Preliminaries for a Generative Analysis of Kannada and Telugu Meter

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Outline

Kannada and Telugu: literature & metrical systems

*Dēvagaṇa*s

The *dēvagaṇa* meters

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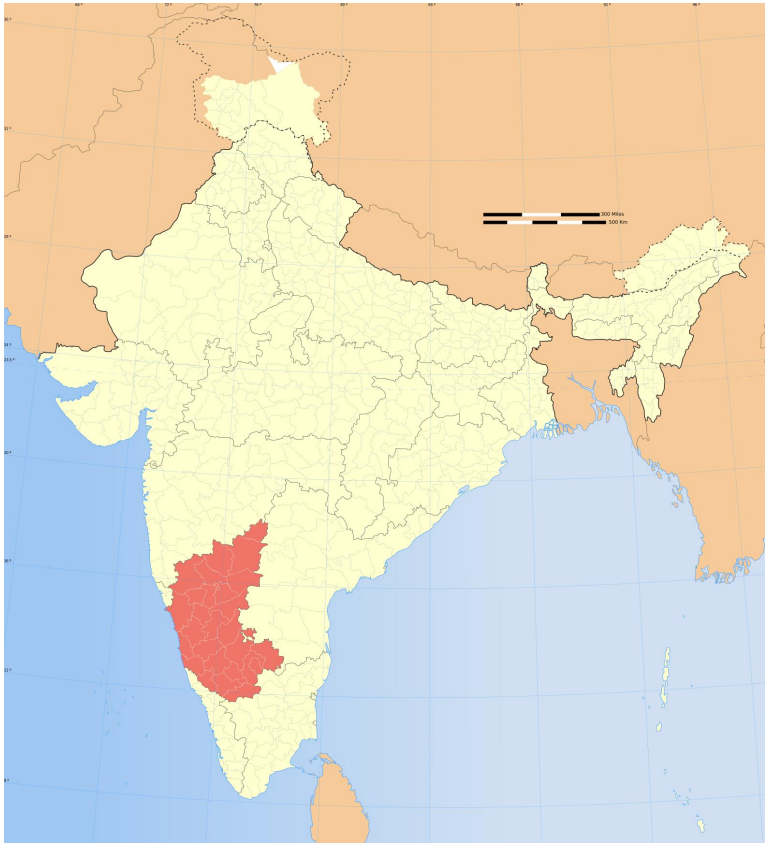
Dēvagaṇas

The *dēvagaṇa* meters

Kannada



Kannada is a **South Dravidian** language spoken in South India, in the areas united into the **linguistic state** of Karnataka in 1956.

Kannada literature

- 500 CE: earliest inscription (Halmiḍi)
- 700 CE: earliest verse inscriptions (Kappe Arabhaṭṭa)
- 870 CE: earliest surviving literary work (*Kavirājamārgaṁ = Way of the Poet-King*)
- 941–1041 CE: *saeculum mirabile* of Kannada, with major works by the “three great poets” (Pampa, Ponna, and Ranna) as well as other authors (Cāvuṇḍarāya, Nāgavarma I and II), and many inscriptions
- 1160 CE: Basava’s religious movement introduces major changes in literary practice
  - the introduction of new meters and more recent linguistic forms
  - the transformation of the existing *dēvagaṇa* meters to a strict mora-counting system

Kannada literature

- This talk focuses on the “early period,” before Basava’s innovations.
- Many works of the earliest period (prior to the 10th century) are lost.

