accordingly plan for the future safety of the manuscripts. Perhaps, there was no subterfuge — Mackenzie was quite clear in that the manuscripts could be deciphered only in the hands of South Indians and meant for it to be that way. However, he fell victim to the insularity of his own professional environment in that he did not recognise the hierarchies of colonial intellectual dominance outside of his small team.¹⁷⁴

The void left by Boriah's death was filled by Lakshmiah, who then became Mackenzie's principal interpreter. According to Mantena (2012:104), he spent the larger part of 1802 in Nellore, collecting manuscripts and interviewing local Brahmins for Mackenzie. After Mackenzie's death in 1821, he founded the Madras Hindu Literary Society 1835, and it drew the attention of Mackenzie's friend Alexander Johnston. Johnston lauded Lakshmiah's efforts, having known of his importance in the (now) late Mackenzie's life and work. (Mantena 2012:108). Encouraged by Johnston's support, he submitted a proposal to the Madras Presidency (a response for which we saw earlier by Prinsep 1836), asking urgently for leave to work on the Mackenzie histories. He was denied, and little is known of his work since. Mantena (ibid.:110) rightly notes, 'Lakshmiah's appearance in the colonial record after Mackenzie's death shows his vulnerabilities as a native who is without a European patron.'

The most written material we have of the Kavali brothers is that of Ramaswami, who first wrote *Descriptive and Historical Sketches of Cities and Places in the Dekkan; to which is Prefixed an Introduction Containing a Brief Description of the Southern Peninsula, etc.* which was published around 1828.¹⁷⁵ He then wrote the *Biographical Sketches of Dekkan Poets; being Memoirs of the Lives of several eminent Bards, both ancient and modern, who have flourished in different Provinces of the Indian Peninsula; compiled from Authentic Documents* in 1834. Here, I discovered his complete adoption of the European style of writing — he quotes Aristotle and speaks of India's poetry and poets with the same, curiously distant countenance that his colonial counterparts preferred. Yet, he is more generous with his praise and more thorough with his account of them. I would see

¹⁷⁴ It is worth mentioning here that both Mackenzie and Ellis, who worked closely and harmoniously with many Indian scholars, died within two years of each other and left a squabble for power in their place. Ellis died in 1819 (two years before Mackenzie) due to accidental poisoning (see Trautmann 2006:107). The College of Fort St. George that he set up in 1812 was a collaborative scholarly environment, and the site of Ellis's 'Dravidian Proof'. A history of the College until its demise in 1854 is much needed. (Cf. ibid.:117). Both worked far more with Indians than with the British in the Madras Presidency.

¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, I have not been able to find a copy of this book.

no debate in considering him South India's first historian — had Mackenzie still been alive, perhaps he would have thought the same.

The Kavali brothers were the true torch-bearers of the early historical experiments that Mackenzie began. Their research was often hidden in the shadows, for they published very little under their own names. Yet, on thinking of the Pāṅṭiya manuscripts I have previously analysed, my main question is, what would the Kavali brothers have thought of them? While Wilson and Taylor did not regard them as useful, Mackenzie could not have acquired them without the knowledge of Boriah or Lakshmiah. It is even less likely that these documents were as historically unviable as many claimed them to be, since they went past the eyes of these two meticulous assistants. Had they been tasked with the making of a Pāṅṭiya history, we would have acquired a far more accurate publication, which would have taken oral interviews into consideration in a way that was beyond the scope of Mackenzie's colonial successors.

2.11 Fulfilling A Tradition of Anonymity?

Was the anonymity of the Mackenzie manuscripts a matter of tradition or the result of colonial erasure? On one hand, as we will see in the following Chapter, colophons in Tamil manuscripts are sparse, and authorship is a matter of principle, not ownership. In other words, a written tradition names an author when relevant, but the author rarely claims ownership of his own work. On the other hand, an emerging intellectual trend in colonial India was that of credit — it was not enough to be an Orientalist; one had to 'discover' something, or better still, be named as the first to do something. The Orientalist legacy relied on the very thing that the Indian resisted — the claiming of a work as one's own. It was therefore obvious that the work of those that were accustomed to anonymity was now taken up by those that wanted to be named pioneers of a subject. The Mackenzie Collection, as we call it, had no alternative title, for not a single colophon could be detected in any of the manuscripts I consulted. My arguments can be summarised thus — that the future of the Collection was determined by colonial efforts and that those efforts were feeble. The result of this is the alleged falsity of Indian histories that is the generally held belief even today.¹⁷⁶ On account of my discursive analysis thus far, it is worth quickly revisiting the real goal of this dissertation — to give the Mackenzie historical manuscripts a second life. Colonial ignorance was presented as informed disapproval in the judgement of them. Similarly, colonial intolerance towards Mackenzie's erstwhile South Indian collaborators was sold as the latter's incompetence. Thus, a precious archive was left to rot. The story of Mackenzie's archive so far tells us that it is perceptions that determine realities, rather than the other way around. I have striven to remind readers that it is in fact reality that must decide the nature of our perceptions and have tried to present that reality above.

¹⁷⁶ This is evident in that I am yet to encounter a historical work that has conducted research based on the Tamil historical manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection.

Now, I will try to understand the world of Tamil writing that Mackenzie first entered, before he went on to change it forever.

Chapter 3 — Writings in Prose: Looking Back in Time

So far, my analysis has focused on the future of the Collection — how it was perceived after Mackenzie’s death and how resultant perceptions led to its declining popularity. Now, I return to the early to late 18th and 19th centuries, where I hope to learn something of the creators of the Mackenzie Collection. Wagoner (2009:187) speaks of the abundance of information on the history of the Telugu manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection. In the case of Tamil, however, there is hardly any information, and the little that is available has already been shared in previous Chapters of this work. I look now to compensate for this gap in the story of Mackenzie’s archive by looking for manuscripts that bear thematic and stylistic similarities to those in the collection.

Descriptions of the Pāṇṭiyas are ubiquitous, and ancient, in Tamil literature.¹⁷⁷ Even if specific precursors to the Mackenzie manuscripts cannot be traced, the Pāṇṭiyas’ past — or rather, written documentation of their past — is available. Through this, I am able to treat the Mackenzie manuscripts as one ‘historical’ source among many others and attend to its past by identifying other ‘historical’ sources that are closest to it. By closest, I mean that some manuscripts of the late 18th up to mid-19th centuries that are written in prose speak of the Pāṇṭiyas and their chronology and have specific grammatical characteristics. Mackenzie’s manuscripts have a register of prose that seemingly emerges from nowhere. It is consistent in its orthography and formatting, but there is little evidence of the process that lead to that point.¹⁷⁸ This register could neither have been born out of pre-existing poetry, nor can it be traced to contemporary spoken registers. Poetry was too technical and spoken Tamil too untechnical. The nature of prose seen in these manuscripts is a mixture of both elements, which was then curated according to British historiographical expectations. I therefore surmise that the precursors to Mackenzie were texts written in prose registers albeit in a more ‘raw’, inconsistent form. I was pleasantly surprised to find three palm-leaf manuscripts across two manuscript libraries in the world and one paper-back print book, that were clearly the inspiration for the Mackenzie manuscripts.¹⁷⁹ The three manuscripts are Indien 291 in the BNF, and RE27530 and

¹⁷⁷ Sastri (1929:1) provides an overview of literary sources on the Pāṇṭiyas. Although he (rightly) states that they are not the most reliable means of reconstructing Pāṇṭiya histories (ibid.), they provide useful details such as kings’ names and toponyms, that date back as far as the Caṅkam Age.

¹⁷⁸ Here, I mean that Mackenzie’s manuscripts represent practised prose writing. I therefore searched specifically for manuscripts on the Pāṇṭiyas that were still experimental, i.e., inconsistent in their writing style.

¹⁷⁹ By ‘precursor’, I mean in a stylistic sense. The manuscripts I will use in my analysis were completed around the same time as Mackenzie’s surveys, in different circles and under different circumstances. I have not yet found instances of similar prose manuscripts that precede Mackenzie but am certain that they were there.

RE27535 in IFP, Pondicherry. Before I go on to describing them in greater detail, an explanation of context is necessary.

In pursuing this course of enquiry, three factors must be kept in mind. Firstly, the writings in the Mackenzie Collection must be seen as exceptions to existing traditional writings in South India in the 18th century and not at all as representing them. Secondly, the changing materiality of the manuscript from palm-leaf to paper must be considered, particularly for the impact it had on formatting techniques and thus also on writing practices. Thirdly, the economy of the manuscript changed — the traditional teacher or preacher was replaced by the written text. These are also the basis of my argument that the only similarity that the Mackenzie manuscripts shared with their precursors is their mutual engagement with the medium of prose. The choice of prose for such writings is unsurprising, and I shall soon explain why. The new, even more interesting aspect of prose is its writer, who exemplified the cultural exchanges they had with their surroundings. They represented (and still represents) an anomaly in terms of his medium and expertise, but his methods and styles carried well into the 20th century. I am keen to understand this sort of writer better, especially since there are no studies on the language and style of early prose in Tamil. Yet, the medium of prose is inherent to Tamil's literary tradition, as it has been for centuries.¹⁸⁰ I attempt to provide a timeline of writers and their work in prose from 1780 (which is approximately the date of the earliest manuscript I consult in this part of my dissertation) to 2010 (which is the publication date of a printed book whose text is almost identical to an earlier palm-leaf manuscript that I also consult).

As for the content of writing itself, the origin of the Mackenzie histories on the Pāṇṭiyas is unambiguous. They come from the *Tiruvīlaiyāṭar Purāṇam*, more specifically, from the version by Parañcōti Muṇivar (17th century CE).¹⁸¹ The connection between poetry, prose, and later print cultures is observed seamlessly in the transmission of the TVP legends across three centuries. Parañcōti's TVP is condensed into prose to function as a learning guide/commentary already at the end of the 18th century. Throughout the 19th century, prose versions of the TVP (and other texts) crop up across Tamil Nadu and gain even more popularity through print in the 20th and 21st centuries. Most prose versions are based on earlier poetic works. Yet, the TVP textual tradition is special in that many significant changes in Tamil literary history in the second millennium — such as the movement from palm-leaf to paper, from paper to print, from legend to history, and from poetry to prose — are witnessed simultaneously in it.

¹⁸⁰ An early example of prose is from the commentary tradition of around the 13th century CE. See Anandakichenin & D'Avella 2020. In between, informal learning guides were used by students for difficult poetic texts. Some of them are discussed further on in this Chapter.

¹⁸¹ See Wilden (2014:24).

Unfortunately, the history of Tamil prose has not yet been written.¹⁸² This leads to certain, specific challenges that I hope future efforts may help overcome. Firstly, there are a large number of prose manuscripts across libraries in the world, but they remain un- or mis-catalogued, making the provision of accurate statistics difficult. Secondly, while late 19th and 20th century prose can be studied due to the ubiquity of prose writings during this period, examples from earlier periods are no longer available. It is unclear whether they have been destroyed since, or whether they never existed in the first place. This leads to an additional problem — the way we see and document prose is dependent on the longevity of its existence. If it was an older phenomenon, it does not suffice to draw any conclusions from only later, still extant prose texts. If Tamil prose was indeed a late 18th century phenomenon, there is no evidence on how or why it developed. Thirdly, there is no standard grammar or orthographic template that can be universally applied to all Tamil prose works. They have changed greatly over three centuries and oftentimes, two contemporary texts bear no similarities to one another. Early material appears to emulate spoken registers of Tamil — this is evident in spelling and sentence structure. As we approach the 20th century, efforts were made to standardise and even ornamentalise prose writing to make it more ‘official’, perhaps. This stage of its development coincided with a number of socio-political changes that were happening in South India at the time, particularly in the context of rejecting colonial rule. Simultaneously, Tamil poetry was no longer as beloved as it was in the yesteryears, and its safeguarding was left in the hands of only a few individual scholars. One of the most illustrious of them was U. Vē. Cāminātaiyar, also the editor of the first (literary/poetic) extant version of the TVP by Nampi. Simply put, prose was easier to read and compose, and that facilitated faster production and wider audiences.

The incongruence of poetry with an independent, modernising India meant that prose was employed as the means of expression for a sundry of new ideas. Several phenomena took place at once: the colonial system had somewhat successfully publicised knowledge in India, as a result of which literacy rates were rising in the early 20th century.¹⁸³ This new social section (let us call them the ‘middle class’) wanted content to read — novels, newspapers, pamphlets, plays, religious/philosophical essays, and more.¹⁸⁴ A wider accessibility to knowledge was enabled also by the rising number of printing presses and publishing houses within

¹⁸² At this stage of my analysis, I exclude the Mackenzie manuscripts from this statement. The Mackenzie Collection is anomalous in most ways to the ongoing literary developments of the time. Additionally, it deals not with an ‘organic’ form of prose that Tamil scholars developed of their own accord, but a commissioned one that was heavily influenced by Western historiographic sensibilities. Here, I aim only to understand the textual predecessors of Mackenzie, which were influenced by a whole other set of literary and social factors.

¹⁸³ According to the official Indian 2001 census, it rose from 3.2 per cent in 1872, to 16.1 per cent in 1941. See also Ebeling 2018.

¹⁸⁴ See Blackburn 2003 for an overview of these processes. See also Venkatachalapathy 2006.

Tamil Nadu.¹⁸⁵ British control of publishing and printing rights began to fade when Tamil intellectuals began to grasp the power of the printed word. As audience numbers grew, the average writer bought his bread not through the quality of his writing, but through the quantity of its circulation. Activism, political manifestos and social justice movements embraced writing as their primary propaganda tool. Temples attracted a whole new class of visitors by publishing abridged/simplified versions of mythological stories, thus increasing their revenue and popularity. The power of prose lay in its ease of reading, and the catalyst that enabled its success was the material shift from palm-leaf to print.

This line of enquiry began when I discovered that William Taylor had used manuscripts outside of the Mackenzie Collection, alleging that they were part of it. That revealed to me the existence of quasi-historical manuscripts outside of the Mackenzie context, thus implying that ‘history’ was not the invention of Mackenzie’s group, but was in fact a practised phenomenon outside of Orientalist Madras.¹⁸⁶ That led to the finding of at least three rudimentary accounts of the Pāṇṭiyas across two libraries. They are Indien 291 at the BNF, and RE25375 and RE27530 at the IFP, each presenting a prose re-telling of the *Tiruvīlaiyāṭar Purāṇam* by Parañcōti Muṇivar (ca. 17th cent. CE). The original poetry of Parañcōti Muṇivar was simplified in a way that prioritised the narrative of the TVP. Subsequently, I realised that all three of these manuscripts possessed their own chronologies, delineated similarly to how chronologies in the Mackenzie manuscripts were recorded. All three manuscripts are on palm-leaf and present an additional clue that connects them to the Mackenzie Collection — that the life-stories of Pāṇṭiya kings are prioritised over other narrative details. They call themselves ‘*vacanam*’, (re-telling) ‘*katai*’ (story), or ‘*curukkam*’ (summary), and are exclusively prose genres. It is difficult to tell how old these genres are, or whether they were old at all, for they do not appear to have any real precursors in the Tamil literary tradition. The style of writing is what baffles one the most — these prose works are written in a curious amalgamation of ‘spoken’ and ‘written’ Tamil and raise many questions on how the process of writing took place. I was most taken by this feature, for it reveals a spontaneity that is far from the highly ornamented poetry that Tamil scholars conventionally wrote and endorsed.

In the meantime, there are several potential explanations as to how and why historians of the Mackenzie projects wrote the way they did. I suggest that they

¹⁸⁵ The first Tamil newspaper was *Swadesamitram*, launched in 1899. Previously, the press was mainly English, and controlled by the British. More Tamil publishing houses were launched in the cusp of the century. A prominent example is the *Āṇanta Vikāṭaṇ* (since 1926), which is still a household name.

¹⁸⁶ It is not always accurate to call any of these works ‘histories’. Yet, the works that were produced in the Mackenzie Collection alleged historical accuracy. The Tamil accounts were written for Mackenzie, who asked for histories. The English translations were written as histories, as per Mackenzie’s request also. The secondary literature produced by Wilson and Taylor were self-declared histories. The label of ‘history’ is very much a matter of interpretation at this stage. I therefore adopt ‘quasi-history/historical’ in the context of discussing the genre/content relevant Mackenzie manuscripts in this Chapter, so that they may be clearly discerned in theme from the TVP, which never claimed, nor can today be called, a ‘history’. In reference to the Collection itself, I refer to them as ‘the Mackenzie histories’ on occasion, where no specific aspect of any one manuscript is discussed. In other words, the TVP stands for that which is legendary and the Mackenzie Collection claims that which is ‘historical’, whatever that may mean to its authors.

studied and borrowed prose techniques that were practised at the time and adjusted them to Mackenzie's sensibilities. I also therefore argue that the apparent spontaneity in their writing was either indicative of a hurried note-taker or the work of someone who composed as he wrote. In other words, he chose not his words, but his stories, and simply wrote as one would today in a journal. As for *what* he wrote, that was borrowed from their precursors too. Both technique and content were refined, thus producing the first Tamil histories for Mackenzie's archive.

3.1 Tamil Prose in Libraries

Prose writing is found in manuscript libraries across the world, but often not catalogued separately. Notably, the IFP has a large collection of prose in various themes, marked in their catalogue with one of the three genre-names.¹⁸⁷ The BNF also has a reasonable amount of prose material, but it has not been labelled such.¹⁸⁸ Thus, one must go through their entire collection in order to identify whether a manuscript is prose. The GOML has the largest collection of prose material, but I do not yet consider it for the present study, for its prose manuscripts are mostly from the Mackenzie Collection.¹⁸⁹ The Dr. U Ve Swaminatha Iyer Library (henceforth UVSL) contains the lowest number of prose manuscripts and none at all on the Pāñṭiyas.¹⁹⁰

The problem with most prose manuscripts is that their title does not reveal that they are written in prose. In the rare case that they do, catalogues do not demarcate them as prose. All of them are re-tellings of older poetic works, such as the TVP. Thus, they retain the name of the original text in the title and do not consistently add '*vacaṇam*', '*katai*' or '*curukkam*' to it. In the IFP library, most manuscripts are identifiable, but it is not possible to rule out exceptions without

¹⁸⁷ The IFP Catalogue (Varadachari, Grimal & Ganesan 1986-2002) contains four volumes. However, one of the manuscripts from this catalogue that we study has not been represented in this catalogue, as work for a fifth volume is still ongoing (or so I have heard during my visit there.) The tell-tale sign of any prose manuscript is the suffix '*vacaṇam*', '*katai*' or '*curukkam*' that is added to the name of the text.

¹⁸⁸ The BNF Tamil manuscripts are around 500 in number. I use the online platform 'gallica.BNF.fr' [last date of access: 09.07.2023] to access digitised manuscripts that come with a catalogue entry, as well as provenance history. The Indien collection of the BNF was collected and/or commissioned during French colonial rule in India. I work only with one manuscript from the collection, which was apparently procured in 1780 (I do not trust this account, and will discuss it further below). As for unlabelled prose material, I have estimated that approximately 30 manuscripts out of 500 are prose, although some are not exclusively so.

¹⁸⁹ The current issue with the GOML collection is that only the paper manuscripts (i.e., the Mackenzie Collection and its copies) have been digitised. The palm-leaf manuscripts that had nothing to do with Mackenzie likely have some prose texts in them, but it is impossible to find them, online or in person. The catalogue comprises thirteen volumes (see bibliography) and does not reveal whether a certain manuscript is prose or not. It is implied somehow that all Mackenzie manuscripts are prose, but manuscripts outside the Collection are not marked. This is a cause for concern, for the GOML collection could contain significant information on the history of prose. It is my hope that future academic attempts take on the task of delineating the prose manuscripts in the GOML.

¹⁹⁰ The UVSL collection contains those manuscripts that Cāminātaiyar himself collected and employed. He was interested primarily in older, poetic works. This library is therefore not the most useful source to the present study on prose.

conducting a manual search first. This problem does not affect my project directly, but creates only a small disadvantage in that I cannot provide accurate statistics of prose manuscripts. Yet, the three prose manuscripts I have suffice to illustrate the literary and material processes that directly preceded the creation of the Mackenzie Collection.

Returning to the theme of Pāṇṭiya histories, the primary written source used is the TVP. It is difficult to define the TVP as one ‘text’, for its stories represent a diverse textual universe — poetry and prose, then interpreted and re-written to suit different audiences and scholarly circles, sometimes with changes made to the storyline.

3.1 Poetic Versions of the TVP¹⁹¹

The TVP is essentially a compilation of 64 Chapters, illustrating the wondrous play-acts (Skt. *līlā*) of Cuntarēcuvavar, the presiding deity of Madurai. Each incident is allotted one Chapter. Its first known version was composed by Perumparrapuliyūr Nampi (ca. 12-14 cent. CE).¹⁹² It is composed in elaborate, notoriously difficult verse, and remains for that reason without commentary, nor translation. The first (and only) editor of the TVP was U. Vē. Cāminātaiyar (henceforth UVS), who published his edition in 1906.¹⁹³ It has, since many years, gone out of print, and I use a 1972 reprint instead. Thanks to a digital transcription made by Mrs. Kamalambal (EFEO, Pondicherry), I have been able to compare both versions, and the differences are not many. Nampi’s text is preceded by an extensive invocatory section, comprising many single laudatory verses (Tam. *kaṭavuḷ vāḷttu* ‘praise to a deity’). The Chapters themselves explore Cuntarēcuvavar, the Pāṇṭiya dynasty, and the mutual subjects/devotees they share, interlocked in a unique, symbiotic relationship. The ‘moral’ of the TVP, as it were, is to remind readers of the glory of Madurai, its deity, and its rulers. Thus, we receive the first link of a long textual chain that is to come.

The next version of the TVP is the *Hālāsya Māhātmya* (15th cent.?)¹⁹⁴ in Sanskrit. The primary difference, apart from the language, is that the order of the 64 Chapters is reorganised into what one might assume is a more historically realistic manner. The *Hālāsya Māhātmya* is then transcreated into Tamil by Parañcōti

¹⁹¹ My summary of Nampi’s TVP is based on my own understanding and translation of the text, for no translations nor commentaries are available. I am also grateful to T. Raja Rethinam, who read Nampi’s text with me for several months in 2020 and helped me translate relevant passages.

¹⁹² See Wilden 2014:24. Cf. Aravamuthan 1931:95: ‘The date of Perum-Parrap-Puliyūr Nambi’s *Tiru-Vīlaiyādal Purāṇam* is not easily fixed: the data are all too few. Considering that it narrates tales of Jñāna-Sambandha and Varaguṇa, — personages assigned general to about 650 A. D. and 810 A. D., — we shall not be far wrong if we concluded that Perum-Parrap-Puliyūr Nambi must be earlier than about 1227-8 A.D. but no facts of probative value have been cited in support. An inscription near the native place of the poet tells of a Perum-Parrap-Puliyūr Nambi who lives about 1304 A.D. but no argument can be adduced in support of the suspicion that he is the poet of our quest unless it be the one of geographical proximity.’

¹⁹³ See bibliography for this entry. As I will shortly clarify, the 1972 edition is much more widely available, and my references are to it. The 1906 edition is out of print.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

Muṇivar, who maintains its re-ordered chapter-format. Parañcōti Muṇivar's version is the basis for the prose interpretations of the TVP that are yet to come.¹⁹⁵

In terms of the Pāñṭiyas, the TVP is the first serious political account of Pāñṭiya histories, which I believe was written as a response to the *Periyapurāṇam* of the Cōlas, their neighbours and enemies.¹⁹⁶ In Nampi's TVP, the literary legacy of Tamil is attributed to the Pāñṭiyas. The famous Tamil Academy of scholars, called the *tamiḷccaṅkam* (also, just 'caṅkam'), credited with the production of what we therefore call Caṅkam literature, is hosted in the court of the Pāñṭiya king. The role of the Pāñṭiyas in upholding Tamil literature is documented through 99 verses, in Chapters 15-20 of Nampi's text.¹⁹⁷ Additionally, these Academy Chapters tell us that the *Iraiyāṇār Akapporuḷ*,¹⁹⁸ a text that explains Tamil love-poetics, was composed by Cuntarēcuvarar of Madurai (called Iraiyāṇār 'lord' in the title) and its commentary written by Nakkīraṇ, the most talented of the several poets in the Academy.¹⁹⁹ Similarly, the history of Madurai and its illustrious dynasty is attributed to the Pāñṭiyas' close relationship with Cuntarēcuvarar. Nampi's TVP speaks of only four Pāñṭiya monarchs in moderate detail. Firstly, Chapter 3 speaks

¹⁹⁵ There are several other poetic interpretations of the TVP legends. See *ibid.* for a full account. This is another reason why I prefer the term 'transcreation' to 'translation when discussing Parañcōti's text. Indeed, he (and several others) took the base story of the TVP from the *Hālāsya Māhātmya*, but created their own narratives within it to produce a new text. As far as I am aware, no version of the TVP is a direct representation of the version upon which it is based.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Wilden 2014:247-8: 'One would be tempted to surmise, but this is mere speculation, that it [TVP] was meant to be a sort of Pāñṭiyaṇ literary counterattack against the Cōlas and their *Periyapurāṇam*. As such it may have been introduced at the time of Māṇavarman Cuntara Pāñṭiya, the king who restored Pāñṭiya power and reconquered Madurai, making it once more the Pāñṭiya capital after a Cōla interregnum of almost three hundred years. Māṇavarman ascended the throne in 1216 as the founder of what is called the second dynasty.' This is a discussion that needs further analysis. For brevity's sake, I attempt to bring out the most significant instances for my argument. Firstly, in terms of the Śaiva saints, the *Periyapurāṇam* is a detailed hagiography. The TVP immediately lays claim to one important saint, Māñikkavācakar. Secondly, the spiritual power of the Madurai temple is frequently compared/set against that of Citamparam. Naṭarāca, the dancing Śiva icon of the golden hall (Tam. *poṇṇampalam*) in Citamparam, is contested in the TVP, where a dancing Śiva performs in the silver hall (Tam. *veḷḷiyampalam*) of Madurai temple. Thirdly, the bitter battles between the Cōlas and the Pāñṭiyas are won by the latter due to Śiva's preference of them. Even if the TVP was not a direct response to the *Periyapurāṇam*, it certainly was a product of its time. I look forward to an opportunity to write a politically considerate comparison of these two important literary works.

¹⁹⁷ Wilden 2014:254.

¹⁹⁸ The literal translation of the title is 'Iraiyāṇār's [book on] matters of Akam'. Akam is the poetic genre that deals with matters of the heart. It relays love-quarrels, reconciliations, and other romantic situations that a young, courting couple endures. The poet who composes an Akam poem must respect several thematic rules, such as the time of day that the poem is set, or the geographical landscape in which the couple live. The poetry is fraught with symbolism and often possesses several layers of meaning, most of which are indirect. Thus, these thematic rules are elucidated in this treatise, among some others, such as the *Poruḷatikāram* of *Tolkāppiyam* (2nd cent. CE).

¹⁹⁹ Different versions of the TVP state different numbers of Caṅkam poets in the Academy. Nampi counts 48, although not explicitly. Parañcōti counts 50, depending if we include Iraiyāṇār among the poets or not. Later prose versions play with the ambiguity and include or exclude certain superfluous or divine characters to suit their narrative. The three main poets of the Academy are Nakkīraṇ (also sometimes Naṅkīrar), Kapilar and Paraṇar. In Nampi's TVP, only seven of the poets have been mentioned by name, including the three aforementioned. The other four are, Iṭaikkāṭar, Uruttiracaṇmar, Maturaippērālvārāyar, and of course, Iraiyāṇār. (Cf. UVS 1972:31).

of Taṭātakai, a Pāṇṭiya princess who is later deified as Mīṇāṭci upon her marriage to Cuntarēcuvar.²⁰⁰ Secondly, Chapter 9 mentions Malayattuvacaṅ Paṇṭiyaṅ, who was the father of Taṭātakai and long deceased. He returned from the dead in order to fulfil a ritual obligation to his widow, Kāñcaṇamālai (Taṭātakai's mother), who then departed the earthly realm along with him, and ended up in Intiraṅ's paradise called Amarāvati. Thirdly, Chapter 10 speaks of Ukkira Pāṇṭiyaṅ, the son of Taṭātakai (= Mīṇāṭci) and Cuntarēcuvarar. In fact, he was Lord Murukaṅ (Śiva's son) disguised as a Pāṇṭiya king that ruled for several centuries. Fourthly, Chapter 47 mentions Varakuṇa Pāṇṭiyaṅ, who asked Cuntarēcuvarar to show him the world of his devotees. Cuntarēcuvarar showed him both heaven and the Pāṇṭiya kingdom, after which the kingdom was also known as *civalōkam* ('the world of Civa'). Thus, in Nampi's text, great importance is given to the Pāṇṭiya dynasty but there are only these four monarchs that are described in his text.

This changes in Parañcōti's version. While Parañcōti maintains Nampi's Chapter titles, as well as the total of 64 chapter-stories, he re-orders the Chapters in what we may assume is a more chronologically sensible way.²⁰¹ The formatting change of Parañcōti is, in this case, the more significant one. Future prose versions of the TVP maintain his formatting. Additionally, there are some changes in narrative between Nampi and Parañcōti, and these prose versions take on the narrative of only the latter. It is my belief that they were not even aware of Nampi's text. This is unsurprising, for it was likely too complex even then to be really taken into account.²⁰² What I can confirm is that the incorporation of chronologies²⁰³ into the TVP narrative was a prose phenomenon. Parañcōti's updated format may have provided a more conducive environment for a more historically inclined text to be created, but the actual list of approximately 72 Pāṇṭiya kings emerged with prose versions of the TVP. This relieves us of two misconceptions — firstly, that Mackenzie, and by extension, Orientalist scholars, introduced historical sensibilities to South Indian writing, and secondly, that a chronology, although not delineated as such in early South Indian prose writings, was the response to a more factual, historically oriented, writing culture. We will revisit the significance of the

²⁰⁰ Perhaps it is worth noting here, that the name Mīṇāṭci is a political pun. If we take the 'āṭci' part to be from Skt. *akṣī* 'she with eyes', we have 'she with fish-shaped eyes' — a perfectly acceptable beauty-trope in Tamil. If we maintain 'āṭci' as Tam. 'rule', we have 'rule of the fish', the fish being the sigil of the Pāṇṭiya dynasty.

