

*Tirumaṅkai Ālvār's Five Shorter Works: Experiments in Literature. Annotated Translations with Glossary.* By Lynn Ate. Collection Indologie 140/ NETamil Series 4. pp. ix, 433. Pondichéry: École Française d'Extrême-Orient/Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2019.

The book contains translations of the five shorter works of the Vaiṣṇava Bhakti saint-poet Tirumaṅkai Ālvār, the *Tirukuruntāṅtakam* (TKT) and *Tiruneṭuntāṅtakam* (TNT), consisting of 20 and 30 stanzas respectively, the *Tiruvelukūrrirukkai* (TEK) consisting of 46 lines, and the *Cirīya* and *Periya Tirumaṅgal*, consisting of 77 (CMA) and 148 (PMA) lines respectively. Tirumaṅkai's longer, sixth, work is the *Periya Tirumoli* of 1084 quatrains. The saint is generally dated in the eighth century. In a foreword, the series editor writes that the translations of Bhakti poetry available so far lack philological rigour and are tainted by later, fourteenth and fifteenth-century theological interpretations. We are told that what the new translations might lack in poetic beauty would be compensated by their faithfulness to the original reading. Furthermore, we are promised, they are accompanied by extensive annotations and a glossary.

The book under review is the second in a series which aims to cover the entire corpus of Vaiṣṇava Bhakti poetry. How are the texts presented? Of every stanza or every group of lines first the text is given in Tamil script, cut up into metrical feet (*acai*) the boundaries of which do not necessarily coincide with those of words. Next the same text is given in Roman script, in which the *sandhi* is solved and the words are written separately. This is followed by a so-called literal English translation, which whenever it was deemed necessary is accompanied by footnotes. Finally, tucked away in an appendix (pp. 361-392) yet another translation is given, this time, one uninterrupted by annotations, which, the author hopes, will “reveal the poet's voice and the tone and flow of his works” (p. v). To me, all this seems a bit too much. What if the editors of the BORI edition of the *Mahābhārata* had decided to subject the more than 100,000 *śloka*s of the epic to a treatment like this! Or, to stay closer to the project at hand, by the same method Tirumaṅkai's 1084 quatrains will result in a book of approximately 1000 pages. It is unclear to me why the much more efficient and elegant presentation used by T.V. Gopal Iyer and François Gros in their *Tēvāram* edition had not been adopted: text in Tamil script with all words standing on their own.<sup>1</sup>

The literal translations given next are meant to serve as a bridge between the Tamil texts and the “poetic” translations. However, they do not always make access to the Tamil texts any easier. For instance, in the case of the seventh quatrain of the *Tiruneṭuntāṅtakam*, it is quite a puzzle to determine which English words represent which parts of the Tamil text. The transcribed version of TNT 7 reads:

- 1<sup>a</sup> *varpu uṭaiya varai neṭum tōḷ manṅar māḷa*  
1<sup>b</sup> *vaṭivu āya maḷu ēnti ulakam āṅṅu*  
2<sup>a</sup> *verpu uṭaiya neṭum kaṭal uḷ taṅi vēl uyttā*  
2<sup>b</sup> *vēḷ mutal ā venṅān ūr vintai mēya*  
3<sup>a</sup> *karpu uṭaiya maṭa kaṅṅi kāval pūṅṅa*  
3<sup>b</sup> *kaṭi polil cūḷ neṭum marukil kamalam vēli*  
4<sup>a</sup> *porpu uṭaiya malai araiyaṅ paṅiya niṅra*

<sup>1</sup> T.V. Gopal Iyer and François Gros, *Tēvāram. Hymnes śivaites du pays tamoul*. Vols I-II, Publications de l'Institut Français d'Indologie Nos 68,1-2. Pondichéry 1984-5.

4<sup>b</sup> *pūm kōvalūr tolutum pōtu neñcē.*

Ate's literal translation runs as follows (between brackets the text passages concerned are added):

[My] heart, go forth; let us worship [him] in lush Kōvalūr (4<sup>b</sup>),  
with lotus borders on long streets surrounded by fragrant groves (3<sup>b</sup>),  
Which remains for the king of [the people of] the magnificent  
mountains to worship (4<sup>a</sup>), where the chaste, simple virgin  
who dwells in the Vindhya (*vintai mēya* of 2<sup>b</sup> and first part of 3<sup>a</sup>)  
Undertook protection of the city of him who (*kāval pūṇṭa* of 3<sup>a</sup> and *ūr* of 2<sup>b</sup>),  
ruling the world bearing a curved axe (2<sup>b</sup>) so that kings  
with strong mountain[-like], high shoulders would die (1<sup>a</sup>),  
Conquered first [among others] the youth who threw  
a singular spear in the wide sea with mountains (2<sup>a</sup> and the first part of 2<sup>b</sup>).

