

INDIRA V. PETERSON

SANSKRIT IN CARNATIC MUSIC:  
THE SONGS OF MUTTUSVĀMI DĪKṢITA

INTRODUCTION: SACRED MUSIC IN TIRUVĀRŪR

I came to the subject of this study in two ways. As an amateur Carnatic musician I have been singing the Sanskrit songs of the 18th century composer Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita for over 20 years. Since 1977 I have been studying the devotional hymns of the Tamil Śaivite saints (*nāyanmār*, 6th–9th c. A.D.), songs which are sung to this day as part of the ritual complex in Śiva temples in Tamil country. The two interests – musical and literary, Sanskrit and Tamil, –converge in the present study. Looking into the sacred musical and textual traditions surrounding Tiruvārūr, which is the ancient center connected with the lives of the three *nāyanmār*, authors of the *Tēvāram* hymns, as well as the home of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita (and two other important composers in Carnatic music) in the 18th century, I began to explore connections which I saw between vernacular texts and Dīkṣita's Sanskrit songs. In this paper I present some of my initial findings: instances of (a) the immediate and general influence of Dravidian vernacular (Tamil and related languages) compositional style, and (b) the specific influence of the Tamil Śaivite hymns, in style and ethos, on Dīkṣita's composition.

THE KṚTI SONG FORM IN CARNATIC MUSIC

Dīkṣita composed in an art song genre called 'Kṛti', which is the distinctive compositional form and focal point of the current concert repertoire of Carnatic (South Indian classical) music.<sup>1</sup> The *kṛti* developed over a period of 300 years and reached its definitive form in the late 18th century, an era which is rightly known as the "Golden Age" of Carnatic music. This period, roughly between 1750 and 1835, was a time of great and innovative activity in literature and the fine arts in South India; its center was the Kaveri delta region, especially the Tanjore district in (presentday) Tamilnadu; here cultural activity was encouraged and patronized by the 18th century Maratha rulers, as it had been by the Vijayanagar Nayaks, Cholas and Pallavas before them, in an unbroken tradition from the 8th century onwards.<sup>2</sup>

The publication of Veṅkaṭamakhin's *Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā* in 1660 marked the standardization of the South Indian system of *rāgas* (modal scales) in the 72-*melakartā* scheme; it also gave examples of the standard compositional forms of his time: *rāga*, *ālāpa*, *gīta*, *ṭhāya* and *prabandha*.<sup>3</sup> Within a century all these forms

were superseded in the concert repertoire by the crystallization of the *kṛti* and its adoption as the song form par excellence. This was primarily the result of the prolific and innovative work of the three great 18th century composers known as the “trimūrti” (trinity) of Carnatic music, Tyāgarāja, Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita and Śyāmā Śāstri, all of whom were born in Tiruvārūr in the Smarta brahmin community.<sup>4</sup>

As defined by the compositions of the “trimūrti”, the *kṛti* is a tripartite song composed in a specific modal scale (*rāga*) and *tāla* (a beat cycle of a fixed number of counts organized in a particular pattern, repeated throughout the duration of the song; 1 *tāla* cycle = *āvarta*, *āvartana*). The 3 parts (*aṅga-s*) of the *kṛti* are: *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *caranam*, each part being proportionally longer than the previous one (e.g., *pallavi* = 2 *tāla* cycles, *anupallavi* = 3 or 4 *tāla* cycles, etc.). The *pallavi* is the refrain of the song. The text is usually an expression of praise or devotion for one of the gods in the Hindu pantheon.<sup>5</sup>

#### SANSKRIT AND THE DRAVIDIAN VERNACULAR LANGUAGES IN KṚTI TEXTS (SĀHITYA)

In theory, the devotional content of the *kṛti* leaves it open to composition in at least two broadly-defined styles common in South India: the style of the simpler, lyrical devotional song called *Kīrtana*, which is found mainly in the vernacular languages, is well suited to group singing of the *bhajana* type,<sup>6</sup> and represents popular, ecstatic *bhakti* devotionism; or the style of the more sedate, more formal, less emotional and intimate *stotra*, the non-musical devotional lyric composed in Sanskrit, usually in the śloka or classical *kāvya* meters. In practice, the vernacular was the preferred language of the *kṛti* composers in the 18 century, although composition in Sanskrit was not unusual in the history of the form, and some composers, like Dīkṣita, composed mainly or exclusively in Sanskrit.<sup>7</sup> Of the vernaculars, Telugu was most commonly used, for the following reasons: many of the pioneers in the *kṛti* form were native speakers of Telugu (e.g., Talappākkam Annamācārya, Bhadrācalam Rāmadās: later Tyāgarāja); these and other composers aligned themselves with the vernacular, *popular* bhakti tradition—as represented in the *bhajana sampradāya* (*bhajana* tradition, see note 6 above)—in the style, content and ethos of their songs;<sup>8</sup> finally, Telugu was the accepted language of culture and literature even in the Tamil area, especially because of the influence of the Vijayanagar Nayak court.

Among the three great composers of the mature *kṛti*, Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita alone composed exclusively in Sanskrit; of the early composers in the form, only one, Mārgadarśī Śeshayyaṅgar, a Śrīvaiṣṇava brahmin from the Tamil area, wrote in Sanskrit.<sup>9</sup> In order to assess Dīkṣita’s work we must study him not simply as an

author of Sanskrit texts, but as a *vāggeyakāra*, a composer in the textual tradition of Carnatic music; and this essentially means evaluating Dīkṣita as a Sanskrit author working in a predominantly South Indian vernacular musical tradition and milieu. In this context, who, besides other *kṛti*-composers, could have served as models for Dīkṣita? In fact, our composer could have been influenced by authors in the non-musical *stotra* tradition, composers of Sanskrit texts in musical forms other than the *kṛti* (*kīrtana*, *padāvalī*, *tarāṅga*) and the related, yet distinct, tradition of Tamil devotional song such as the *Tēvāram* hymns: South Indian authors have been prolific in all these traditions between the 6th and 18th centuries. I have provided the name, date, medium of composition, and, where relevant, type of composition, of important authors in all the above-described traditions, musical and non-musical, vernacular and Sanskrit, in the Appendix, I.