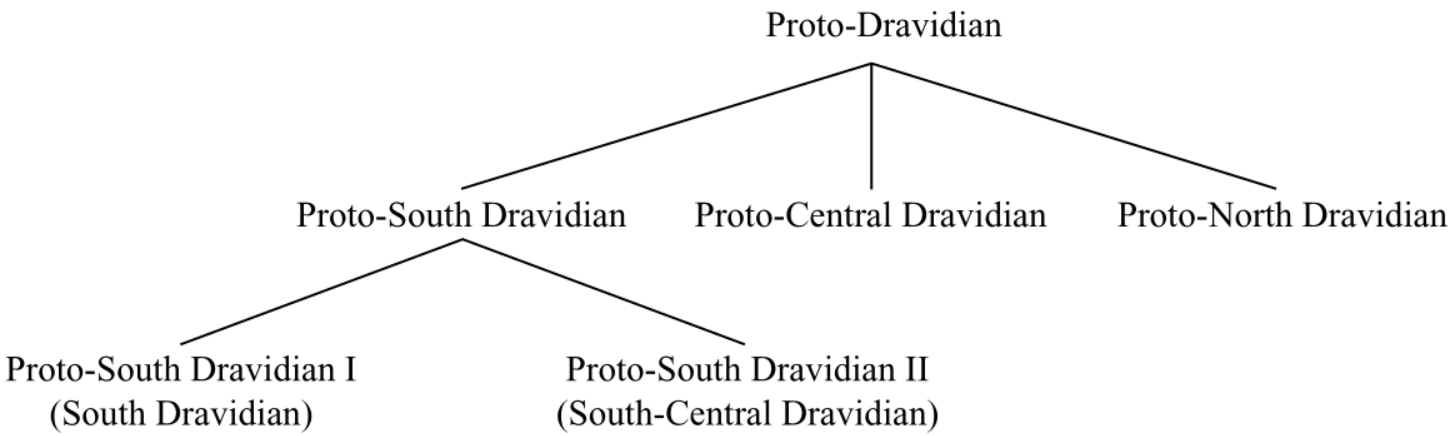
Telugu

Telugu is a **South-Central Dravidian** language spoken in the areas corresponding to the modern states of **Andhra Pradesh** and **Telangana**.

Telugu Literature

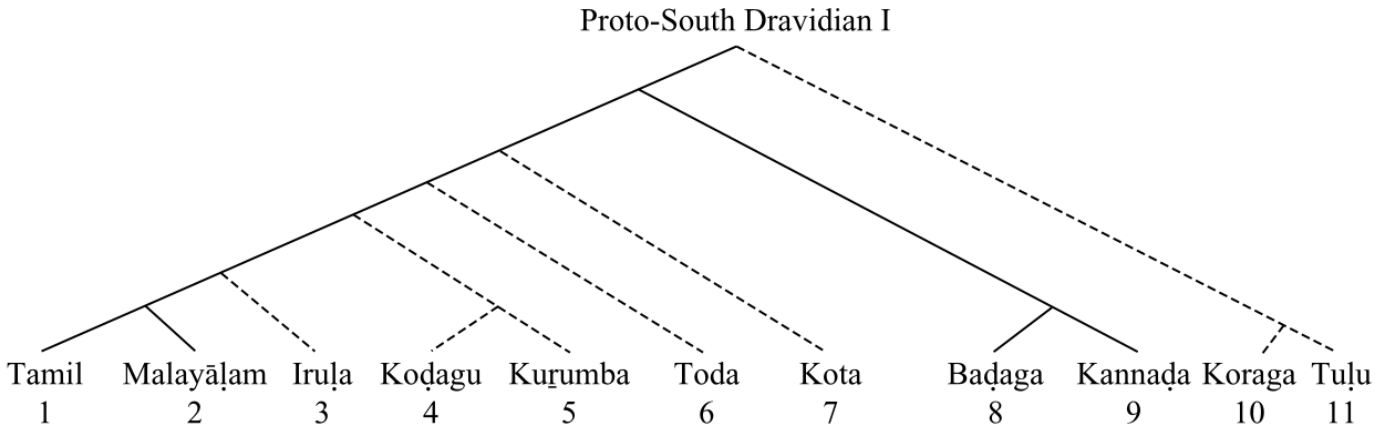
- 575 CE: earliest inscriptions (Kalamalla)
- 844 CE: earliest verse inscriptions (Addanki)
- 950 CE: earliest surviving literary work (*Kavijanāśrayamu*, a metrical handbook!)
- 1050s CE: Nannaya begins the *Āndhra-mahābhāratamu*, which would be completed by Tikkana (13th c.) and Er̲r̲ana (14th c.).

Dravidian languages



From Krishnamurti 2003: 21.

