III. Nūnmarapu.

Nūnmarapu is the name of the first chapter. marapu is usually interpreted by Ilampūranar as lakshna or definition of rules of grammar. According to him marapu here means the grammatical principles or the postulates of the phonology described in eluttu atikāram. According to him, though the postulates are summarised in a way, nūl here refers to eluttu-atikāram alone. He further adds that this part of the book deals only with sounds as individual sounds and not as sounds forming part of words. This restriction, he has to place, because of the subject matter of this part of the book. The name nūl however, cannot imply any such restrictions.

Naccīrkkīniyar takes the word nūl as referring to the whole of Tolkāppiyam, that is, all the three parts.

1. Phonology  
2. Morphology and syntax and  
(3) Poetics.

But this is only to create unnecessary difficulties as admittedly, that is, as pointed out by Ilampūranar, the first chapter of eluttu atikāram deals only with sounds per se. Naccīrkkīniyar, however, proceeds to give an explanation justifying his interpretation. We already referred to the various aspects
of the study of phonology. Of these, the name and the order of the sounds according to Naccinārkkinīyyar are common to both ēluttu atikāram and the chapter on ceyyul-iyal 'literary composition' in poruḷ atikāram. It is true that the total here given is thirty three whereas there in Ceyyuliyal the categories are still further reduced to make up only a total of fifteen. The quantities are also common to both. The short vowels and long vowels have the same quantities in both the places. But the nature of ālapetai has no significance in ēluttu atikāram and its quantity here given is useful only in metrical exigencies and Naccinārkkinīyyar thinks that what is stated there in Ceyyuliyal with reference to metre is simply a reference to ff. 33 here in ēluttu atikāram which speaks of the sounds exceeding the limit prescribed in ēluttu atikāram with reference to their quantities. And again the class of short vowel and long vowel and the class as of plosives, nasals and semi vowels and āytam are all common to both the rhythm is Ceyyul-iyal and this atikāram. The shortening of some of the sounds is applicable to both ēluttu-atikāram and ceyyul-iyal. The coming in of words to form syllable, the persistence of the sounds in a syllable as two different units and the rules about clusters of sounds
though stated as correctly belonging to elūttu-atikāram have reference to Collatikāram (book on Morphology) because, that book deals with words which are here said to be formed out of sounds mentioned here. What the commentator means here is probably that these describe the pattern of words studied in Collatikāram. In this way, the commentator points out what is stated here in the first chapter of elūttu-atikāram given rules applicable not only to this chapter and to this part of the book but also to the next part on Morphology and the third part on poetics (or poetic subject matter). According to him, the first chapter deals with the names, order, total number of sounds, quantity, shortening of quantities, coming of sounds to form syllable, classes and the clusters. The rest of the aspects according to him are treated in the other chapters of elūttu-atikāram.

This is indeed a very ingenious argument; but it is very far fetched. It is a strained interpretation; and our commentator seems to feel constrained to make such interpretations because, as he himself states, in the commentary on the last sutram of this chapter, other serious difficulties will arise otherwise. Here, the serious difficulty will be the inappropriateness of the word mūl in this context.
How Ilampuramai came to restrict the meaning of the word nūl to eluttu-atikāram alone is not clear.

Mr. Venkataramulu Reddiar suggests that the word nūl perhaps meant sounds in the age of Tolkappiyar. But it is very difficult to prove from Tolkappiyar that nūl ever meant eluttu in his age.

There is another possibility, that is, Tolkappiyar, probably, at first proposed to write only on eluttu, if that suggestion is possible he could be thinking only of eluttu atikāram as his nūl or work. If that was so Collatikāram and Porul atikāram must be later developments in his mind.

Girvananamunivar, interprets marapu as conversions or conventional usages and distinguishes between the convention of the ordinary usage of words or the usage of the common man as distinguished from the technical terms used only in particular sciences. 5

Illakamarapu will be the ordinary usage of the word in common parlance; nūmarapu will mean the scientific terminology or the technical terms used according to the conventions of the particular sciences. This certainly
throws a flood of light on the name. But, once again arises the problem why the specific science is not mentioned here. He attempts to translate nūm-marapu as merely technical terminology. Admittedly the author has not mentioned here all kinds of technical terminology, not even the terminology common to all the three parts of Tolkāppiyam. It is therefore necessary to restrict this to phonology alone and that is, possible only if the suggestion thrown above that the author, at first thought of writing only on eluttu is accepted.

