

Mapping and Integrating Traditions Through Poetry and Grammar

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(v.s. rajam, u.s.a)

Social and intellectual interaction between the two traditions under consideration (Aryan/Sanskrit and Tamil) seem to have triggered a three-way response, such as translation, encapsulation, and amalgamation, in the Tamil system while maintaining a fine native layer. In one way, critical cultural values have been translated from Sanskrit into Tamil; in some cases, certain behavioral patterns in the Tamil system have been encapsulated in principles from the other; and in some other cases, certain codifications (“rules”) from both systems have been amalgamated to produce a new system in Tamil. Tamil poetry reflects the first two techniques; grammar on Tamil love poetry follows the third.

This presentation will draw from classical and pre-modern Tamil poetry as well as grammars on Tamil poetry. The focus will be on specific poems from the classical akanānūru, kuṛiñcippāṭṭu, a didactic text from the patinenkīlkanakku collection, cilappatikāram, and the third book (poruḷatikāram) of the tolkāppiyam. For comparison, some “rules/code” from the Sanskrit Manusmṛti will be viewed.
