

**Intercultural Encounter and
the Jesuit Mission in South Asia
(16th - 18th Centuries)**

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CHAPTER TWELVE

Gaspar de Aguilar: A Banished Genius

Cristina Muru

Abstract

The Portuguese Jesuit Gaspar de Aguilar was born in 1588 in Castelo Rodrigo (Portugal) and joined the Society of Jesus in 1610. After working in Goa and in Cardiva Residence in Jaffna, he was dismissed from the order because of immoral behavior.

But his contributions to the study of Tamil language and grammar were considerable. He was a very well read man and his grammar (Arte Tamul) was the most exhaustive and useful source for teaching Tamil. It was constantly used and referred to by other missionaries.

The aim of the present article is to reconstruct the life of Father Aguilar and to present his work, which has never been studied before. I shall discuss the linguistic and cultural features of Aguilar's grammar in order to show how he was able to point out many peculiarities of the Tamil language, although these differ greatly both from his mother tongue and from Latin. The linguistic considerations will be made taking into due consideration the historical setting and the socio-cultural context Aguilar experienced.

As far as I am able to ascertain, the character of Gaspar de Aguilar and his work have never been carefully studied. After a brief presentation of his life and work in the Company of Jesus that has been reconstructed through primary sources kept at Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu in Rome (henceforth ARSI) as well as secondary sources, I shall discuss his work in detail. What we have is not an autographed manuscript, but a copy of a small Arte which deals with spoken Tamil. This text was discovered a few years ago. It is structured as a grammar book followed by translations of prayers, a manual for confession and some texts which present the Tamil letters and orthography rules as well the pronunciation.

Gaspar de Aguilar: Biographical Notes

Gaspar de Aguilar was born in 1588 in Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, a municipality in the district of Guarda in Portugal. He belonged to the Diocese of Lamego and joined the Society of Jesus in 1609.¹ He reached Cochin in January 1610 when he was 20 years old. He was described as the best in the batch of young Jesuits and with a great intellectual capacity. According to the Jesuit catalogue of the Goa Province in 1610, Aguilar was considered prudent, but also choleric and sanguine.² In 1611 he studied philosophy and he is described as a very suitable person for the Society.³ In the same year he studied theology and was an expert in both philosophy and theology.

During his stay in India he was frequently moved between Jesuit missions and residences. Indeed, he was sent to the College of Colombo (in Jaffnapatam) in the Province of Cardiva between 1619 and 1620; in 1623 he was in the College of Santo Thomé. He returned to Jaffnapatam in 1626 where he professed four vows.⁴ In 1627 he returned to Cochin where he attended the seminar.⁵ When he was 39 years old, in December 1628, he completed his studies of grammar and theology and was sent once more to the Cardiva Residence

¹ In ARSI, Goa 29, fol. 14v: "Supplementu Catalogi anni 1610 Admessi in Societatem Jesu."

² In ARSI, Goa 29, fol. 3v and fol. 5r: "Gaspar de Aguilar bonis viribus, bonum habet ingenium et prudentiam; est colericus, sanguineus."

³ Refer to ARSI, Goa, 29, fol. 7r: "Catalogus Patrum q forum q Provincia Coccinensi, Mens Decembris, ano 1611."

⁴ In ARSI, Goa 29, fol. 26r: "Collegium Santia Thom com una Resdencia hablet 7"; in Lusitania 4, ff. 252r and 255r. The priests who have pronounced their solemn vows of chastity, of poverty and of obedience are called 'professi.' The fourth vow is a solemn vow of obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff for the 'missions' (in Gramatowsky, *Glossario Gesuitico: Guida All'intelligenza Dei Documenti*,

http://www.sjweb.info/arsi/documents/GLOSSARIO_GESUITICO.pdf).

⁵ In ARSI, Goa 29, fol. 27r: "Catalogus Patrum, Fratrum q nostrori Prov.ce Coccinens Indie Orientalis, mens Ianuarj, 1627; Siminarise: P. Gaspar de Aguilar."

Jaffnapatam.⁶ In 1632 he is said to have mastered the Malabar language⁷ after practicing it for four years⁸ and in 1639 he was characterised as the best teacher of Tamil.⁹ He was, however dismissed in 1645 together with eleven more Jesuits.¹⁰

As far as we know, Gaspar de Aguilár was dismissed because of his amorous relations with Indian women and because he was considered a ringleader and a person who contracted debts both in Jaffnapatam and on the Fishery Coast. He was also accused of writing inappropriate things against other priests. Subsequently he spent eight years in prison in addition to various other punishments. He denied all of the accusations and expressed his complaints against the excessive punishment by his superiors.¹¹

⁶ In ARSI, Goa 25, ff. 48r and 30v: “In Arce Regnii Jafanapatao domus vaa cum tredecim Residentiis.”

⁷ During the 16th and 17th centuries the word 'Malabar' language was used in order to refer both to Malayalam and Tamil. According to Delgado, “Língua Malabar: it is used by our Indian scholars with two meanings: as synonymous with Malayālam, the language spoken in the Malabar, and as synonymous of Tamil spoken along the Coast of Malabar due to their similarity” (Sebastião R. Dalgado, *Glossário luso-asiático*, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1982), 527. Since the term 'Tamulicæ linguam' will be used further on in this text, in this context 'Malabaricam linguam' should be intended as the Tamil language.

⁸ In ARSI, Goa 29, ff. 42r and 51r.

⁹ In ARSI, Goa, 29, ff. 51r and 53v. According to de Mascarenhas Júdice, at the beginning of 1634 Aguilár was in Punicale (Punnaiykayal) on the Fishery Coast and he worked among the Paravas. If this is true, it is a very important factor, since one can correlate Aguilár with a specific variety of spoken Tamil, the same one used by Henriques. No information related to Paravas or Tuticorin was found among the documents kept at ARSI. See João António de Mascarenhas Júdice Visconde de Lagoa, *Grandes e humildes na epopeia portuguesa do Oriente (séculos XV, XVI e XVII)*, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Gráfica lisbonense, 1943), 195.

¹⁰ In ARSI, Goa 29, fol. 57v we read that in 1645 the Company dismissed twelve fathers, among whom, Gaspar de Aguilár. In ARSI, Goa 29, fol. 63r we read: “et nunc in conversione versatur” (1644), while in Goa 29, fol. 77r it is clearly written: “[...] ab ano 1639 expulsi 12, inter quos unus professus 4 votorum ex mandato speciali Reverendi Patris Generalis,” October 1648.

¹¹ In ARSI, Fondo Gesuitico 463, ff. 135r; 143r; 147r-192v, I found both the

Most of the documents preserved in ARSI have never been entirely published¹² and their content is interesting both as information and for its theatrical quality. In reading these letters, we are transported into a courtroom where a prosecutor is charging Gaspar de Aguilar with different accusations while he is replying as if he were his own defense lawyer. The rhythm of the narrative is characterized by different tones, sometimes imploring, sometimes conciliatory, but always keeping the reader in suspense.

Due to sheer volume of these documents, I am going to copy only part of these letters.¹³

*Accusations*¹⁴

“A list of some things that the Father Provincial [...]”¹⁵ and the Superior of the Cochín Province have referred to the Reverend Father [...] about Father Gaspar de Aguilar and about his many failings which were included in the proceedings against him and which led him to

letters of accusation against Father Gaspar de Aguilar and his letters of defence in ARSI, Fondo Gesuitico, 436, ff. 147r-192v.

¹² De Mascarenhas Júdice has published both the accusations and defense of Aguilar. The published information has been taken from different manuscripts kept in the Biblioteca Nacional in Lisbon and Arquivo Historico, Torre do Tombo. See also De Mascarenhas Júdice, *Grandes e humildes*, 195-200.

¹³ This documentation is available in ARSI, Fondo Gesuitico, 436. At the end of the letters, which have all been kept together, it is written “Gesuiti 7 januaris 1643, Provinciale [...] (against) Il P. Gasparro de Aguilar, 10 decembri 1642 (acto Compagnia Jesus negotius [...] regularum).” While it is easy to read the letter of accusations written in Portuguese, it has been much more difficult to understand the replies sent by Aguilar which are written in Latin. In fact, both Aguilar’s handwriting and the state of his letters does not always allow their being read properly. Consequently, I have mainly taken into consideration the extract which had already been published by de Mascarenhas Júdice, *Grandes e humildes*, 196-199.

¹⁴ In Fondo Gesuitico, 436, ff. 135r-143v. The translation from Italian and Portuguese into English is mine.