#### DRAVIDIAN VERNACULAR PROSODIC ELEMENTS IN DĪKṢITA'S KṚTI-S

Examination of the text of a typical *kṛti* of Dīkṣita (“*vātāpigaṇapatim bhaje’ham*”, Appendix, III), reveals the complex interplay of the above influences, as well as the use of Dravidian vernacular prosodic patterns, in his songs. The Sanskrit text of “*vātāpigaṇapatim*” resembles Sanskrit *ślokas* and *stotras* in several respects: it has the vocabulary, tenor and cumulative syntax of the hymn genres; the song is one long sentence in which the god’s (here Gaṇapati’s) attributes are described and praised in compound epithets (e.g., *murāri-pramukhādyupāsitam*, *karāmbuja-pāśa-bijāpūram*) set in parataxis (in this instance, in the accusative case). However, unlike the *stotra* texts, this *kṛti* is not a metrical text, though it approximates a “moric” metrical pattern of sixteen moras (*mātrās*, syllabic instants) per line, similar to the songs in the 12th century *Gītagovinda* of Jayadeva.<sup>10</sup> Familiarity with the song as it is performed makes it clear that “metrical” scansion of the text is irrelevant, and that other features, i.e., the beat (*tāla*) and the melodic component in conjunction with patterns of alliteration in the text are our guides to the structure of the “lines” of the song. Analysing “*vātāpigaṇapatim*” in these respects, I present the following conclusions:

(1) Regularity in lines of text is provided by the quantitative equivalence, *in performance*, of one or more cycles (*āvartas*) of the beat with one melodic line (*dhātu*, musical or solfa syllables to which the words are sung). Thus in the *Ādi tāla*, a beat of 16 *mātrās* (syllabic instants) per *āvarta*, no matter how many *mātrās* a line of text may have in metrical scansion, the line must be sung for a duration of exactly 16 *mātrās* in performance.<sup>10a</sup> E.g., in “*vātāpi*”, line 1 = 15 *mātrās* in textual scansion and 16 in performance:

*vātāpigaṇa || patim bhaje’ham*  
(long = 2 *mātrās*; short = 1 *mātrā*).

Here “vā” is held for 3, instead of 2, instants. Scanning the entire text of this song, we find that the average line of text in each cycle of the *tāla* contains 14–16 *mātrās*, so that very little “adjustment” of this sort is needed. In the text of “Kumbheśvareṇa” (Appendix, VI), the text needs no adjustment at all to fit the 16-*mātrā* pattern of the *tāla*. However, the text-lines of many songs are quite irregular, varying in syllabic quantity. Thus, in “Vedapurīśvaram” (SDKM Vol, XV, 2, p.5), in the *Ādi tāla*, the first four lines of text have 18, 17, 15 and 14 *mātrās* respectively. In “abhirāmim” (XV, 5), which is in a six-count *tāla* called Rūpaka, the first four lines have 12 (regular), 10, 15 and 16 *mātrās*. Obviously, greater adjustment is needed in such lines.

Both short and long vowels are given the value of 2, 3, 4, 5, or even more *mātrās* in singing, and—at least till the 20th century—such disposition of *mātrās* within the text line could be known only by knowing (i.e., by singing or hearing) the song as it has been transmitted in the oral tradition.<sup>11</sup> It might appear as though this procedure is simply a case of “fitting” the text line to the *tāla* line in a manner similar to Western practice in setting a text to music. The crucial difference, however, is that in the oral tradition of South Indian music, Dīkṣita and others originally composed their texts to be sung, and expressly to be sung in specific *tāla* patterns. Lastly, it should be noted that the system of measuring, the line by means of the *tāla* unit, in the absence of metrical regularity, is the reverse of the system used in such metrical musical compositions as the songs of the Sanskrit *Gītāgovinda* and the Tamil *Tēvāram*, where the meter itself acts as the *tāla*.

(2) The structural pattern of the *musical line* in the *kṛti* is defined and marked out by an elaborate system of sound-correspondences—assonance, consonance, alliteration and rhyme. These patterns connect successive *tāla* cycles and also the 3 parts of the *kṛti* one to the other.

In “vātāpigaṇapatim”, the following recurrent features may be observed:

(a) Correspondence of the initial vowel or consonant of each pair of lines in the text (aa, bb, cc etc.): *vā/vā; bhū/vī/vī*; (collapsed and doubled in line 5, which is in double time); *pu/pu; mu/mu; pa/pa; ni/ni; ka/ka* and *ha/ha* (the last two in double time). In tempo 1, this “initial rhyme” occurs at the beginning of each *tāla* cycle.

(b) Agreement of the second consonant between the first lines of the *pallavi* (I) and *anupallavi* (II) and between alternate lines of the *caraṇam* (III): *vātā/bhūtā/vīta; purā/murā/parā/nirā/karā/harā*.

(c) End rhyme, primarily between lines: *-haṃ/-daṃ; -ṇaṃ/-naṃ; -taṃ/-kaṃ; tuṇḍaṃ/khaṇḍaṃ; -pūraṃ; -kāraṃ; bimbam/-rambam*.