²⁰¹ The *Hālāsya Mahātmya* has done this re-ordering already. However, I am certain that this Sanskrit text has not directly been incorporated by the composers of prose versions of the TVP. For more information on this text, see, for instance, Fisher 2017. In this work, Chapter 4 deals with the chronologies in greater detail.

²⁰² There are some manuscripts of Nampi's TVP that have been transmitted. As far as I am aware, the only complete manuscript that also includes the lengthy introductory chapters and invocatory verses is RE47715, at the IFP. I attribute their transmission to the fact that Nampi was considered important among Śaiva circles, given the theme of his work, and was therefore maintained. In an article for the TST project (Bhaskar, forthcoming), I provide an overview of the already located manuscripts of this text.

²⁰³ By this, I mean the inclusion of a table of kings in chronological order, and later, with dates provided to indicate the length of their reign. The mention of some kings' names is present in the literary versions by Nampi and Parañcōti. However, the later prose versions have ensured that a longer list of kings is given, and this was further updated in the Mackenzie lists, where a date was also provided.

chronology in later parts of this work. For now, it is worth remembering that the first line of almost every single prose TVP begins with the phrase that mentions the king who ruled during the occurrence of that play-act of Cuntarēcuvarar. That is a marked shift from the days of Parañcōti (forgetting Nampi entirely here!), where the opening sentence of a chapter was a phrase of praise to Cuntarēcuvarar.

3.2 Prose Versions of the TVP

Keeping the poetic versions of the TVP in mind, I begin my analysis of the three prose manuscripts that give us the story of the TVP with an emphasis on their treatment of Pāñṭiya chronologies and their format and style. The first two, Indien 291 and RE27530 have the same textual ancestor. Possibly, the former manuscript is the ancestor of the latter. The third manuscript, RE25375, is a later prose version from 1861²⁰⁴ that modifies significantly the origin-story of the TVP for the first time.²⁰⁵ The altered story then becomes the standard for later printed versions. My goal here is to display through the common link shared between these works, how the tradition of narrating a story changes with every generation of scholar, almost only because of changing (or updated?) notions of what ‘history’/‘*purāṇa*’/‘*carittiram*’/‘historiography’ mean. First, I discuss the common points between Indien 291, and RE27530. I try to show how the flexibility of the prose medium plays an important part in determining the outcome of the final text and how one must look carefully to identify common threads within a textual tradition. Secondly, I discuss RE25375 and its successor, a print-book published in 2010, sold in front of the main door of the Mīṇāṭci Cuntarēcuvarar temple in Madurai, as an example of how textual traditions, as well as their media, may change, but how several elements are faithfully maintained through those changes. Finally, I tie these two comparisons together in the form of a timeline and attempt to contextualise them with the *carittirams* of the Mackenzie Collection, which were their contemporaries in terms of time, but successors in terms of style and format.

Prior to my analysis, a clarification of my understanding of relevant technical terms is necessary. We delve into the world of what I have thus far called prose, which I understand to be an umbrella term for specific genres that call themselves *vacaṇam*, *katai* and *curukkam*. Just as I argued in section 1.9 that the terms *carittiram*, *varalāru* and *kaipītu* do not bear marked differences to each other, the same is the case of the three early prose genres. What I do argue is that the collective *vacaṇam*, *katai* and *curukkam* differ greatly from the collective *carittiram*, *varalāru*

²⁰⁴ I am indebted to Giovanni Ciotti for converting the dates mentioned in the colophon of this manuscript.

²⁰⁵ Usually, texts that describe the history of a holy place or deity flit between the terminology of ‘*purāṇam*’ (‘legend’) and ‘*stalapurāṇam*’ (‘legend of a holy place’). The two terms are used in alternation in different places, sometimes to describe the very same text. It is possible that the introduction of the word ‘*stalapurāṇam*’ was due to cataloguers, who felt the need to differentiate it from the traditional (i.e., Sanskrit) *purāṇam* and its translations, which describe more the history of a specific deity, than that of a specific place (for example, ‘*skandapurāṇam*’). In Sanskrit, the ‘*māhātmya*’ is usually the equivalent of the Tamil *stalapurāṇam*. Yet, Parañcōti’s text calls itself *Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam* and not, say, *Maturai Stalapurāṇam*, although it claims to have been translated from the *Hālāsya Māhātmya*. The adoption of these terminologies from Sanskrit into Tamil is not linear, and their usage within Tamil is fluid.

and *kaipītu*, for they represent different phases within the spectrum of Tamil prose. The former deals with literature and the latter with history, from the perspective of the writings themselves. From my own perspective as a reader/student, I prefer to see both categories as forms of ‘historical literature’, that represent slightly different circumstances in terms of their audience. The former speaks to non-colonial, primarily religious, moderately literate audiences and the latter to colonial, historically curious, but linguistically ignorant audiences. This analysis is benefitted by the fact that all three manuscripts contain texts that call themselves *vacaṇam*, which I have chosen to translate as ‘prose re-telling’. I would surmise that the influence of orality and spoken lingo is strong, and the word *vacaṇam* is representative of that. The lack of secondary material on Tamil prose becomes a problem in this portion of my thesis, for I am working at the intersection of three disciplines, all of which are hardly discussed in academia — the binary of spoken and written Tamil, the transformation of poetry into prose, and the subsequent transformation of prose manuscripts to print.

3.3 Indien 291 — The Connecting Link Between Poetry and Prose

This manuscript, according to the catalogue entry made by its acquirer, was included into the BNF collection in 1790. I do not take this date seriously.²⁰⁶ It is an incomplete, prose account of the TVP and functions as a mini-commentary to Parañcōti’s text. It provides in the very first Chapter a gloss of the key-words in Parañcōti’s TVP and elucidates the storyline of each Chapter in simple prose. This convention is not followed throughout the text, but it is clear that Parañcōti was kept in mind throughout, for this prose account maintains his order of Chapters, as well as their titles. The invocatory verse of Parañcōti is also provided in the first folio of this manuscript. It reads as follows:

சத்தி யாய்ச் சிவமாகித் தனிப்பர,
முத்தி யான முதலைத் துதிசெய்ச்,
சுத்தி யாகிய சொற்பொரு ணல்குவ,
சித்தி யானைதன் செய்யபொற் பாதமே.

catti āy civam-āki taṇip para(m)
muttiyāṇa mutalai tuti ceya
cutti ākiya col-poruḷ nalkuva
citti-yāṇai taṇ ceyya poṇ pātamē.

In order to make praise of the foremost [spiritual tenets] that are the unique, highest salvation,

²⁰⁶ This is discussed in greater detail below. Therefore, here is but a brief explanation: The BNF collection, although vast, does not contain any proof of provenance of any of its manuscripts. Its collectors/cataloguers Vinson and Freer, claim that this manuscript was collected in 1790, but do not provide any basis for it. See Vinson & Freer (1801?:67r) for the catalogue entry for this manuscript.

[That salvation] having become Civam (i.e, the essence of Śaiva-ness) who is Catti (= Śakti),
 May the red, golden feet of the success[-giving] elephant (Ganeśa/Cittiviṇāyakar)
 Grant words and [their] meanings that are pure.²⁰⁷

Later on, Parañcōti's short invocation (that he calls '*kāppu*' 'protective verse') becomes the standard invocatory verse for most TVP manuscripts in Tamil, including those that document Nampi's text.²⁰⁸ Parañcōti's TVP essentially becomes the chosen version that is circulated and re-interpreted in prose even today. Nampi's text remains forgotten, but Parañcōti, although also an ornamental poet, is far easier to understand.²⁰⁹ Indien 291 is an incomplete manuscript. Likely, the second half has been lost, as it abruptly ends with story 51 (of 64).

Cabaton (1912:43) tells us that it was collected by Eugène Burnouf in 1790. According to Burnouf's catalogue of the BNF manuscripts (1854:346), Entry No. 171 describes this manuscript as follows:

'Manuscrit tamoul, en prose, dont j'ignore le titre, mais dont le contenu me paraît être religieux et mythologique. — Ce manuscrit considérable qui est bien écrit et lisible, quoique l'écriture n'en soit pas noircie, se compose de 169 olles.'

'Tamil manuscript, in prose, whose title I do not know, but whose content seems to me to be religious and mythological. This considerable manuscript, which is well written and legible despite the writing being unblackened, consists of 169 'olles' [Tam. *ōlai* - palm-leaf]'

I have counted 168 folios, based on the scan of the manuscript available on the BNF online collection. Burnouf's count (169 *ōlais*) would therefore tell us that he received it in an incomplete state. Additionally, a third, handwritten source speaks of this manuscript. Julien Vinson and Léon Feer (1801?:67r) have added an entry in their unpublished, handwritten catalogue that identifies the texts. They also note that it is incomplete. They connect it to Parañcōti's text, but say nothing more of its acquisition. As for the date of acquisition provided (Cabaton 1912:43), this cannot be true. According to a more recent online catalogue made by Eva Wilden,²¹⁰ the date of production is estimated at 1852, based on the fact that it is part of the collection of Eugène Burnouf (1812-1852), and thus cannot be after Burnouf's death. I would say

²⁰⁷ '*cuttiyākiya*' is glossed by the commentator (Parañcōti 1912:5) as '*pari-cuttamākiya*' 'that which is pure/clean'. This is a later word invoked to convey the spiritual purity of Śaivism. Such words are altogether absent from Nampi — another sign of the many centuries that passed between these two composers.

²⁰⁸ I speak of this further in a forthcoming article in the final volume for the project 'Text Surrounding Texts'. For an insight into this project, see Anandakichenin & Wilden 2020. It is through this project that I became aware of the BNF Tamil collection.

²⁰⁹ As far as I am aware, there exist only two scholarly works that engage directly with Nampi's TVP namely, Aravamathan (1931; 1932) and Wilden (2014). There is also a Tamil introduction to the TVP by UVS (1907), where several analyses of toponyms, Nampi's life, and other pertinent topics are made.

²¹⁰ https://tst-project.github.io/mss/Indien_0291.xml [last date of access: 09.07.2023]

that it is older than that, but cannot be sure of any exact date. My basis for saying so is the state of the physical artefact — it is uninked, does not use the *pulli* (that signifies closed consonants and becomes standard usage around the late 18th century, with exceptions), is heavily damaged, and it has at least one textual successor, which is a much more ‘modernised’ manuscript (inked, with *pullis*, better condition).

The textual successor of Indien 291 is RE27530, in the IFP.²¹¹ To see an identical representation of the text in Indien 291 was surprising for several reasons. Upon engaging with Indien 291, the first of the three manuscripts in my study that I gained access to, I had assumed that *vacanams* were composed spontaneously. I had also assumed that the circles in which the *vacanam* were shared were insular, such as those of nuclear families or small temples. Thirdly, I had believed the manuscripts to be treated as reading/writing practice for students, given the frequent change of handwriting and many spelling errors. All three points were called into question when I located RE27530, a faithful representation of the text of Indien 291 in another version. A comparison of these two manuscripts will be included in my study further on, but first, there is a need for the proper analysis of the *vacanam* genre of writing. If works were transmitted faithfully with only few emendations, it would mean that the apparent spontaneity of the *vacanam* was, in fact, obtained by careful, calculated writing. This would suggest that we are looking at a special written register that requires analysis. Therefore, before I get into the content of the *vacanam*, I conduct a preliminary linguistic study of it. In this way, the conventions I have adopted to transcribe and translate it are clarified, and our idea of what makes an ‘accurate’ or ‘well-curated’ manuscript are revised. Following this, I will revert to analysing specific themes, and/or ideas that these texts display, and re-connect them to the main topic of this dissertation — the manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection.

The link between prose and poetry is thus made by Indien 291. It uses Parañcōti’s text as its guide, and is in turn used to (re-)write prose versions of the TVP, as we witness in RE27530. In the same way, yet another connecting link exists between prose of the 18-19th centuries and that of the 20th-21st centuries. RE25375, another IFP palm-leaf manuscript, was completed in around 1861²¹² and bears many textual similarities to a 2010 print-edition of the TVP. This represents the transference of palm-leaf directly to print. It brings one to the question of how this transference took place, for I have not been able to trace any intermediary steps. For instance, I would have been unsurprised to find a paper version of RE27535, from which the print version was made. At the same time, RE25375 was completed in 1861, as per its colophon. Thus, it was written well after paper manuscripts (such as those of the Mackenzie Collection) came into use. It has largely standardised its orthography and formatting.

After my introduction of this written register, I provide passages that compare both textual groups, namely, Indien 291 and RE27530, and RE25375 and a modern printed book.

²¹¹ I have discussed the provenance of this manuscript in the following section.

²¹² Many thanks to Giovanni Ciotti for decoding the colophon for me.

3.3 Contextualising Early Written Prose — the *vacanam* and Other Genres²¹³

Working with *vacanam* manuscripts entails a thorough understanding of the grammar of their language. Here, however, I must work in the reverse. In the absence of any grammar that represents the *vacanam*, I must use the three manuscripts in my study to determine the basic criteria required to analyse them for future scholars. Here, I think of the *vacanam* as representative of an interesting combination of circumstances, reflected in the way it has so far been perceived — firstly, it has not attracted any interest in the scholarly community, probably due to its ease of understanding. Secondly, I have realised through oral correspondences with scholars that most view the *vacanam* as a *mélange* of spoken and written registers and simply a precursor to the more standardised (and therefore more consistent) modern Tamil prose writings. Thirdly, there is a preference among scholars to read more poetic (i.e., more ‘beautiful’) versions of the TVP. As I have mentioned earlier, it is no longer viable to suggest that the *vacanam* is spontaneous, for at least two *vacanam* texts can be found to have been transmitted faithfully. Additionally, the linguistic binary of ‘spoken’ and ‘written’ requires further enquiry, for the *vacanam* is in fact only written. There is a temptation to assume that which is ‘spontaneous’ to be inspired by the spoken. In that case, why have transmitters refrained from ‘correcting’ earlier versions of the text into more consistent writing?

I look at the *vacanam* from two temporal perspectives: on one hand, they are the precursor to the Mackenzie manuscripts, more so because I speak of the Pāṇṭiyas, whose first ‘histories’ were the TVP. On the other, they are the aftermath of a rich poetic tradition, likely used to compensate for dwindling expertise/interest in difficult poetry. The *vacanam* connects Mackenzie to a broader past, and by doing so, takes the Mackenzie manuscripts outside of the colonial context and into the Tamil literary tradition as a whole. In this, one realises that traditions have changed over time and adapted to suit their circumstance. Thus, from the point of view of the modern reader, it is as unnecessary as it is inaccurate to state that the *vacanam* was a mere precursor to the standardised, ‘smoother’ prose of the Mackenzie manuscripts. This brings me to the particular challenge of editing the *vacanam* without grammatical reference — how does a student such as myself identify an error? If the writer/scribe wrote this way on purpose, what qualifies as an error to us today is not an error for them. My first criterion is therefore to understand, through writing patterns found in these three manuscripts, what constitutes a ‘true’ error — that is, what was written unintentionally by the writer. I begin my analysis with an enumeration of the basic conventions I have adopted, through which I hope to treat the *vacanam* in as unintrusive a manner as possible. In other words, I hope that my conventions allow for the acceptance of the scribal style without inaccurately attributing errors where

²¹³ At this point, I speak of all three prose genres (*vacanam*, *katai* and *curukkam*) as ‘*vacanam*’, so that I might be succinct. Here, the *carittiram* of the Mackenzie Collection is omitted, for it represents a slightly different writing approach. It seems to be a revised, standardised form of the prose we see in the *vacanam*, which is why I deal with it separately in the fourth and final Chapter of my dissertation. I use some grammatical abbreviations in this section — ‘n.’ for noun, ‘abs.’ for the absolute verb and ‘inf.’ for the infinitive verb. All unclear readings are marked with ‘?’.

there were in fact none. I take the following factors into account: a) ambiguous vowel length, b) the switching of certain consonants (\tilde{n} , η and \underline{n} , or r and \underline{r} , or l , l and \underline{l}), c) the usage of glides (y and v), and d) the employment of internal and external combining of letters/words (Skt. *sandhi*; Tam. *puṅarcci*). Hopefully, they provide a basic structure to transcribe these manuscripts with accuracy. Following this explanation, I can begin to compare passages of the *vacanam* texts in my study.

3.4 Ambiguous Vowel Length

a) case-ending e/\bar{e} : In these manuscripts, the length of the final e for the following five case-endings is unclear. e and \bar{e} are undifferentiated in all three *vacanams*, except in a few places in RE25375, which is frequent enough to be taken seriously into account as a convention. Even then, it could be a scriptorial ambiguity, as morphologically, e sometimes looks like \bar{e} but is not necessarily \bar{e} . I make the difference between e and \bar{e} in my transliteration in most cases, except for when they occur at the end of a word, usually as an extension of a case-ending. Consider the following instances:

i) noun + locative: When the locative case is marked, contrary to the usual modern literary locative $-il$, these manuscripts contain $-ile/\bar{e}$, which is now only a spoken form that is pronounced somewhere in between the short e and the long \bar{e} . It is therefore difficult to discern exactly what the scribes of these manuscripts meant in terms of pronunciation. The semantics are clear — that it is without a doubt a locative case, backed by extensive evidence of spoken Tamil — but I would surmise that the scribes here intentionally applied the ambiguity in the spoken to their writing. Thus, I did not find it necessary to choose between e and \bar{e} , and leave it as the short e (since that is, after all, scriptorially what is represented in the manuscripts). e.g. *vīṭṭile* ‘at home’.

ii) noun + locative + emphatic: An extension of the previous phenomenon, where the length of the final e vowel is unclear is seen in the addition of the emphatic. e.g. *vīṭṭileye* ‘only at home/indeed at home’. It is possible that the last of the two e is the longer, for the emphatic is pronounced mostly so. Still, I hesitate to make a more firm differentiation, for Tamil has so many dialectal variations.

iii) noun + locative + ablative: Although semantically, this is simply the ablative case, it is interesting to separate the various components of this noun-case in such a way because the now medially occurring locative still maintains the ambiguous vowel length of e . e.g. *vīṭṭileyiruntu* ‘from home’. In speech, the possibility of including an emphatic after the locative and before the ablative also exists. For example, in *vīṭṭileye-iruntu*, the two medial short es combine to form one clearly long \bar{e} , i.e., *vīṭṭilēyiruntu*, following, interestingly, the rules of Sanskrit grammar.²¹⁴ Since these

²¹⁴ The presence of Sanskrit *sandhi* rules, particularly in the case of vowel combinations, is a remarkable feature of these manuscripts which will be discussed further in the sub-section ‘*Sandhi*.’

manuscripts do not differentiate between *e* and \bar{e} as a general rule, it is difficult to conclusively identify the presence of the emphatic. In other words, morphologically, noun + locative + ablative *vīṭṭileyiruntu* would be, in these manuscripts, identical to noun + locative + emphatic + ablative *vīṭṭilēyiruntu*. It would also seem that semantically, the emphatic holds little value in such cases. Thus, I simply take these readings as *e*.

iv) noun + emphatic: Sometimes, the standalone emphatic is combined with the pronoun, although rarely. e.g. *avaṇe* ‘he alone, he himself’. Although structurally simpler than the four cases discussed above, this too holds the same ambiguity as the others — that the vocalised sound stands somewhere in between *e* and \bar{e} . Additionally, it would seem that both the short and the long are possible, depending on specific contexts in pronunciation. Thus, three possibilities: *avaṇe*, *avaṇē* and the sound somewhere in between exist. Semantically, it does appear to hold a slight difference, which I discuss further in the following section. Additionally, in the comparative particle *pōl*, the emphatic *e* is added in the end. In terms of transcription, here too, I simply maintain the reading of the manuscript, i.e., *e*.

b) vowel length in Sanskrit loan-words: In most cases, the Sanskrit loan-words containing the Sanskrit vowel *e* are rendered in Tamil as \bar{e} , i.e. ए = ஏ. The simple justification for adopting this observation as an absolute rule is that the Sanskrit *e* consistently has the same phonetic value (two *mātrā*-s) of Tamil \bar{e} . There are, however, some interesting phenomena that take place regarding vowel length in Sanskrit loan-words in Tamil, which are worth noting here. As is the case with several other linguistic features in these manuscripts, an ‘obvious’ rule is still worth analysing, for it holds great significance in later arguments where I attempt to discern the register of Tamil of these texts. The two possible cases pertaining to the length of *e* in Sanskrit loan-words in Tamil are:

i) Sanskrit loan-words with \bar{e} : In the case of Sanskrit loan-words in Tamil, e.g. Skt. *kleśa* > Tam. *kilēcam* ‘affliction or suffering,’ pronunciation of the word determines immediately the length of the vowel in question. The Sanskrit *e* is always two *mātrās* and is thus the same as the Tamil \bar{e} . In these manuscripts, *kilēcam* is rendered as *kilecam*. There is no doubt that what is meant is *kilēcam*. Another example would be Skt. *veda* > Tamil *vētam*. In the case of a Sanskrit compound noun rendered in Tamil, this rule is still maintained. For example, Skt. *sundara* + *īśvara* = *sundareśvara* > Tam. *cuntarēcuvara*. Thus, I transcribe all *es* present in Sanskrit loan-words as \bar{e} .

ii) Sanskrit loan-words with short *e*: Although the previous rule might seem obvious, I mentioned as there does seem to be an exception that is equally prevalent in the *vacaṇam*. When rendering certain Sanskrit words as loan-words in Tamil, it would appear that the Sanskrit short *a* is converted into a Tamil short *e*. e.g. Skt. *daṇḍa* > Tam. *teṇṭam* ‘staff or rod’. There are several examples of this present as accepted and often-used ‘Tamilised’ Sanskrit forms, one particularly note-worthy one

in these manuscripts being Skt. *darśan* > Tam. *tericinam*. Since this phenomenon is well-documented here, and continues to feature extensively in modern Tamil, there is no requirement to question it in any way. It is the short vowel that is applied here.

iii) the occasional accusative to mark the destination *to which* one is going is also present in these manuscripts. Usually, one denotes the destination to which one is going in the dative case. i.e., *nāṅ vīṭṭirku pōkirēṅ* ‘I am going home’, or literally translated, ‘I am going *to* [my] home’. In Sanskrit, the same phenomenon is represented in the accusative. Despite the spontaneous language used in these manuscripts, on occasion, one sees the influence of Sanskrit, a literary language that is seldom spoken, here. Thus, we sometimes see *naṅ vīṭṭai pōkirēṅ* instead of *vīṭṭirku*. The question of vowel length arises when we get a further distortion — instead of *vīṭṭai*, we see *vīṭṭe*. Although this looks exactly like the standalone emphatic case-ending, it semantically represents the accusative. One common example in the text of all three palm-leaf manuscripts is *kōvile vantū*, ‘coming to the temple’. This is, structurally speaking, a combination of the spoken ambiguity of the final *e* of Tamil that we see rendered as a written ambiguity and the semantic Sanskritisation that is surprising, despite its frequency, in these written documents. Keeping in mind the convention of transcribing the final *e* of the case suffixes as a consistent rule, I maintain that here as well. The semantic value of this accusative will be reflected in my translations and discussed in detail with examples.

c) *o* and *ō* — vowel length: Just like the scriptorial, phonetic and semantic ambiguities present with *e* and *ē* that may, but mostly may not, be mutually exclusive of each other, the same exists for *o* and *ō*. Many of the same rules that I have adopted for *e* and *ē* apply here with *o* and *ō*. These manuscripts do not make a difference between *o* and *ō* at all. The final *o* is commonly seen in these texts, but with a different semantic role. They exist most commonly as a suffix to the finite verb to imply uncertainty, doubt and/or rhetoric. An example of doubt or uncertainty would be *vantāṅ* ‘he came’ > *vantāṅo* ‘did he come?’ An example of a rhetorical question would be *nāṅ iruppēṅo* ‘would I be there?’. In terms of phonetics, it appears that in most cases, especially when conveying a rhetorical question, *ō* is implied. In modern Tamil printed texts, wherein differentiation in vowel-length is made, *ō* is adopted consistently. However, in speech, it would seem that based on several context-based nuances, the length of the *o*, much like the length of the *e*, could be one of any three possibilities — *o*, *ō*, or somewhere in between. Whether the length of the vowel influences the semantics or vice versa, is yet to be fully determined. A modern Tamil speaker might argue that the spoken is always *ō*, because all printed versions that distinguish vowel length have *ō*, but I would surmise rather that this is a ‘chicken or egg’ situation. If one were to closely listen to various samples of a spoken Tamil, the vowel length for the case of the final *o* is just as ambiguous as for the case of *e*. Thus, I would suggest that current spoken Tamil has attempted to standardise itself based on standardised writing conventions. There are some occurrences in which the length of the vowel is clear and are discussed in the following section. For my transcriptions, I adhere consistently to the short final *o*, just as with the final *e*.

3.5 The Switching of Certain Consonants

a) n , \underline{n} , η and \tilde{n} , \dot{n} : It would seem that there is some internal confusion that is reflected in these texts on the usage of n and \underline{n} in particular. As per the rules of Tamil spelling, n occurs in word initial position and prior to t , and \underline{n} occurs anywhere else. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, particularly in Sanskrit loan-words which will be discussed shortly. Regardless, the standalone \underline{n} or n is pronounced exactly in the same way, and the difference made is only in writing. That the presence of this confusion indicates a leaning towards knowledge of spoken Tamil and comparatively less practice in written Tamil is obvious, but requires further investigation. The reason for this is simple: all texts have some natural presence of spelling error, regardless of the expertise of the scholar and/or scribe in charge of its composition. The confusion between the word initial n and \underline{n} is one of the most common errors made by school-children in their written essays even today, despite years of training in written Tamil that is independent of the Tamil they speak at home.

a) the initial \underline{n} and n confusion: in the case of the confusion of \underline{n} and n in word initial position, I always correct it, because spelling rules of Tamil dictate that no word can begin with \underline{n} . In conformance with the general rules that I have described in the very beginning, I correct \underline{n} in word initial position to n , by crossing out the former and adding the latter in my transcriptions. For example, ~~\underline{n}~~ n \tilde{ilam} . I maintain this convention for any other incorrect characters that I edit in the texts.

b) the medially occurring stand-alone \underline{n}/n in Sanskrit loan-words: There seems to be no fixed standard when adopting Sanskrit loan-words into Tamil, regarding this question. For example, words such as Skt. *vinoda* are written in Tamil either as \underline{v} \underline{i} \underline{n} \underline{o} \underline{t} \underline{a} \underline{m} or \underline{v} \underline{i} \underline{n} \underline{o} \underline{t} \underline{a} \underline{m} . Other examples are \underline{a} \underline{n} \underline{a} \underline{n} \underline{d} \underline{a} \underline{m} / \underline{a} \underline{n} \underline{a} \underline{n} \underline{d} \underline{a} \underline{m} . A consistent standard seems to be adopted in Sanskrit loan-words in which only one \underline{n}/n is required, and it is both preceded and succeeded by a short vowel, e.g. Skt. *vana* is always spelled in Tamil as \underline{v} \underline{a} \underline{n} \underline{a} \underline{m} , and never as \underline{v} \underline{a} \underline{n} \underline{a} \underline{m} . In these texts, no confusion in spelling such loan-words is observed, but in the case of a loan-word in which the \underline{n}/n is preceded and succeeded by two vowels of differential length, no one standard is adopted. Thus, In the case of medially occurring stand-alone \underline{n}/n in Sanskrit loan-words, I offer no correction of the original text and leave it as such in the transcription.

c) the \underline{n} and η confusion: Rarely, but still often enough to take into consideration, these texts alternate between \underline{n} and η . The interesting cases are where an η is required, but an \underline{n} is used instead. The consonants \underline{n} and t cannot be combined. η must always precede t , e.g. \underline{k} \underline{o} \underline{n} \underline{t} \underline{u} . Given the morphological similarity of these two letters — ஊ and ஊ — this interchangeability may be a writing error more than an orthographic one. There are minimal occurrences of this phenomenon the other way around, i.e., an η in place of an \underline{n} . They are so rare, that I suggest that they too are writing errors. Additionally, the difference between \underline{n} and η is always made in spoken Tamil. Thus,

the interchangeability in these texts cannot be dismissed as a spoken anomaly. Given that I adopt the confusion between *ṇ* and *ṇ* as errors in the manuscript, I correct them, e.g. *koṇṇṭu*, *vāṇṇam*. In some cases, it is scriptorially difficult to determine whether an *ṇ* or an *ṇ* is meant. Perhaps the scribe is correct in his spelling, but the reader of today cannot discern that, given the damage that the folios have since undergone. In such cases, I use the neighbouring letters to determine the correct letter, based on modern orthographic conventions. For example, *ṇ* can precede *r*, but *ṇ* can never precede *r*. Similarly, as seen above in *koṇṭu*, *ṇ* can precede *t*, but *ṇ* cannot.

d) the occasional *ñ* in place of *ṇ*: Where a doubling of *ṇ* is required, e.g., *aṇṇaṇam*, we often find *aññaṇam* in these manuscripts. It is plausible that this is the result of a difficulty in pronunciation, for the doubled *ṇ* is quite rare in Tamil. This phenomenon, rather than an adopted convention, seems to be in place only for specific words, one of which is the example presented above. The other example, still rarer, is a doubled *ñ* in the place of *m* + plural suffix *kaḷ*, which produces *-ṇkaḷ*. For example, *camuttiraṇkaḷ* is written as *camuttiraññaḷ*. The doubling of the *ñ* gives the researcher the impression that it is written purposefully and intentionally. Thus, I do not edit these occurrences in any way, but leave them to be analysed in the following section.

e) the occasional initial *ñ* in the place of *n*: Observed specifically in the word *nālaiyile* ('in the days') in all three texts is the alternative spelling *ñālaiyile*. Given that *n* could orthographically be mistaken for *ñ*, I am yet to discern whether to count this as an error or not. For now, I do not correct them, for they are anyway so rare.²¹⁵

f) hypercorrecting *ṇṇ* and others — there is also some documentation in these texts of the hypercorrected *ṇṇ* into *ṇr*, e.g. *paṇṇi* (the absolute of *paṇṇutal* to do) → *paṇri*. Although infrequent, it is an instance of a written form that is then spoken and then re-rendered into written Tamil. It stands testament to the complexity of the linguistic features of these texts — that although to the modern reader this is simply a hypercorrect form (and therefore erroneous), it is to the scribe the correct(ed) way of writing something down. Usually, absolutes and finite forms are distorted when rendered in speech. e.g. *koṭuttal* 'to give' always becomes *kuṭuttal*, thus producing the absolute of *kuṭuttu*. Given this 'usual' pattern, verbal roots such as *paṇṇu* ('to do') and *ott-* ('to resemble') sound 'spoken', although they are perfectly accepted written forms. I would surmise that the scribes here read these forms and are taken aback by how 'spoken' they appear, and thus attempt to make it look more "written" when inscribing these texts by adding the hypercorrection in question. The hypercorrected absolute form of *paṇṇutal* is *paṇri*, which is, at first glance the noun meaning 'pig'. All the hypercorrected forms of *ottutal* ('to resemble') become *orru*, which means 'to bring into contact or to push'. To eliminate the semantic confusion, but retain the

²¹⁵ The alternation between *ñ* and *n* is old. For example, in *nekiḷtal/ñekiḷtal* (to slip off, as bangles), seen for instance in *Kalittokai* 17, and *Aiṅkuṇunūru* 20 respectively. I would attribute it largely to dialectal variations. Here, though, the objective of highlighting this point is to show how it functions more as a hypercorrection than a dialectal variation.

scriptorial uniqueness of such forms, I leave the transcription without edit, but discuss the form in a footnote for each such case.

g) *ḷ, ḷ̣ and ḷ*: They sometimes used interchangeably, particularly to writing *ḷ* in the place of *ḷ̣*, e.g. *kēḷkka* instead of *kēḷ̣kka*. These alternate spellings (and thus pronunciations) had already been documented²¹⁶ in European projects in Tamil studies, indicating definitively that these are not errors or anomalies, but accepted forms that constitute this register of Tamil. The reverse process — *ḷ* instead of *ḷ̣* is equally ubiquitous in these texts. e.g. *vāḷka*. In both these cases, I do not edit the text at all. However, in the case of *ḷ* in the place of *ḷ̣* and/or *ḷ̣̣*, I correct the text, as it is both rare and inconsistent enough to be counted as an error, and is certainly not reflected in pronunciation.

h) *r* and *ṛ*: Even today, the difference, particularly in terms of pronunciation, between *r* and *ṛ* is ambiguous, even among native Tamil speakers. It would seem that at some point, the usage of *r* and *ṛ* was re-standardised²¹⁷. One could dismiss the seemingly random interchangeability of *r* and *ṛ* as a simple lack of importance paid to the subtle difference between them. On the phonetic level, perhaps the difference is so subtle that its neglect is justified in these texts, but scriptorially and in written grammar, a more detailed study of occurrences of the interchangeable *r* and *ṛ* could yield a more meaningful result.²¹⁸

3.6 The Usage of Glides (*y* and *v*)

In the transcription, I remove all glides. However, there seems to be an additional role of the *y* glide in these texts. More often than not, an initial *y* is observed prior to a vowel. Sometimes, it could be mistaken for a glide, but it also occurs where a glide is not necessary. Let us take the following sentence which gives us both cases, a) where the *y* is necessary as a glide, and b) where *y* is added as part of the spelling of the word.