Dravidian languages



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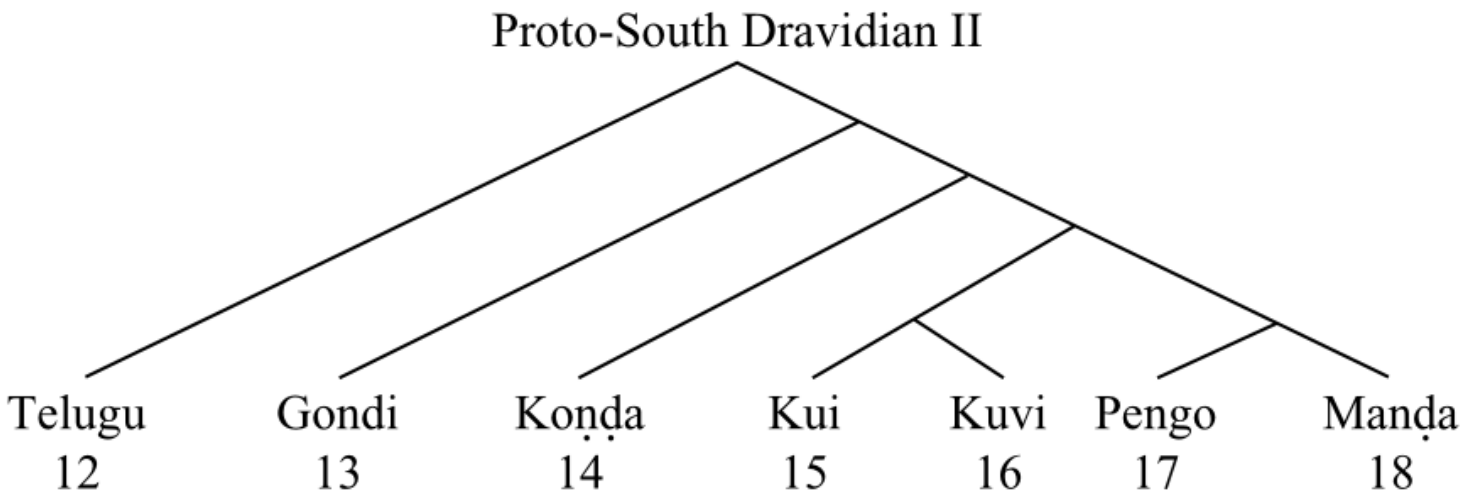


From Krishnamurti 2003: 21.

Connections with “Transregional” literary traditions

Both Kannada and Telugu are deeply influenced by the transregional literatures of South Asia in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Apabhramsha, as will be clear from their metrical systems.

Most of the earliest surviving works in both traditions are adaptations of or responses to works in Sanskrit (e.g., Daṇḍin’s *Mirror of Literature* [*Kāvyādarśa*] or the *Mahābhārata*).

Connections with other regional literary traditions

There were very close connections between Kannada and Telugu, at least in the earliest stages of the surviving literature, much of which comes from the strategically-important region where the modern states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Telangana meet.

Pampa (10th c.), probably the most important Kannada poet, was a Telugu speaker. (He didn't write any Telugu, but his brother, Jinavallabha, did.)

Despite their proximity, Kannada and Telugu works show no awareness of the Tamil literary tradition.

The Kannada and Telugu metrical systems

We know of Kannada and Telugu meter both from metrical works that survive in inscriptions and manuscripts, as well as from descriptions in metrical handbooks.

Metrical handbooks

Kannada:

- *Chandōmbudhi* of Nāgavarma (late 10th c.)
- *Chandōnuśāsana* of Jayakīrti (late 10th c.) [actually Sanskrit, but discusses a few Kannada meters under the heading of “popular” meters]

Telugu:

- *Kavijanāśrayamu* of Rēcana (late 10th c.) [currently being translated by Harshita Mruthinti Kamath and R.V.S. Sundaram]
- *Appakavīyamu* of Appakavi (1656 CE)

The Kannada and Telugu metrical systems

The metrical systems are composite, consisting of the following different types of meters:

- syllable-counting meters (≈ Sanskrit meters)
- mora-counting meters (≈ Prakrit and Apabhramsha meters)
- the so-called dēvagaṇa meters

Local modifications

In Sanskrit and Prakrit, the meters have places where word boundary is required (caesura), including at the end of the line.

In Kannada and Telugu, these restrictions are very often intentionally violated, so that words straddle the boundary between verse lines. But this is only true for the meters derived from Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Apabhramsha, and not for the “native” Kannada/Telugu meters.

Syllable-counting meters

Metrical patterns consist of a sequence of a given number of syllables in which the weight of every syllable is fixed as either light or heavy, usually repeated four times.

Weight is determined in exactly the same way as in Sanskrit (including parsing across word boundaries).

Local modifications: One author at least states that word-final light syllables should not be made heavy by position.

Syllable-counting meters

Scholars sometimes loosely call these “Sanskrit meters,” but note that some of the most popular syllable-counting meters in Kannada and Telugu were never actually used in Sanskrit. These include what are called in Karnataka the *khyātakarṇāṭaka* (those for which Karnataka is famous): *utpalamālā*, *campakamālā*, *mahāsragdharā*, and *mattēbhavikrīḍita*.

Drutavilambita, *Kavirājamārgaṁ* 1.138

⏑⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑– × 4

niyamitānvayajāti-guṇa-kriyā-
śrayam id’ āy avadhāraṇa-lakṣaṇaṁ
naya-niyōga-vikalpaneyoḷ viśaṅ-
keya viśēṣaguṇakk’ upalakṣaṇaṁ

Mora-counting meters

Mora-counting meters depend on the equivalence S = II.