¹⁵ [...] is used to point out what it was not possible to read from the original manuscript and it has been omitted in transcribing the letters.

being imprisoned and other disciplinary punishments.

This Father (Aguilar) had difficulty in following orders, since he was ordered to leave Puniacale [Punnaikayal] and to go to live in another place, although Father Provincial threatened him excommunication in order to force him to follow the orders, but he did not obey creating a huge outrage and damage to the Company.

This Father (Aguilar) insulted and dishonored another member of the Company [Society of Jesus] from Tuticorin [Tuttukkuṭi] in front of many, inviting the Christians of Puniacale [Punnaikayal] to lapidate him, in Puniacale [Punnaikayal] where this Father went in order to force him (Aguilar) to leave that place. (Father de Aguilar) insulted him with terrible and outrageous words, the same treatment was reserved to another Father, Father Pietro Messia who was there by the order of the Father Provincial in order to succeed him in that mission.

And much more exorbitant were the writings and compositions of this Father (Aguilar), because it is without a doubt that he wrote an inflammatory letter to Father Pietro Messia, telling him the worst insults that it is possible to imagine and also threatening to kill the Father or to perforate his breast with a spear.

In another letter he wrote a very bold composition against other Fathers, without any respect, which reached the Father Provincial, but which Gaspar de Aguilar denied to have written, as he denied all the other things he did of which he was convinced. Nevertheless they were in his own handwriting, recognizable in these letters, that he wrote more than once.

[f. 136]

He wrote to the Captain of Tuticorin [Tuttukkuṭi] saying that whatever he had done against him was under the orders of the Father Provincial, placing the Company in a very risky position by doing so since the Royal Officials perceived that the Company and superiors attacked them directly without respecting their orders. And this is false. This was also denied by the Father Aguilar, even when letters written by him were shown to him, he replied he had done it out of compassion.

He wrote another letter to the King and the Christians, in which he was clearly against the Company [...]. And there is no doubt that he wrote this letter and sent it to the Captain of Tuticorin [Tuttukkuṭi] who read it to a friend and this friend informed another Fathers of the Company about it, leaving everybody very confused about such an

important issue. When Father Aguilar left Puniacale [Punnaikayal] he did it in an outrageous way. He went to a nearby village of the Gentiles where he remained. Here nobody could force Father Aguilar to leave the place against his will. At the same time, during his stay there, accusations against him worsened, but he paid no attention to them. One of these accusations was that he wanted to move to live with the heretical Dutch, and another time he said that he wanted to go to Europe. Yet another time he declared that he wanted to live among the Gentiles. In order to resolve all the disorders that he had created, the Superior decided to suspend all the major punishments while waiting for the resolution of the case from Rome. The superior was really benevolent with him, absolving him from all the censures.

[f. 137]

During the time that the Father was staying in the village of the Gentiles, his behavior was outrageous. According to what was reported by a priest, having seen it with his own eyes, (Father Aguilar) was playing with women of the land and took charge of supporting his concubines. Things were so scandalous that the religious men of St. Francis [Franciscans] and others decided that he should no longer spread Christian religion, saying that many others suspected this of him. He begged the ecclesiastic Vicar of the Mannar, Emmanuel Marque de Serquera to sign letters written against various Fathers of the Company on 20th December [1]692 since they suspected things against him. [...]

[f. 138]

Wherever he went he contracted debts of many *scudos* (money) [...], continued with buying agreements [...] and in the end the Company became infamous, because of him the Company of Jesus was public accused to steal, since he incurred many debts [...]

[f. 139]

There is lot of uneasiness on the Fishery coast between the Captain and Christians who are encouraged by Father Aguilar. It was for this reason that the Father Provincial of the Fishery Coast ordered him to leave and to change the place, but he remained there. [...] He stayed six months in Cochin, refusing to meet with an old Father with authority who was trying to show religious benevolence towards him [...].

[f. 140]

Because of many other failures, Father Aguilar is accused and we proceed against him, in order to redeem his soul and conscience, although it is possible to find out many other accusations against him.

[f. 143]

Father Gaspar de Aguilar complains that his Superiors treat him with too much severity, too many punishments and most of all by imprisoning him for eight years. If only the Father could look at the way in which he lived without confessing his sins, he would understand that the punishment given by his Superiors is proportionate to his sins, since his actions are unacceptable not only for a religious man but also for a reasonable common man. The Father Provincial ordered him to move from Puniacale [Punnaikayal] and to go to another college, but he did not obey them. Since it would have been a very negative situation for the Company if he had remained there, the Father Provincial ordered him to leave, in the name of holy obedience and under risk of excommunication. Father Aguilar laughed at this and remained in this place. The Provincial Father sent a father from the College of Tuticorin [Tuttukkuṭi] to him with the purpose of bringing him away from there. He got angry and invited the Christians to lapidate him. He finally left Puniacale [Punnaikayal] only when he wanted to and he retired to a village of the Gentiles where he lived for a long time in a scandalous way since it was a public knowledge that he was playing and having intercourse with women there and he had reduced himself keeping the concubines of the Gentiles. He was intimidated by the Provincial Father to leave, and he was censured. But he paid little attention to it and he publicly declared that he wanted to move to live with the heretics in the Netherlands [...] where all the punishments were suspended and the Provincial Father promised not to castigate him anymore until a new order came from Rome [...].”

The Corpus: Manuscript Cod. Orient. 283

Piecing together information about Gaspar de Aguilar is not easy because of his problems in the Society of Jesus. All we know about him comes from ARSI and from the opinion of other missionaries, as

well as from Sommervogel and de Mascarenhas Júdice.¹⁶

I found more information¹⁷ while reading the manuscript of another Tamil grammar (*Arte Tamul*) by Balthasar da Costa SJ (c.1610-1673).¹⁸ He was also a Portuguese missionary who worked in the Madurai Mission under Roberto Nobili SJ (1557-1656)¹⁹ and his grammar was written together with the first Tamil-Portuguese dictionary written by Antão de Proença SJ (1625-1666) and printed in 1679.²⁰ Da Costa refers several times to Aguilar's grammar:²¹

¹⁶ De Mascarenhas Júdice, *Grandes e humildes*.

¹⁷ For further information about the Jesuits who studied Indian languages, see Joseph Wicki, "La formazione della gioventù indo-europea a Goa," in *Civiltà Indiana ed impatto europeo nei secoli XVI-XVIII: l'apporto dei viaggiatori e dei missionari italiani*, eds. Enrico Fasana and Giuseppe Sorge (Milano: Editoriale Jaca Book, 1987), 54-60.

¹⁸ Da Costa belonged to the Madurai Mission and was a Pandaraswami working among the lower castes of Indian society. See Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Brussels: Schepens, 1960), 82.

¹⁹ For further details about Roberto Nobili's work, see I. G. Županov, *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-century India* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), I. G. Županov, *Missionary Tropics: Catholic frontier in India (16th-17th Centuries)* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), Roberto de Nobili, *Adaptation*, ed. S. Rajamanickam (Palayamkottai: De Nobili Research Institute, 1971), and S. Rajamanickam, *The First Oriental Scholar* (Tirunelveli: De Nobili Research Institute, 1972).

²⁰ In the printed version of the Dictionary, kept in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, da Costa's grammar is the copied manuscript by Father Paolo Francesco, while in the manuscript version of the Dictionary, kept at Library of Goa, it is written at the beginning of the dictionary. Since da Costa refers several times to Antão's dictionary in his text, one can suppose that the two missionary linguistic tools appeared together, the Grammar itself was complementary to the Dictionary.

²¹ The translation of the Portuguese manuscripts into English is mine. For typographic reasons all the examples written in Tamil in the manuscripts have been transliterated in this paper according to *Madras Tamil Lexicon* (henceforth MTL) conventions using both round and square brackets. See S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, *Madras Tamil Lexicon*, 6 vols. (Chennai: University of Madras, 1982).