²¹⁶ The first non-native students of Tamil were the Portugese, and they had already observed the dialectal variations within Tamil. Antaõ de Proença documented many of these variations in his Tamil-Portugese Dictionary (1679), including the example of *kēḷkka* given above (See the manuscript Borg.ind.12 at the Vatican Library, founder under this link: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.ind.12/315) [update towards the end]. Given that I have dedicated a later section (Section III) to this study, I do not discuss it any further here. For a general introduction to the Portugese study of the Tamil Language, see Stephen 2008. For a more detailed and chronological account of European scholarship in Tamil Studies, see Chevillard 2014.

²¹⁷ In classical Tamil literature, spellings are standard and consistent. By the time we arrive at the 18th century, the *vacaṇam* texts reflect a tradition that does not prioritise consistency of spelling, until in the later 19th century, when there is a sudden re-emergence of standardised spelling conventions. This is reflected particularly in the case of *r* and *ṛ* and found consistently in printed documents. The role of the *r* and *ṛ* seems to be understood by the scholars of this period as suggestively grammatical, rather than phonetic.

²¹⁸ As far as I am aware, the difference between *r* and *ṛ* is very subtle in spoken Tamil across all regional dialects, with few significant exceptions. It is therefore unsurprising how they are often interchanged. This also confirms that the *vacaṇam* was based on spoken pronunciations and not orthographic rules.

*cuntarapāṇṭiyarum yeppōtum pōle kōvilile civaliṅkattile yeḷuntaruḷi iruntār.*²¹⁹

In *yeppōtum*, the initial glide is simply not required as a glide, because it is preceded by a closed consonant. In the case of *yeḷunt-aruḷi*, given that it is preceded by the vowel *e*, the use of the glide is justified. Thus, the usage of *y* in *yeppōtum* conforms to case b, and the usage of *y* in *yeḷunt-aruḷi* conforms to case a. Thus, in case a, where the use of *y* is clearly as that of a glide, I will remove it from the transcription. In case b, I will retain the initial *y*. In the case of incorrectly used glides (i.e., glides that make no sense even in the spoken register), they too will be eliminated from the transcription. For example, அதிகமான யொரு instead of அதிகமான ஒரு. The former is in fact harder to pronounce, defeating the purpose of the glide in the first place.

The reason behind retaining the *y* in case b is that it is yet another significant way of studying the features of the languages in these texts and their close relationship with spoken Tamil. In spoken Tamil, the initial *y* is often added for ease of pronunciation. So much is it an accepted inflection of speech that it gives rise to hypercorrections when a native Tamil speaker speaks English. For example, rather than say ‘yellow’, one would say ‘ellow’. The presence of the redundant glide in the *vacanam* is probably due to the influence of spoken Tamil.

3.7. Sandhi

The rules of *sandhi* (Tam. புணர்ச்சி) are well-attested in modern Tamil prose. And yet, these scribes do not seem to pay any attention to those rules. In most cases, we encounter a complete absence of *sandhi* rather than the erroneous use of *sandhi*. I provide one definitive reason for this. The scribes, now writing in prose, were only familiar with writing in *scripto continua*. Knowing the rules of *sandhi* was necessary to to separate individual words. Thus, the space between words, which was introduced by Europeans²²⁰ to Indian writing, emerged not long before the three *vacanam* manuscripts in my study. The absence of *sandhi* is further confirmed by Meenakshisundaram (1974:81-2) who states in his work *The Contribution of European Scholars to Tamil*:

‘...the splitting of Tamil words however, was restricted to prose works only. There was and still is a firm belief that in poetry if the words are separated and split the rhythm and diction was lost...’

Thus, splitting words to form individual graphemes, as opposed to Tamil poetry in which the unsplit words were essential to the delivery of the poem itself, was unique to prose. The inconsistency of internal sandhi rules within these *vacanams* could amount to the scribes’ own unfamiliarity with splitting words, for it was still new.

²¹⁹ Indien 291, 27v-r.

²²⁰ See James 2010:34-5.

However, there are also a number of occurrences where those rules are correctly used in the *vacanam*, particularly when quoting earlier poetry. We may now see into the learning process of these scribes. Mostly, *sandhi* is not used at all. I do not attempt to add missing *sandhi*, for that would entail far too many corrections. Moreover, *sandhi* is (arguably) less important to prose — it does not particularly aid in the recitation or memorisation of the text, as it would in poetry.

In the case of Sanskrit loan-words in Tamil whose origins are from a Sanskrit compound, the transmission into Tamil is clearly from the final compound, rather than the individual elements that constitute it. For example, in Sanskrit *nīlaḥ + utpala* → *nīlotpala* becomes *nīlōtpalam* in the *vacanam* texts in Tamil, as opposed to *nīlaḥ* and *utpala* being transmitted individually and compounded in Tamil according to Tamil *sandhi* rules (which would bear the result *nīlavutpalam*). Thus, Sanskrit *sandhi* rules are followed for all Sanskrit compounds.

As a result, given that *sandhi* is more a written feature than a spoken one, the lack of it gives away the fact that the scribes were influenced more by the spoken than by the written. One can even go so far as to say that they seldom read in their learning, and more often heard. The only formal grammatical training they had was in Sanskrit, for that was a ‘foreign’ language that could not be taught without rigorous grammatical training. Literacy, in their case, amounted to scriptorial familiarity, which naturally included studying the script and subsequently consonant-vowel combinations (Tam. *uyirmeyyeluttu*), complemented by training in inscribing on palm-leaf. It is my pursuit in this work to analyse *sandhi* particularly meticulously, for it is a curious case. It is a requirement, as well as a strong and consistent feature of literary Tamil, but is neglected in speech and tentatively represented in these manuscripts in which word-splitting (as discussed above) was still a novel concept - the complexity of *sandhi* speaks to the complexity of the *vacanam* and the historical value that it holds.²²¹ Thus, even though it does not affect the phonology of this register of Tamil, it holds the potential to expose the nature of erudition that fulfilled the requirements of being qualified to compose a *vacanam*. I anticipate that the analysis of *sandhi* present in the *vacanams* would shed light on the educational background of these scribes, about whom we know little. The analysis of that educational background would in turn provide us with the means to study the unique features of the *vacanams*, of which *sandhi* is but one component, in a more informed manner.

In the case of the *sandhi* of the unvoiced hard consonants *ka*, *ca*, *ta* and *pa*²²² — when a word ending with a vowel is followed by a word beginning with any of these four consonants, that consonant must be doubled (this does not apply to *ṭa* and *ṛa* because there is no Tamil word that can begin with them). For example, *vīṭṭirkup*

²²¹ That it is a consistent feature in literary Tamil does not necessarily imply that it is not complex. Within those consistencies, the governing rules of *sandhi* are convoluted and on occasion very difficult to justify. Those rules, laid down initially by the *Tolkāppiyam*, are, later on in modern Tamil printed works, revived and actively taken into consideration. For a more detailed account of *sandhi* in Classical Tamil, see Wilden 2018:22.

²²² I have summarised for the sake of my argument here the observations regarding *sandhi* of Arden (1942:67-72); Andronov (1989 34-56) and Wilden (2018:29-30).

pōṇēṇ ('I went home'); and *eṇ kaiyaip piṭi* ('Hold my hand!'); but *vīṭṭirku vantēṇ* ('I came home'); and *uṇ kaiyai nīṭṭu* ('Extend your hand!'). Exceptions include: when the word with the initial hard consonant is preceded by:

- a) a relative participle (Tam. *peyareccam*), even when ending with *a*,
- b) all absolutives ending with the overshoot *u*²²³ (Tam. *ceytuvinaiyeccam*),²²⁴
- c) nouns ending with vowels that are modified into the oblique ending instead of doubling the hard consonant when compounded (for example, *puli* + *koṭṭai* is not *pulikkōṭṭai*, but *puliyaiṅkoṭṭai* 'tamarind seed').²²⁵

These rules are maintained consistently in today's Tamil prose, but are often ambiguous in speech. The doubled consonant is often omitted and/or unemphasised, and goes unnoticed by the listener. Therefore, *vīṭṭirkuṇ pōṇēṇ* and *vīṭṭirku pōṇēṇ* would not be audibly different. The absence of consistent *sandhi* of hard consonants in the *vacanam* texts implies, firstly, the inability of the scribe to discern between the presence and absence of the doubled consonant and therefore, secondly, the lack of emphasis on written composition. These observations extend to confirming that the scribes' education was mostly restricted to *śruti*, the oral tradition,²²⁶ complemented by training in inscribing on palm-leaf.

Be that as it may, it appears that where the scribes did learn Tamil high literature, they did so both orally and in writing. I recount here the picture published in Ebeling (2010:37), of children at a *pyal* school, learning the contents of palm-leaf manuscripts which they hold with their hands in front of their eyes.²²⁷ It is the ultimate aim of each child in the school to memorise the text on the palm-leaf that he holds in his hand. Until this was accomplished, the palm-leaf manuscript was permitted as a learning tool. As a result, I put forward here an alteration of my previous theory where I stated that the scribes had no exposure to written texts — exposure was indeed there, and even encouraged by teachers of Tamil, but it was restricted to high literary works of older Tamil that were usually in verse and thus not necessarily applicable to the more *verbatim* compositions that these students later composed as *vacanams*. In other terms, the composition of a *vacanam* was likelier to

²²³ Wilden (2018:29) points out that gemination occurs after the *ā* positive absolute and after all absolutives ending with *i* (including those that end with *y*) in the case of old Tamil. Both forms appear to be completely absent from the *vacanams* and are re-incarnated later on in modern printed works of literature.

²²⁴ Arden, however, points to the example of *pōy*, one of the absolutives of the verb *pōkutaḷ* 'to go', as an exception. While the old Tamil rules dictate gemination after all absolutives with *i* and *y* endings, by the time we arrive at the 20th century, none are geminated anymore, save for *pōy*. It is no surprise that this one verb is posed as differentially functioning, for Tamil grammar is full of exceptions. It seems, therefore, that the old Tamil rules of gemination are forgotten, and their vestige is witnessed only in this one verb.

²²⁵ These are but some exceptions to the *sandhi* of *ka*, *ca*, *ta* and *pa*, drawn here for the sake of the examples that follow. For a complete list of *sandhi* rules considered in this work, see *ibid*.

²²⁶ See Fuller 2001 for a detailed account of orality in contemporary South India.

²²⁷ This image was taken from Gehring, A. 1906. *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben eines Tamulenmissionars*. Verlag der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Mission, Leipzig.

have been aided by casual speech situations that these scholars engaged in, rather than by any possible memorisation of earlier Tamil literary compositions. The two Tamils — one literary, and the other casual — were kept separate. The former, consisting of the literary genre, was often paired with grammars that aided those literatures. Thus, even grammatical resources were kept away from more casual usages of Tamil and seemed to be transmitted as complimentary to certain corresponding literatures or vice versa — those literatures were meant to be interpreted by means of those grammars.²²⁸ In other words, the curated portion of study by the teacher and scholar (and oftentimes also composer) (Tam. *āciriyar*) was maintained as intellectual information that was to be kept away from the spontaneity of everyday speech. What took place in school was independent of what took place anywhere else.

We observe this cleft very clearly in the case of Indien 291, wherein the *vacaṇam* functions as a study guide and/or synopsis of Parañcōti's *Tiruvīlaiyāṭal Purāṇam*. The first line of the first three Chapters of this *vacaṇam* is the first line of the corresponding three Chapters in Parañcōti's text. Each such line is followed by a line of prose that functions as a gloss. In other words, the author of this *vacaṇam* translates Parañcōti's Tamil into *his own* Tamil. Moreover, the manuscript itself opens with an invocatory verse to *cittiyāṇai* (Gaṇeśa), which is taken directly from Parañcōti's text. The order of Chapters is also the same as the order of Chapters present in Parañcōti's text.²²⁹ It is clear, therefore, that the author of the *vacaṇam* text in Indien 291, was familiar, and even confident, in his command of Parañcōti's literary work.

If we take for granted that the author of the *vacaṇam* knew Parañcōti's text well, based on the evidence supplied above, the cleft between literary Tamil learning and spontaneous prose composition is seen clearly with regard to *sandhi*. Where Parañcōti is quoted, the text is in perfect *sandhi*, with no error in sight. The subsequent gloss of the quoted text is, in contrast, riddled with confusion.

Let us take, as an example of perfect *sandhi*, the invocatory verse of Parañcōti that is provided in this *vacaṇam*, where I mark the occurrence of *sandhi* in bold in my transcript. I thus provide the respective lines first in Tamil script, wherein certain rules of *sandhi* are visually easier to identify. I continue to make this provision for examples from the *vacaṇam* texts with respect to *sandhi* rules. In my transcription, I have organised the verse into its corresponding *aṭis* by providing line-breaks. I have already provided a translation of this work under 3.2:

²²⁸ See Ciotti & Buchholz 2017 (available online with this link: https://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/MC/articles/mc10_buchholz_ciotti.pdf) [last date of access: 09.07.2023] for a case study on BNF 589, a multi-text palm-leaf manuscript in which patterns in the transmission of certain literary works with certain corresponding grammatical treatises are analysed. That a particular combination of texts was transmitted together is a phenomenon worth looking into, for such manuscripts often functioned as one comprehensive portion of study for the students of Tamil.

²²⁹ As this is an incomplete manuscript, I can confirm that the order of Chapters holds good with Parañcōti's sequence only upto Chapter 51. As this is far above the half-way marker of 32 of the total of 64 Chapters, I propose with some certainty that the remaining Chapters must have also respected Parañcōti's sequence, if they had been written at all.

[1] சத்தியாய்ச் சிவமாகித் தனிப்பர முத்தியான முதலைத் துதிசெய்ச் சுத்தியாகிய
சொற்பொரு [2] ணல்குவ சித்தியானை தன் செய்ய பொற்பாதமெ²³⁰

[1] *cattiyāyc civamākit taṇippara muttiyāṇa mutalait tuticeyac cuttiyākiya corporu*
[2] *ṇalkuva cittiyāṇai taṇ ceyya porpātame.*

Thus, wherever *sandhi* is required, it is used. An infinitive, such as *tuti-ceya* (‘to make praise’) in this case, when followed by a word beginning with any hard consonant apart from *ṭa* and *ṛa*, must double that consonant. Additionally, *poru!* + *nalkuva* = *poruṇalkuva*. There too, *sandhi* is maintained perfectly. This particular instance of *sandhi* (*l + n = ṇ*) is, where due, completely absent from any of the *vacaṇams*, as is even the more ubiquitous *pon* + *pātamē* = *porpātamē*. The exception to perfect *sandhi* in accordance with high-literary Tamil is the consistent writing in all three of these *vacaṇams* of the often-used *pon* + *tāmarai* as *porrāmarai*, the name of the sacred water-tank at the Madurai temple, an important location of many of Cuntarecuvarar’s play-acts. Earlier on, the adaptation of Sanskrit compounds into Tamil as loan-words was discussed. I surmise here that *porrāmarai* is an adaptation of a compound from classical Tamil (*porrāmarai* is present in Nampi’s and Parañcōti’s texts and has been lexicalised²³¹) into the *vacaṇam* period in its already compounded form. Clearly, both the perfect literary Tamil and the spontaneous prose Tamil have been penned by the same hand. Thus, this analysis yields the following three results that I summarise here: a) that *sandhi* is considered and dutifully maintained where compounds, either of Sanskrit or literary Tamil origins, are transmitted directly to the *vacaṇam* as loan-words that have only been utilised as such, b) that where the scribe has witnessed in a written document a text in high literary Tamil and has perhaps subsequently memorised portions of it, he maintains *sandhi* as part of that text, and finally, c) that *sandhi*, like the spacing introduced by Europeans to split words into graphemes for ease of reading, was more of a visual aid in a verse that could not be re-rendered into prose writing in spontaneous Tamil and was therefore incompatible with the thought that went into composing the *vacaṇams*.

I use Andronov 1989:1-2 as a baseline for how I define the ‘correct’ rules of *sandhi*:

²³⁰ As this is an excerpt from a well-attested and widely published text, I make no qualms in identifying the final *ē* as a long one, even though the manuscript contains the short *e*. Where it concerns the *vacaṇams*, as discussed under Section I 1), the rules provided will be maintained. This particular *ē* is taken as an obvious exception.

²³¹ TL: பொற்றாமரை *porrāmarai*, *n.* < id. + தாமரை. 1. Golden lotus, as of Svarga; பொன் மயமான கமலம். பொற்றாமரை யடியே போற்றும் பொருள்கேளாய் (திவ். திருப்பா. 29). 2. Sacred tank, as in the temple at Madura; மதுரைக் கோயில் முதலிய தலங்களில் உள்ள பொய்கை. தலைச் சதி பொற்றாமரை (தேவா. 435, 10). 3. See பொற்பூ, 2. பைம் பொற்றாமரை பாணர்ச் சூட்டி (பதிற்றுப். 48).

‘Several forms of the Tamil language are to be distinguished, first of all Literary Tamil and Colloquial Tamil. Literary Tamil at present does not serve as a medium of oral communication for any portion of the Tamil population and, being largely incomprehensible without special training, should be regarded as a bookish, written language used only by educated people, fiction, etc., and Classical Tamil, i.e., the language of the ancient and mediaeval [*sic*] literature. The difference between the two lies mainly in their vocabulary. Their grammar is the same, although the modern language, particularly that of the prose, does not make use of all grammatical forms found in the classical language.’

Andronov’s observation, that ‘Literary Tamil at present’ differs from ‘Classical Tamil’ mainly in vocabulary, but retains many grammatical rules if not all, is the foundation for my discerning in the *vacanams* what constitutes correct use of *sandhi* and what does not. I thus take the *sandhi* rules prescribed in older Tamil²³² and apply them to the *vacanam* passages. Between the line of comparison of older Tamil and the *vacanam* are the two important resources — Arden 1942 and Andronov 1989 — which have discussed in detail the function and usage of *sandhi*. Their works are titled *Tamil Language*²³³ and in *Modern and Classical Tamil* respectively. They too are taken into consideration here.

An excerpt from the introductory passage (story number 0 out of 64) in Indien 291 is provided below to illuminate the complexity of *sandhi* in the *vacanam*. The initial purpose of the example is to dissect usage of *sandhi* into three categories: a) missing *sandhi*, b) incorrect *sandhi*, and (occasionally) c) correct *sandhi*.²³⁴ Subsequently, I will try to relate my categorisation to the aforementioned grammatical resources. Hopefully, this description brings us closer to understanding the education of the scribes of the *vacanam*:

[Indien 291, 2v]

²³² Wilden 2018 is my main source for understanding classical Tamil grammar.

²³³ In Arden’s grammar, he does not defend his choice of title, *A Progressive Grammar of the Tamil Language*. Given that a large part of my work here is dedicated to disagreeing with the existence of *the* Tamil language, and that here, the word ‘progressive’ is in its nature comparative, and yet not used here in comparison to anything, it is unclear what exactly Arden’s grammar is a grammar of. Be that as it may, one can gather that he implies *some* form of literary Tamil, that is, in its features, comparable to printed Tamil works in the first half of the 20th century, the latter of which Arden may have familiarised himself with, given the date of his publication (1942). Additionally, what is explicit in his work is that it is a prescribed text book for missionaries who intend to learn Tamil (according to the blurb on the jacket of the 1942 edition). It is thus possible that he took into account previous attempts of missionary scholars to compose grammatical resources for Tamil learning. In that case, I take it that his work is meant to function as a practical guide, and is thus not inclined to define the more theoretical complications regarding the multiglossia of Tamil. For the purpose of my study of *sandhi*, this book functions, to me as well, as a practical guide.

²³⁴ Incorrect *sandhi* rules are marked in bold, absence of *sandhi* is marked with the symbol ‘#’ where the *sandhi* should be, and correct use of *sandhi* is underlined.

[4]...அதன் பிரகு, அகத்தியர் [5] முதலாகிய ரிஷிகள் எல்லாரும் காசி விசுவனாத லிங்கத்தை# தெரிசினஞ் செய்து சன்னதி முன்னெ இரு [க்]கிற [6] முத்திமண்டப[த்]திலெ இருந்தார்களப்போது, ரிஷியளெல்லாரும் அகத்தியரை# பணிந்து சுவாமி நாங்கள் [2r] [1] இகபரமோட்சங்களை# பெறும்படிக்கு# சிவதலங்களுக்கெல்லாம் அதிகமா [ன] யொரு சிவதலமுந் தீந்தங்களுக்கெல்லாம் [2] அதிகமான தீந்தமும் சிவதலங்களுக்கெல்லாம் அதிகமான சிவலிங்கமும் திருவுளம் பற்ற வேணுமென்று# கேட்டார்கள்.

ataṅ piraku, akattiyar mutalākiya riṣikaḷ ellārum kāci vicuvanāta liṅkattai# tericiṅaṅ ceytu, caṅṅati muṅṅe iru[k]kīra muttimaṅṅapa[t]tile iruntārkaḷ. appōtu riṣiyaḷ ellārum akattiyarai# paṅintu, ‘cuvāmi! nāṅkaḷ ika-para-mōṅcaṅkaḷai# perumpaṅikku# civatalaṅkaḷukk- ellām atikamā[ṅa] oru civatalamun, tīrtāṅkaḷukk- ellām atikamāṅa tīrtamum civa[liṅ]kaṅkaḷukk- ellām atikamāṅa civaliṅkamum tiruvuḷam parra vēnum’ enru# kēṅṅārkaḷ.

After that, all the Rīṣis of which Akattiyar was first, having seen the Vicuvanāta Liṅkam of Kāci, sat down in the Muttimaṅṅapam (one of the temple halls) that was in front of the sanctum. Then, All the Rīṣis, bowing to Akattiyar, asked, ‘Lord! In order for us to obtain the ‘*ika-para-mōṅcams*’²³⁵, you must tell us one holy place of Civaṅ that is the best among all holy places of Civaṅ, a holy water-body that is the best among all holy water-bodies, and a Civaliṅka that is the best among all Civaliṅkas.’

Thus, gemination where required is missing in five places, within the scope of just one sentence. *Sandhi* where required is applied correctly only in two places, both considering the rules regarding nasal combinations (1. $m + c = ṅc$; 2. $m + t = nt$). And still, one nasal *sandhi* is missing — ‘...*tīrtamum civa...*’ should have been, going thus far by the usage of the scribe himself, ‘*tīrtamuṅ civa...*’ As for the use of glides, which was already discussed under the sub-section ‘-y- and -v- glides’ they are as inconsistent as the usage of hard and nasal consonants in *sandhi*.

Interestingly, as RE27530 is based on the text in Indien 291, several scribal habits, it would seem, are also transmitted. Oftentimes, where *sandhi* is present in Indien 291, RE27530 records it. Where *sandhi* is absent in the former, the latter does not attempt to add it. That is yet another example of the scribes’ nonchalance towards *sandhi* — that the writer of RE27530 could not fill in omitted *sandhis* while copying the text of Indien 291 and thus rather assumed that his predecessor knew more than he did. Alternatively, he knew how *sandhi* functioned, albeit only for Tamil poetry, and assumed its superfluousness in prose passages.

The purpose of this example is to illustrate one prominent feature of the *vacaṅam* — that internal consistency cannot be expected. Every single passage

²³⁵ The concept of ‘*ikaparamōṅcam*’ (literally, ‘the salvation that is beyond’) is a spiritual one, wherein the soul becomes one with Śiva, denoting the ultimate goal of any devotee — to be one with Śiva in salvation. The TVP is, in these circles, believed to be one of the many keys to such a form of salvation. The power of the text is thus acknowledged in this passage.

within all three manuscripts considered in this study is riddled with a combination of errors and anomalies, which are all simply too many to take into consideration each and every time.

That the occurrences of *sandhi* are of three types — a) missing *sandhi*, b) wrongly used *sandhi*, and c) (occasionally) correct *sandhi* — speaks for the lack of emphasis on grammatical accuracy and consistency, the thus casual, prose narrative of the *vacaṇam* compositions; and possibly, of the scribe's unfamiliarity with composing prose.

I intend to henceforth ignore *sandhi*-related rules in my transcriptions, for they do not really figure in the actual register. I thus single out the *sandhi* situation from the other issues — such as glides, alternative spelling, etc. — for they pose no direct significance towards the study of the register. Where *sandhi* exists in the manuscript, it is retained in the transcription. Where it is incorrect, it is not corrected.

Having displayed that the transliteration and transcription of the *vacaṇams* is not as straightforward as it may seem at first glance and that it clearly holds a deeply symbiotic relationship with the linguistic features, I move on to the next layer of this study — to compare textual passages and create a timeline of the development of prose before, during, and after the Mackenzie Collection.

3.8 Comparing Indien 291 and RE27530²³⁶

Little is known about the provenance of RE27530, but I have attempted to trace some patterns of its creation and transmission through the information gathered on Indien 291. Firstly, we can be fairly certain that it was circulated amongst Śaiva priests. The entirety of the IFP Collection is a Śaiva collection of manuscripts, and thus, many of its texts are fundamentally Śaiva texts.²³⁷ Varadachari (1986:v) writes:²³⁸

‘Most of these manuscripts were in the private collections of the priests — either gurukkals of deśikar-s. As a result we have now in our collection, after 31 years, about 1200 palm-leaf manuscripts mostly in grantha [*sic*] script, some in Malayalam, Telugu, Nandināgari and Tulu scripts.’²³⁹

This passage reveals to us two key aspects. Firstly, Tamil manuscripts were not specifically sought, but percolated into the collection through their location in the circles of Śaiva priests. Tamil is not even mentioned in this paragraph (‘grantha’ is for writing Sanskrit). Secondly, since they were specifically not sought, there must likely

²³⁶ RE25730 is also incomplete, ending abruptly with story no. 56 out of 64.

²³⁷ Interestingly, one of the few complete manuscripts of Nampi's TVP is also in the IFP Collection. It is RE47715 and can be located in their online database.

²³⁸ The preface of this manuscript catalogue has been written by N. R. Bhatt and not Varadachari.

²³⁹ Earlier on in the same passage, Bhatt writes that the primary goal of the IFP was to collect manuscripts on the Śaivāgamas, which he says (ibid.) were the ‘texts dealing with the Temple complex’. They are, very succinctly, guides for Śaiva priests (called *gurukkaḷ* or *deśikar* above, depending on which temple they are employed in) on how to perform temple rituals properly. For more information on Śaiva philosophy with relation to the Āgamas, see ibid.:vi.

be several more such *vacaṇam* manuscripts amongst similar circles that have not yet made it to libraries. In this light, we may make two observations about RE27530 — that it was accidentally acquired, both with respect to the language in which it was written, and for its non-participation in the theme of Āgama, which was the core of the Śaiva project at the IFP at the time.