Metrical patterns consist of a sequence of a given number of moras, arranged into groups of four with specific rhythmic features:

- syncopated
  - ISI
- unsyncopated
  - SS
  - SII
  - IIS

IIII is ambiguous.

Kanda, Kavirājamārgaṁ 1.1

Two lines of eight four-mora groups each; syncopated rhythms are disallowed in odd-numbered groups and required in group six of each line.

This is the most popular Kannada and Telugu meter, and it is borrowed from the Prakrit *skandhaka*.

śrī taḷt’ uradoḷ kaustubha-

jāta-dyuti baḷasi kāṇḍapaṭad’ ant’ ire sam-

prītiyin āvanan agalaḷ

nītinirantaran udāran ā nr̥patuṅgaṁ

Mora-counting meters

There are other meters called *ragaḷe* in Kannada and *ragaḍa* in Telugu that essentially consist in rhymed couplets, where each line of the couplet is a moraic pattern (e.g., $4\mu \times 4$).

These appear to be borrowed from Apabhramsha, or at least inspired by them (the most popular such meter is sometimes called *paddaḷi* = Apabhramsha *paddhaṭika*).

Common principles

What unites all of these systems is:

- more or less the same way of determining syllable weight, which is essential to all of them
- a regional requirement (shared also with Tamil and Malayalam) of second-syllable alliteration

Weight

Weight assignment:

- a syllable with a long vowel is heavy;
- a syllable with a final consonant is heavy (i.e., a vowel followed by a conjunct consonant, or a single consonant at the end of a line);
- all other syllables are light.

But Kannada grammarians tell us that certain consonant conjuncts are “weak” (*śithila*), in the sense that they do not make the preceding syllable heavy. This includes primarily *l̤* + consonant and *r* + consonant. The “weak” scansion seems more common in the *dēvagaṇa* meters than in the syllable-counting (“Sanskrit”) meters.

As are certain other licenses (*maraṅgaḷe* scanned as *maragaḷe*, the historically more recent form).

Second-syllable alliteration (*prāsa*)

In any verse form, the consonant that begins the second syllable must be the same across all lines.

In addition, the weight of the preceding syllable (the first syllable of the line) must also be the same.

Outline

Kannada and Telugu: literature & metrical systems

*Dēvagaṇa*s

The *dēvagaṇa* meters

Dēvagaṇas

Literally this refers to “groups (of syllables named after) gods,” because that is how the early metrical writers (Jayakīrti and Nāgavarma) referred to them.

The “native” Kannada and Telugu meters (presumably native to one of these traditions and borrowed into the other) use meters that are analyzed by the early metrical writers into these groups.

See Venkatachala Sastry 2011: 173–174.

The reason for this work: philological

The meters that use the *dēvagaṇa* system are poorly understood, even by specialists.

In Kannada, they were largely forgotten, and they are poorly transmitted in manuscripts.

The statements of the metrical handbooks do not align particularly closely with the attested practice.

Hence we need a better understanding of these meters for philological work.

The reason for this work: theoretical

Many metrical systems are either syllable-counting or mora-counting. The *dēvagaṇa* system, at least superficially, includes aspects of both.

An analysis of these meters based on universal (generative) principles might contribute to our understanding of versification, specifically (1) the specification of metrical patterns (pattern-generating rules/constraints) and (2) the alignment of text to metrical patterns (pattern-matching rules/constraints).

The following slides are based primarily on Nāgavarma's account in his *Ocean of Meters* (*Chandōmbudhi*, late 10th c.).

Please note however that the Kannada and Telugu traditions differ not only in technical terms but also in the syllabic patterns that they admit as part of each group. The Kannada metrical handbooks allow all possible combinations; the Telugu metrical handbooks allow only a subset of them.

Brahmā = Rati = Sūrya

Sequence	Mnemonic
SS	*brahmā*
IIS	*purapaṁ*, *druhiṇaṁ*
SI	*dhāṭr̥*
III	*ajane*, *surapa*

Syllables: 2–3, Moras: 3(–4)

Sequences in gray are disallowed by Telugu metrical handbooks.

Brahmā = Rati = Sūrya

Generalizations:

- The beginning of the group can be either ऽ or ॥.
- This is followed by ।, ऽ, once.
  - According to the Telugu handbooks, ऽ is disallowed at the end.

Viṣṇu = Madana = Indra

ᏕᏕᏕ	*gōvindaṁ*
ᏆᏆᏕᏕ	*hṛdayēśaṁ*, *jalajākṣaṁ*
ᏕᏆᏕ	*nāgikaṁ*, *mādhavaṁ*
ᏆᏆᏆᏕ	*parahitaṁ*, *smarapitaṁ*
ᏕᏕᏆ	*kaṁsāri*
ᏆᏆᏕᏆ	*narakāri*
ᏕᏆᏆ	*śrīpati*
ᏆᏆᏆᏆ	*murahara*, *muraripu*

Syllables: 3–4, Moras: 4–5

Viṣṇu = Madana = Indra

Generalizations:

- The beginning of the group can be either ऽ or ॥.
- This is followed by ।, ऽ, two times.
  - According to the Telugu handbooks, ऽऽ is disallowed at the end.