This system of alliteration, or, more properly, rhyme, is alien to classical Sanskrit metrical composition; the latter, while it uses all kinds of alliteration, avoids *regular* alliterative or rhyme patterns in metrically | *rhythmically obvious* places, e.g., the

beginnings of *pādas* or lines. It is also different from that used in non-South Indian musical Sanskrit forms, typified by Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda*, wherein complex and varied patterns of alliteration are strikingly present, but *end rhyme* is the only feature occurring in a *metrically* obvious position.<sup>12</sup>

Dīkṣita's patterns are, on the other hand, absolutely in conformity with pan-Dravidian vernacular prosodic practice, both in poetry and musical composition, from the earliest times onwards. Works on Telugu and Tamil poetics and prosody use the following terms to denote the three types of "rhyme" used by Dīkṣita: initial rhyme = *yati*; second-syllable (or consonant) rhyme = *prāsa* (or *dvitīyākṣara-prāsa*), and end rhyme = *antyaprāsa*.<sup>13</sup> Specifically, a comparison of Dīkṣita's patterns with those of his fellow-authors of devotional poems (non-musical) and songs in Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit yields the following picture of the use of these prosodic features.

(a) *prāsa*, or second-syllable rhyme, is truly pan-Dravidian, and occurs in all types of vernacular *poetic* and *musical* texts; e.g., the Śaivite *nāyaṇmār* (Tamil), Puraṇdaradāsa (Kannada), Tyāgarāja (Telugu). See Appendix.

(b) *yati*, or *initial* rhyme, is a characteristic feature of Tamil poetry from the earliest times onward.<sup>14</sup> It plays an important part in the Tamil Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite hymns (6th-9th c.); it is a standard feature of folksongs, proverbs, and all poetic and musical forms in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam,<sup>15</sup> and certainly of the non-metrical *kṛti*-s of composers such as Annamācārya and Tyāgarāja. See Tyāgarāja's "*nannu brōva nī*". Appendix, II.

(c) *antyaprāsa* is rarely used in South Indian vernacular and Sanskrit words; in the latter, it is found in works modelled on Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* (e.g., Nārāyaṇatīrtha's *Kṛṣṇalīlātaraṅgiṇī*) and *stotras* in certain regular moric meters such as *mātrāsamaka*; (e.g., the *Carpaṭapañjarikā-stotra* or *Mōhamudgara* attributed to Śaṅkara). See Appendix, p. 3.

(d) South Indian authors of *stotras* in Sanskrit, in general, avoid using any of these vernacular rhyme-patterns, following the classical Sanskrit śloka and *kāvya* metrical models instead.

(e) South Indian composers of musical genres (*taraṅga*, *pada*, *kīrtana*, *kṛti*) in Sanskrit prior to Dīkṣita use either or both initial rhyme (*yati*) and *prāsa* (second-syllable rhyme), but *optionally*, e.g., Nārāyaṇatīrtha, Sadāśiva Brahmendra. Mārgadarśī Śeṣhayaṅgār, a 17th century composer of *kṛtis* in Sanskrit, is said to have used *yati* and *prāsa* regularly.<sup>16</sup> P.Sambamoorthi remarks that the 17th century author Nārāyaṇatīrtha is the first to use *prāsa* in a Sanskrit work.<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that 1) Nārāyaṇatīrtha composed the *Kṛṣṇalīlātaraṅgiṇī* as a *musical* text; and 2) in different songs in his *Taraṅgiṇī* he used either the end-rhyme patterns of Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* (which was the inspiration and model for his work), by themselves, or the South Indian vernacular patterns of *yati* and *prāsa*,

and, on occasion, both features together, as in Dīkṣita's "vātāpigaṇapatim". Compare Nārāyaṇatīrtha's "avadhāraya mām" (Southern features) with his "kalaye devam iha sukhakandaṃ" (in imitation of the *Gītāgovinda*). See Appendix, IV. 3.

Clearly, the Dravidian vernacular prosodic features, *yati* and *prāsa*, were adopted by South Indian composers of musical texts in Sanskrit, since they were considered to be *musically* important, useful or beautiful. Indeed, the "Gopikāgītam" ("Song of the Gopīs") is one of the rare instances in the *Bhāgavata purāṇa* (a 10th or 11th c. Sanskrit text written, on the whole, in the traditional Sanskrit style) where we see the use of *yati* and *prāsa* in the vernacular manner (along with end-rhyme). (Appendix, IV. 4). M. Krishnamachariyar cites this as an early example of "Gītākāvya" in his *History of Classical Sanskrit literature*,<sup>18</sup> and the 19th century Sanskrit composer Svāti Tiruṇāl cites it as an authoritative model for the use of *yati* and *prāsa* in *Sanskrit kṛti* composition.<sup>19</sup> No authorization was needed for their use in vernacular *kṛti* composition, since it was standard practice there.

Thus, in using *yati* and *prāsa* in a consistent manner in his Sanskrit *kṛtis*, Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita was aligning himself with authors of musical genres rather than with authors of *stotras*, however much his *kṛtis* resemble the latter works in style and ethos. There is reason to believe that this was out of necessity, not choice. In Dravidian vernacular poetic texts, initial rhyme occurs at the beginning of and within the line of poetry, while second-consonant or -syllable rhyme is placed only at the beginning of the line of poetry. i.e., *yati* is a line-internal rhyme-pattern, while *prāsa* is line-external. Looking at the rhyme pattern in "vātāpigaṇapatim" we observe that the occurrence of *yati* and *prāsa* defines or demarcates the structure of the text-melodic line as covering two *tāla*-cycles (*āvartas*); hence the occurrence of *prāsa* only at the beginning of alternate *āvartas*. Our definition of the musical line is confirmed by: (i) the structural expectations of the melodic component of the song; (ii) the fact that initial rhyme is internal, and second-syllable rhyme external, to the line in Tamil and Telugu poetry; and (iii) the oral transmission and performance tradition of the Tamil Śaivite hymns in Śiva temples in Tamil country; while these hymns are metrical compositions, their melodic and rhythmic structural patterns are recognized and memorized by the singers with reference to *yati* and *prāsa* patterns.<sup>20</sup> In the *Tēvāram* songs, *yati* occurs precisely at the *yati* or caesura in the melodic line which, in this case, coincides with the metrical text-line. See the example given in page 3 of the Appendix. Where meter is abandoned, as in the *kṛtis* of the Sanskrit and Telugu composers in Carnatic music (and unlike Nārāyaṇatīrtha, or the Tamil Śaivite saints), the *structural* pattern of the musical line *replaces* the pattern of the metrical line, and the *kṛti* composers use the rhyme-techniques of Dravidian poetry to define this melodic line, *instead* of a non-existent "line of text" or "poetic unit".