II.

From this point of view nūm-marapu treats about terminology. The explanation of mutal-eluttu or primary letters, cārpu-eluttu or secondary sounds, the short vowel, long vowel, extra lengthening of vowels the terms māttirai or quantity, the vowels, the consonants, the statement about the quantity of a syllable, of a consonant, of secondary sounds and of shortened m. the clue to the written form of sounds, namely p and m consonants and short e and short e and syllables; the way in which the syllables are pronounced, the explanation
of the term val-elutte, mel-elutte, itai-elutte and also cuttu and vina are all given here. Before the sutram on cuttu consonantal clusters are described in relation to each one consonant. The last sutram deals with the lengthening of sounds beyond the quantities mentioned here, in the science of music.

III.

The definition of māttirai is not in its proper place because the sutram previous to this definition assumes a knowledge of the unit of length in pronunciation, which he calls 4a alapu. No where does he use the word māttirai in eluttu-atikāram except in this sutram defining māttirai. This, of course occurs in Ceyyuliyal. Tolkāppiyar does not accept any sound occurring with three units of length in Tamil. This is stated after the explanation of the term metil. In this connection, a sutram follows which speaks of the lengthening of ordinary sounds if necessary by adding on, other sounds of required length.

This is further explained in the next chapter, where it is stated that the long vowels are thus further lengthened when short vowels are added to them. As already stated, the further lengthening in music is referred to, at the end of
nūnmarapu. It is therefore very doubtful whether the ff. 6 and 33 are necessary in their places.

Tolkāppiyar does not speak of the shortening of L m J like others and therefore it is for consideration whether Tolkāppiyar could have referred to makarakkurukkam either here or elsewhere. Realizing this, Naccipārkkiniyār speaks of the ff. 13 as referring to the views of others. Following this sutram there is a sutram which is an enigma. That is, utperu pulli uruvākumē i.e. the form is one where the dot is inside. The commentor on Virācōliyam speaks of makarakkurukkam being written down with a dot inside L m J, because there is already a dot or mark outside at its top for the consonant L m J, unless this can be taken in that sense, it is very difficulty to justify the place of this sutram here. Naccipārkkiniyār and Ilampūrānār take the sutram to mean that the form of L m J is differentiated from the form of L p J by an internal dot. Why should Tolkāppiyar refer to this distinction alone. For instance L v J and L p J are also to be distinguished. Further before giving the forms of the consonants why should Tolkāppiyar describe the form of L p J and L m J. One wonders whether these sutras about the written form were
originally written by Tolkāppiyar, because these forms are stated casually in such phrases as muppārpulli, aytappulli, pullimayankiyal and also in ff. 104 and 105. If these sutras are omitted, we pass on to the way in which the syllable is pronounced when combined with consonants, first pronouncing the consonant and then pronouncing the vowel.

IV.

The difficulty arises with reference to consonantal clusters. The initial position and the final position of sounds in a word are dealt with in the next chapter. And these clusters have been explained by Pavaṇantī and others, as really belonging to the medial position of sounds in the words. If that were so, these sutras should really belong to molimarapu. Realising this, Naċcinnārkkinnīyar himself states that these sutras are given as means or karuvi for understanding molimarapu. The one explanation may be that these sutras properly belong to molimarapu and probably because of a wrong mixture of the palmyra leaves from which they have copied, the ancient scribes wrongly copied the sutras about the clusters in nūmarapu long before Ilampūranar wrote his commentary. But in that case the
reference to ammūvārum in the ff. 22 which begins the description of the consonant clusters cannot have a place in molimarampu because nowhere there the consonants are enumerated to be referred to as such, unless one is going to suggest the reading for this meyammūvārum.

Gīvāṇamūnivar justifies the inclusion of this consonantal clusters here in this chapter which deals with individual sounds because the clustering is the characteristic feature of each one of the consonants with reference to one or more consonants. The clustering may be looked upon according to him, as a friendship or attraction while non-clustering may be looked upon as an enmity or resistance. Therefore, one has to speak of resistance or attraction as the characteristic feature of each one of the consonants in relation to other specific consonants. The consonantal clusters differ from language to language from this point of view.

V.