Rudra = Śara = Candra

SSSS	*gaṅgādhīśaṁ*	SSSI	*kandarpāri*
IISSS	*girijānāthaṁ*	IISSI	*madanadhvaṁsi*
SISS	*nīlakaṇṭhaṁ*	SISI	*candramauḷi*
IIISS	*vṛṣabhalakṣmaṁ*	IIISI	*bhujagadhāri*
SSIS	*kāmāntakaṁ*	SSII	*bhūtāgraṇi*
IISIS	*prathamādhipaṁ*	IISII	*trijagadguru*
SIIS	*śūladharaṁ*	SIII	*kāmaripu*
IIIIS	*puramathanaṁ*	IIIII	*madanaripu*

Syllables: 4–5, Moras: 5–7

Rudra = Śara = Candra

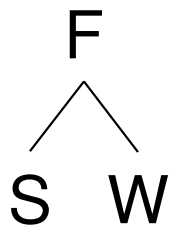
Generalizations:

- The beginning of the group can be either ऽ or ॥.
- This is followed by । or ऽ, three times.
  - According to the Telugu handbooks, ऽऽ× (× = anceps) is disallowed at the end.

Question 1: The forbidden groups

1. Are the sequences that Telugu handbooks proscribe actually off-limits in literary practice, either in Kannada or in Telugu?
   - In the earliest literature (which includes all of the Kannada data), they occur, but seem to be much rarer.
2. What accounts for these preferences?
   - In general, the restrictions are on the occurrence of ʂ in the non-initial part of the group…

Preliminary analysis: Brahmā group



Where:

- The foot consists of two positions, S and W.
- The S position consists of two moras (i.e., ऽ or ।।)
- The W position consists of one mora (i.e., ।).
  - Empty W is not allowed; hence the foot must be branching.

Preliminary analysis: Brahmā group

Note that this is identical to Dresher and Lahiri's "Germanic foot":

> From left to right, build binary, quantity-sensitive left-headed trees whose left branch contains at least two moras (1991: 255).

Preliminary analysis: Brahmā group

But we may still want to allow sequences like ऽऽ, which do seem to occur.

Digression: extrametricality

If we want to keep the foot-based analysis (and we will see why we might want to shortly), then these sequences can be admitted with the addition of extrametricality at the right edge (either of moras, or more likely [Hayes 1995: 69], consonants):

- foot-based with extrametricality: allows the "forbidden" groups (Kannada, maybe early Telugu)
- foot-based without extrametricality: the "forbidden" groups remain forbidden (Telugu)

Digression: extrametricality

Some support for extrametricality in Kannada (I don't know about Telugu) comes from its historical phonology: word-final consonants are lost by the time of Basava (1160), who allegedly composed these words:

amṛtagaṇa-dēvagaṇav ariye

I don't know about the Sanskrit groups or the *dēvagaṇa*s.

The word *ariye* would have been *aṟiyen* in a more formal/conservative register, and *gaṇa* (where *v* is a glide between vowels) would have been *gaṇam* (or better *gaṇaṅgaḷan*, marked as accusative plural).

Preliminary analysis: Viṣṇu group

This allows us to see the Viṣṇu group as two feet constructed according to Dresher & Lahiri's rules.

(S I)	(S)	*nāgikaṁ*, *mādhavaṁ*
(I I I)	(S)	*parahitaṁ*, *smarapitaṁ*
(S)	(S I)	*kaṁsāri*
(I I)	(S I)	*narakāri*
(S)	(I I)	*śrīpati*
(I I)	(I I)	*murahara*, *muraripu*

Preliminary analysis: Viṣṇu group

Note, however, that these feet (unlike the Brahmā group) can be non-branching (i.e., they can consist only of ऽ or ।।).

This leads to a general rule: **within a metrical unit, a solitary foot must be branching**.

- Brahmā groups, which have a single foot, must be represented by a branching foot.
- Viṣṇu groups, which have two, can have non-branching feet.

Preliminary analysis: Viṣṇu group

However, ⏑⏑ also contains two (non-branching) feet, but is not allowed to occur as a Viṣṇu group.