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE TAMIL ŚAIVITE HYMNS ON DĪKṢITA'S SONGS

Dīkṣita's literary-poetic syncretism must be placed in the context of the cultural synthesis we find in the composer's life and religious style.<sup>21</sup> Born in Tiruvārūr and brought up in the South Indian Smarta brahmin tradition, Dīkṣita travelled to Benares, studied Sanskrit, the Vedas the North Indian classical music. He was initiated into the esoteric *Śrīvidyā tantra*. His songs are replete with Vedic and Tantric vocabulary, imagery and forms, and well express the pan-Hindu "Sanskritic" ethos: compare the texts of "vātāpigaṇapatim" and "kumbheśvareṇa"<sup>22</sup> (Appendix, III and VI) with the Telugu text and translation of Tyāgarāja's "nannu brōva nī" (Appendix, II),<sup>23</sup> the latter exhibiting all the personal, emotional, informal attitudes of popular *bhakti* poetry. Here is a selection of phrases from Dīkṣita's songs, illustrating their "stotra", *nirguṇa-bhakti* and *tantric* vocabulary and imagery:

(1) *Śloka* or *stotra* syntax and style: *vātāpigaṇapatim bhaje 'ham; kumbheśvareṇa samrakṣito 'ham* "I am protected by Kumbheśvara", *Śrī subrahmaṇyāya namaste* "Honour to Śrī Subrahmaṇya", are typical first lines of his songs, indicative of the syntax of the entire song.

(2) Vedānta, *mantra*, Tantra features: *praṇava-svarūpa. . . , trikoṇa-madhyagataṃ* ("the primal syllable in essence", "in the midst of the [mystic] triangle"); *mūlādhāraḥsetrasthitam* "dwelling in the field of the *mūlādhāra-cakra*", "*parādi-catvāri-vāgātmakam*" "consisting of the 4 types of speech beginning with Parā" in "vātāpigaṇapatim", and "*sarvāśā-paripūraka-cakra-svāminīm*" "mistress of the *cakra* of the fulfilment of all hopes" in "Kamalāmbāṃ bhajare" (one of a series of II *kṛtis* on the Goddess in her manifestation as Kamalāmbā in Tiruvārūr),<sup>25</sup> all reflect Tantric thought in general, but also refer to specific ideas in the *Śrīvidyā tantra*. *saccidānandamātram* "him who is Being, Consciousness and Bliss" (in "Śaṅkaram abhirāmi-"), and *nirviśeṣa-caitanya-rūpiṇī* "who is of the form of distinctionless consciousness" (in "Kamalāmbāṃ bhajare") illustrate the *advaita vedānta* aspect of Smarta doctrine.

At the same time, certain aspects of the theme and content of Dīkṣita's *kṛtis* distinguish these works both from the *kṛtis* of his peers in Carnatic music, and from the Stotra tradition in which they otherwise fit so well.

In his songs, Dīkṣita describes or addresses the deity of his choice (Śiva, Devī, Subrahmaṇya, Gaṇeśa – Dīkṣita composed *kṛtis* about practically every major deity in the Hindu pantheon, unlike Tyāgarāja, who wrote almost exclusively about Rāma, or Śyāmā Śāstri, whose *kṛtis* are addressed to the Goddess) in very specific phrases or epithets related to peculiarly South Indian iconographic forms connected with specific temples in South India (mainly Chola temples in Tanjore district), and with the local lore and mythology surrounding these temples. All the features of a *sthalapurāṇa*: origin-legend, the name and form of the deity and his/her consort,

the peculiarities of the icon, local phenomena such as *tīrthas* and festivals, legends of local devotees and saints; these form the topics of the *kṛtis* and are interwoven with the more generalized phrases drawn from the vocabulary of pan-Indian *stotra* literature. In these features we see the direct influence (on Dīkṣita) of the *Tēvāram* hymns of the Tamil Śaivite saints and their temple-oriented and intensely localized devotion.<sup>26</sup> This is not surprising, because, as mentioned at the beginning of this study, Tiruvārūr was not only the 18th century center of Carnatic music, but also the ancient center of Tamil Śaivism. According to accounts of Dīkṣita's life, the composer was deeply attached to the sacred musical and ritual traditions of Tiruvārūr temple (he composed a very large number of *kṛtis* addressed to every one of the deities in this enormous complex of shrines, "vātāpigaṇapatim" being one such song), and actively took part in the musical activity connected with the temple.<sup>27</sup> A central part of this musical activity is the singing, during the 6 *pūjā* rituals, of the hymns of the Tamil Śaivite saints by *ōtuvārs* (temple singers of the *Tēvāram*).

We have already observed that Dīkṣita regularly makes use of vernacular prosodic techniques whose crucial musical function is well illustrated in the performance tradition of the *Tēvāram*. In his rhyme-techniques, Dīkṣita may simply have been following the practice of his peers in Carnatic composition. However, it is clear that in many respects he was directly influenced by the style of the *Tēvāram*, for, among the Carnatic composers Dīkṣita alone makes use of elaborate rhythmic patterns or ornaments, called the *gopucchā* and *srotovahā yatis*; these *yatis* are characteristic of the *Tēvāram* singing style, and are held to be an archaic technique preserved only in the Tamil Śaivite hymn tradition. Compare Dīkṣita's *srotovahā yati* in "Tyāgarājayogavaibhavam" (p. 4)<sup>28</sup> and Campantar's example (in the hymn "toṅṭaraṅcu kaḷiru", Appendix, V).