Essentially, I argue that both manuscripts contain too many similarities not to have a connection. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are the same text, but with many orthographic variants. Other Chapters contain many similar phrases, sentences, and passages. Let us for instance take some portions of Chapter 3, titled ‘*tirunakar kaṇṭa tiruvilaiyāṭal*’ (‘The Holy Sport of Having Seen the Holy City’):

[Indien 291, 15v]²⁴⁰

[6]...*kaṭampavaṇattukkuk kilakke maṇavūrenkīra paṭṭaṇattile kulacēkara pāṇṭiya rācā rācciya paripāḷaṇam ceytu varukīra nālaiyile,*²⁴¹ [15r] [1], *cunañceyaṇ enkīra ceṭṭi mērke* [vi]yāpārattukkup pōy varukīra pōtu, *kaṭampavaṇattile cūriyaṇ attamaṇ āka avatāyile yiruntāṇ.*

In the city called Maṇavūr, easy of Kaṭampavaṇam, in the days of rule of the king Kulacēkara Pāṇṭiya, a Ceṭṭi²⁴² called Cunañceyaṇ, returning from having gone west for business/trade, stayed in that place, Kaṭampavaṇam, as the sun was setting.

[RE27530, 13v]

[6]...*kaṭampavaṇattukkuk kilakke maṇavūr enru* [7] *oru paṭṭaṇam. atile, kulacēkara pāṇṭiyaṇ rācciya paripāḷaṇaṇ ceyitu varukīra nāleyile, nañceyaṇ enkīra ceṭṭi mērke viyāpārattukkup pōy varukīra pōtu, kaṭampavaṇattile cūriyaṇ astamaṇam āka avatattile iruntāṇ.*

To the east of Kaṭampavaṇ is a town called Maṇavūr. In it, in the days that Kulacēkara Pāṇṭiyaṇ was ruling, a Ceṭṭi called Nañceyaṇ, when returning from having gone for business/trade to the west, stayed in that place, in Kaṭampavaṇam, as the sun was setting.

²⁴⁰ In my transcriptions, I use the following conventions. Folio numbers and line numbers are given within square brackets. ‘v’ stands for ‘verso’, and ‘r’ for ‘recto’. All punctuations have been added by me. I have added spacing between words where necessary, but the original manuscript is not consistent with spacing. I have added missing characters within square brackets.

²⁴¹ Usually, every *vacaṇam* episode begins with a mention of the king that ruled during the occurrence of that episode. I tend to render the line ‘...*rācciya paripāḷaṇam ceytu varukīra nālaiyile/potu*’ somewhat loosely, for it is firstly formulaic and thus often redundant, and secondly too convoluted in English (‘in the days/when ___ was continuously performing the protection of the kingdom’). I therefore shorten it according to the context, as seen above.

²⁴² The Ceṭṭi [today called Ceṭṭiyār] is a caste that was historically associated with business, trade and money-lending.

Thus, there are only minor differences. Here is another passage for comparison, derived from the beginning of story no. 5. It recalls the story of Taṭātakai, the young Pāṇṭiya princess who was born with three breasts. Her father, the Pāṇṭiya king, was reassured by a sage that when she finds the right husband, the third breast will disappear. Lo and behold, Cuntarēcuvarar falls in love with her, and not only does the third breast disappear, but the young princess manifests as Cuntarēcuvarar's divine consort Mīṇāṭci, and they rule the Pāṇṭiya kingdom together. According to the TVP, Taṭātakai (= Mīṇāṭci) was the only ruling queen of the Pāṇṭiya lineage. The *vacanam* version of this story begins with Taṭātakai's mother Kāñcaṇamālai planning her marriage:

[Indien 291, 18v]

[1]...maturāpurile tāṭātakai tēvi rācciya paripālaṇam ceytu [2] varukira pōtu, tēvik kalyāṇap paruvam vantatiṇāle, tāyākiya kāñcaṇamālai vicāramāka yiruntāḷ. [3] appōtu, tēvi kāñcaṇamālaiyaip pāttu, 'tāyē, nī maṇatile niṇaitta kāriyam naṭakkum pōtu naṭakkum' eṇrut 'tiruvicaiyañceyyapōka vēṇum.' eṇru tiruvuḷattile niṇaittut tēraik koṇṭu vara collit tērile ēriṇāḷ.

In Maturāpuri, during the rule of Taṭātakai Tēvi, because Tēvi had come of [the right] age for marriage, her mother who was Kāñcaṇamālai was thoughtful/anxious. Tēvi, looking at Kāñcaṇamālai, thinking in her sacred heart 'O Mother, the affair that you thought of in your mind will happen when it happens', and, 'I must go to perform a sacred action', asking for the chariot to be brought, she mounted it.

[RE27530, 15r]

[3]...mā [4] maturaiyile taṭātakai tēvi rācciya paripāliṇam ceytu varukira ṇālaiyile, [5] tēvikku kāliyāṇāpparuvam vantuteṇru tāyār[āka] irukkira kāñcaṇa [6] mālaikku maṇatile vicāramāka iruntāḷ. appōtu, tēvi kāñ [7] caṇamālaiyai pā[t]tu, 'tāye maṇatile niṇaitta kāriyam naṭakkira pōtu naṭakku [8] tu' eṇru colli 'tikku vicaiyam ceyyap pōka vēṇu' eṇrum maṇatile [9] niṇaittu tēraik koṇṭu varac collit tērile yēriṇāḷ.

In great Maturai, in the days of rule of Taṭātakai Tēvi, because Tēvi had come of [the right] age for marriage, her mother who was Kāñcaṇamālai was thoughtful/anxious. Tēvi, looking at Kāñcaṇamālai, saying 'O Mother, the affair that you thought of in your mind happens when it happens', and thinking in her mind, 'I must go to perform a holy action', asking for the chariot to be brought, she mounted it.

One difference is noteworthy. 'tiruvicaiyañ' of the former manuscript becomes 'tikuvicaiyam' in the latter. The dissolving of *sandhi* is common and might appear to be the result of a minor corruption. However, I have noted that there is a pattern in differences such as this one. In Indien 291, the phrase 'eṇruttiruvicaiyam' has a

mistaken character between ‘*ti*’ and ‘*ru*’, which resembles a ‘*ka*’. The scribe of RE27530 appears to have copied it exactly so, even though it is wrong. There are many other such examples of this phenomenon, making it likely that RE27530 consulted, if not directly copied, Indien 291 or another manuscript with the same text (ie., the same corruptions). As Indien 291 is an older manuscript, mistakes are not crossed out.²⁴³ The correct character is simply written after the mistake, and it is upto the reader to deduce it. Here are some more examples of the same, from the prefatory Chapter (Chapter 0):

[Indien 291. 1r]

[1]...*akattiyar; vētaviyācar; nāratar; caṇakkar; kavutamar; parācarar; vāmatēvar; vāṇmīkar; vacciṭṭar; cukar ivarkaḷ mutalāṇa riṣikaḷ tēvataikaḷ ellārum vantārkaḷ. ivarkaḷukkellām vippākaṅkoṭuttu piramatēvar yākarrai niṛavētti cattiyalōkattukkup pōṇār.*

...These, starting with Akattiyar, Vētaviyācar, Nāratar, Caṇakkar, Kavutamar, Parācarar, Vāmatēvar, Vāṇmīkar, Vacciṭṭar and Cukar, and all the celestials, arrived. Having given them welcoming honours, Piramatēvar, completing the sacrifice, returned to the Cattiyalōkam (heavenly world).

[RE27530, 1r]

ஆப்போது, அகத்தியர், வெத வியாசர், நாரதர், சனகர், கெ [3] வுதமர், பராசரர்சரர், வாமதெவரம் வால்மீகர், வசிட்டர், சுகர் இவர்கள் முதலான ரிசி [4] யள் தெவதையள் எல்லாரும் வந்தார்கள். இவர்களுக்கெல்லாம் **அவிற்பா [5] கங் கொடுத்து** {} பிரமர் தெவர் யாகத்தை நிறவெத்தி, {} சத்திய லொகத்து [6]க்குப் பொனாள்.

[2]...*appōtu, akattiyar; vētaviyācar; nāratar; caṇakar; ke [3] vutamar; parācarar; vāmatēvar; vālmīkar; vaciṭṭar; cukar ivarkaḷ mutalāṇa rici [4] yaḷ tēvataiyaḷ ellārum vantārkaḷ. ivarkaḷukkellām avirpākaṅkoṭuttu piramar tēvar yākattai niṛavētti, cattiya-lōkattukku pōṇāḷ.*

Then, these sages, starting with Akattiyar, Vētaviyācar, Nāratar, Caṇakar, Kevutamar, Parācarar, Vāmatēvar, Vālmīkar, Vacīṭṭar and Cukar, and all the celestials, arrived. Having given them welcoming honours, Piramatēvar, completing the sacrifice, returned to the Cattiyalōkam (heavenly world).

The word ‘*vippākam*’ from Indien 291 connotes the auspices one pays to a guest of honour when they arrive. Literally, it could be translated as ‘assigned share’

²⁴³ I have observed a slight black point where errors occur and have been noticed by the scribe. However, it is possible that that is part of the damage on the manuscript. Moreover, errors are not consistently marked.

— that is, each guest’s honorary gift is already allotted or predetermined according to certain traditional rules. The scribe of RE27530 has misunderstood this and reads *avirpākam*, telling us that the lack of *pulli* that marks closed consonants in Indien 291 has confused him in this instance. He thus renders an ‘a’ in the beginning of the word. Yet another example, from story number 5, tells us how mistakes in the original Indien 291 were transmitted faithfully by RE27530. In this story, titled *tirukkaliyāṇam ceyta tiruviḷaiyātal* (‘The Holy Sport of the Holy Marriage’), the beginning of which has already been quoted in the beginning of this section. Towards the end, when Cuntarēcuvarar reveals to Taṭātakai in battle that he intends to marry her, he tells her to return to Madurai after victory, where he will join her and they will be married:

[Indien 291, 19r]

[2] *cuvāmiyum tēviyaip pārttu*, ‘*varukira cōma* [3] *vāra tinattile kaliyāṇaṅ ceyya varukirōm. nī maturāpurikkup pō.*’ *venru anukkirakaṅceyya*,²⁴⁴ *tēviyum caturaṅka cēṇaiyuṭaṅe maturāpuri vantu cērntāl.*

And, the Lord (Cuntarēcuvar), looking at Tēvi (Taṭātakai), saying, ‘I am coming on this Monday to marry [you]. You go to Maturāpuri.’, and Tēvi reached Maturāpuri with her four-part army.

[RE27530, 16r]

[9]...*cuvāmiyum tēviyaip pāttu* [17v] [1] ‘*varukira cōmavārattinattile kaliyāṇaṅ ceyya varukirōm.*’ *aṇiyunru* [2] *ṭaya maturāpurip paṭṭaṇattukkup pōkaccolli anukkirakam ceyya, tēviyum caturaṅka cēṇaiyuṭaṅe maturāpuri vantu cēntāl.*

And, the Lord (Cuntarēcuvar), looking at Tēvi (Taṭātakai), saying, ‘I am coming on this Monday to marry [you].’ Telling [her] to go to your Maturāpuri on that day, and Tēvi reached Maturāpuri with her four-part army.²⁴⁵

This is clearly a corrupted text. Indien 291 makes a mistake by writing ‘*ṇū*’ instead of ‘*nī*’ and not scratching it out. This confuses the scribe of RE27530. The result is that the latter suddenly switches to the passive voice, leaving the active quote incomplete. In such texts, the flitting between the active and passive voices is not uncommon, but the latter manuscript does this especially when there is some confusion in understanding the source-text.

²⁴⁴ Every time there is a quote by Cuntarēcuvarar, it is marked by ‘*anukkirakam ceytu*’ or ‘*aruḷ ceytu*’ alongside the usual quotative ‘*enru*’. The flavour of this marking is the implication that the Lord’s word is one of grace. I find it both redundant and difficult to render in English and therefore do not include it in my translations.

²⁴⁵ ‘*aṇiyunruṭaiya*’ is an interesting error. In fact, it should be ‘*aṇru unṇuṭaiya*’ (‘on that day, your...’). The change of grammatical person also happens here, making for an awkward translation into English. In general, this is a corrupt sentence, and, as I explain shortly, it is probably because of a copying mistake.

I have counted around 18 examples of such occurrences, but there may very well be more. There are also some passages from both manuscripts that are identical to each other, except for where the scribe of RE27530 could not read Indien 291. Below are examples of both phenomena — the faithful transmission of one passage (Case A) and the altered transmission of another to account for the source-text being corrupted (Case B). Of Case A, corrupted portions, or, portions that the latter text has not fully understood, are changed slightly. Thus, here, errors have not been transmitted faithfully. Additionally, it provides an insight into how dialogue-sentences work in these *vacaṇams*. A large dialogue is in fact one finite sentence, with individual quotes being marked with the infinitive *ena* (‘saying’). The end of the finite sentence is found several folios later.

Case A - faithful transmission

This passage is taken from TVP story No. 7 titled *kuṇṭōtaraṇukku aṇṇamiṭṭa tiruviḷaiyāṭal*, ‘The Holy Sport of Having Served Food to Kuṇṭōtaraṇ’. It describes the scene after the wedding feast of Mīṇāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar has taken place. There are so many leftovers that Cuntarēcuvarar must call on one of his divine attendants, Kuṇṭōtaraṇ, to finish them off. Kuṇṭōtaraṇ famously has a large appetite. Thus, he is hungry even after going through mountains of rice and thirsty even after drinking from all the water-wells of Madurai.²⁴⁶

[Indien 291, 23v]

[3]...tēvi kaliyānattukkup pirāmaṇar periyōr aṇṇattāru [4] tēcattu rācākkal kiṇṭapatikaḷ ivarkaḷukkellām pōcaṇaṇceyvittu āṭaiyāparaṇam veku [5] matiyuṇ ceytu, avaravarai yavarkaḷ rācciyattukkup pōkaccollic cuvāmi tiruvuḷam paṇṇa, avarka [6] ḷum pōṇatan pīraku, maṭaiṇṇaiyil camaiyal ceyta paricaṇamākiya peṇkaḷellārum vantu taṭāta [23r] [1] kai pirāṭṭiyārait teṇṭaṇ ceytu, ‘tāye, nāṅkaḷ camaiyal ceyta aṇṇamalaiyile yāyirattil oru paṅkuṇ cilavi [2] llai’ eṇ[ru]c colla...

Having served food for Tēvi’s wedding to all of these — the Pirāmaṇs (= Brahmins), the elders, the kings and ministers of the 56 countries, having paid great respect²⁴⁷ with clothes and jewellery, Cuvāmi having told each of them to return to their own kingdoms, after they had gone, all the girls of the retinue who had cooked in the kitchen, bowing to Taṭātakai Pirāṭṭi, saying, ‘Mother, of the mountain of rice that we had cooked, not even one portion of a thousand has been reduced.’...

²⁴⁶ There is a tale that explains the etymology of the river Vaikai (literally *vai* (verbal root) ‘to place’, and *kai* ‘hand’). Kuṇṭōtaraṇ’s unabating thirst led to his drinking of all the water sources of Madurai. Therefore, Cuntarēcuvarar asked him to put his hand out and released one lock of his hair which was the Gaṅgā river. Kuṇṭōtaraṇ drank from this, and the water that spilled out became the Vaikai. As far as I am aware, the older name of the Vaikai is Vaiyai, as seen in *Puraṇānūru* 71:10 — *vaiyai cūḷntavaḷaṅkeḷu vaippin* — ‘in the land that is abundant in prosperity, that Vaiyai surrounds’.

²⁴⁷ The verb *vekumatittal* comes from *veku* ‘excess/much’ and *matittal* ‘to respect’. I did not find this meaning/connotation expressed in any of the dictionaries I consulted (see bibliography).

[4]...tēvi [5] t tirukkaliyāṇattukku vanta pirāmaṇā periyōrkaḷ anpattārut tēcat [6] tu tācākaḷ kīriṭapatikaḷ ivarkaḷukku viruntu pōcanaṅ kuṭuttū ātaiyāparaṇa [7] ṇamatiyaḷ veku matiyatu ceyitu pettuk koṇṭu taṅkaḷuṭaiya rācciya [8] ṅkaḷukkup pōyṅārkaḷ. atin pīraku maṭappalliye camaiyaḷ ceyita paṭricāṇa [9] mākiya peṇaṅkaḷellām vantu taṭātakā tēviyai namaskāraṅ [ceyitu], 'tā [20r] [1] ye, nāṅkaḷ camaiyaḷ ceyita aṅṅamalaiyile āyirattile oru [maṭaṅku] cila [2] vallai' yeṅru colla...

Having provided a feast to all of these who came for Tēvi's holy wedding — the Pirāmaṅs (= Brahmins), the elders, the kings and ministers of the 56 countries, having given out of²⁴⁸ great respect with clothes and jewellery, [they] having received it, returned to their own kingdoms. After that, all the girls of the retinue who had cooked in the kitchen, bowing to Taṭātakai Pirāṭṭi, saying, 'Mother, of the mountain of rice that we had cooked, not even one [portion] of a thousand has been reduced.'...

Here, apart from small differences, the text essentially remains identical, save for a few structural elements. In the following example, we will see how a corrupted portion of Indien 291 inspires the scribe of RE25730 to improvise. A series of new, elaborate passages in this text are thus born. In terms of transmission alone, this is a curious phenomenon. On the one hand, the scribe follows the text of Indien 291 to the best of his abilities and thus cannot be said to have betrayed it. On the other hand, the changes he makes are significant. I therefore choose to call this 'fluid' transmission, i.e., when a text is changed due to circumstance, and not because its writer did not respect his sources.

Case B: fluid transmission

Below is an extract from Chapter 33, titled *aṭṭamācitti upatēcitta tiruviḷaiyāṭal* or 'The Holy Sport of [Cuntarēcuvarar] Having Taught the Great Eight Cittis' (> Skt. *siddhi*):

[Indien 291, 76r]

[2] kulapūṭanaṅ ceṅkōl kēḷ celuttu nālaiyil, ātikālattile yuka [3] ttukku yukam aḷivillāmalirukkīra kayilāca parupatatṭin aṭiyile ālaviruṭcattin kīḷe paramēcuparaṅum [4] pārpatiyum eḷuntaruḷi yirukka appōtu, parupata rācakumāriyākiya tēvi cuvāmikku verrilai maṭittuk koṭukkap [5], pakkattile nantīkēcuparar irukka, makākāḷar mutalākiya civakeṇaṅkaḷum caṅakāti muṇiyāḷumakat tericaṅaṅ [6] ceytu koṇṭu nīrkak kēḷkka, teruṭṭāmal irukkīra

²⁴⁸ The text marks *mati* with the genitive, literally, 'of great respect'. I prefer the ablative, 'out of respect', so that the translation is more natural.

civakataiyai paramēcuparar tiruvuḷam paṛṛik koṅṭirukki [7] ra vēlaiyil, munṇoru kālattile cuppiramaṇiya mūrṭtikku upatēcam paṇṇip pāṇaṅ koṭuttu vaḷarttavavar [77v] [1] kalāyē cuttakaniya! āru pēr vētam pūṇṭu caṭai vaḷarttukkoṅṭu vipūti ruttirāṭcan tarittukkoṅṭu cuvāmi [2] caṇṇatiyā vantu namaskarittu vāypotti niṇru ‘cuvāmiyaṭi yeṅkaḷukku aṭṭamācitti yanukkiraṅ ceyya vēṇu [3] m’ eṇru viṇṇappaṅ ceyya,

In the days of (the ruler) Kulapūtaṇaṅ’s execution of justice, at the feet of the Kayilāca (> Kailāśa) mountain that remained without being destroyed for eon after eon, at the time while Paramēcuparar and Pārpati were sitting²⁴⁹ under the banyan tree, as Tēvi who was the queen of the mountain folded²⁵⁰ betel leaves for Cuvāmi, as Nantikēcuparar was nearby, as all the attendants (*keṇaṅkaḷ*) of Civaṅ starting with Makākāḷar, as the sages of which Caṇaka was the first [also] stood [nearby], watching and listening, in the time that Paramēcuparar was speaking the stories about Civaṅ without interruption, the pure virgins —who were the ones who raised Cupparamaṇiya Mūrṭti once upon a time, having taught him, and having given him water²⁵¹ (literally, ‘drink’) — having put on a disguise, growing matted hair, wearing sacred ash and Ruttirāṭcam beads, coming to the sanctum of Cuvāmi, greeting [him], standing in complete silence (literally, with the mouth shut),²⁵² requesting ‘Oh, respected Cuvāmi, you must grace us with the Aṭṭamācitti’...²⁵³

[RE27530, 91r]

[2]...*kulapūṣaṇa pāṇṭiya rācāvāṇavar ceṅkōl celutti varukira nālaiy [3] le, ātikālattile, yukattukku yukam aḷivillāmal vaḷarntu koṅṭe varu [4] vatākiya kayilāca parupattiṅ aṭiyile ālāviruṭcattiṅ kīle paramēcura [5] ṇum parācattiyum eḷuntaruḷi irukka appōtu, paruvata kumāriyākiya [6] tēvi cuvāmiikki vettilai maṭittu koṭukka, pa[ka]ttile nantikēcuranum [7] paṇṇikiyūm makā kāḷarum mutalākiya civakaṇaṅkaḷum caṇakāti riciya [8] ḷum makā tericaṇam ceytu koṅṭu nir[ka], kēḷkka kēḷkka, tēvi viṭā [9] mal irukkira civakataiyai paramēcuraṅ tiruvuḷam pattuk koṅṭu [92v] [1] irukkira vēlaiyile munṇame cuppiramaṇiya mūrṭtikkit taṇṇi pā [2] ṇaṅkoṭuttu vaḷattavaḷākiya yavapa? kaṇṇikaiya! atu? pōtavavēṭam pūṇṭu, caṭai vaḷarntuk koṅṭu, vipūti ruttirāṭcamum tarittuk koṅṭu cu [4] vāmi caṇṇatiyile vantu*

²⁴⁹ In this case ‘*eḷunt-aruḷtal*’ denotes not speech as I had pointed out earlier, but any action at all that the Lord performs. Here, it is used to express the divine couple’s seat, from where they apparently grace.

²⁵⁰ The preparation of a *verrilai*, betel leaf for consumption, now known as *pāṇ*, starts with folding it over a number of ingredients — areca nut shavings or bits that act as a mild stimulant, coconut shavings, chalk, and cloves to name a few. Given the method of preparation, the verb that is used with *verrilai* is *maṭittal* ‘to fold’.

²⁵¹ According to the *Skandapurāṇa*, there were six (sometimes seven) virgins whom Civaṅ created out of his third eye. Pārvati, his consort, then converted them into stars. They became Cuppiramaṇiya Mūrṭti’s (= Murukaṅ) mothers, raising him as their own.

²⁵² The literal translation ‘mouth shut’ does not really work, for the subjects say something shortly thereafter. The idea therefore is not a literal silence, but rather, that one stands still in respect, as one is supposed to before the Lord.

²⁵³ For an explanation of Aṭṭamācitti, see 93f.

namacikarittu vāy potti niṅṅrukkonṭu [5] ‘cuvāmi aṭiye, eṅkaḷukku aṭṭamācitti yaṅukkiraṅ ceyya vēṅnum’ enṅru viṅṅappaṅ ceyya...

In the days when he who was king Kulapūṣaṅa Pāṅṅiya was maintaining justice, in the earliest of times, at the feet of the Kayilāca mountain that remained without destruction for eon after eon, at the time while Paramēcuraṅ and Parācatti were sitting under the banyan tree, as Tēvi who was the queen of the mountain folded and gave betel leaves to Cuvāmi, as Nantikēcuparar, Paṅṅki (?) the attendants (*keṅaṅka!*) of Civa starting with Makākāḷar, and the sages of which Caṅaka was the first also stood [nearby] watching the great ‘sight’²⁵⁴, listening and listening, in the time when Paramēcuraṅ was narrating the stories of Civa without excluding Tēvi, the yavapa? virgins who were the ones who previously gave water to, and raised Cupparamaṅiya Mūrṅti, having given him a drink of water — having put on a *pōtava?* disguise, growing matted hair, wearing sacred ash and Ruttirāṅcam beads, coming to the sanctum of Cuvāmi, greeting [him], standing in complete silence requesting ‘Oh, respected Cuvāmi, you must grace us with the Aṭṭamācitti’...

Here, we may observe that the general framework of the passage, even its key sentences and vocabulary, is more or less the same in both versions. Yet, there are obvious stylistic changes. Several corruptions in the latter version are also found, but they do not reveal how they may have occurred. It is likely that the source-text was not corrupted, but perceived as corrupted or illegible by the scribe of RE27530, who copied it faithfully, despite not understanding what was written. At this state, one can only speculate.

Through the comparison of these two manuscripts, I hope to have firstly shown that the modern reader’s perception of what constitutes an error must change. The reader’s error and the scribe’s error are two different concepts that exist several hundred years apart. The study of the *vacāṅam* must therefore be approached with the mindset that there are no errors, only patterns. Analysing those patterns could, in turn, tell us more about how these texts were used and transmitted. Secondly, I hope to have argued adequately how different portions within the same text were transmitted differently. It is therefore never enough to say that two manuscripts are the same text, based only on some initial passages. The situation is much more complicated and must be considered when dealing with prose manuscripts. Oftentimes, as we also saw earlier in the case of D. 436 and D. 437, two manuscripts are assumed to contain the same text, as a result of which only one is preserved. Thirdly, I focused on choosing those passages that contained, in a way, the ‘essence’ of the *vacāṅam* style of writing. I will speak of this further on below, but first, some technical explanations are necessary.

²⁵⁴ The act of ‘*taricaṅam*’ (>Skt. *darśan* ‘sight’) is one of the main ways in which Hindu worship is conducted. The belief is, the very sight of the deity is enough to gain enlightenment and closeness with the divine. Here Śiva/Cuntarēcuvarar is described as being surrounded by his several faithful attendants, who are blessed with the sight of seeing and hearing him.

3.9 ‘Spoken’ and ‘Written’ Tamil — What Do They Mean?

The study of the *vacaṇam* is limited by the lack of available terminologies to describe it accurately. As a register, it is an amalgamation of many features, but what features? It has attributes that emulate modern spoken registers and others that follow modern writing practices. Yet, we do not know how people spoke 300 years ago, nor how far back in time the concept of non-technical prose writing²⁵⁵ even existed. So far, there has been widespread acknowledgement of the diglossia of Tamil — that is, the existence of two factions of Tamil — a formal (= written) and informal (= spoken), let us say. The first study in this regard was that of Constanzo Gioseffo Beschi (8 November 1680 – 4 February 1747; also known under his Tamil name Vīramāmuṇivar), an Italian Jesuit priest who dedicated his life to seriously researching Tamil.²⁵⁶ Rather than using ‘spoken’ and ‘written’ Tamil, he preferred the High Dialect and the Common Dialect²⁵⁷ in the Tamil region:

In this region there are two dialects of the Tamul Language: I would call one *the High*, the other *the Common*. Some not very correctly call that which differs from *the Common*, *the Poetical* dialect. But since we see the Tamulians use that dialect, not so much in those writings which have the trammels of metre, as in all others which by the old authors skilled in this tongue are composed in prose also, which is especially to be seen in the commentaries of the poets, that dialect will be better named the *more elegant*, or *high*, than the *poetic*. The Tamulians however call this *high* dialect செந்தமிழ், and the common கொடுந்தமிழ்: as if they would call that the *elegant* Tamil dialect, this is the *rough*. As I intend hereafter by God’s grace to publish a Grammar and Lexicon of the *high* dialect of the language, I shall here treat only of the *rough* or *common* idiom of the Tamul Language.²⁵⁸

Here, what stands out is his mention of the ‘high’ dialect not being restricted only to those writings which have ‘the trammels of metre’. He acknowledged the presence of prose, and one that was not at all ‘rough or common’ but befitting of the ‘high’ dialect. His observations likely included the *vacaṇam* (and other such genres), for he

²⁵⁵ I understand the commentary tradition to be technical prose — it is highly formulaic and follows a set format in most cases. For a discussion on the same, see Anandakichenin & D’Avella 2020.

²⁵⁶ For an overview of Beschi’s contributions to Tamil, see, for instance, Meenakshisundaram, K. 1974, where Beschi is described at length. For a biography of Beschi, see Besse 1918. For an account of Beschi’s Grammar of High Tamil (which is discussed only briefly in my work), see Gaur 1968. To learn more of the research process of Beschi and other earlier European researchers of Tamil, see Chevillard 2015. Regarding Beschi’s lexicographical work, see James (1991:66-70). For a complete list of Beschi’s original works, see Beschi (1848:v-vi).

²⁵⁷ Beschi’s grammars were written in Latin which I do not read. I have only used the English translations by Mahon and Babington (see bibliography). I thank Jean-Luc Chevillard for helping me navigate these texts and explaining important parts of the original Latin to me as well.

²⁵⁸ Beschi 1848:2

himself wrote in curated prose and must have required examples for it.²⁵⁹ Today, Beschi's impressions are maintained, but with different terminologies — '*cem-tamiḷ*' ('perfect Tamil') is maintained as the high dialect, seen almost only in the written medium. The phrase '*koṭum-tamiḷ*' has since been discarded for '*pēccu-tamiḷ*' 'spoken Tamil', for '*koṭum*' now means 'terrible' or 'inauspicious' and is used in rude reference to the speech of lower castes. They are rendered in English as 'written' and 'spoken' Tamil respectively.

One important source that adds a third dimension to the understanding of Tamil diglossia is Chevillard 2012, who argues for a 'triglossia' comprising A - 'Vernacular Tamil²⁶⁰', B - 'Modern Formal Tamil' and C - 'Classical Tamil'.²⁶¹ Of these three, C is the easiest to define — 'Classical Tamil' is of symbolic value with the exception of the *Kuraḷ* by Tiruvaḷḷuvar, a collection of 1,300 distychs, that is still used, quoted and memorised. Today, it is frozen in time and does not seem to have linguistically made it past the late first millenium. Of course, to be frozen in time does not imply that Classical Tamil did not undergo changes that eventually led to the Tamil(s) that we know of today. Rather, in the symbolic sense, Classical Tamil was, and still is, inaccessible. The register of Classical Literature as it has come to us is too distinct from Modern Tamil to be fully understood by any literate Tamil-speaker — at least not without great effort and special training.