Two possible explanations:

- With final-consonant extrametricality, this group may often be scanned as ⏑– (hence one foot, hence brahmā)
- We will see that Brahmā groups are sometimes substituted where the meter calls for a Viṣṇu group. Maybe this is a reflection of the interchangeability of (⏑)(⏑) [brahmā] and (⏑)(––) [viṣṇu].

Preliminary analysis: Viṣṇu group

The banned patterns are those that would have to be parsed into three feet.

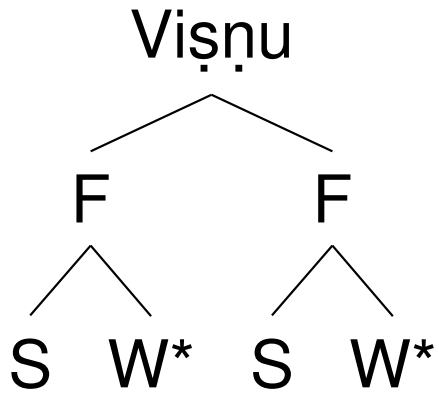
(S)(S)(S)	*gōvindaṁ*
(H)(S)(S)	*hṛdayēśaṁ*, *jalajākṣaṁ*

If we want to keep these in play, we might once again consider extrametricality at the right edge, forcing SS to be parsed as a branching Germanic foot.

If we implement this consistently, then final consonants of a group won't count, and what seems to end in S will effectively end in H (but that shouldn't affect the parsing of syllables into metrical units).

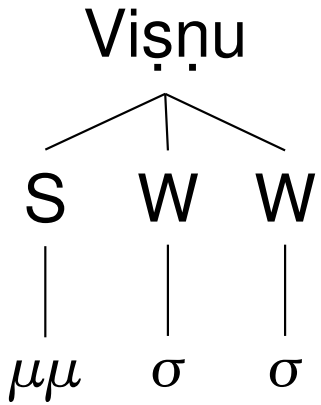
Preliminary analysis: Viṣṇu group

Hence:



Preliminary analysis: Viṣṇu group

I have been trying to avoid an analysis like the following:



Because (1) one branch of the metrical unit can be realized by a moraic trochee and the other branch(es) by a syllable; and (2) we want to prefer binary branching when possible; and (3) we would lose the explanation for the stricter Telugu practice (whereas all we need to "add in" the looser practice is extrametricality).

Question 2: What is the Rudra group?

Consider *candramauḷi* (ऽIऽI).

Is it a Rudra group (SWWW) or a Brahmā group (SW + SW)?

$\rightarrow$ We have no way of telling on its own.

Question 2: What is the Rudra group?

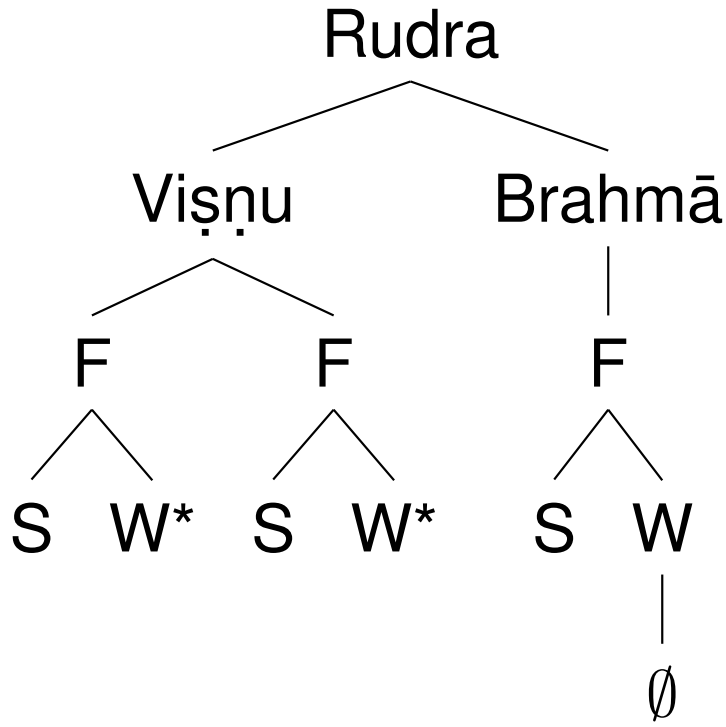
These *dēvagaṇa*s are constituents of the metrical pattern of a verse, where they are subject to positional restrictions, so (in theory) we should know whether to expect a Rudra group or two Brahmā groups.

In fact:

- Rudra groups tend to be the last group in a line.
- Rudra groups are identical to the Viṣṇu group (including the restriction on the occurrence of ऽऽ in positions 2 and 3) but for the last syllable.