Abundant testimony for the influence of the ethos of the *nāyaṅmār*'s hymna on Dīkṣita's songs is provided by the emphasis I spoke of above, on *place*, *particular mūrti* and local myth. Again, accounts of Dīkṣita's life give us the information that the composer actually went on pilgrimage to all the shrines of the gods he sang of;<sup>29</sup> the other Carnatic composers were not inveterate pilgrims of Dīkṣita's sort, nor did they sing of particular shrines. The *nāyaṅmār*, on the other hand were, above all, just such pilgrims, and sang in their hymns about the gods and shrines of the 260 temples they visited in Tamil country.<sup>30</sup> As can be expected, Tiruvārūr and other Chola shrines form the subject of the bulk of the *Tēvāram* songs, and these very temples and gods form Dīkṣita's subjects. Compare "kuṁbheśvareṇa" (Appendix, VI) and the following excerpts from Dīkṣita's *kṛtis* with some from the *Tēvāram*.

- (1) *śrīsundararājam bhaje 'ham . . . somāskandavimānastham . . .*

*nūpuragaṅgātīrthaprabhāvam . . . jāradoraśikhāmaṇim*<sup>31</sup>

“I sing of Sundararāja . . . who dwells in the temple with the *vimāna* called Somāskanda; . . . who is the glory of the *tīrtha* called “Nūpuragaṅgā”; . . . who is Lord of rogues and robbers”.

*Sundararāja* is the Sanskrit translation for the Tamil *Alakar*, which is the name given to Viṣṇu in this temple near Madurai. *Alakar* is locally known as *Kaḷḷalakar*, chief of the local bandit tribes.

(2) In “ādhipuriśvaram sadā bhaje ’ham”: *nandipūjita-svayambhu-liṅgam* “the self-born *liṅga* worshipped by Nandi” and *nāga-kavaca-dhara-saikata-liṅgam* “the *liṅga* constituted of sand/earth, covered by a *nāga* (snake) sheath”. Such precise descriptions of the type of *liṅga* or icon are typical of these *kṛti* texts: see the iconographic description of the Gaṇeśa of Vātāpi (distinguished from the 15 other major types and several other specific icons of Gaṇeśa on whom Dīkṣita has composed songs) in “*vātāpiganapatim*” (Appendix). In “*sadācaleśvaram bhāvaye ’ham*”,<sup>33</sup> for instance, Dīkṣita speaks of a specific (and legendary) feature of the temple: *chāyā-rahita-dīpa-prakāśa-garbhagrha-madhyaraṅgam* “whose arena is the centre of the *garbhagrha* lit by the brilliance of a *shadowless* lamp”.

Compare: Campantar, *Tēvāram* I. 75. 2.

He shares his self with his lady; / on his red locks he wears the moon and snake; / melodiously he sings the modes, and dances. / The beggar-god, my Lord, ever displays his gracious will. / He loves Veṅkuru’s temple / now descended to earth, / having once risen even higher and touched heaven, / as it floated on the Ocean’s cosmic flood / which covered Earth and reached the sky; / and here he abides.

Appar, *Tēvāram* IV. 61.4.

O heart, if you seek a good end, go worship / at holy Irāmēccuram, / be saved / at the temple built with love / by beautiful Māl with the mighty discus / when he had killed the evil demon / with shoulders like hills.