Schiffman's (1979) grammar of spoken Tamil is also noteworthy. However, the specific dialect of Tamil that he speaks of is that which 'resembles most the higher caste, educated speech of non-Brahman groups in Tamilnadu.²⁶²' Thus, he adds yet another layer of socio-linguistic inquiry that cannot be excluded here — that caste is a huge determining factor of the usage and transmission of the Tamil language. Andronov acknowledges caste-based linguistic differentiations by calling them 'social dialects'. He says:

'Quite a few specific features may be found in some social dialects, such as the dialect of Brahmans and the dialect of Harijans [*sic*].²⁶³ Dialects, as well as the colloquial language are widely used in fiction.'²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ I think particularly of his series of children's stories, titled *Paramārta Kuru Kataikaḷ* 'Stories of Paramārta Kuru'. His use of *kataikaḷ* is reminiscent of the prose *katai*.

²⁶⁰ Chevillard defends the use of the terminology of 'vernacular' in 2012:2:2f. Most Tamilians (including myself) prefer the term 'colloquial' or 'regional', for we argue that 'vernacular' puts the language in an inferior position to Sanskrit, the universally accepted Indian classical language. This is a politically charged debate, and one that does not offer much clarity in terms of this work. Today, Tamil is simply referred to as one cultural entity in comparison to Sanskrit, as a 'classical language'.

²⁶¹ Chevillard 2012:2-3.

²⁶² Schiffman 1999:1

²⁶³ Since Andronov's publication, the word 'Harijan' has been nationally acknowledged as a casteist slur towards the lowest strata of caste in India. The preferred term for this community is now 'Dalit'.

²⁶⁴ See Andronov 1989:4.

It is therefore worth keeping in mind that most investigations on Tamil socio-linguistics are focused on the speech of the upper-most Brahmin caste, which was historically also the only literate Tamil caste. In this light, plenty of work must be done in this field to understand the impact and development of *all* registers and dialects of spoken Tamil, if we really wish to get to the bottom of how the spoken and the written function in combination with each other. I think particularly of Andronov (ibid.) who also stated that colloquial Tamil is identified as ‘a common modern language of Tamils.’²⁶⁵ The ‘Tamils’ are not one homogenous group, and assuming representation of all its constituent castes and class-groups is misleading. Andronov acknowledges the nuance of these social divisions, but his grammar conforms to the speech of the upper-most caste. I believe it is worth keeping in mind the complexities of the topic at hand, so that more inclusive work may be done in the future.

Returning now to the theme of the *vacanam*, I prefer not to call it a mix of ‘written’ and ‘spoken’ Tamil, for it is too difficult to isolate either one from the other, and therefore both are far too elusive to clearly define. Instead, I choose to call the *vacanam* ‘spontaneous prose’ where ‘spontaneous’ does not imply a lack of preparation/forethought on the part of the scribe, but the linguistic elements he employs, making it conducive to read out in a kind of natural dialogue-format. A single conversation often contains only one finite sentence, which is provided several folios after the start of the sentence. The subject is changed often, according to context and not to grammar. The length of each story in the TVP changes due to a variety of factors. Individual scribes adapt their storyline and sentence-structure to the need of the hour, which takes priority over accurate copying. Given these features, the *vacanam* likely *also* was made to be read out, perhaps during temple sermons or as reading practise for young scholars.

On the one hand, the usage of the phrase ‘spontaneous prose’ to describe the *vacanam* offers many advantages to projects such as mine. On the other hand, many have in the past attempted not to rectify earlier terminologies, but to simply add their own. Currently, I am unable to find a middle ground. Therefore, without meaning to add further confusion, I would ask those interested to read through a *vacanam* manuscript on their own and come up with their own understanding. After all, the *vacanam* never defined itself. I cannot guarantee that a post-dated definition such as mine will suffice.

3.10 The *vacanam* writing style - Recognising Patterns

This part of my dissertation analyses the patterns within the *vacanam* for two reasons: firstly, it allows us to further discern between error and non-error, and secondly, it shows us exactly which orthographic/stylistic features were done away with as Tamil prose became more standardised. This second point will be explored in the fourth and last Chapter of this work. Keeping in mind once again the transcription conventions I introduced earlier, the writing style of the *vacanam* can be categorised by their basic types of modifications. My impression of the *vacanam* is that where a pattern may be

²⁶⁵ See Andronov 1989:3-4.

found, the possibility of error is reduced. For example, if a *la* is replaced often enough by *la*, such as *vāḷkkai* ('life') becoming *vāḷkkai*, it indicates not a mistake, but an alternate spelling that has since been discarded. Tentatively, there are three basic types of modifications that occur — when something is added, when something is removed, and when something is changed/modified.

Additions

Additions made to the orthography of a word in the *vacanam* are, I argue, a direct result of Tamil speech patterns. The characteristics cited and described below are common in Tamil speech but are usually not represented in writing. The *vacanam* is the only noted exception I have observed in manuscripts.

1. *eppaṭi* → *yeppaṭi*:²⁶⁶ The addition of an initial 'y' before a word that begins with a vowel is a frequent phenomenon, and the only addition made to a written spelling that is found in the *vacanam*.²⁶⁷ For example:

[Indien 291, 52v]

[4]...**யெப்படி**க்கொண்டு போவோம் என்று சொல்ல...

'*yeppaṭi koṇṭu pōvōm?*' *enru colla...*'

Saying, 'How will we carry [him] away?'

[Indien 291, 102v]

[3] **யென்ற** தமையன் பிள்ளையி[ல்]லாமல் **யென்** மகனை **யெடு** [4] த்து வளத்து...

'*yeṇ tamaiyaṇ, piḷḷaiyillāmal yeṇ maṇai yeṭuttu vaḷattu...*'

My elder brother, [on account of] being without a child, having taken my son, [and] raising [him]...

[RE27530, 25v]

[8]...பெண் குடுத்தமாமனார் **யென்கிற** முரை [9] யாலெ சுவாமி தாமெ **யெருந்திருந்து** மாமனாரைக் கூட்டிக் கொண்டார்.

²⁶⁶ I discussed the addition of *y* as a redundant glide already. Yet, I bring back this example for it is the clearest one in the *vacanam* of additions being made on purpose. Smaller examples include re-duplication where none is required (such as when *vāṇam* 'sky' is written as *vāṇṇam*) and the addition of *k* before or after *h* in Sanskrit loan-words (such as in *śahkti* instead of *śakti*).

²⁶⁷ I decided in this portion to include the original Tamil in my transcriptions, as my point on morphology and orthography is easier made in the Tamil script.

...*peṇ kuṭutta māmaṇār yeṅkīra muraiyāle, cuvāmi tāme eḷuntiruntu māmaṇāraik kūṭṭi-koṇṭār.*

...by the order/status of [him] **being** the father-in-law who gave [his] daughter, the Lord himself **having risen**, brought along the father-in-law.

[RE27530, 31r]

[31r]

[1] அவன் வசமாக மே [2] கங்களை விட்டு விடச் சொல்லி மேகங்கள் **யெப்போதும்** போலெத் தேவலோகத்துக்கு [3] போயிருந்துது.

avaṇ vacamāka mēkaṅkaḷai viṭṭu-viṭa colli, mēkaṅkaḷ yeppōtum pōle tēva-lōkattukku pōy iruntutu.

He, declaring as an order [for him to] let go of the clouds, the clouds, having gone, just like **always** to the Upper world, stayed there.

In example (a), the first word ‘*yeppaṭi*’ is the first word in a new sentence. It thus does not justify the use of a glide. However, given the spoken pronunciation of this word, in which the initial ‘y’ is vocalised, this is likely the reason behind this orthography. In example (b), this is even clearer: ‘*yeṇ makaṇai*’ is preceded by the word ‘*illāmal*’, ending with a closed consonant. There are, in this short sentence, four instances of an initial ‘y’. We observe in (c) and (d) the same phenomenon: ‘*yeṅkīra*’ is preceded by a closed consonant from ‘*māmaṇār*’, and in (d), ‘*yeppōtum*’ retains a ‘y’ even though it is preceded by ‘*mēkaṅkaḷ*’.

Particularly in the case of interrogative particles such as *yēn* (why), *yeppaṭi* (how), *yetukku* (for what), *yenta* (which), and adverbs such as *yeppōtum* (always) and *yellārum* (everyone), the initial ‘y’ is consistently observed. There are just as many examples of the ‘y’ being used correctly, in terms of modern grammar rules. I cite just one example here:

[RE27530, 77v]

[9]...பறுவதங்கள் காடுகள் செடி [10] **களையெல்லாம்** தூளாக்கிக் கொண்டு...

paruvataṅkaḷ, kāṭukaḷ, ceṭikaḷai yellām tūḷ ākkikkoṇṭu...

Having turned (literally, made) to dust **all** the mountains, the forests [and] plants...

I am convinced that this is a result of spoken pronunciations. Today, in Tamil speech, the initial y is often added to English words also, as a hypercorrection. Words such as

‘everybody’ and ‘earth’ are sometimes pronounced by a Tamilian as ‘yeverybody’ and ‘yearth’. Two classic examples of spoken hypercorrections with the reverse process are that the word ‘yellow’ is often pronounced ‘ellow’ and ‘yesterday’ ‘esterday’.²⁶⁸ The flexibility of the usage of the *y* in Tamil speech is thus reflected in the writing of the *vacanam*.

In the following examples, the addition of *u* after a closed consonant at the end of the word is observed.

2. pēr → pēru: This is a tell-tale sign of ‘spoken’-ness in the *vacanam*. Adding of the ‘*u*’ to closed consonants is a frequent feature in Tamil speech. For example:

[RE27530, 85v]

[6]...சவந்தர சாமந்தரை [7] ப் பாத்து வம்முடைய நிமித்தியமாக யெணக்கு யிந்தப் பேறு கிடைத்துதெ...

cavuntara cāmantaraip pāttu, ‘vummuṭaiya nimittiyamāka yeṇakku yintap pēru kiṭaittute!’

Looking at Cavuntara Cāantar, [saying], ‘by way of your presence,²⁶⁹ this name was given²⁷⁰ to me!’

[BNF Indien 291, 119r]

[5] புண்ணிய புருஷர்கள் இதொ சிவலோகத்திலெ யிருக்கிறார்கள் பாரு...

‘punṇiya puruṣarkaḷ ito civalōkattile yirukkīrarkaḷ pāru!’

‘**Look!** The children of good fortune indeed reside right here, in the World of Civan!’

It is unsurprising that this happens, but worth noting all the same, for one may be tempted to correct it. I suggest that there is no need, for it was clearly an attribute of the register and not an error. If there is more to say on this phenomenon, it is that prose, unlike metrical writing, had less markers of natural spacing. That is, when one reads a poem, one often knows where to pause, where to emphasise, and where the

²⁶⁸ Thank you to Giovanni Ciotti for pointing these examples out to me.

²⁶⁹ *nimittiyam* > Skt. *nimitta* ‘cause, ground, reason, omen’. I took ‘*unṇuṭaiya nimittiyamāka*’ to be ‘by way of your presence’ because the speaker is talking about the good fortune he received from the listener. I was not able to convey the exact flavour of this phrase into English and have therefore resorted to a non-specific translation here.

²⁷⁰ Although *kiṭaittal* means to obtain or to receive, the fact that it is a verb that is conjugated with the dative (*yeṇakku kiṭaittatu*, for example) makes the literal translation (‘it was obtained for me’) nonsensical in English. Since the implication, after all, is that something was given to the speaker, I stretched the semantic potential to suit the translation.

poem itself ends. The different tools provided for rhyme and rhythm facilitate logical pauses. At this stage, prose was not quite aware of how to create those pauses, particularly because sentences were long, and it was easy to get lost in them. Thus, scribes may have adopted such spoken sensibilities, so that readers could navigate reading the *vacanam* better.

Deletions

3. *vēṇṭum* → *vēṇum*: The swallowing of sounds that are redundant in spoken Tamil is unsurprising. For one, the *ṭ* that succeeds a *ṇ* is often deleted. For example, *vēṇṭum* ‘it is necessary’ is rendered *vēṇum* in the *vacanam*. For example:

[BNF Indien 291, 2r]

[1]...தீர்தங்களுக்கெல்லாம் [2] அதிகமான தீர்தமும் சிவத[ள]ங்களுக்கெல்லாம் அதிகமான சிவலிங்கமும் திருவுளம் பற்ற **வேணும்** என்று கேட்டார்கள்.

...*tīrtaṅkaḷukk- ellām atikamāṇa tīrtamum, civata[ḷa]ṅkaḷukk- ellām atikamāṇa civaliṅkamum tivulaṅam parra **vēṇum** ’enru kēṭṭārkaḷ.*

They asked, the sacred heart **must** ignite, [saying] the greatest holy water-body among all holy water-bodies, and the greatest Civaliṅkam among all shrines of Civa.

[RE27530, 25r]

[7]... சுவாமியை [8] த் தெண்டம் பண்ண **வேணும்** மென்று நினைத்தான்.

‘*cuvāmiyait teṅtam paṇṇa vēṇum*’ *menru niṇaittāṇ.*

‘It is necessary to perform prostration to the Lord’ he thought.

4. *yāṇai* → *āṇai*: Beside the addition of a seemingly redundant *y* as glide, one also finds the rarer but still prevalent deletion of *y* in words attested to have one present — likely a hypercorrection. *yāṇai* ‘elephant’ is spelled *āṇai* and *yār* ‘who?’ as *ār*. The god of death, *yamaṇ* first becomes *yemaṇ* and finally *emaṇ* in the *vacanam*. Many of these forms have been lexicalised, as they are ubiquitous across all literary disciplines in Tamil. For example, *āṇai* (TL:263) is found in *Tiruvācakam* 8: *āṇaiyāyk kītamāy* ‘as an elephant, as a worm’. I believe that both cases — the addition of the *y* and the deletion of the *y* — existing simultaneously in the *vacanam*, tell us something of its influences. Perhaps the former is a spoken sensibility and the latter, a literary one. At this stage of research, it is only speculation. Below are examples of the deletion of *y*:

[BNF Indien 291, 116v]

[3]...அவன் [4] பகையாளியாய் வந்து இருக்குற **எமனாதனை** வெல்ல வெணுமென்று திருவுளத்திலெ நினைத்து...

'avan 'pakaiyāḷiyāy vantu irukkura emanātanai vella vēnum' enru tiruvuḷattile ninaittu...'

He, thinking in [his] sacred heart, 'it is necessary to vanquish **Emanātan**, who has come in the form of an enemy' ...

[RE27530, 116v]

[4]..யிந்த கரும்பைக் கல்லினா [5] லெ செயிதிருக்கிற **ஆனையைத்** தின்னச் சொல்லுந்...

'yinta karumpaik kalliṅāle ceyitirukkira ānaiyait tinnac collum!'

'Tell the **elephant** that has been made with stone to eat this sugarcane!'

5. paiyan → **payyan**: Nouns whose first syllable possesses the diphthong *ai*, followed by *y* tend to delete the *ai*, and sometimes replace it with a second *y*. For example, *paiyan* 'boy' → *payyan*, *kaiyile* 'in the hand' → *kayyile*, but *kaiyilācam* 'kailāsa mountain' → *kayilācam*. For example:

[BNF Indien 291, 44v]

[5]...அந்தக் கறும்பைக் **கய்யிலெ** [44r] [1] வாங்கி, சித்தர் சாமியை பாற்த்து நீரெல்லாம் வல்ல சித்தரென்று சொன்னீர்.

antak karumpaik kayyile vāṅki, cittar cāmiyai pārṭtu, 'nīr ellām valla cittar' enru conṅṅīr.

Having received that sugarcane in the hand, looking at venerable Cittar, saying that you [are] the Cittar of all powers.²⁷¹

[RE27530 - 168r]

[1] சுவா [2] மி பெரு விரலாலெ **கயிலாச** கிரியை மிதிக்க...

cuvāmi peruviralāle kayilāca kiriyai mitikka...

²⁷¹ In my translation, I have interpreted the sentence within the quotations to be indirect speech, despite the presence of the quotative '*enru*'. Although this is fairly common in Tamil prose, it seems to be an important feature in the lengthy passages of dialogue exchange, wherein the active and passive are used interchangeably without warning.

As the Lord stamps the **Kayilāca** mountain with [his] big toe;

6. *pārṭtu* → *pāṭtu*: The *r* that precedes a *tt* is often deleted. For example: *pārṭtu* ‘having seen’ → *pāṭtu*, *patārṭtam* → ‘side-dish food variety’²⁷² → *patāṭtam*, and *tīrṭtu* ‘having destroyed’ → *tīṭtu*. For example:

[BNF Indien 291, 105v]

[2]...அவர்களைக் கட்டிக்கொண்டு கண்ணீர் வளிய வாயி விட்டலறி மருமகனை [3]
ப்பாத்துக் கிலேசப்பட்டு...

*avarkaḷaik kaṭṭikkoṇṭu, kaṇṇīr vaḷiya, vāyi viṭṭ-alaṛi marumakaṇaip pāṭtuk
kilēcappaṭtu...*

Embracing them, as tears flowed, weeping out loud,²⁷³ feeling distressed **having seen** [her] son-in-law...

[RE27530, 82v]

[7]...அறுசுவை கறி பதாத்தங்களுடனெ பிராமண போசனமும்...

arucuvai kari patāṭṭaṅkaḷuṭane pirāmaṇa pōcaṇamum...

And the food for/of the Brahmins **along with side-dishes** of cooked vegetables of [all] six flavours...

7. *appuṛam* → *apuṛam*: Deletion is also observed where there is a reduplication of consonants within a word. அப்புறம் ‘afterwards’ is written more often as அபுறம், and அப்போது ‘at that time’ more often as அபோது. திருவுள்ளம் ‘sacred heart’ becomes திருவுளம் every time. For example:

[RE27530, 108r]

அபடிக் குறைந்து வரவுந் தன்னுடைய இல்லாமையை ஒருவருக்குஞ்
சொல்லாமல்...

²⁷² This is a derived meaning. *patārṭtam* more often refers to some form of paraphrenalia and in the context of food, is often that which comes with the food — i.e., a side-dish or an *entrée*. As far as I know, this is unique to the Brahmin/temple-circle dialect.

²⁷³ The sense of *vāyi-viṭṭu*, literally ‘having left the mouth’ is that the weeping is aloud. An alternative translation could perhaps be, ‘weeping (*alaṛi*), [the sound] having left (*viṭṭ(u)*) the mouth (*vāyi*)’, thus taking *vāyi* as an unmarked accusative. In this context, I was inclined to understand *vāyi-viṭṭu* as a compound verb meaning ‘to be loud/to be audible’.

apaṭik kuraintu varavum taṇṇuṭaiya illāmaiyaṭi oruvarukkum collāmal...

Even as [the money] was steadily lessening **in that way**, not telling even a single person of his own poverty...

[BNF Indien 291, 131v]

[1]...அபோது யாள்ப்பாணத்து வில்லி யென்கிறவள் வீணையைக் கையிலெ யெ

[2] டுத்துத் தந்தியை இறுக்கி ராசாவுக்குச் சந்தோஷம் வர ராகம் பாடினாள்...

apōtu, yāḷppāṇattu villi yenkiravaḷ vīṇaiyaik kaiyile yeṭuttut tantiyai irukki rācāvukkuc cantōṣam vara rākam pāṭiṇāḷ.

Then, she who is called Villi of the lute, taking in [her] hands the Vīṇai [instrument], [and] tightening the strings, she sang a mode so that enjoyment comes to the king.

8. *piramaka/hatti* → *piramatti*: A rarer form is the deletion of the sibilant (Skt. *uṣman*) *h* in Sanskrit loan-words. *piramahatti/piramakatti* → *piramatti*. Since the Sanskrit aspirative is often rendered in Tamil by *k*, a word such as *pātaka* (Skt. *pātaka*) tends also to lose the intermediary *ka* by following that pattern, thus producing *pātam*, only differentiated from *pātam* ‘foot’ by context. The most ubiquitous example of this known to Tamil is *mahā/makā* → *mā*. For example:

[BNF Indien 291, 113r]

[3]...அந்தத் தலத்திலெ யுன் [4] னுடைய பிரமத்தியைத் தீத்துப்போட்டுகிறோ மென்று சுந்தரேசுபரர் திருவா[க்கு]ப் பிறந்திது.

‘anta talattile yunṇuṭaiya piramattiyait tīttu pōṭukirōm’ enru cuntarēcuparar tiruvā[kku]p pīrantitu.

The sacred speech of Cuntarēcuparar took form [thus]: ‘I²⁷⁴ will completely destroy your **Brahminicide-curse** in that holy place.

[RE27530, 64v]

[2]...இருபத்தா [3] றாவது **மாபாதந்** தீர்த்த திருவிளையாடல் சொல்லுகிறோம்...

²⁷⁴ Although *pōṭukirōm* is in the first person plural form, it is obvious here that it is meant in the singular sense but used for the sake of grandeur — the ‘royal we’, as many call it casually. After all, Lord Cuntarēcuparar is the speaker.

‘*irupatt-ārāvatu māvātan tīrtta tiruviḷaiyāṭal collukirōm.*’

‘I [Agastya] will narrate (*collukirōm*) the twenty-sixth (*irupatt-ārāvatu*) sacred sport (*tiruviḷaiyāṭal*) of having destroyed (*tīrtta*) **the great sin (*māvātan*)**.’

Modifications

9. Revisiting the ambiguity between *ki* and *ku*: In the finite verbs, the intermediate *ki* present in fifth class verbs such as *collutal* ‘to speak’, ninth class verbs such as *kēḷḷutal* ‘to listen’, ‘to ask’, and thirteenth class verbs such as *vātal/varutal* ‘to come’ often use *ku* instead.²⁷⁵ Thus, *collukirēṇ* ‘I speak’ → *collukurēṇ*, *kēṭkirēṇ* ‘I listen/I ask’ → *kēṭkurēṇ*, *varukirēṇ* ‘I come’ → *varukurēṇ*. Less often, but still present, is the complete deletion of this intermediate ‘*ki/ku*’ sound. There is no singular pattern from these instances that may be observed. It is found only in the case of the verb *collutal* → *collurēṇ* ‘I speak’, but not in other fifth class verbs such as *pāṭutal* ‘to sing’ → *pāṭukurēṇ*, *mārutal* ‘to change’ → *mārukurēṇ*, etc. The ambiguity of this intermediate *ki/ku* sound is also seen in strong-stemmed verbs, such as *vaittal* ‘to keep/place’ → *vaikkurēṇ* ‘I keep/place’. This is a very frequent variation that is observed in the *vacaṇam*. It is worth revisiting here precisely for the closeness it holds with regards to pronunciations — the specific sound between *i* and *u* that has no designated vowel of its own is perfectly clear in speech. The confusion starts only when the spoken needs to be represented in writing, and this is exemplified in the variation in form found in the *vacaṇam*. The example below represents the ‘correct’ way of writing:

[RE27530, 83v]

[8]...நாளை வுதையத்திலெ நாம் வருகிறோம்.

‘*nālai vutaiyattile nām varukirōm.*’

We are coming tomorrow at sunrise.

Yet, this is not maintained consistently. For example:

[RE27530, 90r]

[3] இந்த வளை களன்று போகுது.

inta vaḷai kaḷaṅṅru pōkutu.

This armband is slipping off.

²⁷⁵ This is also found in *Śrivaishṇava Maṇipravāḷam*. e.g. (find reference here). Thanks to Erin McCann for this reference.

[BNF Indien 291, 2r]

[2]...அபோது, அகத்தி [3] யர் கேட்ட ரிஷிகளைப் பாத்து, முகமலர்ச்சியுடனெ
சொல்லுகுறார்...

apōtu, akattiyar kēṭṭa riṣiyalaip pāttu, mukamalarcciyuṭane collukurār...

[And] then, Akattiyar, looking at the sages who had asked, **says** with a smile...

[but in BNF Indian 291]

[5v]

[2]...இனிமேல்த் திருவிளையாடல் [3] சொல்லுகிறோமென்று இருஷிகளைப்
பாத்து, அகத்திய மாமுனி சொல்லுகிறார்.

‘inimēl tiruṣaiyāṭal collukirōm’ enru iruṣikalaip pāttu, akattiya māmuni collukirār.

Having looked at the sages, saying ‘And now, **I will narrate (collukirōm)** the Tiruṣaiyāṭal [stories]’, the great sage Akattiyar [accordingly] **narrates**.

10. Revisiting the ambiguity between *l̥* and *l̄*: Yet another ambiguous sound is *l̥*, that is rendered sometimes in writing as *l̄*, such as in the case of *tamil̥* ‘the Tamil language’ instead of *tamil̄*, *valipātu* ‘way [of worship]’ instead of *valipātu* and *varavaḷaittu* ‘to invite’ instead of *varavaḷaittu*. It is an interesting case because there is some agreement among linguists that the nature of differentiation between *l̥* and *l̄* may indicate the dialect and/or register of the speaker. A correctly pronounced *l̥* that is easily differentiable from *l̄* connotes a good education in Tamil and thus has much to do with the interplay between caste, other social hierarchies, and language. Schiffman also states:

‘Because of the ‘mystique’ surrounding this sound (Tamils seem to believe it is ‘unique’ in Tamil) it is learned only through literacy by many speakers, and even then, some never master it.’²⁷⁶

It is, for several reasons, undeniable that the *l̥*, famed in Tamil, does not have any one phonetic identity. Its socio-linguistic complexity, that Schiffman also notes further on in the same passage,²⁷⁷ cannot be explained by the study of the *vacaṇam* and its treatment of this phoneme/glyph. For example:

²⁷⁶ Schiffman 1999:7-8

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*

[2] சகல பாக்கியங்களும் பெற்று **வாள்க**

‘cakala pākkīyaṅkaḷum perru vāḷka!’

‘May you **live [long]**, having obtained all fortunes!’

[RE27530, 152v]

லோ [7] கத்திலெ ஒருவன் **வாள** உலகம் **வாளுமென்றது** போலவெ குலத்துக்கும் நன்மை உண்டாச்சது.

‘lōkattile oruvaṅ vāḷa ulakam vāḷum’ enrātu pōlave, kulattukkum naṅmai uṅṅāccutu.

Just like the saying ‘As one [good] man **lives** in the world, the [whole] world **will live [well] (vāḷum)**,’ prosperity materialised for the [Pāṅṅiya] clan [due to one good king].

In RE27530, where the famous poem beginning with *koṅku tēr vāḷkkai* is quoted, this is also observed.²⁷⁸ Here, *vāḷkkai* is written as *vāḷkkai*:

[RE27530, 174r]

[4]...சுந்தரேசுபர மூற்த்தி ஒரு பட்டு சீட்டி மணிதத்திலெ²⁷⁹ கொங்கு [5] தேர் **வாள்க்கை** யென்கிற கவிதை எழுதி...

cuntarēcupara mūrṭti oru paṭṭu cīṭṭi maṅṅattile koṅku tēr vāḷkkai yeṅkīra kavitai eḷuti...

Cuntarēcupara Mūrṭti, having written [down] the composition that is called *Koṅku Tēr Vāḷkkai* upon a silk cloth-bit, (here) on earth...

I had stated earlier, with the example of Parañcōti’s invocation, that the scribes of the *vacanam* were steadfast in maintaining the rules of Tamil writing when it came to older literary works. Yet, the presence of ‘*vāḷkkai*’ as opposed to the original ‘*vāḷkkai*’ contradicts this. I suggest an explanation: As ‘*koṅku tēr vāḷkkai*’ was (and still is) one of the most famous Tamil poems, the scribes of the *vacanam* simply knew it by heart, and never saw a written version of it. The same could not be said of Parañcōti’s

²⁷⁸ This poem is the second in the *Kuruntokai* (‘the collection of small poems’), part of the *Eṅṅutokai* ‘the collection of Eight’.

²⁷⁹ I have taken *maṅṅattile* to be *maṅṅattile* ‘on earth’.

lengthy and complex text. This is intriguing for the simple reason that it once again shows us the high level of complexity in creating the *vacanam*. A literary poem is learned by rote and then rendered into writing with the sensibilities of spoken pronunciations maintained.

11. The rare hypercorrection of *!* into *!*: The very nature of the confusion between *!* and *!* lends itself to yet another interesting phenomenon — a hypercorrection, where the expected *!* is changed to the less common *!*. In the *vacanam*, I found only one example for this hypercorrection: *kē!kka* ‘to hear’, ‘to question’, is seen instead of *kē!ka/kē!kka*. For example:

[RE27530, 49v]

[3]...காஞ்சிபுரத்திலெ ராச்சிக்கஞ் செயி [4] து வரு சோழன் சமணாமத்ததிலெ
கேழ்வி கேட்டு யிருக்கிறவன்

kāñcipurattile rāccikkañ ceyitu varu cō!aṇ camāṇa matattile kē!yi kē!tu yirukkiravaṇ.

The Cō!aṇ, who continuously rules in Kāñcipuram, is one who is asking questions about²⁸⁰ the Camāṇa [Jain] religion.

[RE27530, 52r]

[5]...சுந்தரேசுர மூற்த்தி நாயகனார் அடியவர்க் கெளியவர் பரதேசி காவலவென்று
வாள்த்தி...

*‘cuntarēcura mūr̥tti nāyakaṇār! aṭiyavark kē!iyavar/kē!iyavar, paratēci kāvala!’
venru vāl̥tti,*

Praising, saying ‘O, Lord of the form of Cuntarēcura! [You] who is the friend²⁸¹ of the devotees, O you, the protector of [also] foreigners/foreign lands (*paratēci*)!’

The second quotation is one made from only a few folios away and is still the same story. The two variants are found in such close proximity to each other, suggesting that they were not errors at all, but fully internalised spelling conventions.

²⁸⁰ Although a more literal rendering of ‘*matattile*’ would be ‘in the religion’, this use of the locative does not translate well into English. I have therefore extended the semantic scope slightly. Alternatively, one may also take ‘in [the field of] the Jain religion’ as another option. Given that the story is that the inquisitive Cō!a king eventually clashes with the Pāñṭiya king on account of his interest in the Jain religion (among other factors), I surmised that my final translation respected the context more.