Preliminary analysis: The Rudra group

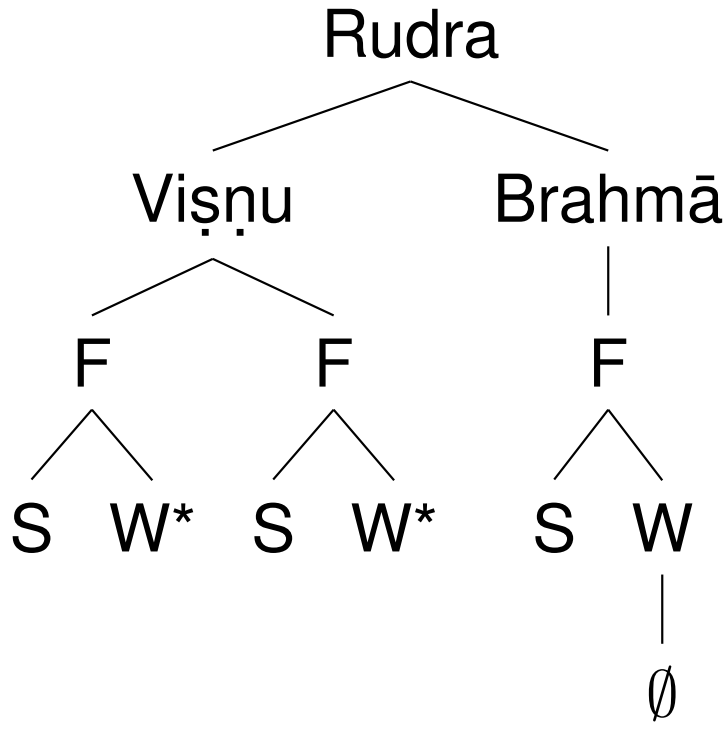
This leads us to think of Rudra as Viṣṇu followed by a single catalectic foot.



According to the convention that the final syllable in a line is counted as heavy, the final S is always going to be represented by ऽ.

Preliminary analysis: The Rudra group

This leads us to think of Rudra as Viṣṇu followed by a single catalectic foot.



Incidentally, these names appear to have originated in a Śaiva context, where Śiva is at the top of the hierarchy.

Outline

Kannada and Telugu: literature & metrical systems

Dēvagaṇas

The *dēvagaṇa* meters

The *dēvagaṇa* meters of Kannada

- *tivadi* (*tripadī*)
- *akkara* (*akṣara*)
  - several varieties are taught but only one, the *piriyakkara* (*mahākṣara*) is used in literature
- *gītike* (*gītikā*)

Others, such as the *ēḷe* and the *madanavati*, are described in metrical handbooks but almost never found in actual texts.

These meters belong to the earliest phase of Kannada literature (500–1160); they are very rarely used afterwards.

The *dēvagaṇa* meters of Telugu

- *sīsa* + *āṭaveladi* / *tēṭagīti*
- *dvipadi*
- *utsāha*
- *akkara* (several varieties)

These are used at all periods.

The greater prominence and staying power of the *dēvagaṇa* meters suggests that they are Telugu inventions borrowed into Kannada.

The *piriyakkara*

In each line:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bra	Vi	Vi	Vi	Vi	Vi	Ru
F	FF	FF	FF	FF	FF	FFF

I assume weight is determined by parsing across word boundaries (syllabifying final consonants with initial vowels), as in Sanskrit and Prakrit. But word-level parsing could work too (for reasons we will see shortly).

I mark potential extrametrical consonants in red.

Piriyakkara, Pampabhāratam̐ 14.55 (941 CE)

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]
[S I] [I I I I] [S I I] [S I I] [S I S] [S S I] [S S I S]
bīrad'# aḷaviya# nanniya# cāgada# śāsanam̐# candrārka- tārambaram̐#
[1] [2] [3!] [4] [5!] [6] [7]
[S I] [S I S] [I I S S] [S S I] [S S S] [S I I] [S I S S]
mēru# nilvinam̐# nilavēḷkum̐# kāvyakke# tān# ittam̐# śāsanad'# agrahāram̐#
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]
[S I] [S I S] [I I S I] [S S I] [I I I I] [S I S] [S I S S]
sāram# embinam̐# pesar-iṭṭu# tān# īye# harigana# dharma-bhāṇ - ḍārad' ante#
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]
[S I] [S I I] [S S I] [S I S] [S I S] [I I I S] [S I I S]
sāram# ādudu# biṭṭ'# agra hāram# ā# baccesā - siradoḷam̐# dharmavuram̐#

Piriyakkara, *Pampabhāratam̐* 14.55 (941 CE)

The reign of heroism, strength, truth, and generosity
should stand for as long as the sun, moon, and stars,
as long as Mount Mēru stands.
For poetry he gave a royal *agrahāra*.
When he gave it, he called it “essence,”
as if it were Harigan’s own storehouse of Dharma.
The *agrahāra* that was left to him,
Dharmavura, in the Bacce thousand,
became prosperous.