Here alone may be discussed Naccinārkkīniyar’s views on this χ clustering. Having considered these sutras as a kind of introduction to the next chapter on formation of words from sounds, Naccinārkkīniyar looks upon
this clustering of consonants as occurring in a word not as
the characteristic feature of the consonant as such. In
syllabic writing these clusters form one single letter though
a conjoint letter. Probably from this point of view, the
clusters were treated even as uyirmey is treated in this
chapter. But this kind of explanation will have to assume
that these sutas were due to the sanskrit influence on
Tolkappiyar or on the Tamil writing system of Tolkāppiyar’s
age. As a result it must be assumed it was through and
through syllabic as in sanskrit. This is difficult to prove.
Of course, it is possible to assume that Tolkāppiyar’s con-
ception of syllable here comes to play.

Ilampūraṇar thinks that ff. 22 divides the
clusters into two categories viz. (1) Consonant clustering
with other consonants and (2) Consonant clustering with
itself that is, to say doubling or gemination. He speaks
of maymayakku and utanilai mayakku. Therefore out of these
kinds of letters viz. vowels, consonants and syllables,
especially when one consider the writing system of vowels,
consonants and syllables, there should be nine varieties of
clusters. Of these nine, according to Ilampūraṇar the
clustering of single consonant with single consonant alone
is mentioned here, because there is no restriction as to
the clustering of others. He also points out that this
clustering is applicable to the consonants occurring both in
single word and in two juxtaposed word in sandhi. Ilampūrana
nar feels that the sandhi rules are all, in an implied way
stated here alone. This is because most of the rules of
sandhi are based on the incompatibility of certain clusters.

Ilampūrana need not have introduced the
uyirmey into this discussion of clusters. Unfortunately,
the writing system confused even this great man. Since
Ilampūrana has stated that there are nine varieties of
clusters, Naccipārkkīniyar, without having any recourse to
any implied statements, wants to show that Tolkkāppiiyar himself
provides for all these nine varieties. He takes the com-
ounds meymayakkutanilai as meym mayakkunilai and utanilai-
mayakku nilai. Naccipārkkīniyar has got the reading meym-
mayanku instead of meym-mayakku in Ilampūrana. meym-
mayanku nilai refers to the consonants, clustering with
other consonants. In utan mayanku nilai according to him
refers to the consonants occurring with vowels that is,
syllable clustering with other syllables or other consonants.
This leaves out of account the vowels clustering with syllables or with consonants. According to Naccinarkkiniyar, Tolkëppiyar reminds us about this, through the extra phrase teriyûnkâláî in the sutram. Generally, it is a convention with the later day commentators to assume that the author has something more in mind which he has not stated clearly and which he wants us to note down wherever there is an extra word in the sutram or whenever things are not enumerated in their proper order. By the same general method, the commentator Naccinarkkiniyar, relying upon the extra word meyn nilai cuttin in ff. 30 states that clustering of consonants with syllables is impliçîly stated. According to him ff. 49 is limiting the occurrence of syllable clustering with consonants.

All these elaborations only confuse the issue and do not sufficiently emphasise the importance of clusters in this chapter. The clustering with other consonants and clustering with its own variety are distinguished clearly by Ïlampûranar, and his writing shows that Tolkëppiyar also has this distinction in mind. Naccinarkkîniyar, though he does not try to show this distinction in the sutram, tries to bring out the distinction with reference to the arrangement of the sutram describing them. Because
the consonants clustering with consonants are of many varieties; he states that they are described in number of sutras whilst doubling of consonants is treated in one sutra. From this, it can be implied, according to Naccinārkkiṇiyyar, that there are certain letters which occur only as their own doubling without clustering with other consonants. These are consonants [k], [c], [t] and [p]. Others cluster only with other consonants. All the consonants except [r] and [l] can occur as doubles. This is stated in ff. 30. The above statement of Naccinārkkiṇiyyar seems to remind us of the corresponding sutram in Nagṇūl.

VI.

The question is raised whether these clusters are stated with reference to individual words or whether they apply to more words therefore to compounds. Naccinārkkiṇiyyar asserts as against Ilampūranar that these clusters are referred only with reference to individual words.

But he includes in his example the individual words as well as a few compounds i.e. vinātttokai and panputtokai because these compounds alone are taken as one word and therefore cannot be split according to Tolkāppiyar. Caṅkā-
ranamacivāyar ridicules Naccinārkkīnīyar for calling a compound a single word and compares this statement to the statement that one's mother is a barren women, as the very term compound or implies two words.

