Sangam literature points out the Greek colonies and their cultural contacts and commercial transactions. "Greeks were spoken of in Sanskrit writings as Yavana, Yona, Yauna and Yonaka (from Ionian)." The term 'yavanar' found in the Sangam literature must have referred to the Greeks at the beginning. In the course of time it included the Romans and other western people also. The settlements of yavanar were found all over the Tamil land especially along the seaport towns. The ships of the yavanar came with gold coins and returned after purchasing pepper from Cēra country. The gold coins of Caesars along the eastern and western coasts of Tamil land have come to light by the archaeological excavations.

The Cēra king Imayavarampan metun-ceeralatam fought against Yavana warriors and subdued them. A Cēra king who is said to have ruled some territory belonging to yavanar may be the same king. The Tamils admired the artistic workmanship of the lamps and chains brought by yavanar from Greece and Rome. The bed chambers of the kings and queens are lighted by the imported Greek oil-lamps with a damsel-shaped stand and decorated with the Greek chains in the shape of a series of tigers.
Swan-shaped oil lamp of the yavanar is another object of curiosity to the Tamils. Mechanical devices of war found in the fortresses of the Tamil kings are provided by the yavanar. Takatuur yaattirai supposed to be sung by the Sangam poets aricilkilaar and ponmutiyaar speaks of the engines of war fitted up in the walls of the fortress. Yavanar are employed as body-guards to the Tamil kings and they also guarded the gate-ways of the forts. The well-built physical structure and strength of the yavanar are keenly observed and beautifully portrayed in the Sangam literature. In addition to their native palmyra toddy and other alcoholic drinks, Tamils had great admiration for the cool and fragrant liquor of the Yavanar. Thus yavanar lived in the midst of the Sangam Tamils. It is plain and natural to think that they must have brought not only the trade goods but also their thoughts. Just as the Vedic thought came by land, thoughts of yavanar came by sea.

Professors M.A. Dorai Rangaswamy and T.P. Meenakshisundaran are of opinion that the Sangam literature was influenced by Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics.

According to Tolkappiyar, kaanci theme of war poetry indicates the instability of the world. In Maturaikkaanci the poet Maankutti marutanaar speaks of the instability and encourages the king TalaiyaalaKaanattuc ceruvenRa netunceliyan to drink the wine poured by the young ladies in golden cups.
In PuRanaanuuRu also he advises the very king to do the same thing. The sense of instability mainly encouraged the people of the Sangam period to enjoy their life rapidly. This is evident from the love and war poetries of Sangam literature (For elucidation please refer the article on "The Concept of World"). Moreover, taking alcoholic drinks were not considered as an immoral act in the Sangam epoch. The kings were reminded of their death and requested to live happily in advance by eating drinking and donating to the poor people. So, it is customary to advise the kings to drink in the company of the ladies. But Dr. Dorai Rangaswamy sees a different meaning in this custom of drinking in the company of ladies. The mention of the liquor of yavanar made in the 56th poem of PuRanaanuuRu induces him to attribute this custom to the influence of Greek philosophy.

The passage below shows Dr. M.A. Dorai Rangaswamy's views on the influence of Greek Philosophy:

"In addition to their art, the yavanar brought their drinks which played an important part in their philosophy of art. The Hellenic philosophy preached the middle path - neither abstinence nor gluttony. Temperance was their watchword. This seems to have influenced the Tamilar, if they had not been wedded to this kind of philosophy even before the coming in of the Yavanar."

The poet of Maturaikkanci coming to preach the ephemeral nature
of this world and all its pleasures winds his poem in a curious way. After advising the king to become famous for his learning and culture, for his justice and munificence, for his royalty and personal magnetism, he blesses the king with all his heart to live long for ages with women, feasting with sweet and fragrant drink. This seems to be a surprising philosophy of compromise to the modern Tamil land reared on doles of ascetic poetry.