Admittedly, this going back- and forwards has to do with the convoluted syntactic structure of the Tamil verse, with embedded sentences within embedded sentences. However, it is not as if there are no alternatives, as shown by Pope's line-by-line translation of the *Tiruvācakam* by the Śaiva Bhakti saint Māṇikkavācakar, the one by Filliozat of the *Tirumurukārruppatai*, and the one by the above-mentioned François Gros of the *Paripāṭal*.<sup>2</sup> The above translation is accompanied by several notes, three of which identify figures mentioned in the poem: the virgin dwelling in the Vindhya is a form of the goddess Durgā, the one bearing a curved axe is Viṣṇu's incarnation as Paraśurāma, who destroyed the warrior class, and the youth throwing a spear is God Murukaṇ, or Skanda, Śiva's son.

The above translation is in the first place an attempt to account for the complex syntactic structure of the poem. For an easier read we have to turn to the appendix (pp. 366-7):

My heart, go forth; let us worship him in lush Kōvalūr,  
with lotus borders on long streets surrounded by fragrant groves,  
Which endures for the king of the magnificent mountains to worship,  
where the chaste virgin who dwells in the Vindhya protected  
The city of him who ruled the world with a curved axe,  
killing kings with strong mountain-like shoulders,  
And who conquered first the youth who threw  
a singular spear in the wide sea with mountains.

However, like the first translation, the second one cannot stand on its own. To understand it properly we need the information supplied in the notes to the first translation about the virgin who dwells in the Vindhya, the hero with the curved axe and the youth who throws a spear into the sea. Here, too, we thus end up with two overlapping texts.

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<sup>2</sup> G.U. Pope, *Tiruvāçagam or "Sacred Utterances" of the Tamil Poet, Saint, and Sage Māṇikka-vāçagar*. Oxford 1900, Jean Filliozat, *Un texte de la religion kaumāra. Le Tirumurukārruppatai*. Publications de l'Institut Français d'Indologie No. 49. Pondichéry 1973, François Gros, *Le Paripāṭal. Texte tamoul*. Publications de l'Institut Français d'Indologie No. 35. Pondichéry 1968.

In the foreword of the series, the editor promised us extensive annotations. However, leaving aside footnotes of the type mentioned above, and others dealing with *realia*, many of them I would not call “annotations”. Some are unnecessary, such as the ones that inform us that the verb *āl-* in *tēr ālum*, “who mastered the chariot” (TNT 20, 1), means “to rule” as well as “to control”, and that *poru-* in *poru kaṭal*, “crashing seas” (TNT 20, 2), means “to fight, to dash against [as waves]”. At the same time the author is silent about a difference between the first and second translations of TNT 7 quoted above. Where the latter has “for the king of the ... mountains”, the first translation reads “for the king of [the people of] the mountains”. This difference rests on different interpretations of the sequence *malaiyaraiyaṅ*, that is, as *malai araiyaṅ*, “king (*araiyaṅ*) of the mountain (*malai*)”, in which *y* after *malai* functions as a sandhi glide, or as *malaiyar aiyaṅ*, “lord (*aiyaṅ*) of the mountain people”. In some cases one would wish that the author had delved somewhat more deeply into the matter. Thus, in a note to *aimpāl ōti*, “[her with] hair of five types” (TEK 33-4), for the five types of hair she first refers to lists supplied by the various editors of the text, one of which includes curly, glossy, fragrant, thick and soft hair. Then she refers to the series editor who would have informed her that the earlier Caṅkam literary tradition also knows of five types of hairstyles. However, if she had checked this information, she would have found that Caṅkam poetry does not speak about five hairstyles but about women wearing their hair in five tresses (*nār(u) aiṅkūntal*, “with five (*aiṅ*) fragrant (*nāru*) tresses (*kūntal*)”, *Akanānūru* 65). Furthermore, one of the most extensive footnotes, on *karpōr puricai*, translated with “walls made by craftsmen” (TEK 40), in which the author takes *karpōr* as a participial noun of *kal-*, “to learn”, is completely superfluous. The phrase means “(earthen) rampart (*puricai*) covered (on the outside) (*pōr*) with stones (*kal*, with *l>r* before a voiceless plosive). (Compare *Periya Tirumōli* 5.1.4 *karpār puricai*, “a rampart with (on the outside) a layer (*pār*) of stones”.) Another irrelevant note is found with the passage PMA 17, “tell [us] of one who went on this ancient path which is called ‘release’ going through some crack right in the center of the ever fierce-rayed one’s orb!”, which would provide “an interesting cosmological image of release from rebirth as an escape through [a tiny orifice of, H.T.] the sun”. In her translation, Ate overlooked the word *annatu*, “like”: “through a hole as small as the one in the very middle of the sun”.