“Sixth Chapter

The other part of the discourse

Prepositions

Those that in Latin language are prepositions, in this language are also prepositions because they are always postponed. There is nothing else to add about this issue, except that they have declensions in some oblique case, of which they also modify the meaning i.e. = *mun* = in front, = *munaka* = forward, = *munakku* = onwards, dative; = *munile* = on, = *munāle* =, ablative, the front. They require different cases and their usage will show it; in the dictionary we add only some of them; all those who want the complete series of these postponed prepositions || which we have discussed here || should look for them in (the Arte) by Father Gaspar de Aguiyar.”²²

“The series of adverbs is more related to the Dictionary than to the Arte, those who have the Arte of P. Aguiyar can see them easily.”²³

Da Costa defines Aguilar’s Arte as a complete Arte, his admiration for it is evident, and for example one can read:

“About Relative

²² See, SCL, M-15-63. This copy of Da Costa’s grammar book is kept at the State Central Library of Goa in Panjim (henceforth SCL), India under MS-M15. It also appears at the beginning of de Proença’s manuscript dictionary kept in the same Library of Goa (MS M 34). Another copy of it is kept at the Vatican Library under Borgiano Indiano 12 (henceforth, Borg. Ind. 12) and this passage occurs at f. 237r. A letter kept in Borgiano Latino 747, dated to March 5th, 1693 and written by Father Pietro Paolo Francesco belonging to the order of Carmelitan Barefoot, informs us that Father P. P. Francesco had sent to Pastrizio Giovanni (a Theology lecturer at the Collegio Urbano of Propaganda Fide) a copy of the dictionary of Antão De Proença along with a grammar book he copied in Verapoli on June 25th, 1685, two exercise books on verbs and four drawings of Indian men and women in traditional dress [Pastrizio, G. *Notizie sul P. Pietro Paolo di S. Francesco, Olim duca di S. Elia, napoletano, Carmelitano Scalzo, missionario nel Malabr, e sul vocabolario tamulico portoghese del P. Antonio de Proença, stampato nel 1679. Con notizie dei missionari nel Malabar*, ff. 235-254, (ff.239-244 e ff. 246-248 empty), 17th-18th cent., ff. 393.

²³ SCL, MS M-15-64. This passage occurs in Borg. Ind. at fol. 237r. where Aguiyar is written like Aguilar.

In this language there is no relative [pronoun] ‘who’ or ‘that’ although Father Aguilar affirms in his *Arte* that = *enna* = is the relative, he believed that because = *enna* = is nothing more than ‘who’ or ‘what’ and it will not be found without asking i.e. = *enna manushan* = ‘what man’ and it never means ‘the man who,’ or ‘what’ so that it refers to the noun, which should have the relative.”²⁴

I tried to find out more information about Aguilar and at the same time I also tried to identify where his original grammar manuscript was, but without success. All I found in ARSI were accusations against him, his monastic vows and some information about his entering into, and his dismissal from, the Society of Jesus. I also checked other archives, but there was no trace of Aguilar. According to de Mascarenhas Júdice some references about him can be found in Reservados in the Biblioteca Nacional in Lisbon and in the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo in Lisbon. However, when I visited them I was unable to find anything.

According to Sommervogel Aguilar's *Arte* belonged to a Fondo held at the Bibliotheca Uffenbachiana Halae.²⁵ This collection was lost during the Second World War and so far none of the autographed manuscripts by Aguilar have ever been found. Fortunately, a couple of years ago a copy of his *Arte* copied by Philippus Baldaeus (1632-1671) was found at the Staats- und Universitäts Bibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky.²⁶

The first question is what portion of this manuscript should be

²⁴ SCL, MS M15, f. 23r.

²⁵ Sommervogel writes: “*Arte Tamoul*, 16...: Aguilar, Gaspar de: *Arte Tamoul*, sive *Institutio Grammaticae linguae Malabaricae idiomate lusitano ex maiori opere p. Casp. D’Aguilar Soc. Ies. Confecta*, quod ex praefatione patet (Bibliotheca MSS. Uffenbachiana. Hale, 1720, fol., col.697).” See Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 82.

²⁶ Manuscript Cod. Orient. 283. The manuscript measures 20.7 x 15.5 cm, including 43 folios (ff. 1 r- 43 r) of *Arte Tamul*. There are 8 folios (ff. 42 r – 49 r) of *Arte de escrever Tamul* [*How to write in Tamil*]; 11 folios (ff. 50 r – 69 v) of *Confessionario Portuguez e Tamul* [*A Portuguese and Tamil Confession manual*], a portion of a bilingual Portuguese-Tamil religious book with rules on confession, prayers and the commandments; 5 folios (ff. 70 r – 64 r) of prayers written in Tamil and 9 folios of an incomplete *De Malabarico* syllabary.

considered as having been copied from Aguilar's book? In the first folio Baldaeus writes: *Arte Tamul. Sive Insitutio Grammatica Lingae Malabaricae. Sum Philippi Baldej. UDM in Regno Jaffnapatam. 1659. Filippi Baldeyusu 1665* (henceforth Cod. Orient. 283). On the back of the first folio there is a foreword which I will partially copy in the following text.

“Father Gaspar de Aguillar of the Company of Jesus wrote an extensive and in depth Arte of the Tamil language. It seems to be the most exhaustive, methodical and well organized among various others written. We have taken most of the grammar rules from this edition but above all it is the declension of nouns that are the most studied [...] It is true that all that Father G. de Aguilar wrote in this Arte and what is left in this grammar book is secundum Arthem et Methodum. This language is not used abroad and it is not possible to write everything about this language in detail. It is learnt mainly through necessity rather than the curiosity of examining its words and way of speaking. Many things must be added or changed in order to learn it.”

After this foreword, the Arte that follows is divided into:

- 1) Letras (Letters)
- 2) Declinações (Declensions)
- 3) Adjectivos (Adjectives)
- 4) Pronomes (Pronouns)
- 5) Verbos (Verbs: tense, mood, aspect)
- 6) Formation of verb in the conjugation.

After the grammar, as stated above, one finds *Arte de escrever Tamul* [How to write in Tamil].

There is no information as to whether this should be considered as part of Aguilar's Arte or if it was a personal text by Baldaeus.²⁷ However, the fact that it is written in Portuguese instead of Dutch allows us to suppose that it was copied from Aguilar.

²⁷ Baldaeus went to Ceylon upon the conquest of Colombo by the Dutch in 1656. See Luba Zubkova, “Dravidian Studies in the Netherlands. Part I - Pioners of Orientalism at the VOC (1605-1690s),” *Indigenous Peoples' Movements, International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) Newsletter* 35 (November 2004): 14.

In fact, even if Portuguese had been a lingua franca in the Indian ocean during the 16th and 17th centuries, one would expect that each author would have chosen his own mother tongue during the compilation of a manuscript with personal annotations or translations. According to Zubkova “Baldaeus personal observations of the life and mores of Hindus constituted a monumental work in Dutch, printed in Amsterdam in 1672. In the same year it was translated into German, and in 1703 abridged in English: *A True and Exact Description of the most Celebrated East India Coasts of Malabar and Choromandel. As also the Great Island of Ceylon and the Religion of the Heathens of the East Indies*. The book included maps and engravings which illustrate the author’s experiences, and a supplement entitled ‘Introduction to the Malabar language’ which contained elements of Tamil grammar followed by the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed in Tamil.”²⁸ I have compared the English version of this book²⁹ with the manuscript, and I have noticed that what was originally written in Portuguese³⁰ had been translated into English, after being published in Dutch and German. Furthermore among the prayers in the manuscript which are included under The sentences that are usually asked during confession and the Confession in general only the 'Our Father' and 'The Creed' are enclosed in a circle and these are the same prayers published in the above mentioned book.

Consequently, I presumed that that it was copied directly from Aguilar's book or from another existent manuscripts written by a Portuguese Jesuit. As a further consequence of this choice, since Aguilar belonged to the Goan Province and was sent to the Residence of Cardiva in Jaffnapatam, I have assumed that the original author of the book was Aguilar, as declared by Baldaeus at the beginning of the manuscript in question. However, further studies carried out by

²⁸ See Zubkova, “Dravidian Studies”, 14.

²⁹ Philippus Baldaeus, *A True and Exact Description of the Most Celebrated East-India Coasts of Malabar and Coromandel and Also of the Isle of Ceylon*, [Translated from the High-Dutch, printed at Amsterdam, 1672] (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2000), 663-665.