Once more we see Dīkṣita’s syncretism at work: Even as he chose the Sanskrit language for composition in a predominantly vernacular musical tradition, even as he blended stylistic features of *stotra* literature and vernacular prosody, even as he eclectically used the techniques of both Hindustani and Carnatic music,<sup>35</sup> so in his songs he brought together aspects of the ethos of early Tamil devotional poetry and Sanskrit *stotra* literature.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the *kṛti* form in Carnatic music, see: P. Sambamoorthi, *South Indian Music*, Book III, 7th edn., Madras: Indian Music, 1973 pp. 133–181; and Indira V. Peterson, 'The *kṛti* as an integrative cultural form: Aesthetic Experience in the Religious Songs of Two South Indian Classical Composers', *Journal of South Asian Literature* 19, (1984), 165–79.
- <sup>2</sup> On cultural activity in the Tanjore court, see: Dr. S. Seetha, *Tanjore as a seat of Music* (17th, 18th and 19th c.), Madras: University of Madras, 1981.
- <sup>3</sup> On Venkaṭamakhin and the *Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā*, see S. Seetha, *op. cit.*, pp. 375–379. On the scheme of 72 *melas*, see: *ibid.*, 408ff.
- <sup>4</sup> On the lives and work of the 3 composers, see: P. Sambamoorthy, *Great Composers*, Madras: Indian Music Publishing Co., Book I, 2nd ed. 1962, and Book II, 2nd ed. 1970. On Tyāgarāja, see V. Raghavan, Introduction to: C. Ramanujachari, *The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja*. Madras: Shri Ramakrishna Math, 2nd ed, 1966, pp. 1–222. On Dīkṣita, see: V. Raghavan, *Muttuswami Dikshitar*. Bombay: National Centre for the Performing Arts, 1975; T. S. Parthasarathy, ed. *The Musical Heritage of Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar*. Bombay: Indian Musicological Society, 1976. T. L. Venkatarama Ayyar, *Muttuswami Dikshitar*. Delhi: National Book Trust, 1968; and Indira V. Peterson, *op. cit.*
- <sup>5</sup> On the *angas* of the *kṛti*, see Sambamoorthy, 1973, pp. 137–138; on *tāla*, see: *Ibid.*, Chapter VII.
- <sup>6</sup> In fact early composers of the *kṛti* (15th–17th c.) composed many more *kīrtanas*, meant to be sung in *bhājana* sessions, than *kṛtis*. Among the trinity, Tyāgarāja wrote several *kīrtanas* for the *bhājana saṁpradāya*. It must, however, be noted that the *kṛti* itself, however much it might resemble a *kīrtana*, is musically complex, and focuses on aspects of *classical* form. *Kṛtis* are almost always performed solo or, if in a group, on formal occasions such as the Tyāgarāja Ārādhana (memorial to Tyāgarāja) held annually in Tiruvaiyāru. On the development of systematization of the *bhājana* as an institution in 17th–19th c. Tanjore see: S. Seetha, *op. cit.*, pp. 190–201. See also the articles on the Rādhā-Krishna *bhājanas* of Madras city, by Milton Singer and T. K. Venkateshvaran, in: M. Singer: *Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes*, Chicago, 1968. For examples of songs used in the *bhājana* tradition, see: *Bhajanāvalīh*. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 5th ed. 1972.
- <sup>7</sup> For the names and dates of some of these composers, see Appendix, I.
- <sup>8</sup> Consult *Bhajanāvalīh*, cited above, note 6.
- <sup>9</sup> Unlike the *kṛtis* of Dīkṣita and the 19th c. Sanskrit composer Svāti Tirunal, Seshayyengar's *kṛtis* are not available to us in practice.
- <sup>10</sup> On moric metre in general, and the metres of the *Gītagovinda* in particular, see: Barbara Stoler Miller, *Love Song of the Dark Lord: Jayadeva's Gītagovinda*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, pp. 9–14, and 43–48, of the *Introduction*.
- <sup>10a</sup> I have avoided using the technical terms peculiar to Carnatic music, because words such as *akṣara* (syllable) apply to slightly different ideas or quantities in the musical system. I avoid the term *akṣara*, and have used *mātrā*, as a unit of time, precisely as it is used in discussions in Sanskrit and vernacular prosody.
- <sup>11</sup> While manuscripts with notation are available from the 17th c. onwards, *reliance* on notation for learning a piece of music is a rare phenomenon, even in the 20th century.
- <sup>12</sup> On alliteration and rhyme in the *Gītagovinda*, see: Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–14 and 47–48.
- <sup>13</sup> On musicological prosody, see Sambamoorthi, Book IV, Chapter XIV, pp. 283–309.
- <sup>14</sup> On initial and 2nd syllable rhyme in classical Tamil poetry, see: George L. Hart III, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil: Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts*, pp. 197–210, esp. 208–210. In Tamil *yati* = *mōnai*; *prāsa* = *etukai*.
- <sup>15</sup> In general, *yati*, or initial rhyme, is absent in Kannada poetic and musical compositions, e.g., The Compositions of Purandaradāsa, See: *Sri Haridāsa Bhājana Manjari*, Madras: Madhva Sangha, (in Tamil), 1980. Professor V. Narayana Rao of the University of Wisconsin tells me

that there is a proverb in Telugu: “*kannadaku yati yilla; kōnārku mattiyilla*” “Kannada has no *yati*; a shepherd has no intelligence.” Note the *yati* pattern in the proverb! All Tamil children’s songs, e.g., “*nilā nilā ōṭi vā; nillāmal ōṭi vā*” and proverbs: “*aṟpaṇukkup paviṣu vantāl // arttarāttiriyilē kuṭai piṭṭipān*” have *yati* and, most often, *prāsa*.

<sup>16</sup> Mahārāja Svāti Tirunāl of Kerala, a prolific composer (early 19th c.) who composed not only in Sanskrit and Malayalam, but 9 other languages as well, cites Seshayyengar and the *Bhāgavata Purāna* as his models for the use of *muhana (yati)* (Tamil *mōṇai*), *prāsa* and *antyaprāsa*, in his work on the subject, entitled *Muhanaprāsāntyaprāsādivyavasthā*. See: Dr. S. Venkitasubramonia Iyer, *Swati Tirunal and His Music*, Trivandrum: College Book House, 1975, pp. 76–81. For further examples of Swati Tirunal’s *kritis*, V.V. Sundararajan, Compiler and ed., *Maharaja Sri Swāti Tirunāl Kritis* (Part 1). Trivandrum: Sri Swati Tirunal Kritis Publication Committee, 1970.

<sup>17</sup> Sambamoorthi, *South Indian Music*, Book IV, p. 309.

<sup>18</sup> M. Krishnamachariyar, *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 3rd ed. 1974, first ed. 1937, pp. 918–19.

<sup>19</sup> See note 16 above.

<sup>20</sup> From my observations in South Indian temples and *Tēvāram* concerts, 1977–1981. See also: Ka. Veḷḷaivāraṇaṅ, *Panniru Tirumurai Varalaru*, I (*mutal ēlu Tirumurai*). Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1972, pp. 396–552. (In Tamil.)

<sup>21</sup> On this, see, Indira V. Peterson, 1984.

<sup>22</sup> “*vātāpigaṇapatim*,” *Sri Dikshita Kirtana Mala* (SDKM), Kallidaikkuricci Vainika Vidwan A. Sundaram Ayyar, Madras: Music Books, 1979, Part XIV, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> “*nannu brōva nī*”: C. Ramanujachari, *op. cit.* p. 336.

<sup>24</sup> “*sri subrahmanyāya namaste*”: *Sri Dikshita Kirtana Mala*.

<sup>25</sup> “*Kamalāmbāṃ bhajare*”: *Sri Dikshita Kirtana Mala*. Anubandham, Dēvī Navāvaraṇa Kirtanams, 1981, p. 6. (1) *Kamalāmbike* (2) *Kamalāmbā saṅrakṣatu mām* (3) *Kamalāmbāṃ bhajare* (4) *śrī kamalāmbikayā kaṭākṣito haṃ* (5) *kamalāmbikayai . . . namaste* (6) *śrī kamalāmbāyāḥ param nahi re re citta* (7) *kamalāmbikayās tava bhakto haṃ* (8) *śrī kamalāmbikāyāḥ bhaktiṃ karomi* (9) *śrī kamalāmbike vāva* (10) *śrī kamalāmbā jayati* (11) *śrī kamalāmbike . . . pāhi māḃ*.