This brings me to the translations themselves, and the question of how philologically sound they are. In this connection I will, to begin with, focus on TNT 3. This quatrain opens with an enumeration of the forms and colours of Viṣṇu in different eras (for example, in the Tretā Yuga) or in his different incarnations (here, that of the tortoise). The subsequent part reads:

*perumāṅnai karu nīlam vaṅṅaṅ taṅṅai*  
*oru vaṭivattu ōr uruvu eṅru uṅaral ākā*  
*ūli tōru ūli niṅru ēttal allāl*  
*karu vaṭivil cem kaṅṅa vaṅṅaṅ taṅṅai*  
*kaṭṭuraiyē yār oruvar kāṅkirpārē,*

for which Ate provides the following translation (with the Tamil words and phrases added by me):

A perception (*uṅaral*) cannot exist (*ākā*) of one shape (*oru vaṭivattu*), of one appearance (*ōr uruvu*) of the dark blue-hued one (*karu nīlam vaṅṅaṅ taṅṅai*), of our Lord (*perumāṅai*).

Say (*kaṭṭuraiyē*) who is able to see (*kāṅkirpārē*) him of the dark form with red eyes (*karu vaṭivil cem kaṅṅa vaṅṅaṅ taṅṅai*) without (*allāl*) always (*ninru*) praising (*ēttal*) [him] in era to era (*ūli tōru ūli*)!

However, *allāl* usually means “except”, not “without”, and the expression *ūli tōru ūli*, “in era to era” (is this good English?), is as far as I know not otherwise attested in Tamil. Unfortunately, instead of explaining the problems she has with these two expressions, Ate produces *ad hoc* solutions. Starting from the regular meanings, the passage (with a full stop after *allāl*) may be paraphrased as follows:

Going from one era to the other (*ūli tōru*) one will (when trying to praise our Lord) realize that He does not have one form or one colour. It is different (*allāl*) when one praises Him, remaining (*ninru*) in the era (*ūli*) one is in (i.e. restricting oneself to one, the present, era). Make a prediction: will anyone ever see him with a black body and red eyes?

Though with this god anything is possible, I venture to suggest that the answer to the latter question is “no”, as red eyes are symptoms of anger.

The verb *kaṭṭurai-* in the above passage brings me to another passage, CMA 19-26, in which the family has called in a female soothsayer (*kaṭṭuvicci*) to discover the cause of their daughter’s strange behaviour. After having gone into trance, the *kaṭṭuvicci* explains (*kaṭṭuraittāl*) that the girl’s conduct is caused by her infatuation with Viṣṇu. However, the soothsayer does not mention this god by name, but speaks in riddles, asking for instance: “who measured this whole world?” (the answer is: Viṣṇu in his incarnation as dwarf), or referring to him indirectly, for instance, as the “One with the Thousand Names”.<sup>3</sup> A sentence of the latter category reads *pērttēyum kārār tirumēṅi kāṭṭināl* (22<sup>ab</sup>), which Ate translates with “Furthermore, she indicated [his] sacred body like a raincloud”. “Furthermore” is her interpretation of *pērttēyum*, which she analyzes as consisting of *pērttum*, “again”, with the emphatic particle *ē* inserted in the middle of it, that is, as *pērtt-ē-(y)um*. Ate does not provide any other examples of an insertion of this type, which of course there are not: her analysis of the word is completely nonsensical and only shows what extreme solutions she is prepared to resort to when a passage is not immediately clear to her. In fact, the make-up of *pērttēyum* is clear. It consists of *pērttu*, “having altered, distorted”, and *ēyum*, “which resembles”. The passage may be translated with “She (the *kaṭṭuvicci*) pointed to His sacred body (visible) in (*ār*) the black raincloud, which resembled (the body) in a distorted form”. The colour is right, the cloud’s form is not; the *kaṭṭuvicci* is doing a Rorschach test!