²⁸¹ Here is an interesting ambiguity, occurring exactly where it is most needed. Given the uncertainty of the exact value of *!* in the original, along with the expected undifferentiated *e*, *kē!iyavar* may be read in two ways — *kē!iyavar* or *kē!iyavar*. Serendipitously, the two do not vary too much semantically. The former is a relation or relative and the latter, a friend. I opted for the latter meaning as a matter of preference.

11. ‘Tamilisation’ of Sanskrit loan-words: The exponential presence of Sanskrit loan-words in the *vacanam* requires discussion. While priestly (= Brahmin) circles were known to admit into their language several Sanskrit loan-words and sounds,²⁸² I am interested in how the *vacanam* maintains only those influences that came from the spoken realm. Sanskrit was never spoken, but these priests certainly knew how to recite many Sanskrit verses. Thus, it is unexpected that the spellings of Sanskrit words in the *vacanam* are not consistent. This tells us that the writers of the *vacanam* had two separate ideas of usage of Sanskrit in their professional lives — firstly, there were those sacred texts that they learned by rote and did not alter, and secondly, there was a general presence of Sanskrit in their spoken lives. The latter form became so inherent to their Tamil, that it became Tamil, and thus it behaved like Tamil in texts such as the *vacanam*. Thus, the presence of Sanskrit in the *vacanam* is not really Sanskrit anymore, but Tamilised Sanskrit. This is reflected even in the name ‘*vacanam*’ (>Skt. *vacana* ‘speaking, a speaker, eloquent’).

There is also the matter of finding out why these words of Sanskrit origin exist in such high frequency in the *vacanam*. I am confident that their presence reflects the orthoepics of the transmission of the *vacanam* — that is, the result of the presence of Sanskrit and the nature of that Sanskrit is a reflection of the orality of the *vacanam*. This is why I would take the *vacanam* to be a note-taker’s documentation of an orator. That would be the only explanation for the frequency of, as well as the diversity in spelling in, Sanskrit loan-words that is witnessed in the *vacanam*. This paves the way to a new path of inquiry: how close is the written representation to the original speech? Was there a diversity in pronunciation which then translated to writing variability in the *vacanam*? It seems that when the spoken is rendered in writing, the scribe has just as many choices as the orator. I would accept, for instance, the complete absence or the chaotic usage of *sandhi* as a reflection of this process of rendering — that certain elements are lost (*vīṭṭīrkup pōṇēṇ* (I went home) → *vīṭṭukku pōṇēṇ*), while others are gained/used haphazardly (*pāṇṭiyarum cōmacēkara cōḷaṇ* → *pāṇṭiyaruñc cōmacēkara cōḷaṇ*). After all, that is more obligatory in the written than in the spoken. Can we in the same way take for granted that the Sanskrit loan-words present in the *vacanam* are written exactly according to the original pronunciation of the orator in each instance? Or is the mixture of orthography in these cases an indication of a much more complex process, in which both scribe and orator have their own mixture of pronunciations and spellings that do not necessarily match when mingled? Thus, with the simultaneous usage of Sanskrit and Tamil orthographies, as well as in some cases, a mixture of the two, the question of how consciously the scribal process was carried out is raised; after all, the spoken context is now lost.

The *vacanam* also lends itself to another point of view: so far, the study of Sanskrit in these Tamil texts as those in which there are Sanskrit loan-words treated according to Tamil rules has been the most natural approach. Perhaps we may also momentarily think of the *vacanam* displaying the reverse process — that it is, in some instances, the Tamil being treated according to the rules of Sanskrit grammar. We see this in the usage of the accusative case to mark the destination to which one is

²⁸² This is true of the Tamil-Brahmin dialects even today. For example, the preferred word for water is ‘*tīrtam*’ from Skt. and not the Tamil *nīr/taṇṇīr*.

going, a role that is usually fulfilled in Tamil by the dative. Where accepted spellings of Sanskrit loan-words are found in the *vacanam*, the Sanskrit spelling is usually preferred, but the Tamil word is also sometimes used — *akattiyaṅ* is also *akasttiyaṅ*, *mīṇāṭci* as *mīṇākṣi*, and *maturai* as *maturāpuri*. There is, therefore, no linear direction to the process, if we are to keep in mind the orality of these texts. This could also be the result of the same linguistic interference from the orality of the *vacanam*. It is, in writing, certainly a Tamil text in which Sanskrit is an active participant, but by attempting to attribute only one linear direction — Sanskrit to Tamil — we lose out on the possibility of observing the few instances of the reverse, that are likely a consequence of speech. Some Sanskrit words were Tamilised so early that they themselves became accepted Tamil words.

With that in mind, here are some instances that display the orthographic variety typical of the *vacanam*, when it comes to Sanskrit loan-words:

- (a) *cuntarecuvarar* → *cuntarecuparar*, *cuntaresvarar*, *cuntareṣvarar*, *cuntaresparar*, *cuntaresparar*.
- (b) *paruvatam* → *parupatam*, *paruvatam*, *parvatam*, *parupatam*, *parpatam*.
- (c) *viruṭcam* → *viruccam*, *virukṣam*, *viṭuṭṣam*, *virusṣam*.
- (d) *svarūpam* → *corūpam*, *svarūpam*, *corūpam*
- (e) *akattiyaṅ* → *akasttiyaṅ*, *akattyaṅ*, *akastiyaṅ*.

12. Verbs and Sentence Structure

If the *vacanam* truly reflects speech situations, sentence structure would be the first key to finding out just how close the spoken and the written might have been. Instrumental to the study of sentence structure is the use of verbs. The spoken often betrays the rules of sentence structure in Tamil. For example, the phenomenon known as the ‘run-on sentence’ is present in speech, but absent in writing. I was therefore intrigued to find examples of run-on sentences in the *vacanam*. There are sentences that seem to either lack a finite verb (Tam. *viṇaimurru/murruviṇai*) or continue despite the presence of one and single sentences so long that they contain within them a single story. They are often made up of a string of absolutes (Tam. ‘*ceytu*’ *viṇaiyeccam*), with sub-clauses marked in the infinitive (‘*ceyya*’ *viṇaiyeccam*) that also change the subject (as expected).²⁸³ Somewhere, several folios later, one may or may not find the end.

Another detail that proved significant in determining the closeness of the written and the spoken in the *vacanam* is the fact that most of the verbs are reused several times in the same sentence. Variety, seen universally as a mark of skill in composition, is not prioritised here. The spoken moves away from this, for what has been said only a few minutes ago is quickly forgotten. The written, on the other hand, exemplifies a purposefulness that compels the writer to constantly revisit what was

²⁸³ Although the ‘*ceytu*’ *viṇaiyeccam* is not the only absolute form in Tamil, and ‘*ceyya*’ *viṇaiyeccam* not the only infinitive form, they are the only two of their kind found in the *vacanam*. The different varieties of non-finite verbs forms are discussed in Wilden 2018:76.

composed previously. The same content is visited only once in the spoken, but several times in the written. That the scribes of the *vacanam* do not appear to revisit their work is a sign that their thought process and environment was situated more in the spoken. This observation leads us to yet another factor to consider — speed. The spoken functions much faster than the written. If we are to assume that the narrator of the *vacanam* — a superior (likely a teacher and/or priest) of the scribe — was in control of the speed, the scribe certainly had no time to review his work as he wrote and thus, no time to alter any frequent repetitions.

In my analysis of verbs, I focus on how the auxiliaries, compound verbs and causatives function. Similarly, the way in which the ‘spoken’ realm has interfered or affected the choice of verbs that are used in the *vacanam* determines certain finer semantic points that I am interested in. In this section, I discuss verbs in isolation, while in the following, I discuss how they function syntactically.

Auxiliaries and Secondary Constructions²⁸⁴

There are several auxiliaries in Tamil whose meanings have developed over time to adapt and alter according to circumstance. Alternatively, it may also seem that each literary period or trend has preferred certain auxiliaries.²⁸⁵ But the primary questions that arise are: What are auxiliary verbs? And what qualifies as an auxiliary verb? I do not know of one universal definition, but only of discussions and speculations.²⁸⁶ Several attempts have been made already to study auxiliaries in Tamil, but not all of them have had the ability or disposition, to define what an auxiliary is. As far as I am aware, there exists a documentation of old Tamil auxiliaries,²⁸⁷ a discussion on modern Tamil auxiliaries,²⁸⁸ discussions of specific auxiliaries²⁸⁹ and a discussion on the choice of the term ‘auxiliary’.²⁹⁰²⁹¹ As it is, I have not been able to identify one

²⁸⁴ Here, I speak in general of auxiliaries, but there are some verbs included in this section that are not auxiliaries at all. Rather, they occur only in combination with some kind of ‘primary’ verb/noun, and I am unsure what to call them. Wherever such a verb is described, I have specified that it is not to be thought of as an auxiliary verb, but more as some form of secondary construction that I cannot yet find the means to describe accurately.

²⁸⁵ cf. Wilden 2018:160: ‘Old Tamil already has a complicated system of auxiliary verbs. Some of them are still employed in the same function in modern Tamil, most notably the auxiliaries for passive and middle voices, but the majority is transitory; in fact each period and often each genre has certain favoured constructions.’

²⁸⁶ See Steever 2005:1-3 for a discussion on scholarship and some of the challenges in the field of Tamil auxiliaries.

²⁸⁷ See Wilden 2018:160-5.

²⁸⁸ See Steever 2005.

²⁸⁹ For a discussion on ‘*patu*’, see Agesthalingom 1969:1022. For a detailed semantic analysis of certain auxiliary verbs in spoken Tamil, see Schiffman 1999. Since the verbs discussed do not go under the title ‘auxiliary’ in this work, and a discussion on auxiliary verbs is altogether absent, I hesitate to provide exact references.

²⁹⁰ See Lehmann 1989:194-7; see also Steever 2005:2-12.

²⁹¹ Chevillard 2021, for instance, prefers the term ‘vector’ instead of ‘auxiliary’.

comprehensive source that complements this part of my study of the *vacanam*, but must consult and choose from several. Of all, I am most convinced by Lehmann 1989 for its structured explanation of modern²⁹² Tamil auxiliary verbs.²⁹³ I have also consulted Schiffman for his useful insights of what auxiliaries tend to mean. Given that Lehmann documents ‘written Tamil’ and Schiffman ‘spoken Tamil’, an amalgam of both sources suits the *vacanam*, which falls somewhere in between the two. I therefore understand an auxiliary to be a verb that is used to change the tense and/or precise semantic flavour of the main verb that it is attached to. I differentiate the auxiliary from the compound verb in that the latter is the combination of two or more verbs in which all components bear equal semantic weight, while the former’s semantic emphasis lies on the main verb.

In the *vacanams* Indien 291 and RE27530, there is not to be found a tremendous variety of auxiliaries, but those that are used are frequent and sometimes pose different meanings according to context. I have conducted a survey of these two manuscripts as one textual strand, and I have made another of RE25375 and two modern printed TVP *vacanams* as a difference strand, to compare and analyse the use of the auxiliary verbs²⁹⁴ with greater accuracy. RE25375 will be discussed on its own in the following section.

Within the category of auxiliaries are sub-categories such as the passive (*paṭutal*), the reflexive (*koḷḷutal*) or causatives (*vittal*,²⁹⁵ *ceyṭal*, *vaittal*) which are more frequently present. One can say of the passive, that it is possible that it has a wider range of functions than is typically understood by the term; of the reflexive, that it is often employed to change a causative or transitive verb into an intransitive one and also that it does not always imply the reflexive, nor the conversion of intransitive; and of the causatives, that one of the features that the *vacanam* makes most clear is the inherent confusion between *vittal* and *vaittal*, either leading to the hybrid *vettal* or *veccal*. The semantic scope of these auxiliaries naturally allows for several other possibilities. The auxiliaries in Indien 291, RE25370 and RE25375 are

²⁹² Although Lehmann (1989:viii) says ‘This grammar has been written to present a comprehensive description of the morphological and syntactic structure of the literary variety of Modern Tamil.’, his understanding of the auxiliary verb is compatible with my own with regards to the *vacanam*. Structurally speaking, the auxiliaries in the *vacanam* occur along with the same main verbs as Lehmann describes in his examples and also modify the semantic flavour of that main verb in a similar way. This is, however, not to imply that the *vacanam* as a whole is structurally and semantically equivalent to modern literary Tamil.

²⁹³ See *ibid.*:205 for a useful summary in the form of a table documenting the most used Tamil auxiliaries.

²⁹⁴ In my descriptions, I call the auxiliary by its main function in English. For example, *paṭutal* would be the passive and *koḷḷutal* the reflexive. This does not mean, however, that I understand them to have only this one function.

²⁹⁵ To my knowledge, *vittal* is not an auxiliary, but a periphrastic construction. It has been added here, under the auxiliary category, only out of convenience, for it is often used instead of *vaittal*.

documented in the table below. Specific cases of interest will be discussed subsequently, categorised according to the role they play.²⁹⁶

| Auxiliary | Examples | Suggested Meanings |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| [n.+]cey \bar{t} al | <i>tericaṇaṅcey\bar{t}āṅ</i> ‘he performed the holy sighting’ <i>yākaṅcey\bar{t}āṅ</i> ‘he performed the ritualistic sacrifice’ <i>varaccey\bar{t}āṅ</i> ‘he made [him] come’ | A verbaliser of Sanskrit nouns. To perform something of importance. Sometimes used in a causative sense. |
| [abs.+]koḷḷ \bar{u} tal | <i>piṭṭukkoṅṭārkaḷ</i> ‘they had held it’; <i>oppokkoṅṭu</i> ‘have acceded/agreed’; <i>kaṅṭukkoṅṭu</i> ‘having seen for himself’ | A reflexive marker. A past continuous marker. |
| [abs.+]pā(r)ttal | <i>vācittuppārttāṅ</i> ‘he tried to read’ <i>muḷittuppārttu</i> ‘Having tried to blink’ | To attempt something. To do something with doubt. |
| [vn.+/abs.+]āk \bar{u} tal | <i>kātalāki</i> ‘having fallen in love’ <i>pirāṭṭiyāṅār</i> ‘he reached’ | A positive change of state, to be completely absorbed into something. A sense of finality. |
| [n.+/inf.+]paṭ \bar{u} tal | <i>kilēcappaṭṭu</i> ‘feeling worried’ <i>piralpurappaṭṭu</i> ‘departing’ <i>kāṅappaṭṭāṅ</i> ‘he became befitting to be visible’ | Undergoing or feeling an emotion or change of state. Passive marker. To be befitting to do/be something. |
| [abs.+]ir \bar{u} ttal | <i>tarittiruntārkaḷ</i> ‘they were wearing’ <i>vantirukkīrāḷ</i> ‘it seems she has come’ | A continuous marker. A marker of supposition or assumption. |
| [abs.+]pō(ku)tal | <i>vaṅṅipōccutu</i> ‘it dried up’ <i>paṅṅantupōccutu</i> ‘it flew away’ | An irreversible, negative change of state. |
| [abs.+]viṭ \bar{u} tal | <i>pōṭṭuviṭṭāṅ.</i> ‘he dropped’ <i>vantuviṭṭāḷ</i> ‘she has arrived’ | A marker of a completed and/or irreversible action. |

²⁹⁶ In the table below, the following verbs are not auxiliaries, but have been included because they are used only in combination with other primary words: *cey \bar{t} al*, *āk \bar{u} tal* and *āṭ \bar{u} tal*. A separate analysis is required to understand how such verbs have been employed in the context of the *vacanam*, but that is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Rather than trying to accurately define these verbs, I prefer first to add them to my lists, so that others may modify my findings to suit a more nuanced study.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| [n.+] <i>iṭṭatal</i> | <i>muṛaiyiṭṭān</i> 'he issued an order' <i>ilaccinaiyiṭṭār</i> 'he stamped a seal' | To do something in a grandiose and kingly manner or to do something as a duty. |
| [n.+] <i>āṭṭatal</i> | <i>tīrttamāṭṭināḷ</i> 'she bathed in the holy water-body' <i>vēṭṭaiyāṭṭinān</i> 'he hunted' | Indicates a physical activity that requires engagement and concentration and perhaps also skill. |
| [abs.+] <i>varutal</i> | <i>ceytuvarukirān</i> 'he is doing since a while/ continuously' <i>koṇṭuvantāl</i> 'she brought' | To do something continuously and/or habitually and regularly. Any action that involves a movement towards the subject. |
| [abs.+] <i>vaittal/vittal</i> | <i>paṇṇivittu</i> 'having caused to do' <i>anuppivittu</i> 'having sent off' | A causative marker. |
| [abs.+] <i>pōṭṭatal</i> | <i>collippōṭṭu</i> 'having simply/carelessly said' <i>vaittuppōṭṭu</i> 'having simply/carelessly put [away]' | Used to indicate something that is not done with care or consideration. |

Table 6: A summary of Auxiliary verbs in the *vacaṇam*

Differing Semantic Preferences

Although the variety of auxiliaries is much wider in other contemporary prose texts, there was no need or opportunity to expand lexical creativity, perhaps on account of the common theme that is shared between the three manuscripts. Be that as it may, there are some instances which display variation. For example, while Indien 291 and RE27530 favour *paṇṇi-vittu*, RE27530 prefers *paṇṇa-ceytu*. While the preferred present continuous form in Indien 291 and RE27530 is with the auxiliary *varutal* or *koḷḷutal*, RE25375 is closer to current conventions with the use of *koṇṭ-irutal*. This also occurs in certain constructions where auxiliaries are not employed. For example, *kōpam varutal* 'to become angry' in Indien 291/RE27530 is expressed as *kōpam ākutal*. Similarly, *tīrttam āṭṭatal* 'to bathe in the holy water' is *snānam paṇṇutal* in RE25375, and so on.

vittal/vaittal/veccal/vettal

Those verbs that have a causative function behave differently. Here is where the line, if one exists at all, between a compound verb and an auxiliary begins to blur. In Indien 291, one finds the interesting causative form *paṇṇivikkacceytu*, whose meaning I am unable to distinguish from simply *paṇṇi*, *ceytu*, or *vittu*. *paṇṇivittu* and *ceyvittu* also do not display any major differences. However, given that in speech, both the *ai* vowel and the *i* vowel may be rendered by *e*, the question of whether the scribes intended *vittu* or *vaittu* is difficult to answer, since we see *veccu* and *vettu* in most cases. There is then also *pittu* (such as in *kāṇpittu* 'to make see') seeming to

have the same function as *vittu*.²⁹⁷ Here is the list of all the causatives with examples that I have found in the *vacanam*:

- a) *ceyvittu/viccu*. e.g. *pōcaṇaṅṅ ceyvittu* ‘having made [them] eat’²⁹⁸
- b) *cēvittu*²⁹⁹/*viccu*. e.g. *avarai cēvittu keti perrār* ‘he reached [his] fate, having worshipped him’
- c) *vittu/viccu* e.g. *ācīrpātam paṇṇi vittu* ‘having performed blessings’
- d) *paṇṇivittu/viccu* e.g. *cēṇaiyaik kāṇappaṇṇivittu* ‘revealing the army’
- e) *viccuppōṭṭu* e.g. *paṇṭaṅkaṭṭiviccup pōṭṭu* ‘securing [literally, tying up] the wealth’

The last three examples could be called ‘hybrid’ forms, for they are a string of verbs that do not greatly differ in meaning. This is the one aspect of the *vacanam* that I struggle to explain. If the scribe writes spontaneously, would he not be tempted to shorten his writing, rather than unnecessarily lengthen it? Or, was the scribe so faithful a notetaker that he wrote the full forms of every verb that was employed by his speaker?

The Verb of Speech

Often, the verb *collutal* ‘to speak, to say’ is used with the intention of giving an order, such as from a superior. The Pāṇṭiya king, for example, does the action of speaking in order to give instruction. Given the gravity of that instruction, it is synonymous to the completion of its execution, allowing for the possibility that *collutal* is more than simply the verb for speech. I suggest that *pōcaṇam paṇṇavittu* is semantically the same as *pōcaṇam paṇṇaccolli*, on account of the fact that the latter maybe a causative where *-vittu* works just like *colli* (abs. of *collutal*). This usage is ubiquitous, since the text itself contains several eminent characters of authority who are constantly giving orders.

Additional proof on this point is, firstly, when it is not used in this sense, it is differentiated by *collikkoṇṭu*. Secondly, *colli* is used also where there is no speech at

²⁹⁷ One could say that this argument is unnecessary if we take all versions of this auxiliary/secondary construction to be the equivalent of *-vittu*, which always functioned as a class-dependent periphrastic. This would be why we have *paṇṇuvittal* (> *paṇṇutal*, fifth class) with *v*, and *kāṇpittal* (> *kāṇṇutal*, thirteenth class), with *p*. I do not yet entertain this possibility, because these differences become blurred with spoken Tamil. *veccal* becomes the conventional substitute for *vittal* and *vaittal* and seems to be used most frequently in alternation with *paṇṇutal* in the *vacanam*. Here too, I hesitate to provide precise grammatical categories, because the ‘confusion’ (if I may call it that) between several forms of different grammatical values is precisely the reason why the *vacanam* is complex.

²⁹⁸ This would be the typical periphrastic causative and not an auxiliary. In continuation to 281f, the issue is not in the identification of a grammatical category, but in the grammatical/semantic ambiguity of using *viccu*. I cannot guarantee that the transition from *vittu* to *viccu* in the *vacanam* was linear. I am more inclined to state that its authors treated, both semantically and grammatically, *vaittu* and *vittu* the same. This applies to the following example as well.

²⁹⁹ Since RE25375 sporadically differentiates the short and long *e* vowel, I found occurrences of this verb that were represented with the differentiation. Moreover, semantically, *cevittu* ‘to hear’ is the only alternative reading, which is unlikely here. Also *cevittu* is sometimes used as *ceyvittu*, and it is unclear which one is meant. *pōcaṇaṅṅ cevittu* could be ‘having served food (using *cēvittu*)’ or ‘having made eat (using *ceyvittu*)’.

all, direct or indirect. Thirdly, the causative intention is often emphasised with the addition of *vaittal/vittal* to produce a still more absolute way of deliverance — *collivittu/viccu*. Therefore, *varaccolli* is not ‘having asked [someone] to come’, but ‘having *made* someone come’. Often, while Indien 291 has [abs./inf.]-*vittu*, RE25370 has [inf.]-*colli*, for example, *ceyyacolli* ‘having made/asked to do’
Meanwhile, *colli* (abs.) in its standalone form is only ever ‘to speak, to say’.

The Benefactive Verb

The verb of benefaction, well known to the world of Tamil through the Bhakti corpus³⁰⁰ is present in every folio of all three of these manuscripts. Often, an action performed by the Lord — such as walking or sitting — is depicted by the verb *aruḷtal*. It appears to be synonymous to *eḷunt-aruḷtal* in intention, but in action, the latter possibly connotes some physical movement that is captured by the component *eḷuntu* (from *eḷutal*) ‘having risen’. Where the action is accompanied by the benefactive verb, the semantic emphasis seems to be on the Lord graciously doing something and not at all on what that something actually is. Possibly, the semantic intention of this usage is to bring out the sensation of wonder, which is after all the goal of most Bhakti compositions. Here, the intangibility of the Lord’s physical actions are exactly what make Him the Lord. For example:

[Indien 291, 147r]

[3]...சுவாமியுஞ் சிவலிங்கத்திலெ எழுந்தருளினார்.

cuvāmiyuñ civaliṅkattile eḷunt-aruḷiṅār.

Cuvāmi too, **graciously [disappeared]** into the Civaliṅkam.

The so-called ‘reflexive’

The auxiliary *koḷḷutal* has at least two functions in the *vacanam*. The first is that of the reflexive, and the second, something else altogether that is difficult to grasp. The *vacanam* employs the reflexive function that is well-known in modern Tamil with an additional role that I have not seen anywhere else — to convert a causative or transitive verb into an intransitive/non-causative one. That is, rather than deleting the causative auxiliary, say, in *paṇṇivittu*, the *vacanam* adds the reflexive to produce *paṇṇivittukkoṇṭu*. In the case of a transitive verb, say, *vaḷarttal* ‘to grow (something)’, one would typically soften the stem to produce the intransitive *vaḷarttal* ‘to grow’. In the *vacanam*, the intransitive is instead captured through the addition of the auxiliary to the transitive, to produce *vaḷarttukkoṇṭu* ‘to make grow [for] oneself’, which is simply ‘to grow’ in the intransitive sense. The verb *tarittal* ‘to make wear’ is used

³⁰⁰ Cf. Wilden 2018:161: ‘abs. + அருளுதல் *aruḷutal* general benefactive (bhakti)’

often to describe the decorations and ornamentations that the priest adorns the deity with. *tarittukkoṇṭu* is thus used when one is dressing themselves. Keeping in mind the causative flavour of *collutal* that I described above, it appears to be mildened with *koḷḷutal* to produce *collikkoṇṭu*, a verb which goes with the speech of those who are too lowly to be giving orders. The Pāṇṭiya king did *colli*, but the mere layman did *collikkoṇṭu*.

As for the other, unknown function of *koḷḷutal*, while we may assume it implies the present continuous form (as I had mentioned in the table above), it seems to be added to several verbs in a way that does not really change, nor add to their meanings, despite there being no need to apply the present continuous form there. The only sense I can derive from it is that it signifies that everything is going according to plan. It is used just as often as, say, *pōkutal* is used to connote a negative action, and *viṭutal* a finished action. Perhaps, *koḷḷutal* implies that the action is subtly positive. Where the action is good and as expected, this verb is added as an auxiliary to emphasise that. It does not, however, seem to represent a change of state. It also does not seem to be added to verbs of movement. For example, *vantu* ‘having come’ is never *vantukoṇṭu* in the *vacanam*, while *vēṇṭi* ‘to ask, to pray’ is more often *vēṇṭikoṇṭu* than its standalone form. Perhaps with verbs of movement, the change of state is obvious and thus does not require additional explanation. In the *vacanam*, it is also only found in the present tense — one never sees *pārttukkoṇṭān* ‘he saw for himself’.

A Note on Compound Verbs

I find that compound verbs in the *vacanam* are of two types: there are first frequently used compound verbs such as *eluntaruḷutal*, and then there are compound verbs that are in turn used as auxiliaries such as *ceyyappaṇṇutal* or *ceyyappaṇṇutal*. I surmise that the semantic flavour of such auxiliary compounds is no different from standalone auxiliaries (such as just *paṇṇutal*), as the individual components bear no significant semantic difference from each other. Thus, *ceyyappaṇṇutal* means the same thing as just *ceyṭal* or *paṇṇutal*. This too appears to be a spoken derivation. In speech, such compounded forms are common, and the orator likely used them freely, thus influencing the scribe’s writing of the *vacanam*.

3.11 RE25375: A New Story on A New Material

The *vacanam*, as I hope to have shown, was not yet subject to any pressures to standardise its orthography and sentence structure. Yet, that changed over the decades. It is my view that the need for standardisation soon emerged, as a result of which these and many other such prose works were discarded or ignored. The proof of this process is the process itself — RE25375, a manuscript that was completed in 1861, has largely standardised its writing. The diversity of spelling, as well as the presence of ‘incomplete’ or ‘run-on’ sentences is greatly reduced. It is also complete, with all 64 chapter-stories intact. This manuscript exemplifies the revision of the

vacaṇam style to conform to new norms of ‘good’ writing, and the deletion of inconsistencies was the first feature to go.

There are two perspectives through which we may observe the progressive standardisation of Tamil writing. Firstly, the three *vacaṇam* texts in this study are a mirror that reflects the changes that were going on during the time of their writing. Secondly, the changes going on outside — such as colonialism, to name just one — influenced the way in which Tamil writers such as these treated their own writing. I hesitate to say much more at this point, for there has been very little research on the development of Tamil prose, and what has been done will be discussed with due diligence in the conclusion of this work. In the meantime, taking once again the *vacaṇams* as the focal point, their significance did not end with a mere handful of unpublished palm-leaf manuscripts.

In the same way that Indien 291 is the connecting link between Parañcōti’s poetry and *vacaṇam* prose, RE25375 bridges the gap between manuscript and print. The common features between later print versions and this manuscript stand out, especially when it comes to textual content.³⁰¹ In the time period that had lapsed between RE27530 and RE25375, a number of changes in content were made to the storyline of the TVP. Of them, the significant was the *sthalapurāṇa* (Story 0). According to Parañcōti’s text, the TVP was the narration of the sage Akattiyaṇ in Varanasi, to whom the question is asked, ‘What is the greatest holy place of Śiva after Kāśi (= Varanasi)?’ Akattiyaṇ thus lists the 64 miracles that took place in the faraway land of Kaṭampavaṇam (Kaṭampa tree forest), the forest inside which Madurai and the subsequent Pāṇṭiya kingdom was built. The sages who attended were thus blessed with the story of Cuntarēcuvarar or Śiva in Madurai. This story is entirely discarded in RE25375, and I have not been able to identify any precursors to it. The only successor to it I have found is a print version of the TVP called *Tiruvīlaiyāṭal Purāṇam Eṇṇum Civalīlaikaḷ* ‘The Legend of the Holy Sports, Also Called the Sports of Civa’, by Ār. Poṇṇammāl, published in April 2006. I purchased this copy outside of the Madurai temple, by mere coincidence. The story reads thus: a sage by the name of Cūtamūṇi stood in the thousand-pillared hall (Tam. *āyiraṅkāḷ maṇṭapam*) of the Madurai temple, where some sages asked him the question, ‘In what ways is Madurai better than Kāci?’ Cūtamūṇi, a student of the famous sage Vētavayāsar (Skt. Vēdavyāsa), thus lists the 64 miracles performed at the temple of Madurai.