It is not so easy to laugh at Naccinārkkīnīyar. But, if clustering is looked upon as a characteristic feature of attraction and resistance residing in individual consonants, in relation to other consonants, it is difficult to understand why Naccinārkkīnīyar restricts the statement about the clusters here to individual words alone. Of course, from his point of view these refer to formation of words, explained with reference to their medial position in words. He attacks Ilampūranar for bringing in phrases to prove these statements about clusters. Naccinārkkīnīyar's objection is this; "our author speaks of individual words here; he speaks of the two words coming together in sandhi in a separate chapter called Pupariyal. In that chapter he speaks of words ending in consonants or vowels followed by words beginning with consonants or vowels, later on, he speaks of consonantal endings coming with an augment[1] in that way he takes every consonantal and vowel ending and lays down the sandhi rules in relation to each of them; therefore
to show here also an example of two words coming together will be an unnecessary repetition; that will be a defect in this work. It is not proper to show them as examples. 53

This criticism proceeds from a wrong point of view. As Ilampūranar has already pointed out, the statements about the clusters in an implied way visualise the whole of sandhi. 54 But as he himself hastens to add this can be true only to those who are possessed of the highest wisdom. The approach of Naccinārkkiniyar is itself fundamentally wrong because he forgets these clusters, described in relation to each consonants, are something flowing from the inward nature of consonants used in the language. This clusterings characterise a language.

One may ask why Ilampūranar is constrained to show phrases and not single words in this chapter. That is mainly because examples of individual words exemplifying same clusters are not available even for Naccinārkkiniyar. Naccinārkkiniyar escapes this deficiency by glibly asserting that individual words in which such clusters occur wherein existence in Tolkāppiyar’s age and had disappeared after his time before the literature now available came into existence. 55
VII.

The subject matter of mūrmarapu may be analysed thus:

aluttu (ff. 1)

Primary (ff. 1)                     Secondary (ff. 2)

Vowel (ff. 9)                        Consonant (ff. 9)

short long no three plasive nasal semi
(ff. 3) (ff. 4) matras (ff. 19) (ff. 20) vowels

a, i, u, ē, ĩ, ŭ,
e & o. ē, ai, ēo

a, i, u & au.
demonstrative gative (ff. 32)
(ff. 31) two mattrai
one mattrai each
e & o will have dot above
(ff. 16)

mattrai is the duration equal to one natural
winking or snapping of fingers (ff. 7). In
music the quantity is increased (ff. 33). But
alapetāi for filling up deficiency in meter by
addition of short vowels to long vowels (ff. 6)

uyirmey (syllable)

The mattrai of uyirmey is of the consonant–sounds–first
màttirai of the vowel in it. (ff. 10). Consonant sounds first and then the vowel (ff. 18). The written form is mainly that of the consonant which occurs with a dot but when followed by ¯ a ə dot disappears and that remaining form will be that of the consonant sound with ¯ a ə.

When other vowels follow other diacritical marks are added (ff. 17).

Clusters are also discussed for which see the syllabification (ff. 22 to 30).
1. I. A. p. 7
2. I. B. p. 16
3. Ibid p. 37
4. I. C. p. 4
5. IX. p. 20
6. I. ff. 1
7. Ibid 2
8. Ibid 3
9. Ibid 4
10. Ibid 6
11. Ibid 7
12. Ibid 8
13. Ibid 9
15. Ibid 11.
16. Ibid 12
17. Ibid 13
18. Ibid 14
19. Ibid 15
20. Ibid 16
21. Ibid 17
22. Ibid 18
23. Ibid 19
24. Ibid 20
25. Ibid 21
26. Ibid 31
27. Ibid 32
28. Ibid 22 to 30
29. Ibid 33.
30. III. ff. 310 and 311.
31. I. ff. 5
32. Ibid 6
33. Ibid 41.
34. Ibid 13
35. Ibid 330.
36. I B. p. 27
37. IV. ff. 19, p. 17
38. I. A. p. 10 and I. B. p. 27
39. I. f. 1
40. I. ff. 38
41. I. ff. 59 to 81
42. VI. ff. 57 and 110
43. VII. ff. 31.
44. I. B. p. 32
45. IX. p. 61
46. I. B. pp. 31, 32, 33.
47. I. A. p. 12
48. I. A. p. 12
49a. X. B. p. 32
49. VI. ff. 110
50. I. B. pp. 32 and 34
51. I. ff. 462
52. VI. B. p. 34
53. I. B. p. 34
54. I. A. p. 13 (ff. 23)
55. I. B. pp. 32 and 33 (ff. 24).