Another passage I want to consider in more detail is TKT 17, 3-4:

*pēciṅēṅ ēcamattēṅ pētaiyēṅ piravi nīttarku*  
*ācaiyo peritu koḷka alai kaṭal vaṅṅar pālē.*

<sup>3</sup> For *kaṭṭurai-* expressing indirect figurative speech, see below.

In the preceding two lines it is said that people who praised god have escaped rebirth; those who abused him have been saved as well (have stayed alive). The difference between the two ways of life is experienced only after this life. Ate translates the lines quoted above as follows:

I, a simpleton, spoke [but] will not scorn [that]. Ah (*ō*), the desire (*ācai*) in(*pāl*) him of the crashing sea's hue to reject [re]birth is great! Grasp [that]!

The translation is accompanied by a note on *pāl*, which would be used as a locative postposition here, and one in which the phrase *ācaiyō peritu* is compared to *kāmamō peritē* in *Kuruntokai* 18, 5 (not 185, 5!), which according to information provided by Eva Wilden is “a fossilized Caṅkam formula of yearning or loss”. I suppose this explains “[a]h” in the above translation for *ō*. If I understand Ate's translation correctly, Viṣṇu is anxious to save people from rebirth. However, if *nī-* means “to reject”, it does so in the sense of “to reject as an option for yourself”, so that Viṣṇu cannot be the subject of the desire. Furthermore, *pāl* also means “quality, nature”. As I see it, the saint-poet has decided to praise god, not to abuse him, for two reasons:

For my desire to escape from rebirth is great, (and how could I abuse him, for) consider the exceptional nature of the god (black) as a turbulent sea.

Admittedly, I have no good explanation for *ō* in *ācaiyō* either.

Sometimes I simply do not understand Ate's translations and wonder if she understood them herself. Take her translation of PMA 11-14. The passage describes ascetics, who live of rotten fruit, sleep in leaf huts (which do not protect them against the rain), expose themselves to the sun and lie in full ponds (*vaḷ taṭattinul kiṭantum*). What are the ascetics doing in those full ponds? The context suggests that we are dealing with a form of mortification, but from Ate's translation the image arises of a holiday maker taking a swim to cool off after sunbathing. However, the adjective *vaḷ* does not mean “cool”, but “abundant, rich”. On the other hand, besides being an adjective *vaḷ* could also be a noun, meaning “strap”, and besides the noun *taṭam*, which among many more contextual meanings also means “pond”, there is also a noun *taṭam* meaning “noose, snare, trap” (related to *taṭanku-*, “to be obstructed”?). So, *vaḷ taṭattinul* may mean “in a contraption made of straps”. We have here clearly to do with the so-called *yogapaṭṭa*, that is, a cloth strap thrown over the back and knees used by *yogis* as an aid for sitting still during meditation.<sup>4</sup> The verb *kiṭa-*, in *kiṭantum*, thus does not mean “lying down” but “being inactive, sitting still”.

At this point I will comment on some points of grammar discussed in the notes to Ate's translation. The first concerns verb forms like *viṭukilēṇ* in TKT 1 and *arīkilēṇ* in 10. These are taken to consist of the verbal roots *viṭu-*, “to leave, abandon”, and *arī-*, “to know”, plus the verb *kil-* “to be able”, followed immediately, that is, without any tense

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<sup>4</sup> See Philip A. Maas, “‘*Sthirasukham Āsanam*’: Posture and Performance in Classical Yoga and Beyond”. In: Karl Baier, Philip A. Maas, Karin Preisendanz (eds.) *Yoga in Transformation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Vienna 2018, pp. 51-100, esp. p. 71, and Patrick Olivelle, *Vāsudevāśrama Yatidharmaprakāśa: a treatise on world renunciation*. Vienna 1976-1977, 66, 1-24, a section on *yogapaṭṭavidhi*. For photos of sculptural (Sanchi) and pictorial depictions of the *yogapaṭṭa*, see Seth Powell, “The Ancient Yoga Strap: A Brief History of the *yogapaṭṭa*” (<https://www.theluminescent.org/2018/06/the-ancient-yoga-strap-yogapatta.html>).