³⁰ Baldaeus published not only the Christian prayers translated into Tamil in his book, but also some grammatical rules about the conjugation of verbs. The few notes regarding this are copied from the manuscript which he declared to have copied from Aguilar’s grammar. Nevertheless, Baldaeus does not specify in his 1672 book printed in Amsterdam who wrote them.

historians could confirm or question this point. It may be possible to get more information from the private correspondence of Baldaeus.³¹

Some Remarkable Features of the Arte Tamul

According to Zwartjes “in contrast to the practice in the Americas and in Asia, the Portuguese missionaries could benefit from local grammatical traditions, as in Japan and in the Arabic-speaking world.”³² This is very clear in this grammar since Aguilar frequently uses metalinguistic terms from the Indian grammatical tradition. What is interesting is that Aguilar refers both to Sanskrit and to Tamil grammatical traditions. For instance he uses Sanskrit terms in defining different cases, but he uses Tamil grammatical terms when he describes the orthography of the language. Consequently, one must not exclude the possibility that Father Aguilar, while collecting his linguistic data in India, could in theory have been expert in both Sanskrit and Tamil traditions. This could be the reason why his work shows a mixture of metalinguistic terminology.³³ However, even though Aguilar frequently uses Tamil and Sanskrit terminology, he did not always refer to Tamil grammatical tradition, especially when dealing with morphology of nouns and verbs. For example, he does

³¹ According to Zubkova, “Baldaeus went to Ceylon upon the conquest of Colombo by the Dutch in 1656. He was a talented cartographer and writer, who moved among the people, mastering the Tamil language in which he could preach and converse. He compiled several manuscripts to be used by native proponents of Protestantism and schoolmasters, and prepared a Tamil Psalter which was published in book form in 1755.” In Zubkova, “Dravidian Studies”, 14. His printed book is particularly interesting and important for reconstructing the historical background of Sri Lanka during the Portuguese colonial rule. In fact, he gives a detailed description of the Island and relates about all the facts occurred over there as well as of the Coast of Coromandel.

³² Otto Zwartjes, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars in Asia, Africa and Brazil, 1550–1800* (Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2011), 27.

³³ For further details on non-Western grammatical terminology see Otto Zwartjes, “Incorporación de términos metalingüísticos no-occidentales en la gramáticas misioneras españolas y portuguesas (siglos XVI-XVIII),” in *Lingüística e hispanismo*, ed. Joaquín Sueiro Justel (Lugo: Axac, 2010), 67–92.

not classify nouns in rational and irrational as Henrique Henriques SJ (1560-1600), a Jesuit on the Fishery Coast did before him.³⁴ Instead he classified the gender and the declensions of nouns according to their endings. However, one would have to look into Aguilar's grammatical explanation of the Tamil language in order to know if this kind of terminology has been totally excluded. Indeed, as Aguilar argues, his book was a first treatise of spoken language, and not a proper grammar book:

"In this first treatise we are going to include only forms which are typical of the most ordinary way of speaking and which are more widespread; paying attention to the most extraordinary characteristics of the language, which are not very common in the grammar treatise of the Tamil language, that we will write at the end as extension for all those who are interested in studying the Tamil language."³⁵

"[...] at the moment it is enough for those who learn the language to know what is given here in order not to create confusion."³⁶

Tamil Letters and Sounds

The grammar opens with the alphabet of the Tamil language. Aguilar's phonological description seems to be exact. It gives a full description of the Tamil phonological system demonstrating that the author knows about the existence of long and short vowels. This characteristic is highlighted through the transliteration of Tamil vowels into Latin letters, although they were not marked in the Tamil alphabet (i.e. <e> for short and <é> for long 'e,' but only ϵ for both of them).

As already stated above, it is from the beginning of his grammar that one has the feeling that Aguilar's knowledge of Indian grammatical traditions is extensive, or he must have been guided by a learned Tamil grammarian during the compilation of his *Arte*.

³⁴ Henrique Henriques was a Jesuit missionary who worked among the Paravas for 54 years (1546-1600). He was a pioneer in the study of the Tamil language as spoken among the Paravas.

³⁵ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 7r.

³⁶ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 16v.

Indeed, when it deals with the Tamil alphabet,³⁷ phonology³⁸ and orthography³⁹ in the first and last part of the grammar book, Aguilar mentions some metalinguistic terms that are found in the *Tolkāppiyam* (henceforth *Tol.*):⁴⁰

- “- short letter *curril* (kuṟil) or *cuteLutú* (kuṟṟeḷuttu);
- long letter *neRil* (neṭil) or *neTeLutú* (neṭṭeḷuttu);
- vowel letter *üir* (uyir), this is ‘life,’ or *uireLetú* (uyireḷuttu) because the vowel is like the life of consonants;
- consonant letter, *mey* or *meyeLutú* (meyeḷuttu) this is ‘body,’ because consonants are like the body of which vowels are the souls [...]”⁴¹
- initial sounds of the diction, *taley eLutú* (taley eḷuttu);
- medial letter of the diction, *iRey eLutú* (iṭey eḷuttu), [...]”⁴²

³⁷ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 2r-6v.

³⁸ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 42r-48r.

³⁹ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 48r-49r.

⁴⁰ This is the first treatise of the Tamil language. According to Murugan it was structured in 1604 verses *nūrpās*. Its dates are still largely debated among scholars. I have consulted the following translations: Jean-Luc Chevillard, *Le commentaire de Cēṇāvaraiyar sur le Collatikāram du Tolkāppiyam: Sur la métalangue grammaticale des maîtres commentateurs tamouls médiévaux* (Pondicherry: Insitutut Français de Pondichéry & École Française d’Etrême-Orient, 1996); V. Murugan, *Tolkāppiyam in English* (Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2001), 213-226; Sasthri P. S. Subrahmanya, *Tolkāppiyam – Collatikāram*, ed. P. T. Minakshisundaran (Chidambaram: Sri Velan Press, Annamalai University, 1979); and Kamil V. Zvelebil, “Tolkāppiyam Book II Collatikāram,” *Journal of Tamil Studies* 13 (June 1978): 76–86; 20 (December, 1981), 5-10; 21 (June, 1985), 9-19; and 28 (December, 1985), 67-80.

⁴¹ [...], it points out that some sections of the text have been omitted in the translation.

⁴² Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 1r. The capital L and the capital R in the reproduction of Aguilar’s grammar stand for “l” with two dots on top and “r” with two dots on top. For typographic reason we were unable to reproduce these characters in this text. The correct transcription, according to MTL conventions, have been given into round brackets.

Except from the initial letters where one would have expected *mutaleluttu* (front sounds), all other Tamil terms used for defining letters are found in *Eluttatikāram*, the first section of the Tolkāppiyam where phonetic, phonology and *sandhi* rules are discussed.

After this information about the ‘nature’ of sounds, Aguilar gives the complete transcription of the Tamil letters following the Tamil order: vowels (a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, ē, ai, o, ō, au) to which he adds two more symbols used to represent ‘ac’ and ‘ai’ preceded by a consonant; and consonants (k, ṅ, c, ṇ, ṭ, ṇ, ṭ, n, p, m, y, r, l, v, ḷ, ḷ, ḷ, ṇ). This section is extremely important because Aguilar gives the Latin correspondent for each Tamil sound and these are the letters that he will use throughout the grammar book to explain the grammatical rules as well in the transcriptions of Christian prayers translated into Tamil. These are the correspondents he chooses for Tamil letters.

அ	a	க	c, k	ர	r
ஆ	á	ங	ng	ல	l
இ	i	ச	ch	வ	v
ஈ	í	ஞ	nh	ழ	L
உ	u	ட	R	ள	ḷ
ஊ	ú	ண	hn	ற	rr
எ	e	த	t	ன	n
ஏ	é	ந	n		
ஐ	ay	ப	p, b		
ஒ	o	ம	m		
ஓ	ó	ய	y		

It is only at the end of his grammar that he deals with the letters once again. However, in this context he focuses more on phonetics and orthography. Indeed, he presents the vowels through the transcription of some words⁴³ and then the consonants, describing

⁴³ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 42vbis. I transcribe here the Portuguese version of the content of this folio giving the Tamil transliteration and the English translation into square brackets.

a breve (short a) *aripu* . joeyira [arippu, fig. to sift]

their distribution within the words, or rather the phonological restrictions of their occurrences. He also highlights that the Tamil writing system lacks symbols for representing the voiced plosive and how the foreign word should be pronounced in order to fit the Tamil phonological system. For example:

“Those which start with l. and rr. with ல (l) and ற (r) must be preceded by இ (i) or உ (u); i.e. Roma we write *uroma*.”⁴⁴

In this context the comparison with the Portuguese language is frequent. For example, under the paragraph *Explicação* [Explanation] one can read:

“These letters are called *cana*, *ngnana*, *chana* not because they bring more than one letter, but we give them these nouns in the same way the Greeks do with their “a,” which they call Alpha and the Jews

a longo (long a) *arru* . rio [āru, river]

i breve (short i) *irumbu* . ferro [irumpu, iron]

i longo (long i) *iti* . lança [ītti, spear]

u breve (short u) *urizei* . sabor [uricai, taste (of food)]

u longo (long u) *utu* . fonte [ūrru, spring]

e breve (short e) *ellu* . gerselim [eḷḷu, sesame]

e longo (long e) *eḷu* . sete [eḷu, seven] (the use of the retroflex lateral instead of the retroflex approximant (*eḷu*) leads to locate the variety of pronunciation described by Aguilar in the Southern area since “the one striking feature of this area is the merger of /Z/ (=ḷ) phoneme with /L/ (=ḷ), that is: there is no /Z/ phoneme in this dialect,” see V. Gnanasundaram, “Survey of Tamil dialects: some methodological issues,” in *Streams of Language: Dialects in Tamil*. Pondicherry, ed. M. Kannan, (Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2008), 175.

ay ey diptongo (ay ey diphthong) *aiyam* . esmolla [charity] (Probably Aguilar meant ‘āram’ – see M. Winslow, *A Comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1987 [1862]), 49-, neither ayam ‘doubt’ – see *MTL*, 109, nor āyam ‘diocese’ – see S. Ramakrishnan, ed., *Cre-A: Dictionary*, (Chennai: Kriyā, 2008).