In another poem (in PuRam.24), the same poet states that they alone who could be praised by the needy, drinking from the gold cups of cool and fragrant liquor, held up by jewel-bedecked wives, live with undying fame whilst others perish with their names in this broad world of ancient glory. The same idea is expressed by Nakkiiranaar in blessing another Paantiyan (Paantiyan Ilavantikaippalli tunciya nan maaran): "May you, oh! MaaRa of great sword, along with this world live long and firm like the sun dispelling the darkness in the broad sky and like the moon of the cool rays on the West, always, with your sweet behaviour and with your never failing gifts to the poor along with the pleasure of the cool, clear and fragrant drink offered daily by the women of bedecked jewels, in gold cups of workmanship, the drink or liquor brought in big ships by the yavanar" (PuRam 56: 17 - 25).
It will be seen that the ideas, and the phrases expressing these ideas are almost identical in the three poems above mentioned. Only in the last poem the mention of the liquor brought from the yavanar in their ship is mentioned. Drinking was indulged in by the ancient Tamilar and there was no wonder in their relish of a foreign drink. But the particular context in which it is mentioned is indeed a little startling. A discussion with the foreigners on these drinks might have very well turned around a discussion of the middle path so very much emphasised by the philosophers of Greece though not by the stoics. Nobody could state that this was impossible, though it must be admitted there is no sure and certain sign of any such discussion either. Only it must be remembered that the yavanar were no casual visitors but some of them permanent inhabitants of Tamil land as revealed by the excavations in Arikkameti, thus having an opportunity for shaping the Tamilar's civilisation, with their gold, their liquor and their art.  

Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaran names the philosophic thought identified by Dr. M. A. Dorai Rangaswamy as Nicomachean Ethics. Prof. Meenakshisundaran sees the influence of Greek Philosophy further in the name of naRRinai: "the number of the lines in a poem also forms the basis of the remaining three akam collections."
400 verses which contain eight lines or less are collected together as KuRuntokai or the short anthology. 400 verses which contain nine to twelve lines each are collected as NaRRinai. 400 verses which contain 13 to 31 lines each are collected as the long anthology, viz. Netuntokai or AkanaanuuRu.

The name NaRRinai for the medium anthology is important. Tinai may mean the five-fold division. Nal means 'great' or 'good'. Here probably it means the latter, the good. This conception of the good as that which does not go to either of the two extremes - in any aspect of life - as emphasizing temperance in general, reminds us of Aristotle's conception of the good (Aristotle - 384 - 322 B.C. - Nicomachean Ethics). The advice given to the Great Paantya king Netunceliyam by his great poet Maankuti Marutanaar, emphasizing the fleeting nature of the fame and victory, and of pleasure and greatness, whilst at the same time singing of his victory, glories and pleasures and closing with a prayer for their continuance (753 - 782), can only be understood, without contradiction, in terms of the conception of the good as the via media. Perhaps this may help us to understand the poetic descriptions of the ideal life of the ancient Tamilians as against the later ideals of asceticism.
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2. caaRayar mutuuru cenRutok kaanku yavanar iyaRiya vinaiRaan naavai molipala perukiya palitiir teetttup kalyeern talyakal naRaiyany corintu pulampeyar maakkal kalantini turaiyum paruuuttiri koliyaa kurumuuttalai pimireri muttaac ciRappiR pattinam
Akuru kaaiRaitou NaNaiyaran parntu kayavaay maruNkiR kaanpoort tutukkum payanaRa vaRiyaa yavanar irukkit piitukelu ciRappiR perntakal aallatu ceeralar

3. culliyam peeriyaarRRu vennurai kalaNka

4. amaiyavarampan neyankaar paatinaar pattuppaattu

5. vancol yavanar valanae taantu
5. van col yavanar valanaa taantu ponpatu netuvaram pukuntoon aayinum van col yavanar valanaatuu vanperunkal tenkumari aanta ceruviR kayapuuliyaan
tempulanka layvanaraa taataputta poRRiyee

6. nalimalaic cilampiR cilampuN kooyil

yavanar iyaRRiya vinaimaan paavai
kaiyeeen tayakal niRaiyaneyi corimtu
paruuuttiri kolilinya kururuuttalai nimireri
arRuVaRu kalaintoo Ramaivarap pannip
tounkum uayivan kalitoo korayiyum
palveeRu pallitoRum paayiRul niinkap
piitukelu ciRappiR peruntuakai allatu
aRat kuuRukaar arunkatii varaippu
valipunar yaakkai vankan yavanar
valittottai vitta punaimaan nallil
tirumani vilakkan kaattit tinnaan
elini vaankiya iiraRai palliyul
utampin uraikkai uraiyaa navaavin
patampukku mileeccar ulaiyaa raaka
mantamar nacaiyotu kanpatai peRaatu
yavanar iyaRRiya palaporikalum