marker, by the first person singular ending. These formations are translated with “I will not be able to leave” and “I am not capable of knowing”. I doubt, however, if this analysis is tenable. For one thing, in *irukka killāl*, “she cannot sit” in TNT 11, the verb *kil-* is, as one would expect, construed with the infinitive and not attached to the verbal root. Furthermore, in the case of *matikkilar* in TKT 8 “to be able” cannot be fitted in. Ate translates *matikkilar* with “they don’t consider” and explains in a footnote that it is a present tense negative form, that is, a form consisting of the verbal root *mati-* plus a present tense suffix *-kk(u)* followed by *ilar*, “they are not”. It is unclear to me why this analysis is not applied to *viṭukilēn* as well. Another form which may be mentioned here is *kāṅkirpār* in TKT 18 and TNT 3. According to Ate we have to do with the verbal root *kāṅ-*, “to see”, followed by *kirpār*, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural (*-ār*) of the future (*-p-*) of the same verb *kil-* mentioned above. However, as I have already discussed elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> in *kirpār* we might well have to do with an accumulation of two tense suffixes, *-kir-* for the present (found in modern Tamil. For instances of the variant *-kinr-* in our texts, see Appendix 3.7 on p. 414) and *-p-* for the future. This accumulation is comparable to the suffixes *-tap-* and *-dap-*, and *-dah-*, found in Old and Middle Kannaḍa respectively.<sup>6</sup>

I was surprised to see that quite a number of tense formations (but not all; see *matikkilar* mentioned above) are described in the book in terms of aspect. Thus, *īnranai*, “you bore”, in TEK 2 is identified in a footnote as a “classical perfective aspect formation”, and *nirrum*, “we remain”, in PMA 38 as the 1<sup>st</sup> (not 3<sup>rd</sup>) person plural of the imperfective aspect. The source for what to all intents and purposes appears to be a new concept in the study of the grammar of Old Tamil appears to be Eva Wilden’s recent *Grammar of Old Tamil For Students* (Pondichéry 2018). This work, however, does not offer an in-depth study of aspect in Old Tamil,<sup>7</sup> the concept is introduced there more or less parenthetically. It therefore seems premature to apply the concept as blindly as is done by Ate here. This is not to say that it is easy to account for tense in Old Tamil. Take the past tense form *viluṅkiṅērku* in TKT 4:

*vākkiṅāl karumam taṅṅāl maṅattiṅāl cirattai taṅṅāl*  
... *viluṅkiṅērku iniya āre.*

Ate translates these lines as follows:

Through speech, through deeds, through the heart, through faith,  
For me ... who devours (*viluṅkiṅērku*) [him] (Viṣṇu) [what] is the sweet[est] way?

As said, *viluṅkiṅērku* is a past tense form, “to me who (have or had) swallowed”. Should the passage therefore not be translated as:

<sup>5</sup> Herman Tiekens, “A Propos Three Recent Publications on the Question of the Dating of Old Tamil Caṅkam Poetry”. *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* LXII/2 (2008), p. 593.

<sup>6</sup> See M.S. Andronov, *The Kannaḍa Language*. Moscow 1969, pp. 43-4.

<sup>7</sup> Wilden refers to only one other study of aspect in Tamil, in case modern Tamil, by J. Deigner of 1998, titled *Syntaktische Analyse von Verbalpartizip und Infinitiv im modernen Tamil. Unter Berücksichtigung synthetischer und analytischer Strukturen und des Verbalaspekts*. Wiesbaden, 1998. In fact, the situation in Old Tamil is not different from that in Middle Indic, or literary Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa. Therefore, before embarking on a study of aspect in Old Tamil it might be useful first to consult the following two publications by Vit Bubeník: *The Structure and Development of Middle Indo-Aryan Dialects*. New Delhi 1996 and *A Historical Syntax of Late Middle Indo-Aryan (Apabhraṃśa)*, Amsterdam, 1998.

What is sweeter: to have swallowed Him (Viṣṇu) by words, deeds, the heart or faith?

Ate presents Tirumaṅkai as an author fond of literary experiments. While his *Periya Tirumoli*, which is divided into groups of ten stanzas, each decade being dedicated to a particular place of worship of Viṣṇu, falls in line with a large, if not the largest, part of Bhakti poetry, Vaiṣṇava as well as Śaiva, the shorter works collected by Ate do indeed stand apart. For instance, the *Tiruvēlukūrrirukkai* and both the *Ciriya* and *Periya Tirumaṅal* do not represent stanzaic poetry but are long poems pieced together on the basis of longer and shorter sentences which do not necessarily coincide with metrical boundaries. A text of the *Tiruvēlukūrrirukkai* type, which plays with numbers, is also found among the works of the Śaiva saint-poet Campantar (*Tēvāram* 1, 128). As shown by Ate, both versions abound in verb forms with the ending *ai* (instead of *āy*) of the second person singular, which is otherwise rare. We seem to be dealing with a peculiarity of this type of text here. However, while Campantar's version ends with a few lines which mention the author, the one by Tirumaṅkai does not. Furthermore, Campantar describes his text as a *kaṭṭurai*, a term we have come across above in the passages dealing with the *kaṭṭuvicci* and which may refer to the figurative language used, in the case of the *Tiruvēlukūrrirukkai* literally, as the numbers occurring in the text can be arranged into a pyramid-like figure, as shown by Ate (p. 26).