2º o longo (2nd long o) *oram* . barca [ōṭam, kind of small boat to ferry passengers across a river or a lake]

1º o breve (1st short o) *otagam* . cámelu [oṭṭakam, camel]

ou diptongo (ou diphthong) *ouviram*, aquela lugar [that place].

⁴⁴ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 43v.

Aleph, in the same way in the transcription of *cana* one only takes ‘c’ and in that of *ngnana* one only takes ‘n,’ etc.”⁴⁵

Before discussing the orthography of the language, Aguilar presents a short description of how sounds should be articulated. One can consider this portion as a phonetic description of the modes and the places of sounds. It is extremely interesting because it allows us to understand exactly what the pronunciation of the language was at that time among specific social groups. Indeed, Aguilar wrote what he used to hear among the people and in this way one could trace the variety of language spoken by the Tamils he was in contact with.

He also gives names of castes. This demonstrates that Aguilar, along with the majority of missionaries, dealt mainly with the lowest classes of the society from which they recorded the way of speaking, giving a consistent contribution to modern linguistic descriptions. In fact, the grammatical description of the Tamil language had been written on the basis of literary texts. The missionaries’ contribution to the linguistic studies of Tamil is extremely relevant, since these are the main documents about the spoken varieties.

Finally, Aguilar explains *sandhi* rules in the paragraph *Ortografia e posição dos caracteres Tamuis* [Orthography and position of the Tamil letters]. He is aware that his description was not exhaustive and in fact he closes the paragraph saying: *Plura his tibi suggeret usus* [Other forms will be suggested by the usage].⁴⁶

Aguilar’s treatment of Tamil Noun Morphology

After the “letters” Aguilar analyses the morphology of the noun.⁴⁷ He distinguishes four declensions for Tamil according to a morphophonemic classification, partly following the Latin model. In the first declension he includes only masculine nouns ending in *-an*, *-en*, and *-on*. Here one finds words like *Vanán*⁴⁸ – *Lavandeiro*

⁴⁵ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 43r.

⁴⁶ Cod. orient. 283, fol. 49r.

⁴⁷ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 7r-13v.

⁴⁸ Although in Tamil there are no capital letters, I have reported the given examples as they appear in the manuscript. In this context *Vanán* should be taken as *vannān*, a caste peculiar to the Malabar region, according to

(washerman), *Vanién* – *Principe* (prince), *PaReiton* – *Criador* (Creator). The 2nd declension includes masculine and feminine nouns which end in *–ar* in the singular and *–mar* in the plural number. Consequently, the given examples show words like *Mudaliar* – *Homem* (man). The 3rd declension includes not only masculine and feminine nouns in *–a* like *Irajá* – *Rey* (king), but also neuter nouns in *–a* like *Tétá* – *corta arvore* (short tree). Also in this context Aguilar shows his competence about Indian grammatical tradition,⁴⁹ in fact when he declines the noun into cases, he uses the Sanskrit terminology which refers to the usage of cases and consequently one finds *pradamei* (prathamā), *dvitiei* (dvitīyā), *tritiei* (tṛtīyā), *chadurthi* (catvurthī), *panchami* (pañcamī), *xaxti* (ṣaṣṭhī), *saptami* (saptamī). Furthermore, at the end of the explanation of Tamil noun morphology, he provided the taxonomy adopted for the case declensions. This proves that he had some notions of Indian grammatical traditions.

“Last warning: the declension of nouns is called *vibacti* [vibhakti].⁵⁰ We have six declensions, and we give six cases [to these declensions] in the same way Latins do. In fact, we give them the Tamil grammar names, which are mostly numerals like in the Latin [language] -1°, 2°, 3° etc. In this way they correspond to the nominative, genitive and

Thurston, and closely connected to the Nāyar caste. In fact, Nāyar women cannot go where there are no Vannāṇ, since the washerwomen of this caste have to perform the māttu (change), or better the purification of Nāyar women after their menstruation period on the fourth day. See Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, vol. 7 (Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1975), 304.

⁴⁹ Although Aguilar does not classify Tamil noun according to the Tamil grammatical tradition, he is aware of its different features.

⁵⁰ Meenakshi dealing with *Aṣṭādhyāyī* by Pāṇini, states that “vibhakti refers to the case endings” and these “case forms can be used to denote kāraka and non-kāraka relationship.” Moving forward the author says that “Pāṇini makes a distinction between vibhakti and kāraka. Vibhakti is dealt with in two different sections: 1) as case-markers participating in the declension of a nominal [...] this is a purely morphological treatment; 2) as case-forms occurring in a sentence denoting different kinds of relationship with the other words which co-occur in the sentence.” Eventually, the author adds: “kārakas are said to be six and vibhaktis are eight in number.” See K. Meenakshi, *Tolkāppiyam and Aṣṭādhyāyī* (Chennai: International Institute of Tamil Studies, 1997), 308-10; 312-18.

vocative which are also called the first case, second case, third case, fifth case and sixth case in Latin. This means that we have chosen these Tamil and Guirandaōs (Grantha =Sanskrit) names because they need to be learnt through this Arte. Indeed, pratamei, means the first case, Dvitiei [means the] 2nd [case], Tritiei [means the] 3rd [case], Chadurthi [means the] 4th [case], Panchami [means the] 5th [case], xaxti [means the] 6th [case]. We have to understand that these nouns do not express the variety of endings in the declension, that is Dvitiei ends in uReia. Xadurthi [ends] in ei, etc. Because regarding [these endings] we have to remind that according to the Tamil and Guirandam [Sanskrit] languages, when we refers to this uReia it represents xaxti, ucu represents the chadurthi, ei represents the dvitiei, e represents the sambathi, il ile represents saptami, al ale represents tritiei. In fact, [in the Tamil and Sanskrit languages] the case declension order is not nominative, genitive and [it does not follow] the Latin one. [In these Indian languages] the order of the case declension is: Nominative, Vocative, Ablative, Causative ablative, Dative, Comparative ablative or with Genitive and local ablative. Consequently, according to this order for them pratamei is the Nominative, Sambuthi [is the] Vocative, Dvitiei [is the] Accusative, Tritiei [is the] causative ablative, Chadurthi [is the] Dative, Panchami [is the] comparative ablative and with ex [is the] Xaxti [is the] Genitive, Saptami, [is the] locative ablative. However, we only take those six [numerals] nouns because they are [most] common [i.e.] 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. in order to respect the endings and value of the Tamil or Sanskrit [languages]. However, [there is something that we need to say] in order to avoid misunderstanding when one discusses with those learned men in their Tamil or Guirandam [Sanskrit] language. In fact, if we want to be correct and to respect the grammatical value of the case endings or the right order of them, we should refer to the case endings in this way:⁵¹

N ^o	Pratamei	1 st case
A ^o	Dvitiei	2 nd case

⁵¹ One should wonder if in this context Aguilar is dealing only with vibhakti or if he is also referring to kārakas. For further discussions about vibhakti and kārakas see Meenakshi, *Tolkāppiyam and Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 308-318 and P. S. Subrahmanyam, *Pāṇinian Linguistics* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1999), 218-265.