RE27535 and the print edition have other narrative features in common. Many passages are comparable, and many sub-plots (such as that of Cūtamūṇi) are unique to them. There is reason to state that they both originated from the same textual ancestor. Based on manuscript evidence, it is more likely that RE25375 was the direct ancestor of the print edition. I have found no other palm-leaf manuscripts, nor any paper manuscripts, that document this very story, and I am not sure why. The character Cūtamūṇi is also elusive — he does not appear in many Tamil literary works. I have found him in some Cittar texts, such as one titled *Cittar Pāṭalkaḷ* (songs

³⁰¹ The grammar of RE27535 is so far along the timeline of standardisation that it is almost identical to modern print Tamil. It is an easy text to edit, for its orthography and sentence structure is regular. Therefore, I do not deem it necessary to discuss it in isolation and focus only on the content.

of the Cittars).³⁰² He is also mentioned in one invocatory stanza³⁰³ of the *Tirukāḷattipurāṇam/Cīkāḷattipurāṇam*³⁰⁴ — the *sthalapurāṇam* of the Kalahasti temple.³⁰⁵ The 2006 printed edition of the TVP states that Cūtamūṇi was a student of Vētavyāsar (Poṇṇammāl 2006:2). I cannot yet answer for this story, but it seems to have been wholeheartedly integrated into the *sthalapurāṇa* of the temple, for a statue of Cūtamūṇi (there called Cūta Makāriṣi) is situated on the Northern side of the temple-pond.

Returning to the matter of paper manuscripts, this version of the legend is exclusive to only the two documents I have mentioned above. I cannot yet explain the huge gap in evidence, particularly because the idea of replacing Akattiyaṇ as the speaker for a lesser known character such as Cūtamūṇi is unimaginable to me. Akattiyaṇ is supposed to be the very origin of Tamil, having taught Tolkāppiyar, the author of the earliest extant Tamil grammar Tolkāppiyam.³⁰⁶ He is often cited as the first source of Tamil knowledge, and he is the direct disciple of Śiva and thus the carrier of the story of the TVP — why then would he be replaced?³⁰⁷

Stranger still is that all versions of the TVP (including the ones that have replaced Akattiyar) contain a chapter that legitimises Akattiyaṇ as the authority on Tamil. Nampi Chapter 18 titled *Kurumuṇikku Tamiḷ Uraitta Tiruviḷaiyāṭal* ('The Holy Sport of Having Taught Tamiḷ to the Short Sage (= Akattiyaṇ)')³⁰⁸ describes how Akattiyaṇ was instructed by Cuntarēcuvarar to help Kīraṇ (= Nakkīraṇ/Nar̥kīraṇ)

³⁰² I used a digital, public access version of this text from [tamilvu.org](http://www.tamilvu.org). Cūtamūṇi's name appears on page 545, which can be found under this link: <http://www.tamilvu.org/slet/17100/17100pd1.jsp?bookid=140&pno=545> [last date of access: 09.07.2023].

³⁰³ *Tirukāḷattipurāṇam, avaiyaṭakkam* 1. Briefly, the *avaiyaṭakkam* ('appeasing the court') is a frequent invocatory stanza in which the author(s) of the text pay their respects to the court with an air of modesty.

³⁰⁴ *Cīkāḷatti* is a contracted form of 'Śrīkāḷahasti', the name of the temple.

³⁰⁵ This is an important text to the TVP universe. One chapter of it is dedicated to the story of Nakkīraṇ from the TVP, composed with 137 verses. Nakkīraṇ found fault in Cuntarēcuvarar's composition *Konku Tēr Vāḷkkai*. Cuntarēcuvarar was furious and opened his third eye with which he burnt Nakkīraṇ. Unable to take the heat, Nakkīraṇ resorts to jumping into the temple tank of the Madurai temple to cool down. This story is recounted in this chapter of the *Cīkāḷatti Purāṇam*, as well as all versions of the TVP. The former text, however, adds an extension to the story: Nakkīraṇ is not yet pardoned for his insults to Śiva and must therefore walk to Mount Kailāśa to gain blessings. This text was composed by three brothers, of whom the most famous was Civappirakāca Cuvāmi, a Vīraśaiva poet of the 17th century. For an overview of this text, see Wilden 2014:271.

³⁰⁶ Akattiyaṇ's contributions to Tamil and his role as a grammarian are discussed in detail in Chevillard 2009.

³⁰⁷ I wrote earlier of the *sthalapurāṇa* legitimising the claims of the Pāṇṭiya histories. It is possible that Akattiyaṇ was a similar legitimiser of the TVP. Perhaps that is why he was replaced by Cūtamūṇi, who became more relatable to later audiences.

³⁰⁸ The title can be interpreted in two ways, as *kurumuṇi* is in the dative case. According to the Chapter, Akattiyaṇ learned Tamil grammar from Śiva. Thus, the hidden subject of the line could be Śiva. Alternatively, the Chapter describes how Nakkīraṇ become so skilled at Tamiḷ that he began to correct himself and his colleagues, even reciting refined verses back to Akattiyaṇ. I have taken this interpretation for Nampi's Chapter, who does not make it too explicit that the gods played a role in Akattiyaṇ's education. Parañcōti, however, clarifies this ambiguity in his version of the story (which is Chapter 54 in his text) *Kīraṇukku Ilakkaṇam Upatēcitta Paṭalam* 'The Chapter in Which [Akattiyaṇ] Taught Grammar to Kīraṇ.' As for the above title of Nampi, I would lean towards the interpretation of Akattiyaṇ teaching Tamiḷ.

with his Tamil skills, for he lacked refinement and expertise in certain areas of prosody and composition. The result was, Kīraṇ's Tamil improved dramatically, and the quality of the *tamiḷccaṅkam* was restored to its former glory. A similar tale is recounted in Parañcōti's version, with added portions describing how Akattiyaṇ himself was a Tamil student of Śiva. These two authors, despite being aware of this story, chose to alter it. I do not have an explanation for this yet. It is my hope that this interesting conundrum is dealt with by future scholarship. In the meantime, I hold only onto the singular fact of the matter — that only two versions of this story can be traced by me.

In its path towards standardisation, Tamil prose both gained and lost. With Indien 291, a tremendous textual diversity is witnessed, on account of only minor written constraints upon scribes and their manner of writing. As external pressures grew, and the Tamil prose style demanded refinement, many of the ideosyncracies of the *vacāṇam* were discarded. The results, mostly positive, were manifold. Firstly, the blueprint for works such as the manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection was laid. Naturally, the Mackenzie documents were enhanced further by European formatting sensibilities — a topic that I will talk about in this context shortly — but the crux of the writing style, as well as the absence of orthographic and grammatical inconsistencies, is reflected thoroughly in them. Secondly, standardisation was aided by, and also led to, what Ebeling (2018:205) calls 'the emergence of the Tamil novel'. With a new rising 'middle class' — that is, English-educated, modern lay-people of caste-privileged backgrounds — who wanted to read stories as a pastime (I talk about this soon alongside those early novels that happened to be called *carittirams*). Thirdly, it facilitated early Tamil print culture, which in turn facilitated easier access to formal education.

As most processes towards 'improvement' go, however, the *vacāṇam* was all but forgotten. Today, prose re-tellings do exist, but have abandoned the labels that once differentiated them from the root-text/original text. A *vacāṇam* of the TVP (including the 2006 edition I have consulted) is now only called TVP. The challenges of this are manifold — as I mentioned earlier, this makes it much harder to identify prose texts in manuscript libraries. One assumes they are poetry, because they only have the name of a poetic text. The additional challenge is one of the past, but hopefully not of the future — the fact that prose re-tellings began to be considered as the 'main' text (as is evident by their dropping of prose labels such as '*vacāṇam*') meant the audience for poetry and high literature seriously dwindled. It also meant the prioritisation of the story itself, as opposed to the way in which the story was told. Elaboration, once a valued commodity in Tamil literary production, was now overshadowed by the sheer magnitude of prose and its constantly growing audiences.

The *vacāṇam* fundamentally questions the relationship between the spoken and the written. Its ubiquity ensures its participation in several literary and non-literary (= oral) phenomena. It laid the foundation for the prose of the Mackenzie histories and survived into the 21st century, long after the Mackenzie Collection fell into disuse. A hollistic approach through an inter-disciplinary team of scholars/students is, in my opinion, the only way in which the emergence of the *vacāṇam* and its subsequent impact on the development of prose, may be studied properly.

In the following Chapter, I bring together the various aspects of my research thus far and hope to tie them together.

Chapter 4 — Assimilating Evidence

This Chapter consists of some observations that I could not quite fit into earlier portions of this work and of the result of putting together certain findings that were thus far spoken of in isolation. There are a few conclusions to be made on the basis of my findings, making this Chapter the last. Firstly, I discuss the development of the Pāṇṭiya chronology and by extension, the process of refining chronologies in Tamil prose. It is a rather linear process that reached its most refined form under the translation of Lakshmiah and Sreenivasiah of Text Group A, but that same chronology can be traced to Indien 291, the earliest of the TVP *vacanams*. This lent itself to a ‘new’ kind of writing in the modern world, through combining historical evidence from Tamil regions with formatting techniques of European historiography. Secondly, the materiality of the manuscripts played a role in the outcome of the text. From the *pothi* format, which had certain constraints, but also certain advantages when it comes to writing prose, to the paper format which lent itself to a European book format which in turn made possible the application of European historiographical techniques into Tamil, to finally the production on paper of an English history by South Indians. This shows us how each material was conducive to a certain kind of writing. As the material changed, so did the writing, the language, the medium (stylus to ink, for one), and the editing style. Thirdly, one can say with certainty that the prose *carittiram* was older than what scholarship has thus far acknowledged. Finally, as a ‘tribute’ to Lakshmiah and many such early philologists of South India, but also as a means of understanding how revolutionary his (and other emisarries’) contributions were to Tamil literature, I discuss his translation to demonstrate how his history was neither insufficient, nor inaccurate, and how both Wilson and Taylor would have benefitted greatly from engaging with it. The goal of this dissertation was never to assume a conclusion where there is none. Oftentimes, as is in the case of studying the intersection between history and literature and what that meant to different cultures, only individual conclusions can be developed, depending on the beholder’s own experiences. As I have tried to be as unintrusive as possible with regards to the manuscript evidence itself, many questions must remain unanswered until more research is done. I will return to this point at the very end of the dissertation.

4.1 The Development of Tamil Chronologies — The Core List of Seven Kings³⁰⁹

The earliest instance of a rudimentary chronology of the Pāṇṭiyas in Tamil is in Parañcōti's TVP. In Chapter 37 (*cōlaṇai maṭuvil vīṭṭiya tiruviḷaiyāṭal*, 'The holy sport of having defeated the Cōlaṇ in the pond'),³¹⁰ the following kings are mentioned in succession of: Rācēcaṇ,³¹¹ his son Rācacakampīraṇ, his son Vaṅkiṣatīpaṇ, his son Purantaracittāmaṇṇāṇ, his son Vaṅkiyapatākaṇ, and his son Cuntarēcapātacēkaraṇ. This list is taken from the *Hālāsya Māhātmya*, the Sanskrit version of the TVP of which Parañcōti's text is a transcreation. In Chapter 37 titled *cōlanipātanam* ('Destruction of the Cōlas'), the following list is provided: Rājēndra, his son Rājēśa, his son Rājagambhīraḥ, his son Pāṇḍyavaṃśapradīpa, his son Indrajit,³¹² his son Pāṇḍiyavaṃśapatāka, and his son Sundareśapādaśekhara. The lists are almost the same (keeping in mind that Parañcōti's first king — Rājendra's equivalent — is not mentioned specifically by name).

This list is faithfully recorded in Indien 291, also in the beginning of Chapter 37. The more poetic, laudatory style of Parañcōti's (and the *Hālāsya Māhātmya*'s) chronology was replaced by a simple list of names in the *vacaṇam*:

[Indien 291, 90r]

- [1] *muppattēlāvatu*
 [2] *cōlaṇai maṭuvil*
 [3] *vīṭṭiya tiruvi*
 [4] *ḷaiyāṭal*

[1] *rācēntira pāṇṭiya rācāvāṇavar neṭuṅkālamiruntu rācciya paripālanaṅ ceytu* [2] *civalōkappirāppittiyāṇār. anta rācēntira pāṇṭiyānuṭaiya puttiraṇ rācēca* [3] *pāṇṭiyaṇ. avaruṭaiya puttiraṇ rācakempira pāṇṭiyaṇ. avaruṭaiya pu* [4] *ttiraṇ rācapāṇṭiya vaṅkiṣatīpaṇ. avaruṭaiya puttiraṇ purantācittu.* [5] *avaruṭaiya puttiraṇ pāṇṭiya vaṅkiṣa patākaṇ. avaruṭaiya puttiraṇ cuntarēcupara* [91v] [1]

³⁰⁹ In this section, I make a difference between my use of 'chronology' and 'list'. The former is used as a concept, where a genealogy of kings is presented in chronological order, as was discussed in my introduction to the *carittiram*. The latter refers to a consistent enumeration of seven kings that percolated into the *carittiram* from the TVP. This 'list' also qualifies as a portion of the larger Pāṇṭiya chronology.

³¹⁰ In this story, Cuntarēcuvarar emerges in the form of a skilled hunter on the side of the Pāṇṭiyas and destroys a large part of the Cōlaṇ's army. Then, he disappears. The Cōla army, on realising that the Pāṇṭiya soldier that bested them is now gone, advances on the dwindling Pāṇṭiya army. The Pāṇṭiya king jumps into a lotus-pond for safety. The Cōla king jumps in after him, but drowns in a whirlpool. Thus, the Pāṇṭiyas emerge victorious.

³¹¹ Rācēcaṇ's father, according to Parañcōti, was *neṭuntakai maintōṇ* 'the great king', an epithet that could apply to any king.

³¹² As far as I can discern, this king is identified as Indrajit much later in oral traditions. In this text, he is simply referred to as the one who defeated Puruhūta (Indra).

cēkarapāṇṭiyaṅ. anta cuntarēcupara cēkara pāṇṭiyaṅ rāṭciya paripāḷanaṅ ceyitu varukuraṅālaiyile...

The thirty-seventh: the holy sport of having defeated the Cōḷaṅ in the lotus-pond.

Rācēntira Pāṇṭiya, who was king, having lived for a long time, having ruled, became part of the world of Civaṅ (i.e., he died). That Rācēntira Pāṇṭiyaṅ's son was Rācēca Pāṇṭiyaṅ. His son was Rācakempira Pāṇṭiyaṅ. His son was Rācapāṇṭiya Vaṅkiṣaṭiṅ. His son was Purantācittu. His son was Aṅṭiya Vaṅkiṣa Patākaṅ. His son was Cuntarēcupara Cēkarapāṇṭiyaṅ. In the days that that Cuntarēcupara Cēkarapāṇṭiyaṅ

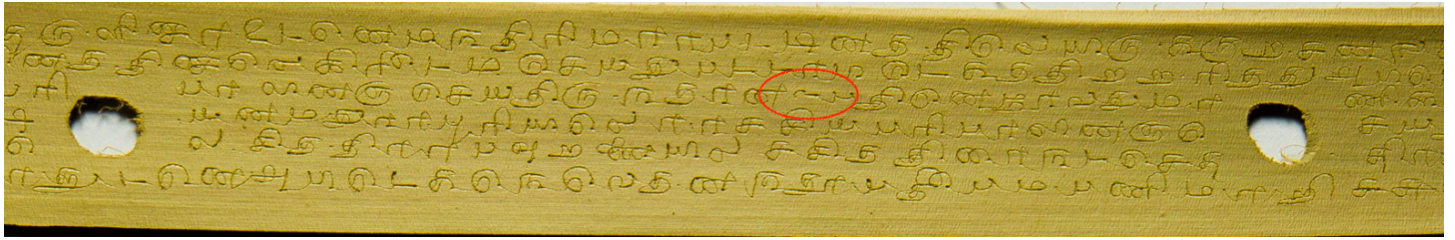


Image 31:38r of BNF 291, with *pillaiyār culi* encircled in red. Taken from gallica.bnf.fr
was ruling,...

[last date of access: 09.07.2023]

In addition to this, the *vacanaṅ* makes an initial statement for most Chapters, which identifies the king that ruled during the events of that story. For example, TVP Story 35 begins thus:

[Indien 291. 82v]

[1] *mupatta*

[2] *ñcāvatu*

[3] *taṅṅīr*

[4] *pantal*

[5] *vaitta*

[6] *tiruvi*

[7] *laiyāṭal*

[1]...[2]...*kulapūṣaṅapāṇṭiyaṅ rācā* [3] *viṅṭaiya puttiraṅ rācēntira pāṇṭiyaṅ rācēciya paripāḷanaṅ ceytu varukiraṅālaiyile...*

The thirty-third [story]: the holy sport of having placed a water-station.³¹³

In the days when Rācēntira Pāṇṭiyaṅ, the son of Kulapūṣaṅa Pāṇṭiyaṅ was ruling,...

³¹³ In this story, there is a ruthless battle between the Cōḷas and the Pāṇṭiyas, in which the latter is losing. Cuntarēcuparar saves the Pāṇṭiyas by providing refreshments (drinking water, mainly) by conjuring up a water-station on the battle-field. The Pāṇṭiyas win.

RE27530 has copied this faithfully and therefore does not need to be reproduced here. The same can be said of the other textual strand of RE25375, where the same chronology, under the same story (no. 37)³¹⁴ is presented, but in a more elaborate way. I do not recount it here, as the names and order of the kings remain the same as in the passage above. Each king in the chronology is introduced with a detailed background story. What we can tell from this is that the chronology itself remained stable across versions. It is also faithfully reproduced in the printed edition (Poṇṇammāl 2006:149) in a succinct way:

*irājēntira pāṇṭiyaṇatu pēraṇ rājakampīraṇ. avaṇatu pēraṇ purukūta cittu pāṇṭiyaṇ intiraṇai jeyittavaṇ. avaṇatu pēraṇ cuntarēca pata cēkaraṇ. avaṇ kālattil...*³¹⁵

Irājēntira Pāṇṭiyaṇ's grandson was Rājakampīraṇ. His grandson was Purukūta Cittu Pāṇṭiyaṇ is the one who conquered Intiraṇ. His grandson was Cuntarēca Pata Cēkaraṇ. During his time...

One would have expected larger, more drastic changes in a chronology that is included in a literary text. Yet, Parañcōti's list, derived from its Sanskrit precursor, is maintained more or less throughout the various versions of the TVP, making its way into modern print cultures. In the same way, this list of seven kings is then integrated into the Pāṇṭiya histories in the Mackenzie Collection. For example, in Text Group B, the same list is reproduced, but the overall list is much longer. The main update to this list that is made is that each king is mentioned alongside a date that indicated the number of years of his rule, as well as the number of *tiruvīlaiyāṭals* that took place during his rule. The list of seven remains a non-descriptive list throughout the literary versions as well as the Mackenzie history, as no *tiruvīlaiyāṭals* took place during those kings' rule. Only the year in which their reign began is mentioned in Tamil numerals, which I have converted in my translation below, for ease of reading:³¹⁶

Text Group C: [p. 4, taken from R. 11162 due to superior legibility]

avar kumāraṇ rācēspara pāṇṭiyaṇ - 8000. avar kumāraṇ rāca kempīra pāṇṭiyaṇ - 6200. avar kumāraṇ pāṇṭiya vaṅkiṣa tēva pāṇṭiyaṇ - 6200. avar kumāraṇ purantara

³¹⁴ The chronology can be found in folios 161v-162r, according to the numerical identifications made at the bottom of each scan by the IFP.

³¹⁵ As this is a modern text, Tamil had by this time become accustomed to using a number of Grantha letters, such as 'ḡ' *j*, as seen above. Although it is not represented in this passage, the use of 'ḡ' *ś* and 'ḡ' *h* were also normalised by this point.

³¹⁶ Many thanks to Giovanni Ciotti for helping me convert these numbers. Very briefly, there is no internal consistency in the conventions used to convey 'complex' numbers, i.e., numbers above 100. Sometimes, the symbol for 100 ('w') or 'æ00' (literally, 1+0+0) is used.

cittu pāṇṭiyaṅ - 8300. avar kumāraṅ pāṇṭiya vaṅkuṣa turantara pāṇṭiyaṅ - 10000. avar kumāraṅ cuntarēcupara pāta cēkara pāṇṭiyaṅ.

His son was Rācēspara Pāṇṭiyaṅ - 8000. His son was Rāca Kempīra Pāṇṭiyaṅ - 6200. His son was Pāṇṭiya Vaṅkiṣa Tēva Pāṇṭiyaṅ - 6200. His son was Purantara Cittu Pāṇṭiyaṅ - 8300. His son was Pāṇṭiya Vaṅkuṣa Turantara Pāṇṭiyaṅ - 10000. His son was Cuntarēcupara Pāta Cēkara Pāṇṭiyaṅ.

Of the six Text Groups, C and D contain numbers. D. 3184 (Text Group D), whose text is titled *Pāṇṭiya Piratāpa Vamcāvali*, contains almost the same chronology with the same dates. Yet, a few intermediary kings have been reduced to ‘*vamcāti pāṇṭiyaṅ*’, which approximately translates to ‘the Pāṇṭiyaṅs beginning with (the one called) Vamca [=Pāṇṭiya Vaṅkiṣa Tēva Pāṇṭiyaṅ above]’. The difference in this chronology is that the numerical order of the kings is given. Out of 72 kings in the list, these seven kings begin with number 24. This is the only manuscript with this detail.

Text Group D [p. 79, taken from TD 0216, the only extant version of this text]:

- 24. *śrī cēkarapāṇṭiyaṅ varuṣam - 8000.*
- 25. *rājakempīra pāṇṭiyaṅ varuṣam - 6200.*
- 26. *vamcātipāṇṭiyaṅ.*
- 27 *vatu cuntarēcura pātacēkara pāṇṭiyaṅ.*

The 24th - Śrī Cēkarapāṇṭiyaṅ; year [=beginning of reign] - 8000.

The 25th - Rājakempīra Pāṇṭiyaṅ; year - 6200

The 26th - the Pāṇṭiyaṅs beginning with (the one called) Vamca.

The 27th - Cuntarēcura Pātacēkara Pāṇṭiyaṅ

This list is the least accurate of all Pāṇṭiya chronologies in the Mackenzie histories. The ‘27th’, as shown above, cannot be accurate — what could have been accepted was ‘30th’. Alternatively, it could mean that the author took Vamcāti Pāṇṭiyaṅ to be one king. In this case, I would suggest that this list is corrupted and can only be used for the numbers with which each king’s name is given. This is important in finding out whether the list of seven really came from the literary versions and was later included in a more elaborate historical list, or whether the literary version extracted seven kings from an existing historical list and added it to the Chapter 37. For now, more such instances must be identified in manuscripts.

Other versions maintain the standard list of seven from Parañcōti’s text. Text Group E, for instance, reproduces it, but in a more elaborate way:

Text Group E [p. 118 taken from D. 436, the only extant version]:

anta civappiracātattiṅāle rācēntiraṅenṅura pāṇṭiya makā rācāvukku rācē [119] ca pāṇṭiya makā rācāvenṅru oru piḷḷai piṅrantāṅ. avaṅum ciritu nāḷ pāṇṭiya maṅḷalattai

*ñāyamāy rācciyātikkam paṇṇiṇāṇ. avanukku rācakampīra pāṇṭiyaṇenkura kumāraṇ
pirantāṇ. avaṇ pāṇṭiya tēcattilē piratikirāyamum aṇēka civaliṅka piratiṣṭaikaḷum
ceytāṇ. avanukku śrī mīṇāṭci cuntarēcvararuṭaiya...pāṇṭiya vamca piratīpaka
pāṇ[t]iya makārācāveṇru oru puttiraṇ pirantāṇ. avaṇ veku kālam pāṇṭiya
maṅṭalattap paṭṭaṇattai rācciyap paripālaṇam ceytu śrī mīṇāṭci cuntarēcvararuṭaiya
kaṭākṣattināle antiyattilē civacāyucciya mukṭiyai aṭaintāṇ. avanukku purukṣata cittu
pāṇṭiya makārācā veṅkura puttiraṇ purantāṇ. avanukku pāṇṭiya vamca patāka
pāṇṭiya makā rācā veṇru oru puttiraṇ purantāṇ.*

Because of that boon of Civaṇ, a son called Rācēca Pāṇṭiya Makā Rājā was born to the great king who was called Rācēntiraṇ. He too ruled the Pāṇṭiya realm justly for a short time.³¹⁷ To him, a son called Rācakempīra Pāṇṭiyaṇ was born. In the Pāṇṭiya country, he established charities (*piratikirāyamum* > Skt. *pratigraha?*) and many Civaliṅkam temples. To him, a son called Pāṇṭiya Vamca Piratīpaka Pāṇṭiya Makārācā was born [because of?] Civaṇ's [grace?]. He, having ruled the Pāṇṭiya realm's capital for a long time, obtained liberation in the next world as an equal of Civaṇ, because of the (auspicious) side-glance of Cuntarēcvarar. To him, a son called Purukṣata Cittu Pāṇṭiya Makārācā was born. To him, a son called Pāṇṭiya Vamca Patāka Pāṇṭiya Makā Rācā was born.

Thus, the list of these seven Pāṇṭiya kings remains quite stable over both the *vacanam* and *carittiram* texts. This tells us that regardless of the historical accuracy of the list, they were taken seriously by transmitters. The question remains, however, whether these seven kings were expanded upon to reach a list of 72 by Mackenzie's collaborators, or whether the literary versions extracted the seven kings out of an existing list of 72. We see particularly in Text Group D (quoted above) that the first of the seven kings (albeit inaccurately reproduced in this Text Group) corresponds to the 24th of 72. This could suggest that the list predated the TVP and that the *Hālāsya Māhātmya* took out and used only an excerpt of it. This chicken-or-egg situation can only be solved with deeper engagement and a comparison of other literary chronologies to the Mackenzie histories, which I hope to do at some point in the future. For now, my aim is to only point out the stability of these seven kings in all lists.

The addition or removal of certain numerical details in this list could be based on differential local evidence. This would make sense in terms of the way in which the Mackenzie Collection was formed — that it was the result of noting down oral reports from the various regions of South India. Thus, differential accounts are unsurprising. At the same time, in terms of literary transmission, we see that the Texts Groups C and D produce the same dates. The rest of the information provided by them individually does not match, suggesting that they did not share the same textual ancestor. This would mean that in certain aspects and in certain places (like the list of

³¹⁷ The literal translation of the Tamil here (*'ciritu nāl'*) is 'few days', but I interpreted it as a way of saying that his reign was not very long. Ruling for a few days seemed too short, for other kings appeared to have ruled for several centuries!

seven kings), a standard version was maintained. Mackenzie acquired at least two of them.

The list of seven kings makes the line between history and historiography clear, strengthening my earlier argument that Mackenzie's emissaries understood their instructions well and produced accurate histories to the best of their knowledge. Regardless of whether one *believes* that these kings really existed, or whether they really ruled for thousands of years each, the historiographical aspect of the Mackenzie project was fulfilled in that a consistent list was circulated among all the texts that became part of the Collection. In other words, taking Mackenzie's instruction to be to collect an authentic history of the Pāṇṭiyas, this was indeed the authentic history that was circulated at the time.

The only part of the Mackenzie histories on the Pāṇṭiyas that are consistent is this list of seven, with certain exceptions.³¹⁸ This tells us that the chronologies were not copies of one another, confirming that the list of seven was stable and widespread. I would suggest that the rest of the list was the result of assimilating evidence from oral sources, while this particular list was common knowledge due to the ubiquity of Parañcōti's text.

4.2 Transformation of Materiality, Writing Practises and Formatting

Certain aspects of the rudimentary chronology have already been observed above — a simple format was adopted to list out the lineage of the Pāṇṭiya rulers. This developed further under the Mackenzie project, where the order of kings (as seen in Text Group D) and duration of rule/starting year of reign (as seen in Text Groups C and D) were added. In Lakshmiah's translation of Text Group A (Mss Eur Mack Trans III.27 'Pandya Rajakul or History of the Pandya Raja', p. 150), the content of the chronology does not change, but its format is updated remarkably.

In image 1 (see next page), a certain kind of presentation has been adopted for the chronology through the addition of lines, numbers and a divider-column to emphasise the name of the king over the functional details of the sentence ('named' and 'his son'). The long sentences that previously enumerated the Pāṇṭiya kings, suitable perhaps only to the *pothi* format of the palm-leaf manuscript (as seen in the *vacaṇam*), were now replaced by an enumeration that worked better for what I call the European book format that is seen first in Tamil in the Mackenzie Collection. The list therefore began to look like a list and was no longer lost among several long sentences as it was in the *vacaṇam*. This may seem simplistic, even obvious, to the modern reader, but this was probably a challenge for Lakshmiah and Mackenzie's other assistants to adjust to at the time. For one, taking that they were trained in

³¹⁸ The most obvious exception is that the Text Groups A, C and D have almost the same list of the first ten kings in the Pāṇṭiya lineage. I do not discuss this here, as there are too many internal inconsistencies within this largely similar framework of ten kings, and I do not think that it can be credited with the same transitory stability that the list of seven that I speak of here can.

writing on palm-leaf,³¹⁹ the transition from stylus to an ink or fountain pen must have been an arduous learning process, for too much pressure on the paper would have caused it to tear. The transition from Tamil or Telugu writing to cursive English must also have been a challenge. We see this even in the picture above, where the cursive 'm' and 'n' have no difference (see item no. 13 where 'Maharaja' looks like 'Naharaja'), and the cursive 'o' and 'a' are used interchangeably (see item no. 11 where 'Pandya' looks like 'Pondya'). While most palm-leaf manuscripts do not contain the neatest handwriting, the horizontal veins of the palm-leaf provided natural

³¹⁹ The introduction of paper to South India was a British one. Paper was expensive, and thus not a household material. Palm-leaf was preferred by many well into the late 19th century. I have not yet found a single Tamil manuscript prior to the Mackenzie Collection in libraries whose material is paper. Of course, there are exceptions, namely, the missionary tradition. The first printing press in South India was established by Ziegenbalg in 1712-3, for the sole purpose of printing the Bible in Tamil. The New Testament was printed in 1715.