In each song, the name of the Goddess is couched in a different case of nominal declension in the Sanskrit language.

<sup>26</sup> On the importance of location, particular shrines, and forms of deity in the *Tēvāram* hymns, see: Indira V. Peterson, ‘Singing of a Place: Pilgrimage as metaphor and motif in the *Tēvāram* songs of the Tamil Śaivite saints,’ *JAOS* 102, 1982, pp. 69–90.

<sup>27</sup> See. V. Raghavan, ‘Muttuswami Dikshitar (1775–1835),’ in *Muttuswami Dikshitar* (1975), pp. 6–7.

<sup>28</sup> On the *srotovahā* and *gopucchā yatis*, see Sambamoorthi, Book IV. 176–182. ‘*Śaṃ–Prakāśam*’: *ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>29</sup> V. Raghavan, ‘Muttuswami Dikshitar,’ n. 27 above, pp. 6–18. See V. Raghavan, ‘Index to the *kritis* of Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar,’ in *Muttuswami Dikshitar* (1975), pp. 73–103.

<sup>30</sup> See Peterson, ‘Singing of a Place.’

<sup>31</sup> ‘*śrī sundararājam*,’ *SDKM* (Sri Dikshita Kirtana Mala).

<sup>32</sup> ‘*ādhipurīśvaram*,’ *SDKM*.

<sup>33</sup> ‘*sadācalesvaram*,’ *SDKM*.

<sup>34</sup> V. Raghavan, ‘Muttuswami Dikshitar’ (1975), p. 4.

## APPENDIX

## I

*Early kṛti composers* (15th–17th c.)

*Telugu*: Annaṃācārya (15th c.), Bhadrācalam Rāmadās (17th c.).

*Kannada*: Purandaradāsa (15th c.).

*Sanskrit*: Mārgadarśī Śeṣayyāgar (17th c.).

*Eminent composers in the mature kṛti form* (18th–19th c.).

*Telugu*: Tyāgarāja, Śyāmā Śāstri.

*Sanskrit*: Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita.

(The above three composers are known as the “saṅgīta-trimūrti”) (“Musical trinity”) of the Carnatic tradition.)

Mahārājā Svāti Tirunāl (19th c.), influenced by Dīkṣita.

*Eminent South Indian composers of other musical forms in Sanskrit* (15th–17th c.)

Nārāyaṇatīrtha (17th c.): *tarāṅga*, *padāvalī*, in the *Kṛṣṇalītarāṅgiṇī*.

Sadāśiva Brahmendra (18th? c.): *advaita-kīrtana*.

*South Indian authors of Sanskrit stotras* (9th–17th c.).

Śaṅkara, Bīlvamaṅgala and Kulaśekhara (11th–12th c.), Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa (16th c.), Jagannātha (16th c.), Appayya and Nīlakaṅṭha Dīkṣita (17th c.).

*The Tamil Śaivite devotional song tradition* (7th–18th c.)

The three Nāyaṇmār saints (Appar, Campantar and Cuntaramūrtti), authors of the *Tēvāram* hymns (6th–8th c.); Māṅikkavācakar, author of the *Tiruvācakam* (9th c.); Aruṇakirīnātar (Aruṇagirīnātha), author of the *Tiruppukal* (15th c.). Pattinattār (16th c.) and Tāyumanavar (17th c.).

## II

*Ādi Tāla*: A beat cycle of 8 counts, divided into 3 units as follows:

4            2            2

Hand gestures: beat +    || beat, | beat, |

3 counts || wave | wave |

In traditional notation this is symbolically represented

as:    1 (4) 0 (2) 0 (2)

*Telugu text of the kṛti “nannu brōva nī”*

*rāga*: Ābhōgi            *tāla*: Ādi            Composer: Tyāgarāja

(I) *Pallavi*

... NA n n u brōva || nī | kinta tāma-  
sama) NĀpai nēra || mē | mi balku-  
mā...

(II) *Anupallavi*

... CI n n a naḍe || nī | celimi galuga  
Kōri) CIntimpa || lēdā | śrīrā-  
mā (nannu brōva)

(III) *Caranam*

... NI j a dāsa || varu - || laku tammu-  
latō) NĪvu bāga || bu | ttaga lē-  
dā) GA j a rāja || ra | kṣaka tanayu-  
lanu KANipeñca || lēdā | tyāgarāja-  
nuta. (nannu brōva)

*Translation of “nannu brōva nī”*

(I) Why do you delay so long in saving me ? Tell me what my fault is.

(II) Intensely desiring a relationship with you, have I not meditated on you since childhood itself, O Rāma?

(III) Were you not born with brothers who are also the best among your true devotees? O savior of the King of elephants, have you not begotten and brought up sons of your own, O Rāma whom Tyāgarāja adores?

## III

CAPITAL, roman (a-j) = *yati*, initial rhyme (alliteration).

roman and spaced (x,y) = *dvitīyākṣaraprāsa* (x), *prāsa* (y)

2nd consonant or syllable rhyme

roman = *antya-prāsa*, end-rhyme, final alliteration.

*Ādi Tāla*: 8 counts,; 16 *mātrās*; 2 *mātrās* [= 2 solfa syllables (*svara*) at tempo 1 (*prathama-kāla*), 4 at tempo 2 (*madhyama-kāla*)] per count.