Abl° causal ⁵²	Tritiei	3 rd case
D°	Chadurthi	4 th case
Abl° comp	Panchami	5 th case ⁵³
G° xaxti	Xexti	6 th case
Ab° local ⁵⁴	Saptami	7 th case
V°	Sambuthi	

The vocative is not included in the number of cases, but Sambhuthi is [used when one wants to express] the vocative.”⁵⁵

This is a clear evidence that the model missionaries used to follow when compiling their grammatical explanations was Latin. However, it also shows that missionaries, even when restrained by their basic model, were able to recognize the differences from their mother tongue or language model. Aguilar shows that he knows indigenous grammatical traditions, but he chooses to provide a hybrid classification which combines Latin criteria with the local grammatical terminology. Furthermore, Aguilar differentiates the *ṣaṣṭhī* into local, causative, social and comparative.⁵⁶ By doing this, he shows how sensitive he was to the usage of the language. Indeed, he goes beyond the Indian grammatical tradition. In fact, he identifies not

⁵² Instrumental case.

⁵³ Aguilar is here clearly referring to the indigenous traditional grammar, more than to the effective usage of the language during his time. In fact, in Tol. the fifth case “points to the nature of an object as it stands in relation to another object” (Murugan, *Tolkāppiyam in English*, 221). At the same time he is also referring to the Sanskrit tradition which corresponds to the Latin meaning/function of this case: fifth case expresses the *apādānam kāraka* which is defined in eight *sūtras*: “the person/object that is constant when separation takes place” (Subrahmanyam, *Pāṇinian Linguistics*, 225).

⁵⁴ Locative case.

⁵⁵ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 17r-17v. The reader has to keep in mind that the principle followed here, while reproducing the content of this manuscript, is one of literal transliteration. Hence, I have kept small and capital letters, in the same way they were written by Aguilar. Furthermore, whenever I added some personal text, with the aim to facilitate the comprehension of the text, I have used square brackets.

⁵⁶ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 16r-17v.

only the locative and instrumental case,⁵⁷ but he also recognizes : 1) the comitative case which he calls *xaxti social*, 2) the usage of the locative case in comparative constructions (*xaxti comparativo*) in Tamil and 3) the ablative used to mark separation which he defines as *ablº partitivo ou separativo*.

He gives the Latin order of case declensions, matching it with the Tamil case and Sanskrit terminology for vibhakti (case), without referring to *kāra*kas. I transcribe here the first declination in order to give an example of it:

“Singular	orumai	yecavaxanam	
Nominativo	Pradamei	Vanàn	Lavandeiro
Genitivo	Dvitiei	Vananúreia	Do lavandeiro
Dativo	Tritiei	Vananucu	Ao lavandeiro
Accusativo	Chadurthí	Vananei	O lavandeiro
Vocativo	Panchami	Vanáné	Ó lavandeiro
Ablativo	xaxti local	VananiRatil, L, Vanan=	no lavandeiro
		iRRatilé	
Ablativo	xaxticausal	Vananal, L, Vananálé	por causa do lavandeiro, pello lavandeiro
Ablativo	xaxti social	VananoRRe, L. Vanan oRú	com o lavandeiro
Ablativo	xaxti comparativo	Vanánil, L. Vanan ilú	que o lavandeiro. Em comparação do lavandeiro” ⁵⁸

This declination shows the distinction of four cases all addressed like ablative and expressed by four different endings. The first ablative (*xaxti local*) to what is locative case, the second ablative refers to the instrumental case, the third ablative refers to the comitative case and the fourth ablative shows the comparative construction of Tamil language. This goes far beyond the earlier analysis of the Tamil grammar by Henrique Henriques SJ (1520-1600), and of da Costa SJ

⁵⁷ These cases correspond to the seventh and third case in Tol. and Sanskrit grammar.

⁵⁸ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 7r. The capital R in this paragraph stands for “r” with two dots on top.

(c.1610-1673). Indeed, it is the first existing analysis of the Tamil ablative which greatly differs from the Latin given by a European.

Aguilar argues whether these four declensions should be considered as belonging to the ablative case or should be considered as postposition, which he refers like prepositions, but he prefers to delay the question for later:

“Although at the moment we leave this issue, another word of caution we need to say is whether those adjuncts with which we form the ablative are real adjuncts or should be taken as prepositions. In fact they are little related to the case marker. However, the most important thing here, in order to learn the language without any doubts, is that the ablatives are formed in that way. We will discuss this issue further on in the grammar.”⁵⁹

Once again, Aguilar deals with the comparison between Tamil and Sanskrit when he discusses the adjectives. He differentiates between *o fallar mais ordinario* [the most ordinary speech] and *o fallar menos ordinario* [the less common speech]. Consequently, among the adjectives considered as the most common we can find:⁶⁰

“*ellá – ellárum – ellam* (represents the Tamil word *ellām*) – all

sagalá – sagalárum (represents the Tamil word *cakalam* (< *cakalā*) of Sanskrit origin) – all, the whole⁶¹

xarruvá – xarruverum (which is defined by Winslow⁶² as the Sanskrit prefix meaning good, *car* > *caruvā*)

chera (whose variant is *cēra* < *cēr*, adv.) means along with, altogether, whole⁶³

aRangalum inclusive of all (those specified)”⁶⁴

It is not clear what exactly should be considered by the less ordinary speech, since the second group which Aguilar mentions is not properly explained. However there is a line which divides the first

⁵⁹ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 17r.

⁶⁰ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 13v.

⁶¹ See Winslow, *Tamil-Eng Dictionary*, 385.

⁶² See Winslow, *Tam-Eng Dictionary*, 423.

⁶³ See *MTL*, 1636.

⁶⁴ The text into round brackets is mine.

group from the other five groups where one finds:⁶⁵

“*Métá, anega, anegam* (aṇekam) many, *palea* (pala) many, *vegueá, vegu* (veku) - very, *migunda, migudi* (mikunta) - extreme,” for which Aguilar gives the Latin translation “multus, multas, multum et multi, multiage, multa”

“*chila* (cila) - some, a few”; which Aguilar translates as “aliquos, aliqua, aliquod et aliqui, aliquae, aliqua”;

“*conja, conjam* (koñcam) - a little, *correinja, correi, tucuni*”⁶⁶ for which Aguilar gives the Latin translation “paucus, pauca, paucum et pauci, paucae, pauca.”

“*mullu, mulludum*” which Aguilar translates as “totus, tota, totum” and that should be taken as *muḷu* – whole, entire, full, all; once again Aguilar did not notice the retroflex approximant and simply gives it as a doubled ‘l’.

Although Aguilar provides some other adjectives, he states that this is not the suitable place to go into all the proper information about numerals, comparatives and superlatives, which are dealt in the proper *doutrina* (the term which he uses to refer to a more extensive grammar). According to him, what is given in order to manage the spoken language is enough in this context.⁶⁷

However, he distinguished between indeclinable adjectives and declinable ones which occur when adjectives are used in a predicative form. Consequently ‘nalla’ (good) does not change, despite the gender of the noun to which it refers. On the contrary it concords with gender and number noun when it is used in attributive predicate (i.e. *avan nallavan*, he is a good man).

Before dealing with Tamil verbs and conjugations, Aguilar gives a detailed analysis of the pronouns, but he misunderstands the two different forms of the first plural person. The Tamil language distinguishes between an inclusive and an exclusive pronoun: *nāṅkaḷ* is the exclusive pronoun which is used when the addressee is excluded (we without you), while *nām* is the inclusive pronoun which includes the addressee as well as the addressed (we and you). However,

⁶⁵ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 13v.

⁶⁶ I have not found any correspondent translation in Tamil for these three words.

⁶⁷ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 14r.

Aguilar's grammar gives forms of the first person plural inclusive and exclusive but he provides no explanations or examples to distinguish and define them. He intends the inclusive form as a kind of honorific pronoun:

"We have to inform that despite Ego, I, like in Portuguese we say too 'we the King, we the Pope, we the Prince order, send, etc.' and this usage can be described as honorific pronoun. And it is nothing else than the second voice of the plural pronoun that we find the in following form

Nom. Nām I honorific

Gen. namuṭeiya of my Majesty, royalty"⁶⁸

Aguilar's Treatment of the Tamil Morphology of Verbs

Tamil verbal system distinguishes between finite and non-finite verbs. The definition of a finite or a non-finite verb form is syntactical rather than morphological. Roughly, the finite verb forms occur as predicate of the main clause, as they end the sentence. On the other hand the non-finite verb forms occur as predicate of an embedded or subordinate clause or in compound verbs. Finite verb forms are tensed and marked by the person, number and gender (hereafter PNG), while non-finite verb forms can be tense marked, but they never mark PNG. The verbal categories include modality, tense and aspect.⁶⁹

As soon as Aguilar starts to deal with Tamil verbs he clarifies that it was necessary to invent new forms and words, since the Tamil language presents verbal forms which are not available either in Latin or in Portuguese.⁷⁰ He also points out that he is going to deal with *o modos desusados, escuros e duvidosos per o tratado da Gramatica dos Verbos* [The unused modes, dark and doubtful for the Grammar of Verbs].