13 150

| | |
|----|--|
| 9 | named Widanta Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 10 | named Raja bhodau emany Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 11 | named Raja Sardala Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 12 | named Teesa Raja kooloonga Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 13 | named Yelana Praveena Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 14 | named Raja Coonyara Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 15 | named Para Rajya ^{Prasanthara} Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 16 | named Mosgra Jany Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 17 | named Maha Jany Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 18 | named Chutturum gaya Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 19 | named Bhumala Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 20 | named Ksena Pasathicrama Pondia Maha Raja - his son |
| 21 | named Pratapa Khandanda Pondia Maha Raja - his son |

Image 1: Excerpt from Mss Eur Mack Trans III.27 'Pandya Rajakul or History of the Pandya Raja', p. 150. Taken by Neela Bhaskar at the British Library on 30th May, 2023.

in the ten sons, the names of those Paupum
 (10 sons) are Punjamaha¹ Pautakum - Sum =
paudakum², Wopa Pautakum³, = Saby =
Pautakum⁴ = Sunkely kurna⁵ Pautakum^{*}
Malyne kurna⁶ Pautakum, Sipa⁷ pautakum =
kurna Pautakum = gauty⁸ Pautakum⁸ = Schara
Pautakum. Sunkere⁹ Pautakum, and tenth
Pra Seer¹⁰ Pautakum, in this manner ten

Image 2: Excerpt from Mss Eur Mack Trans III.27 'Pandya Rajakul or History of the Pandya Raja', p. 138. Taken by Neela Bhaskar at the British Library on 30th May, 2023.

lines that guided the scribe. Here, Lakshmiah drew his own lines, but did not always succeed in writing within them (see, for instance, item no. 9). This writing format is commonplace today in South India, with school-children writing in notebooks that are manufactured with printed lines. In the early 19th century, when a new material was introduced, and thus demanded a new method of writing, Lakshmiah and others had to adapt their existing practices to it. The page (image 1) seems to have been made after he had learnt to write better in cursive. Here is an instance from 18 pages earlier (ibid.:132), where a list is written, but not with the same features as we saw above.

In image 2 (see previous page), Lakshmiah's manuscript enumerates the five great sins as per Hindu religious law (Skt. *pañcamahāpātaka*), that every king (in this case, every Pāṇḍiya king) must be innocent of. Lakshmiah calls them 'Pautakam'. The numbers are added in retrospect, above the word. No lines are drawn, except for rudimentary ones under the words, which are also added after. We see that within the same document that Lakshmiah was learning to write as he wrote.

I also observed that the length of sentences shortened significantly with the *carittiram*, due to the shape of the paper upon which it was written. The run-on sentences of the *vacanam* were enabled by the width of the palm-leaf manuscript. The prose of the *vacanam* was characterised by the freedom that its writers had to adjust or modify a sentence, albeit within a set literary framework that I had discussed in Chapter 3. That freedom often led to long, convoluted sentences. In certain cases, an entire chapter was a single sentence. This style of writing thus saw the scribe losing his train of thought several times as he traversed the palm-leaf from left to right, leading to run-on sentences, or sentences in which the finite verb was missing. Oftentimes, a subject change is to be assumed, even where there are no grammatical indications for it. An additional challenge was the pressure that the scribe had to exert with the stylus to etch each letter upon the palm-leaf, which was time-consuming. The nature of the material thus presented a challenge for the *vacanam* style of prose.

This was resolved during the writing of Mackenzie's *carittirams* with the use of paper. The width of the sheets reduced, and the surface was less brittle than that of palm-leaves. The stylus was replaced by an ink pen. These factors enabled Mackenzie's writers to compose faster with less room for error. Sentences became shorter, and paragraphs were introduced. The conciseness of the sentence defined the idea of 'refined prose' in Tamil writing and laid the foundation for a modernised, 'standardised' kind of Tamil in the years to come. Another way of looking at it is, that the material challenges of palm-leaf caused the scribe to lose their train of thought while writing prose. This problem was solved entirely with the advent of paper, thus changing the nature of the prose itself.

The material shift from palm-leaf to paper also enabled Lakshmiah and others of his profession to make their writing less 'dense'. In Indien 291, for instance, every folio is filled up with writing. Chapters sometimes begin in the middle of a folio, marked in the image (image 3 on the next page) with the *pillaiyār culi*, the traditional symbol that indicated the start of a new chapter or section. This was probably to ensure that there was no room to alter the text by those without the proper authority, once it had been composed.

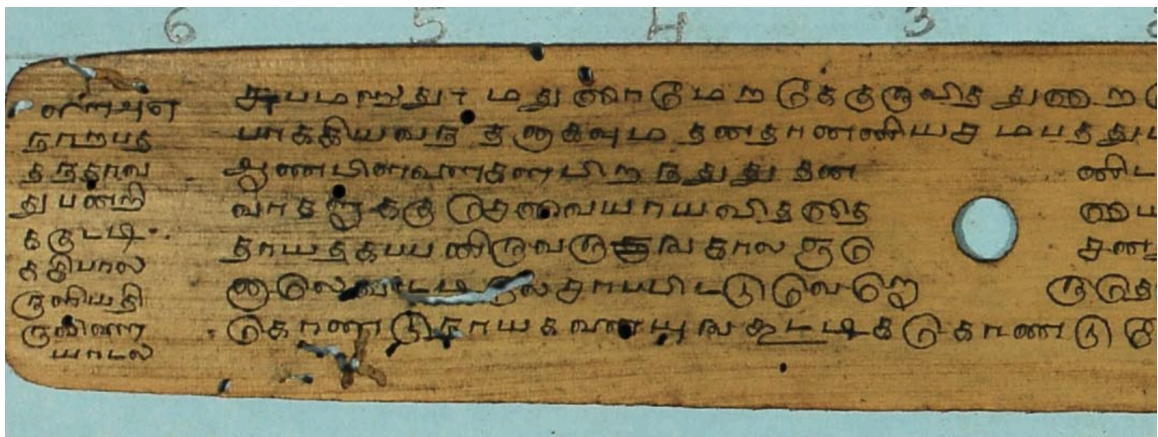


Image 4: 121r of RE25375 291, with the Chapter beginning provided on the left margin. Taken from the NETamil Repository.

In RE25375 (see image 4 on the previous page), every Chapter begins with a new folio, but no other formatting techniques can be observed, as seen in the image above. In contrast, the paper manuscripts of the Mackenzie Collection use a number of blank spaces in their formatting, such as paragraph breaks, line-breaks during lists (as seen in Lakshmiah's chronology above), and page numbers. The content of the writing itself did not change remarkably, but the way in which it was presented did. This transition was, however, not drastic. In D. 437 (Text Group A), the only Mackenzie original among the manuscripts in my study, paper is adopted, but the formatting techniques that were applied by Lakshmiah and others in the later stages of the Mackenzie project are not used here.

The image on the next page (Image 5)³²⁰ shows clearly how European formatting techniques were something to be learned and practised by Mackenzie's South Indian collaborators. The writing style is almost identical to the way in which one wrote on palm-leaf — there are no joint (i.e., cursive) letters, there is equal spacing between letters and words (i.e., no discernment of the nuances of spacing), and no *pullis*. In terms of formatting, there are no paragraph or line-breaks. Mistakes are not crossed out, and several tiny holes are present on the manuscript due to the application of too much pressure — a sign of having trained on palm-leaf, upon which one had to etch characters.³²¹

Improvement, so to speak, is seen in D. 436. I do not include it here, as I cannot confirm whether the improvements are the result of later trends (as this manuscript is a later copy), or if the scribe preserved the format of the original.³²² This is not an original, but likely the copy commissioned by Taylor (1862:III:297), who mistakenly assumed that it was the same text as D. 437 above.³²³

³²⁰ D. 437, p.18-9.

³²¹ This is not very visible in the scan. When I was in the GOML (February 2022), I had an opportunity to look at this manuscript in person, where the bumps and textures of the paper are obvious. Upon talking to one of the members of staff at the GOML, they mentioned that they needed to digitally edit several paper manuscripts so that they were clearer to read. The harshness of the bumps are therefore diminished in this scan.

³²² A small detail in D. 436, one that I hesitate to take too seriously, is located in p. 16. The date of '9.2.8' has been scrawled upon the page. If this is indeed the 9th of February, 1808, it could mean that this was a Mackenzie manuscript, probably copied by Lakshmiah. Yet, the manuscript is far too well-preserved to be this old. Also, its scribe is the same as that of D. 3184 (Text Group D), at the end of which a note (p. 61) reads, 'See original Mss. 2.1. 194' (possibly 1994?), indicating clearly that it was a copy. Perhaps the same copyist (unnamed) worked on many more Mackenzie histories and did not think to add their name.

³²³ I believe that Taylor spoke of D. 437 when he stated that it was 'useless to incur the expense and labour of restoring this book, which can offer nothing new. I examined it with attention, from conjecturing that the title of the book might be confounded with another terms Pandiya rajakal (= Text Group B), and from wishing to ascertain if matter ascribed to the Pandiya rajakal was herein contained.' Yet, D. 436 was indeed restored from the original by pure coincidence. We cannot be sure anymore that this was Taylor's doing, or whether Lakshmiah produced the copy during his days working on the Mackenzie Collection.

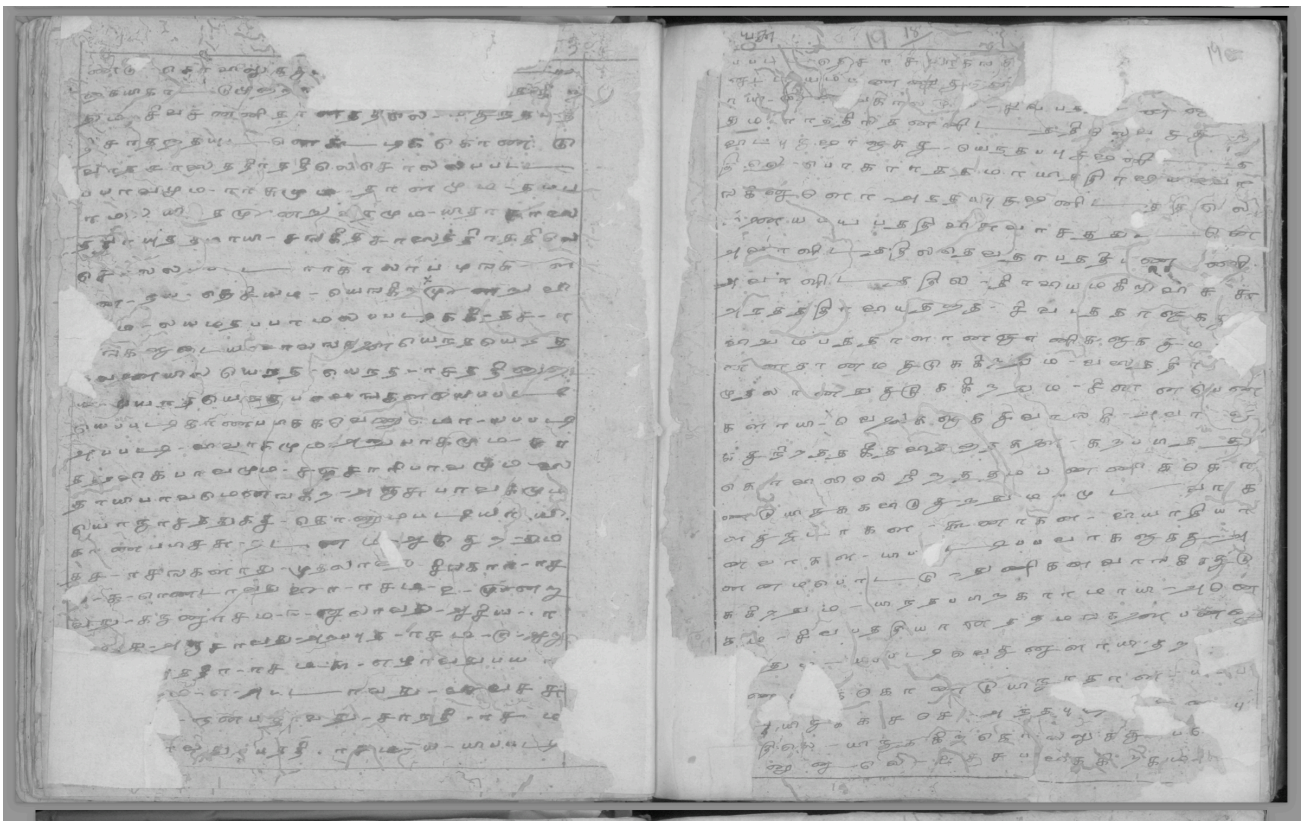


Image 5: D. 437 *Pāṇṭiya Tēcattu Rācākaḷ Carittiram*, pp. 18-9 (inconsistently marked on the folios). Taken from NETamil repository.

This is not to say that the palm-leaf manuscript temporally preceded its paper counterparts. The Mackenzie documents were in fact created in the beginning of the 19th century, while the three palm-leaf manuscripts in my study were made around the middle of the 19th century. Mackenzie's project was thus earlier. It also seemed to be isolated in its progress, or rather took inspiration from outside sources without returning it. It was clearly based on older traditions, such as that of the *vacanam* on palm-leaf. Yet, we find no parallels to Lakshmiah's formatting in later palm-leaf manuscripts. The traditional format continued to be maintained. This is one explanation as to why RE25375 does not have an extant paper copy, but is directly seen in print. At the same time, palm-leaf *vacanams* from after Mackenzie could not have taken up formatting techniques adjusted for writing on paper, simply because of the incompatibility of the material. How would a paragraph break or columns function in a palm-leaf manuscript without great effort? This speaks for the importance of the choice of material — the 'update' seen in Mackenzie's project was warranted only when writing on paper, for it was inapplicable to palm-leaf anyway.

The juxtaposition of Tamil writing (by which I mean writing done by a Tamil scholar, whether it be in English or in Tamil) to European ideals of formatting and sentence formation defined the style of prose of the Mackenzie Collection. The *vacanam* is therefore its main stylistic inspiration, although the specific manuscripts in this study were created after the Mackenzie documents. The simple fact that an idea that began on the left side of a palm-leaf folio was disturbed by the time the scribe traversed to the right with his stylus was cured by the shortening of the width of the material, thus leading to a remarkable change in how prose and, by extension, modern Tamil writing was conceptualised.

4.3 The Making of the First South Indian Histories in English

The translations of Mackenzie's skilled emissaries must be discussed, if only because of the innovation and hard work that was put into creating them. To my knowledge, Lakshmiah was the earliest South Indian translator of Tamil into English and worked for a master who knew nothing of the former, but much of the latter. This meant that the complexities of translation — which often lend themselves to awkward English when one tries to preserve the integrity of the original Tamil — were lost on Mackenzie, but the importance of the quality of good English was not. His emissaries thus had a tough task ahead. They were not just required to produce histories of South India; they were asked to procure histories in a newly formed, syncactically haphazard Tamil prose and then convert them into refined English for Mackenzie, all while preserving the historical authenticity of the originals.

In this light, the translation of D. 437 by Sreenivasiah (rough copy) and then Lakshmiah (Mss Eur Mack Trans III.27), tells us much about the kind of supervision they were offered by Mackenzie and later, Wilson. On pages 42 and 71 (see image 6), what I assume to be Sreenivasiah's writing is heavily edited, specifically where he is complimentary towards the Pāṇṭiya king. Laudatory words and phrases are crossed out by the editor/reviewer, who could have been Mackenzie or Wilson. Either way,

the addition of such an edit was the direct result of British compulsion to approach the subject of Indian history with what they perceived to be ‘neutrality’.

One line from the above pages (left side) reads, ‘in the same reasonable manner he was preserved and ruled the Pandiya Desam...’, but the complimentary portion (‘reasonable manner’) is crossed out. Historically extraneous details are redacted in the entirety of this text. This is unfair in that the original Tamil (D. 437) contains lists of virtues, philosophical principles and the nuances of Śaiva worship before any mention of the Pāṇṭiyas is made. Thus, Mackenzie’s emissaries did their job by faithfully translating everything that they found in the original Tamil — was that not their assignment after all? Still, their attempts were perceived as historically and, by extension, scientifically weak. In a sense, as they were the first historians of South India, the responsibility of the region’s historical narrative fell upon them. Thus, the British, who should have questioned their lacking understanding for Indian history, questioned instead the integrity of Mackenzie’s emissaries. The difference is an important one to make, for it allows for a more welcoming view of the work that Lakshmiah and others did. They were not inaccurate, nor were their histories false. Rather, the subject of history was (and is) flawed and rarely devoid of partialities and personal opinions. It was both unnecessary and unjust to presume that those flaws were solely the responsibility of Mackenzie’s South Indian team, but that presumption alone determined the course of the Mackenzie Collection.

4.4 Historical Accountability and The Future of the Mackenzie Collection

Seeking the history of a land despite having colonised the same land narrowed the lens through which the British saw India, in that they could not fathom an India before, and thus without, colonialism. Their own bias as active participants in a colonial system constricted their understanding of a history in which they were not an active part. In contrast, the Mackenzie Collection represented the antipode of this colonial establishment — it was a congregation of many exceptional circumstances and people and thus engaged with a brand of history that focused on South India before the British. It was the truest history of South India, regardless of how *accurate* it may or may not have been, in that it represented the Indian voice. It was also the site for the creation of a new kind of Indian scholarship, in which narrative was valued over memory. This was never the case in India, where memory was the teacher’s most valuable resource. Hardly anything was written down before it was committed to memory, and texts were often written down only to aid in memorisation. In the Mackenzie Collection, an epistemic shift is witnessed in that the writers began to pay attention to narrative. In the original Tamil Text Groups, space was filled by writing long, digressive passages (I quoted one such excerpt in Chapter 1) that had little to do with the main subject. Yet, neither Taylor nor Wilson had the capacity to criticise these such historically superfluous passages beyond one or two unspecific remarks. Orientalists who were associated with the Mackenzie Collection were either unqualified or simply reluctant to seek ‘real’ histories on their own, for it meant combing through folio after folio of palm-leaf manuscripts. The majority of the work was done for them by Lakshmiah and others. The final product of Mackenzie’s

emissaries was a collection of manuscripts that were in the English language, bound into books that conformed to European formatting and binding practices, and supplied to the British in India so that they could conduct their research. The little South Indian representation that was left in the Mackenzie Collection during Mackenzie's lifetime was completely erased after his death. Was the purpose of the Collection only to aid Wilson, Taylor and many such others in their rebranding of Indian history as a British product? Would that then, quite literally, be colonising the realm of words, as Sascha Ebeling (2018) so aptly puts it in the title of his book?

The special challenge of colonialism is the way in which it isolates people from their own culture. At the same time, under Mackenzie's leadership, there was gratitude among his emissaries. They felt uncharacteristically comfortable to speak the truth to him. Sreenivasiah explained, for one, that his health was in decline, for which he took four months of leave. He took another day of leave on account of his mother's funeral. He took yet another for reasons that he preferred not to elaborate upon.³²⁴ Mackenzie was never with his emissaries, and they could easily have lied or pretended to work. After all, their master was not equipped to know how long it took to produce a manuscript in Tamil. Yet, they remained honest with him and procured a number of important documents out of respect for him, and one would think that their relationship was a welcome exception to how India otherwise functioned under British rule. I would invite scholars in the field to consider the larger perspective evident in the manuscripts that I have framed this dissertation around. The anglicisation of South Indian histories, both in language and culture, was the direction that the Mackenzie Collection took, regardless of how considerate Mackenzie as a supervisor was. The pervasiveness of colonialism ultimately decided the fate of the Collection, and not Mackenzie's optimism for his Indian friends.

4.5 Conclusions — Two Parallel, but Independent Traditions

My dissertation has largely focused on undoing others' conclusions, more than it has been about making my own. As the Mackenzie manuscripts in Tamil have not been paid attention to since Taylor's attempt, their contribution has hardly been recognised in modern scholarship. While this was a challenge, this dissertation took on several novel avenues of investigation in the hope that more conclusive studies may be made on its basis. Be that as it may, some observations brought by the study of the Mackenzie Collection in this work are, I believe, convincing enough to be called 'conclusions'. In Chapter 1, I spoke of the world of Mackenzie and the production of the first instances of a history of the Pāṇṭiyas in Tamil. They represented an early historical experiment, which both Mackenzie and his collaborators were engaging with for the first time. Several manuscripts, sourced often from unknown locations by unknown people, are stored now in the GOML and present to us examples of two worlds coming together for the first time — that of the British and their historical sensibilities, and that of the Tamil and their first textual attempts at what I termed scientific prose. The existing '*carittiram*' label, which until then more closely

³²⁴ No. 56 of Mss Eur Mack Trans XII: Letters and Reports, dated to 1812.

resembled the Skt. *caritra* and was composed in meter, was now readjusted to the idea of ‘history’ as envisioned by Mackenzie. A certain format was adopted — creating an introduction that conditioned the historical narrative to the ubiquitous Indian epics, the chronological enumeration of Pāṇṭiya kings, for the first time with dates, and the importance given to royal names over divine names. This also marked the shift of thinking from ‘*purāṇam*’, which focused on creating legends that immortalised characters, both divine and earthly, of the past, to the ‘history’ that Mackenzie desired, which took inspiration from the European sense of ‘fact’, presenting a less glorious approach to the Pāṇṭiyas’ legacy.

Mackenzie, who seemed to live amicably between two socio-political worlds (colonial and ‘native’), was not aware of the difficulties his Indian collaborators would face upon his demise in 1821. The Collection was handed over to a disinterested Wilson, who knew nothing of the peninsular region or its languages. He approximated a catalogue and even wrote a history of the Pāṇṭiyas that he (falsely) claimed was based upon the Mackenzie manuscripts. Chapter 2 thus discussed, through the works of Wilson and Taylor, the effect of the colonial hierarchy upon the Mackenzie project and how the manuscripts’ value was constantly undermined. At the same time, no valuable work was provided by Orientalists on the Pāṇṭiyas. The result was that the Mackenzie Collection fell into a state of disuse until Cohn (1996) took up some aspects of its history into account. (My work is the first on the Tamil Mackenzie manuscripts in the GOML since the publication of Mahalingam’s catalogue in 1972.) This Chapter also attempted to contextualise the disposition of Mackenzie’s wronged emissaries, suggesting that the errors that Wilson made were not entirely his own, but the result of the actions of Mackenzie’s erstwhile Indian collaborators, who did not take kindly to his leadership. I argued that their actions were justified, for they were reactions to Wilson’s incompetence and his disdain towards them.

In Chapter 3, I brought into the picture a little-known section of prose writings in Tamil called the *vacanam* (as an umbrella term), which I argued was the precursor to the prose format that the Mackenzie writers adopted for their preliminary histories in Tamil. I discussed how there was little uniformity in their writing style, not because they were not good writers, but because uniformity was a later, colonial requirement. Several aspects of the grammar were discussed so that future scholars may work on the *vacanam* without having to edit it blindly. As for the Pāṇṭiyas, the TVP of Parañcōti was taken to be the main source for the Mackenzie manuscripts. In the previous sections of this Chapter, I brought together the several elements of my discussions and hope to have contextualised them with regards to the larger phenomenon. In the course of producing this work, there has been little to be certain of in terms of the provenance and exact nature of the Mackenzie manuscripts. There is even less to speak of the lives and scholarship of Mackenzie’s faithful emissaries, who were pioneers in the field of South Indian history. Yet, in my engagement with the Mackenzie manuscripts, I was continually reminded of the omnipresence of colonialism and colonial thought in the lives of Mackenzie’s South Indian employees. They trained in, and adapted to, the narrative of Indian history that was preferred by an European audience until they themselves became adept at producing it. Despite

this, their legacy was interrupted by the unfairness of the colonial institution. Lakshmiah was denied his inheritance of the Mackenzie Collection, and Taylor, who received it instead, had the opportunity to build his own legacy upon criticising the works of those before him. The provenance of the Pāṇṭiya manuscripts remains obscure, not due to mismatches or mistakes on the emissaries' part, but because of crucial, yet avoidable mistakes committed by Wilson and then by Taylor. The safeguarding of the Mackenzie Collection was tasked to those who cared little for it, and so it ended up in the highest walls of the darkest corners in libraries, split somewhat arbitrarily between two continents.

At the same time, a lively celebration of traditional knowledge is witnessed in the popularity of the prose re-telling. Every region, perhaps every household, has its simplified version of famous tales, and in modern, literate Tamil Nadu, paperbacks are bought and read voraciously. The palm-leaf still remains an object of reverence and thus exclusivity, speaking for the resilience of not only traditional knowledge, but also of those that carry it. As colonialism declined, colonial ideas became obsolete, and older forms of knowledge that remained untouched by colonialism were then taken up. The *vacanam* therefore gained popularity, not as an anachronistic relic, but as a reminder of the culture of writing and publication that existed long before the British. The Mackenzie Collection was discarded by Indians, as is evident in the fact that hardly any Indian institution is yet to engage with it. Its manuscripts were not prioritised, for there were more 'important' works of literature that needed tending to. The difference between the colonised and the uncolonised manuscript is thus the difference between the *vacanam* and the *carittiram*.

Having said that, the *carittiram* continued to exist outside of the colonial framework, but in an entirely different mode to what the Mackenzie manuscripts exemplified. The Tamil novel, a direct result of the modernisation of Indian literature as colonialism was declining, called itself the *carittiram*, as is discussed by Ebeling (2018:205). This *carittiram* catered to the newly emerging middle class of South India that was inspired by the European habit of reading novels. Certain aspects of this fictional literature was borrowed from the Tamil idea of the biography that the *carittiram* already fulfilled in the Mackenzie histories. Other aspects, such as the development of a story and its characters, were inspired by the European novel and are discussed by Ebeling (ibid.) in detail. For the scope of this dissertation, I consider only two aspects of the *carittiram* that are directly relevant to the Mackenzie Collection, namely, the way in which the nature of the *carittiram* in terms of genre, but not in terms of writing, changed, and the fact that the *carittiram* existed well before the Tamil novel that Ebeling speaks of.³²⁵ Both aspects suggest that the indirect precursor to the Tamil novel were in fact the *carittirams* of the Mackenzie Collection — indirectly, because the writers of the early Tamil novels did not confess to being exposed to the Mackenzie Collection, and because the usage of the label *carittiram* was, in later stages, ubiquitous, as is reflected, for instance, by the

³²⁵ This is not to say that Ebeling claims the *carittiram* only emerges with the first designated Tamil novel, *Piratāpa Mutaliyār Carittiram* (1876), by Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai (1826-1889). Rather, I wish to point out that the use of the label 'carittiram' existed for prose well before the emergence of Piḷḷai's first novel, through the historical writings of the Mackenzie Collection.

autobiography of U. Vē Cāminātaiyar, called *En Carittiram* ('my story/history/biography', 1940-1942). Thus, the idea of the *carittiram* as a label for prose was prevalent, but not for its use as a specific kind of historical writing in the Mackenzie Collection. As prose gained popularity, it became the conventional label, fuelled by the generality and adaptability of its name itself — *carittiram* could simply be a story, but could also be a history, a biography, an autobiography, and a novel. The semantic and technical scope of the *carittiram* thus expanded from the days of Mackenzie to encapsulate any form of narrative Tamil prose.

This is somewhat ironic. The term *carittiram* in the Mackenzie Collection emphasised the historicity of its writings, thus differentiating it from the *vacaṇam* of erstwhile legendary traditions. It served as the marker of an updated kind of prose that was framed on the basis of European scientific writing. Yet, its legacy continued through writings of a decidedly fictitious nature, as seen in the Tamil novel. One aspect that remains common between both is a certain quality of story-telling — a timeline is drawn, from the distant past to the recent past. Another underlying common denominator is that both kinds of the *carittiram* talk of the biography of a prominent figure, be it a Pāṇṭiya king or Pirātapa Mutaliyār. A certain quality of historical realism is also invoked in both. In the Mackenzie histories, long passages of literary descriptions are provided to add colour to the story. In *Pirātapa Mutaliyār Carittiram*, for one, the modern ideals of its author Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai are added to the story, making it a reflection of his political identity as a feminist.³²⁶ His novel portrays for the first time a heroine that is equal in status and intellect to the hero. This, among others, is the reason why his work was considered groundbreaking. While this is true, it is interesting that he preferred to call his work a *carittiram*, which was, in contrast, designed to be a more conservative, scientific history of male rulers.

The *carittiram* does not always remain within the boundaries of fiction that Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai drew. This is evident in the autobiography of U. Vē Cāminātaiyar (*En Carittiram*), which contains the life story of this scholar and is thus a work of non-fiction. The fluidity of the *carittiram* genre is all the more intriguing as it developed in parallel to the comparatively stable *vacaṇam*, but the two hardly interacted. It seems almost as though the *vacaṇam* did not change very much from the literary identity it had adapted in Indien 291. Only minor changes were made to the story over the next hundred or so years (as is evident in my discussion on the modern paperback TVP of 2006 in Chapter 3). This encapsulates in every way the resilience of Tamil literature — older terms, such as that of *carittiram* and *vacaṇam*, remain relevant through the changing of their identity or their social implication. The connotation of the *carittiram* changed from (quasi-)historical in the Mackenzie Collection to entirely fictional in the writings of Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai and other Tamil novelists and yet again into biographical writings with UVS's autobiography. Its identity was thus re-adjusted according to the time-period in which it was created, thus saving the genre itself from becoming anachronistic or outdated. Simultaneously, the *vacaṇam* changed very little in the content it relayed, but remained relevant

³²⁶ Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai advocated for women's education. His first publication was titled *Peṇ Kalvi* (Women's Education), released in 1870.

through a continued engagement of its readers with religious and cultural icons and stories. Its early instances saw its circulation restricted to somewhat closed religious groups — regular temple-goers, Brahmin priests, and their students. A newly independent and thus once more ‘Indian’ India saw its revival in the print editions that discarded the name ‘*vacanam*’, but maintained the essence of its writing style.

The TVP (= *vacanam*) and the Pāṇṭiya histories (= *carittiram*) were not far removed from each other in the beginning of the 19th century, as Tamil prose was still being developed by Mackenzie’s team. Over the decades, the two literary/historical traditions have drifted apart, each for their own reasons, but continue to survive with just as much relevance in modern South India. They speak for the resilience of an old, complex literary tradition that never once faltered in its duty to produce literature. It is time for all to acknowledge those writers and teachers, who are all connected by a common duty: to preserve Tamil.

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