The *maṅal* theme is derived from the earlier Caṅkam poetic tradition. It depicts a man who threatens to “ride” through the village on the jagged stem of the palm tree (*maṅal*) to show his despair at being refused by a girl, abusing her in the process. In Tirumaṅkai's poems, however, it is the girl who threatens to ride the *maṅal* to abuse unapproachable Viṣṇu. Tirumaṅkai's two extensive *maṅal* poems are the only ones of their kind in the Bhakti literary tradition.

The innovative nature of the *Tirukuruntāṅṅakam* and *Tiruneṭuntāṅṅakam* is not clear to me. The texts have nothing in common with the Śaiva saint-poet Appar's *Tirutttāṅṅakam* (*Tēvāram* II 6), except that the latter text, like those by Tirumaṅkai, has the word *tāṅṅakam* in the title. An interesting observation made by Ate is that Tirumaṅkai, in his *Tiruneṭuntāṅṅakam*, in the definition of one particular metrical foot adhered to a more traditional rule than in the *Tirukuruntāṅṅakam*.

A problem in any investigation of possible innovative developments within the Bhakti literary tradition is the absence of a verifiable internal chronology. The attempts undertaken to this end so far are flawed anyhow, as they place the beginning of the tradition as early as in the sixth century, that is, during the reign of the Pallavas, who for all we know had no interest in the use of Tamil as a literary language or a language with which to address god.<sup>8</sup> As a result it cannot be established with any degree of certainty if Tirumaṅkai's *Tiruvēlukūrrirukkai* was inspired by Campantar's *kaṭṭurai* or the other way around, or if his two *maṅal* poems were inspired by the two stanzas by Nammālvār that deal with this theme (*Tiruvāymoli* 5, 3, 9-10) or the other way around.

By way of conclusion I would like to discuss one more passage, from the first stanza of the *Tirukuruntāṅṅakam*, which is also the first in Ate's edition. In contrast to some of the passages discussed above, this one consists of words with narrow semantic

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<sup>8</sup> See Herman Tieken, *Kāvya in South India. Old Tamil Caṅkam Poetry*. Groningen 2001 (reprint Delhi 2017). Note that what I say here applies to the Bhakti literary tradition, not to the temple worship of Viṣṇu and Śiva.

fields and lacks complex constructions. However, a translation is more than the sum total of the words. As I see it, in this case the position of the stanza at the head of the text should be considered as well. The stanza starts with a list of Viṣṇu's qualities (He is a treasure) and heroic deeds (He killed Kāmsa). In the third line the text continues with:

... *mālai vāḷtti vaṇaṅki eṇ maṇattu vanta*  
*vitiyinaṅi kaṇṭu koṇṭa toṇṭaṇēṇ viṭukilēṇ,*

which Ate translates as follows (with the Tamil words added by me):

Praising (*vāḷtti*) [and] bowing to (*vaṇaṅki*) ... Māl, I, his servant (*toṇṭaṇēṇ*) who myself beheld (*kaṇṭu koṇṭa*) [this] precept (*vitiyinaṅi*) which came into my heart (*eṇ maṇattu vanta*), will not be able to leave [him].

Supplying “[him]” in “to leave [him]” does not do justice to the text, and I do not think Ate made the right decision in doing so. Rather, the object of *viṭukilēṇ* is the *viti(yinaṅi)* (Sanskrit *vidhi*) mentioned at the beginning of the same line: the saint-poet will not abandon (*viṭukilēṇ*) the course of action (*viti*) of praising Māl (Viṣṇu), which he had completely internalized (*eṇ maṇattu vanta*). The stanza thus forms a very apt beginning of a text the main aim of which is to praise god.

As I see it, the next volumes of the series would profit considerably from a more compact presentation by avoiding needless repetition in the presentation of the Tamil texts as well as the translations. More importantly, the translators should take more seriously their responsibility of developing a sound philological approach in dealing with the Tamil text, which, as shown once more in the publication under review, is dearly missing so far in classical Tamil studies in general.