*Sanskrit text of “vātāpigaṇapatim”*

*rāga*: Hamsadhvani      *tāla*: Ādi

*Composer*: Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita



(III) (I sing) him who was worshipped by the pot-born sage (Agastya), him who is at the center of the mystic Triangle, him who dwells in the field of the *Mūlādhāra-cakra*, and is worshipped by Viṣṇu and all the gods; him who consists of the four types of speech, beginning with *Parā*; the one whose curved trunk is the *praṇava* (“Om”, the primal syllable) in essence; him who bears the moon on his forehead, holds sugarcane in his left hand, and bears the noose and the *bijāpūra* fruit in his other hands; him who is free of impurity, goblin-formed, praised by Śiva and Guha (Kārttikeya, and “Guruguha”, the composer himself), Heramba who delights in the *rāga* Haṃsadhvani.

## IV

(1) *Tamil Śaivite hymn from the Tēvāram* (6th–7th c.)  
Campantar, *Tēvāram* I.80.1

a	KA	ṛ	ṛ	ā	ṅkeri yōmpik	KAliyai vārāmē
b	Ce	ṛ	ṛ	ā	rvāl tillaic	Ci ṛ ṛ ampala mēya
c	MU	ṛ	ṛ	ā	veṅṭiṅkaṅ	MUtalvaṅ pātāmē
d	PA	ṛ	ṛ	ā	ninṛāraip	PA ī ṛ ā pāvāmē

(2) *Sanskrit stotra with rhyme: Śaṅkara, Mohamudgara.*

*bhagavadgītā kiṃcid adhītā*  
*gaṅgājālalavakaṅikā pītā*  
*sakṛdapi yena murārisamarcā*  
*kriyate tasya yamena na carcā*

Mātrāsamaka meter; End-rhyme.

(3) *South Indian musical composition in Sanskrit*  
Nārāyaṇatīrtha, *Kṛṣṇalīlātaraṅgiṇī* (17th c.)

(a) from “avadhāraya mām īśvaram”.

a	ĀGAmāntaikamānakam	Ananyabhāvam
a	AGaṇitalokanāyakam	
bb	VIGAlitamoham	ekam ekaṅ VImalayogitārakaṅ
cc	GAGAnākāram	anekaṅ GATāgatanivārakam

*yati, prāsa* and end-rhyme.

(b) from “kalaye devam iha sukhakandaṅ”.

*iḥaparabhogam amarapadavīm api yadadhigame na bhajante*  
*viṣam iva dhīradhiyo maramṛgyaparaikasukhe viharante*

End-rhyme.

Compare with Jayadeva, *Gītagovinda* (12th c., Eastern India). From “viharati haririha”.

*nindati cañdanam indukiraṇam anuvindati khedam adhīraṇ  
vyālanīlayamīlanena garalam iva kalayati malayasamīram*

Asymmetrical internal alliteration and end-rhyme.

(4) *Bhāgavata Purāna* (10th c. Sanskrit text of Southern provenance).  
*Bhāgavata* X. 31. 1. (*Gopikāgītam*, “The Song of the herdswomen”).

aa JA y a t i *te'dhikaṇ* JA nmanā *vrajaḥ*  
bb ŚRA y a t a *indirā* ŚAśvad *atra hi*  
cc DA y i t a *Drśyatām* Dikṣu *tāvakās*  
dd TVA y i *Dhṛtāsavas* TVĀm *vicinvate*

*yati* and *prāsa*; no end-rhyme.

#### V. SROTOVAHĀ YATI

A figure in which the line is expanded “backwards”.

(1) Campantar, *Tēvāram* (Tamil Śaivite hymn) II. 250. 1:  
“toṅṭarañcu. .”

– *nīlamoṭṭalaruṅ kētāramē*  
– *cuṇainīlamoṭṭalaruṅ kētāramē*  
– *keṅtai pāyac cuṇainīlamoṭṭalaruṅ kētāramē*  
– *varikkeṅtai pāyac cuṇainīlamoṭṭalaruṅ kētāramē*  
– *māṅkaṅru tuḷla varikkeṅtai pāyac cuṇainīlamoṭṭalaruṅ kētāramē*

*vaṅṭu pāṭa mayilāla māṅkaṅru tuḷla varik*  
*keṅtai pāyac cuṇainīlamoṭṭalaruṅ kētāramē*

(2) From Dikṣita’s “*tyāgarājajogavaibhavam*”,  
*rāga*: Ānandabhairavi.

– śam; – *prakāśam*; – *svarūpaprakāśam*; – *tattvasvarūpaprakāśam*;  
– *sakalatattvasvarūpaprakāśam*;  
– *śivaśaktyādisakalatattvasvarūpaprakāśam*

(Elements added in each repetition of the line are underlined above).

#### VI

*Sanskrit Text and Translation of Muttusvāmi Dikṣita’s “kumbheśvareṇa  
samrakṣito’ham”*

*rāga*: Kalyāṇī

*tāla*: Ādi

(I) *Pallavi*

kūṃbheśvareṇa saṃrakṣito'haṃ  
kumbhajādīmuniṣṭhitavareṇa

(II) *Samastīcaraṇam*

kūṃbhamāsamakhāmahotsavena  
kāmakotiṭīṭhayatinutena  
ibhavadanaguruguhānandena  
indudharamaṅgalāmbāyutena (kūṃbheśvareṇa)

(I) I am protected by the great Lord Kūṃbheśvara (one of the *mūrtis* of Śiva in the temple at Kūṃbhakoṇam) who is worshipped by sages such as the pot- (*kūṃbha-*) born Agastya; (II) . . . by the Lord whose Makhāmaha festival takes place (every 12 years) in the month of Kūṃbha (Tamil *Māci*), by him who is worshipped by the ascetic (Śaṅkarācārya) of the Kāmakoti Pīṭha (in Kāñcīpuram), by him who delights the elephant-faced Gaṇeśa and Guha-the -Preceptor (or “Guruguha”, the composer himself), by him who, bearing the moon, is accompanied by his consort (in Kūṃbhakoṇam), the goddess Maṅgalāmbā.

*Mount Holyoke College*  
*S. Hadley, MA 01075, U.S.A.*