Cilampu 28: 141-142
Cilampu 29:(25)
Netunal 100 - 107
Mullaip.61-67
Perumpaan.316-318
Tol.PuRat.10
naccinaarkkiniyar's commentary
cempruku veňkalikal umîlvatirin teňkum
vempuruku vattumilva venneyumakan tumilva
ampumilva veelumilva kallumilva vaakit
tampulâňka laalyavanar taatpatutta poRiyee

- Ciivakacintaamani 1:74

milaiyum kîtaňkum valaiviR poRiyum
karuviral uukamum kallumîl kavanum
parivûRu venneyum paakatu kuliciyum
kaaypon ulaiyum kallitu kuutaiyum
tuuntîlûn totakkum aantalai âtuppum
kavaiyum kaluvum putaiyum pulaiyum
aiyavit tulaamum kaipyar uuciyum
cenReRî ciralum panRiyum panaiyum
eluvûn ciippum muluviRål kanaiyumum
koolûnh kuntamum veelum piRavum
ņaayilum ciRantu naatkioti nutaňkum
vaayil

9. maRanutai maRavark keeRavita ninRî
neyyoo taiyavi appiyev vaayum
entirap paRavai iyaRRîna niRîik
kallun kavanun katuvicaip poRiyum
tillûnh kanaiyum palapatap parappip
pantûm paavaiyum pacuvarîp puttilum
enRivai palavun cenRucen ReRiyu
munRtai makalirai iyarrip pinRai
eyperum pakali vaayil tuukkic
cuRtal pooyin Raayinum vattat
tiRppaay makalir tikainalam peera
nookkunar nookkunar poontukai vitirkku
naaRkkaruR tanRaiR irumpoRai
puukkoot tanRnumai keettoRun kaluniRtee
- ponmutiyaar - tanatuR yaattirai
as cited in Tol. puRat. 12:3 by naccinaarkkiniyar

10. valipunar yaakkai vankan yavanar
pulittotat vitta punaimaan nallil
tirumani vilakkaR kaattit tinnaan
eRini vaahkiya iiraRai palliyul
utampin uraikkum uraiyaa naavin
patampuku mileeccaR ulaiyaraaka
mantamarr nacaiyoRtu kanpatai peRaaatu
See naccinaarkkiniyar's commentary
katimatiR vaayil kaavaliR ciRanta
atalvaal yavanark kayiraatu pukku
Mullaip 61 - 67

11. marrtiRai valaiya marrntuviinku cerivutaR
meyppai pukka veruvarun tooRRattu
valipunar yaakkai vankan yavanar
Mullaip 59 - 61

12. yavanar nankalR tanRta n tankamal teerRai
PuRam. 56:18
13.  கோண் நோர் கிளக்குவல் அறுபோர் ஜானல்
கீட்டிசின் வாலி கேட்டுக்கனின் அவலம்
கேட்டுது நிலையர்னின் சென்விளாங்கு நாற்றிகை
தவாப் பருக்கர் தாராயானர்
அழித்தானாக் கொலுந்திரியு
இலித்தனாப் பாலூனரிய
உன்றானாக் குருநராவின்
தீனானா இந்வாயின்
நிலாநெறுக் கல்லா ஓபல் வேருக்காய்
பாயனாரா வாரிேயா வெலான்களு் திருநாகர்
நாரம்பின் முருலம் நாயம்வரு் முரர்சி
விரலியார் வாருங்காய் குருேந்தோதி சேரிப்பாப்
பானார் உவாப்பக் காலெச்சொபே
நாலூன்னோன் தேறுணையே கதாலி
மாராங்கலாங்கள் தலைசேர்கை
வாலுலன்சன் தால் வால்திய
நாலியின்யா நல்லகாவர்க்கு
தீர்டோது மாசிடுரி
சுுற்றுரா சுத்தர்ப்புசுவின்
பாதுபுலார்ன்றா நார்வானத்தின
விலுமியா பரியூர் குரூறா மாகாக
காலின் இரும்பாய் கலாங்கேலா உந்து
பாணின்தோர் தீன் தம்யால் நட்பாப்ப
பாணியார் தீன் பாணின்துட்டிரய் கோன்மார்