Like Henriques (1548) years earlier, Aguilar divides the verbs into

⁶⁸ Cod. Orient. 283, fol 15r.

⁶⁹ See Thomas Lehmann, *A Grammar of Modern Tamil* (Pondicherry: Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture, 1989) and Sanford B. Steever, *The Tamil auxiliary verb system* (London: Routledge, 2005), 244.

⁷⁰ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 28r.

different groups. However, while Henriques divides verbs into nine conjugations of personal verbs, distinguishing them from the impersonal verbs and the passive, along with some particular Tamil verbs,⁷¹ Aguilar does not differentiate the verbs into different conjugations. He simply identifies basic tenses and modalities (present, preterit, future, imperative, negative future and imperative)⁷² and derives several other tenses from them. The basic tense from which Aguilar starts is the present tense of the verb ‘to believe’ *vichuvadicren*⁷³ (Literary Tamil: *vicuvatikkirēn*) from which he derives the *preterite* (past tense) through morphophonemic changes:

“For the verbs ending in *icren*, the preterite is derived changing the *cren* in *tem* or *chen*. Despite this, it is not possible to give a fixed rule for obtaining the preterite from those verbs ending in *cradu*. The only thing it is possible to say is that they change the necessary letters of the syllables of the present into those which are required by the preterite.”⁷⁴

Discussing the present tense, Aguilar differentiates between the *presente actual afirmativo* [affirmative actual present] and *presente por honra* [honorific present], demonstrating that he was aware of different registers within the Tamil language. This fact is confirmed later by his own declaration in the description of the negative present tense in which he distinguishes two forms: the first one given by the present tense conjugation followed by the Tamil verb ‘illai’ (not to be), i.e. *vichuvadicren illai* ‘I do not believe’ and the second one given

⁷¹ See Jeanne Hein and V. S. Rajam, *The Earliest Missionary Grammar of Tamil: Fr. Henriques’ Arte Da Lingua Malabar: Translation, History and Analysis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁷² These are the same tenses that Henriques also identifies.

⁷³ Aguilar writes this verb in its contracted form (*vichuvadicren*) in the present tense morpheme showing that what is documented is a variety of spoken Tamil where the morpheme *-kkir-* is contracted in the *-kr-* form. It is interesting to compare it with the verbal forms used by Henrique who reports *vichuvadiquiren* which looks similar to the standard pronunciation, although his grammar was written on the basis of a form of a spoken variety of Tamil. For further details about characteristics of spoken Tamil see Harold Schiffman, *A Reference Grammar of Spoken Tamil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁷⁴ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 40v.

by the infinitive of the verb followed by ‘illai,’ i.e. *vichuvadica illai* ‘I do not believe.’ In this context Aguilar, referring to the first form, highlights:

“But be aware of the fact that this negative present is not much used since it is a very poor way of speaking, while this other form (infinitive + illai) is much more in use and is easier.”⁷⁵

While dealing with the second form, Aguilar says:

“This second negative present where no change occurs is used both for honorific and non-honorific speech and it is the most common in speaking.”⁷⁶

Hence, his classification of verbs follows the Latin model of reference: present, imperfect, perfect, plusquamperfect and future.⁷⁷ The first tense to be presented after the present tense is the *preterito imperfecto* (preterit imperfect):

“Although it (preterit imperfect) does not exist in this language, it is replaced with a periphrasis [...] I am going to leave other ways of replacement for other places where (verbs) will be examined more carefully. In this moment the more ordinary and simple way is enough to show here.”⁷⁸

The periphrasis given is *vichuvaducrané apó vichuvadicren* ‘quando aquella cria, entã eu cria’ (when he believed, at that time I’ve already believed).⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 18v.

⁷⁶ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 19r.

⁷⁷ The first future that is given is called ‘*futuro imperfecto*’ represented by the future tense of the Tamil language (-pp-; -v-). Furthermore the future tense marker is found again when Aguilar discusses the ‘*Presente Habitual*’ which he compares to frequentative verbs of the Latin language for expressing actions which are repeated. See. Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 21v.

⁷⁸ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 19v.

⁷⁹ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 19v. This periphrasis is also found in Da Costa’s grammar. See Cristina Muru, *Missionari Portoghesi in India nei XVI e XVII. L’Arte della lingua Tamil. Studio comparato di alcuni manoscritti* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2010) and Cristina Muru, “Categorizzazioni forzate: il modello latino nelle descrizioni missionarie della lingua tamil,” in *Atti del 10° Congresso dell’Associazione Italiana di Linguistica Applicata: Lingue e culture in contatto, in memoria di Roberto Gusmani* (Bolzano, 18-19

Aguilar conjugates the preterit imperfect both in the past, of which one finds both the spoken Tamil morpheme and the literary Tamil morpheme tense, and the negative form, which results in the same used for the present tense, given by infinitive + illai, i.e. *vichuvadica illai* ‘I did not believe.’⁸⁰

There is another periphrasis for the *Preterito plusquamperfecto* (i.e. *Padiriar vandaducú mune nana vatiten* ‘antes que o padre visse, ja eu tinha ido,’ before the Father came, I had already gone).⁸¹ In this context Aguilar gives the Tamil Verbal Noun⁸² in the dative case. He defines them as *nome substantivados* [nominalized nouns]. Hence, he provides the full declension of cases of verbal nouns.⁸³

Aguilar then identifies four different future tenses:⁸⁴ 1) future imperfect, 2) honorific future imperfect, 3-4-5-6) negative forms of future imperfect. Next came 7) habitual present and 8) preterit. These are his examples:

- 1) *Vichuvadipen eu crerei* (vicivadippēn, I will believe, future)
- 2) *Vichuvadipom eu ou nos el Rey crerei* (vicuvadippōm, I, we the King will believe, future)
- 3) *Vichuvadipen illei eu naõ crerei* (vicuvadippēn illai, I will not

febbraio 2010), eds. R. Bombi, M. D’Agostino, S. Dal Negro & R. Franceschini, (Perugia: Guerra Edizioni, 2010), 279-298.

⁸⁰ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 19v-20r.

⁸¹ Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 20r. In this context the proper translation of the Tamil sentence would be ‘before the ‘coming’ of the Father, I was already gone.

⁸² Verbal nouns in Tamil can be distinguished into tensed and no-tensed. The latter consist of the verb stem and a nominalizing suffix. Verbal nouns occur in compound verb constructions and in the formation of complex sentences. While the tensed verbal noun inflected for future tense can be the predicate of a simple clause when it expresses desiderative modality. For further details see Michail S. Andronov, *A Standard Grammar of Modern and Classical Tamil* (Madras: New Century Book House, 1969); Lehmann, *Grammar*, 1989; and K. Paramasivam, “Verbal Nouns in Literary Tamil,” in *Proceedings of the First All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists, 1971*, ed. V. I. Subramoniam (Trivandrum: Dravidian Linguistic Association of India, Dept. of Linguistics, University of Kerala, 1972).

⁸³ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 20r-20v.

⁸⁴ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 20v-22r.

believe, negative future)

4) *Vichuvadica illei eu naõ crerei* (vicutadikka illai, I do/will/did not believe, negative future)

5) *Vichuvadien eu naõ crerei* (vicutadiyēṇ, I will not believe, negative future)⁸⁵

6) *Vichuvadica mäten naõ crerei, naõ posso crer* (vicutadikka mattēṇ, I cannot believe)⁸⁶

7) *Vichuvadipen eu costume crer* (vicutadippēṇ, I use to believe)⁸⁷

8) *Aducu munē vichivadipen ja então eu ter crido* (adukku munṇē vicutadippēṇ, before that time I will have already believed).⁸⁸

After having discussed tenses trying to match Latin and Tamil and having created special constructions in order to supply the missing category, Father Aguilar deals with the modality of Tamil verbs. This classification reveals much more than the tense classification and Aguilar's intuitions about Tamil grammar. In fact, he does not restrict his description into the known Latin categories, forcing his interpretation of Tamil, but he creates new names for defining and explaining the Tamil grammar whenever necessary. With reference to modality, Aguilar distinguishes between:

1) *Modos interrogativos (vulgar, suppositivo, pessoal, elegantes, causal)* [interrogative: vulgar,⁸⁹ personal,⁹⁰ elegant,⁹¹ causal⁹²];

⁸⁵ In old Tamil negative indicative verb forms are not marked for the category of tense and the verb stem combines with the negative morpheme which is phonologically realized either by a zero morph or by the negative allomorph –ā. See Lehmann, *Grammar*, 69.

⁸⁶ The verb māṭṭu is an auxiliary verb used in a periphrastic construction in order to express the negative future. It is combined with the negative allomorph –ā which is conjugated for all person, number and gender.

⁸⁷ Aguilar recognizes that future tense expresses various modalities rather than definitely referring to any future time. It is especially used to express habitual or repeated actions of events in the past or in the present. See Lehmann, *Grammar*, 67-68.

⁸⁸ This is a periphrastic construction created in order to fill up a Latin grammar category which would otherwise remain empty in Tamil.

⁸⁹ It is expressed by the clitic –ō: *nan vichuvaducen ó?* 'Don't I believe?' (Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 22r).

⁹⁰ It is expressed by the interrogative pronoun yār 'who': *vichuvadicran ár?*

- 2) *Modo imperativo* (*tempo presente, tempo futuro ou modo mandativo, imperativo proibitivo, imperativo permissivo, imperativo de benevolencia*) [imperativo, present tense, future tense or future used to give orders,⁹³ prohibitive imperative,⁹⁴ permissive imperative, imperative of benevolence];
- 3) *Modo optativo* (six forms plus a preterite and a future tense) [optative];⁹⁵
- 4) *Modo conjunctivo* (of which he gives 12 different forms) [conjunctive];⁹⁶
- 5) *Modo infinitivo* [infinitive];
- 6) *Modo gerundio* [gerund];
- 7) *Modo Participio* [participle].⁹⁷

This taxonomy is based on the Latin model and Aguilar tried to match it at all cost with the Tamil paradigm. He used the same grammatical names that other missionaries already used according to their model of reference. However Aguilar hyper-differentiated the verbal taxonomy when the linguistic differences between languages require it.

Nevertheless, when he cannot match all forms within the Latin

‘Who does believe?’ (Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 22v).

⁹¹ It is expressed by the verb *uṇṭō*: *vichuvadipar undo?* ‘Is there someone who believes?’ (Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 22v).

⁹² It is expressed by the interrogative word *ēṇ* ‘why’: *nan vichuvadipan en?* ‘Why do I believe?’ (Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 22v – 23r).

⁹³ It is expressed by the infinitive form of the verb *āku*: *vichuvadipay āka* ‘you have to believe’ (Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 23v).

⁹⁴ It is expressed by the negative imperative: *vichuvadiāde* ‘do not believe’ which is in Tamil ‘*vicuvadiāta*’ (Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 23v).

⁹⁵ This modality is realized through the verb *āku*, including also *āguil* (if) and *āguilum* (even if), that in Tamil is highly grammaticalized and has many functions.

⁹⁶ Aguilar provides several forms which include any construction of verbs combined with postpositions or auxiliary verbs.

⁹⁷ Aguilar includes among participles the adjectival present, past, and future participles; noun participles and verbal nouns.

grammar, he created new *modos*, defined with an appropriate name. In fact, the semantics of the different modalities that Aguilar identifies refer to the functional meaning of the element under classification. One finds:⁹⁸ *modo conveniente*,⁹⁹ *meditativo ou contingente*,¹⁰⁰ *possibile*,¹⁰¹ *sicut*,¹⁰² *aquivalente* and *comparativo*.¹⁰³

Dealing with comparative and superlative construction, Aguilar stated:

“[...] we will give some information, not because we need to, but only in order to be clear, since we have to compare this with the Latin grammar according to which we are going to use some examples of impersonal verbs, anomalous verbs, and defective verbs which do not follow any rule of conjugation.”¹⁰⁴

Then Aguilar identifies *verbos passivos* (paṭu), *verbos anomalos*,¹⁰⁵ and *verbos compostos activos* and *passivos*.¹⁰⁶ This section included all those Tamil verbs which are non-finite forms, usually used like auxiliary or modal verbs, still in specific syntactical constructions.

⁹⁸ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 31r-37v.

⁹⁹ It is expressed by the verb kaṭavu ‘let that be so.’

¹⁰⁰ It is expressed by the auxiliary verb tiri ‘go about’ which could be an equivalent of the English form ‘I’m going to....’ Aguilar deals with these kind of verbs later, also (Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 38v) saying that this “*casta de verbos composto a que podemos chamar meditativos, porq na significação não fazer a acção, mas estar ou tartar dea fazer*” [a caste of verbs which we can call meditative, because they do not express an action, but the idea of carrying out an action].

¹⁰¹ It is expressed by *vichuvadiqua’lām* maybe the verbal noun in -al + ām that is ākum phonologically reduced. This auxiliary verb expresses the modality of circumstantial and possibility, permission, hortative and suggestion. See Lehmann, *Grammar*, 215-216. (Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 32r).

¹⁰² It is expressed by the particle pōle which follows the verb: *vichuvadicumpōle* ‘As I believe’ (Cod. Orient. 283, fol. 32v). The particle pōl/pōla is a particle of comparison used in the sense of ‘like,’ ‘as.’

¹⁰³ It is expressed by the comparative and superlative construction with – atilum.

¹⁰⁴ Cod. Orient. 283, fol 35v.

¹⁰⁵ These are defined as anomalous verbs and defectives and they are: āku, uḷ, il, oṇṇu, maṭṭu, vēṇṭu, vēṇṭām, pōṭu.

¹⁰⁶ Among the compound verbs there are auxiliaries like pō, viṭu, tiri, koṭu.

The section about verbs ends with a discussion about verb composition, which nowadays we identify with auxiliary verbs. In this section those verbs which in Tamil are causative verbs like –ppi- or –vi- are also identified along with another ‘caste’ of verbs which Aguilar calls *neutros* [neuter].

Conclusion

This study has presented the figure of Gaspar de Aguilar, a Jesuit missionary who was both invaluable and difficult member of the Society of Jesus. He had mastered the Tamil language and his contribution to its study was immeasurable.

The Arte of Aguilar is without any doubt a remarkable treatise which shows an interesting perspective on understanding of a non-European language and the approach adopted in describing and teaching it.

All grammar books and texts by missionaries demonstrate the efforts and tenacity they showed during their stay in India. In order to spread Christianity missionaries proved to be extremely innovative, especially in their pioneering efforts to describe non-European languages.

Aguilar’s work is of high quality. The examples he used in the grammar, as well in the translations of prayers,¹⁰⁷ can be considered as extremely valuable material. Indeed, it is through them that one discovers how Tamil was spoken during the 17th century in the southern area of India. Latin transcriptions of Tamil examples and texts offer a picture of the Tamil language spoken by a specific group of people in a specific historical period. Further analysis should be carried out in order to underline the peculiarities of the language variety taken into consideration by Aguilar, as well as those analyzed by other missionaries mentioned in this study.

The cultural information revealed by Aguilar is also important; he speaks of certain castes and occupations, he mentions some objects

¹⁰⁷ Cod. Orient. 283, ff. 50r-59v. Due to the sheer volume that this paper would have taken these texts have not been examined here. However, I am working on the whole translation of this Arte, where texts of prayers and dialogues between the Priest and the Penitent will be included.

specific to a particular social context, he gives an idea of what was relevant in the Portuguese environment among Indians and he also reveals what was ‘common’ and what was ‘elegant’ in the language, thus giving an idea of different registers the Tamil speakers used.

It would be desirable to carry out a comparative study of the Tamil grammar contributions in order to see if there exists a genetic relationship between those written in Portuguese in South India. The missionary grammars I have studied so far allow me to assert that there are some characteristics that all the grammar explanations share. For example, the basic verb used to illustrate Tamil tenses and modalities is the verb ‘to believe’ *vicuvadi*, which is no longer used nowadays in Tamil, but is still retained in Malayalam. Another characteristic feature is the declension of nouns and the classification of cases. Apart from this, it seems that every author chose a personal way in describing the Tamil language, by focusing more on morphology, dealing with phonology endings or syntax, or on the contrary, not taking the syntax of the language into consideration at all. The treatment of orthography can hardly be accurately described, especially concerning the articulatory description of sounds. There is no doubt that all the grammar texts written after Henriques’s are organized following the same order: letters, noun declensions, adjectives, postpositions, tenses, modalities, defective verbs and auxiliaries. Once again this study has demonstrated how much missionary descriptions of non-European languages should be taken into due consideration and not be neglected as generally happens in modern studies.

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