MaturaiK.207 - 236.
paṟuntuparāk kallaṟṟu pārvarāṟṟu pācāṟṟai
patukkan muracān kaḷalai iyampha
vetipatakkatantu veentupulat tīṟutta
panaikēlu peruntirāṟṟu palveel mannaṟ
karaippuru tiṟāṅkuṟ kalaiyiru munṇiṟṟit
tiṟaiyitu maṇalinnuṟ.mozilla uraicēla
maḷartalai ulakam aantu kalintooṟe
atanaal....." 
ariyataṟṟu kutiyakarīṟṟip
periyakarīṟṟu iṟacijaivilakki
munṇiṟṟi naappan naayiṟṟu poolavum
pantuṟṟi māṟin tiṅkal poolavum
puyttu cuṟṟamotu polinthuṟṟi vilaṅkip
poyyaa naḷlicaī niṟutta punaitaṟṟi
perumpēyar māṟṟaṇ talaivaraiākak
katantatu vaayvai ilampai koocar
iṟyallēṟṟi marapinnu vaaymoli keeptai
polampaun aivar utpatap pukalnta
maṟṟamiku ciṟappirū kuṟumilai mannaṟ
avarum piṟaruṇ tuvunRīṟṟp
poṟṟuvilaṅku pukalāvai niṟpukaln teetta
ilaṅkilai maṇāṅkai pōlaṅkalat teetaiśīva
maṇāṅkamal teerai māṟṟuṟṟu naalum
maṇiṟṟinti tuRaimai peruma
varaiṇṭuṟṟi peṟṟa naḷḷuṟṟu liyaiyeey

Maturaik.207 - 238.
Maturaik.766-782
14. koRRa niilkutaik kotitteerc celiya

ninRu nilaiiyarnin naanmiin nillaatu
pataaac celiiyarnin pakaivar miinee
ninnotu, tonRumuutta uyirunum uyirotu
ninRu muutta yaakkai yanna
aatukuti muutta viluttinaic ciRantu
vaalin vaalnar taalvalam vaalta
iraval maakkal iikal nuvala
ontoti makalir polaǒkalat teentiya
tankamal teeRal matuppa makil ciRantu
aaŋkini to lukumati peruma aŋkatu
vallunar vaalntoor enpa tollicai
malartalai ulakattut toonRiptu viici
palarcelac cellaatu nınRuvilin tooreel

15. maivitai irumpoottec centiic ceerttik

kaayaŋkaninta kannakan koluŋkuRaif
naRaurovision cevvaaay naattiRam peyarppa
untun tinRum irappoork kiintum.
makilkam vammoo maRappoo rooyee
ariya vaakalu muriya peruma
nilampaka viinté alaŋkaR palveer
mutumarap pottiR katumena iyampum
kuukaik kooli aanaat
taaliya peruŋkaa teytiya ḥaanRee
16. நாவாத்து முல்லையரு மகாலிர்

alkul taaந்கaa acaii mellenak
kalaந்கலன் teeRaju polaந்காளத் teenti
amiltena matuppa maந்தி ikalvilan
nillaa ulakattu nilaiyaa mainii
colla veentaa PuRam.361: 16-21
ulavoli perumpaka ே xā telitin Raaந்குஒ
cēந்கான makaliroது ciRutuni alaii
நாந்த தீரன்பம் ஓய்களத் துகுப்பக
ketalarun tiruva unmo PuRam.366: 13 - 16
paacioilai makalir polaந்காளத் teentiya
naarari teeRan maந்தி makilciRan
tiravalark karuந்காளம் arukaatu viici
vaalțal veentum ் m வளந் மராப்தன் வைகல
PuRam.367: 6 - 9

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