Preliminary observations

- This is the ideal type, conforming the definition given by Jayakīrti, but most of the *akkara*s in Kannada literature (there are only about two dozen, with a few more in inscriptions) deviate somewhat:
  - Pampa occasionally uses brahmā instead of viṣṇu in positions 2, 4, and 6.
  - Both Pampa and Ponna occasionally use rudra instead of viṣṇu (Pampa in positions 2 and 3, and only in the last line; Ponna more widely).
  - Ponna's "misplaced" rudras can usually be parsed as two feet, just as I propose viṣṇus are parsed:

jinapavana (*Śāntipurāṇaṁ* 10.68) = (*jina*)(*pavana*)

Preliminary observations

- We see a very strong tendency for the *dēvagaṇa*s to coincide with words, i.e., for a word boundary to occur between groups (as Jayakīrti actually says: *pratigaṇam api yatiḥ*).
  - The tendency is weaker between groups 6 and 7 (at the very end).
- Words never cross verse lines (contrary to the "Sanskrit" and "Prakrit" meters).
- The "forbidden" groups (such as ऽऽ and ऽऽऽ) are used, and can't always be gotten rid of by final-consonant extrametricality (e.g. *Pampabhāratam̐* 5.43 *baged' ā-* at the beginning of the line).

The *tivadi*

The name of the *tivadi*/*tripadi*, and the definitions in the handbooks, suggest that it has three lines (Nāgavarma's definition):

[1: vi.] [2: vi.] [3: vi.] [4: vi.]

[ı ı ı ऽ] [ı ı ı ऽ] [ı ı ı ı] [ऽ ı ऽ]

bisaruhō - dbhavagaṇaṁ # rasadaśa - sthānadoḷ #

[5: vi.] [6: bra.] [7: vi.] [8: vi.]

[ı ı ı ı] [ऽ ı] [ı ı ऽ] [ı ı ı ı]

bisaruha - nē tra - gaṇame# bar - kuṟiduvu

[9: vi.] [10: brah.] [11: vi.]

[ı ı ı ı] [ऽ ı] [ı ı ı ı]

bisaruha - nē trē # tripadige

"Brahmā in positions 6 and 10, and Viṣṇu in the rest."

The *tivadi*

But note the alliteration:

[1: vi.] [2: vi.] [3: vi.] [4: vi.]

[ı ı ı s] [ı ı ı ṡ] [ı ı ı ı] [s ı s]

bi**s**aruhō - dbhavagaṇaṁ # ra**s**adaśa - sthānadoḷ #

[5: vi.] [6: bra.] [7: vi.] [8: vi.]

[ı ı ı ı] [s ı] [ı ı s] [ı ı ı ı]

bi**s**aruha - nē tra - gaṇame# bar - kuṟiduvu

[9: vi.] [10: brah.] [11: vi.]

[ı ı ı ı] [s ı] [ı ı ı ı]

bi**s**aruha - nē trē # tripadige

This is systematic: all *tivadi*s have alliteration between groups 1, 3, 5 and 9, making it a four-line meter.

The *tivadi*

In Nāgavarma's example, the word boundaries don't align well with the metrical groups. But we need to look at actual practice.

The problem is that most of the attested *tivadi*s (and there are only a handful pre-1160) are either corrupt or exhibit some unexpected licenses, most common of which is the substitution of a brahmā for a viṣṇu outside of positions 6 and 10.

See Chidanandamurthy 1966.

Tivaḍi, Ādipurāṇaṁ 6.100 (941 CE)

[1: vi.] [2: vi.] [3: vi.] [4: vi.]

[ı ı ı ı] [ı ı ı ı] [ı ı ı ı] [ı ı ı ı]

surayiyoḷ # giḷi# maguḻv' # aragi ḷi # birayige #

[5: vi.] [6: bra.] [7: vi.] [8: bra.]

[ı ı ऽ ı] [ı ı ı] [ı ı ऽ ı] [ı ı ऽ]

morevante # mo re va # maṟidumbi # taḷi roḷ #

[9: vi.] [10: bra.] [11: vi.]

[ı ı ı ı] [ı ı ı] [ı ı ı ऽ]

parabhṛtaṁ # maguḻ va # parabhṛtaṁ #

Here the right edges of all groups coincide with the right edge of a word.

Tivadi, *Ādipurāṇaṁ* 6.100 (941 CE)

The parrot on the *suragi* tree,
the royal parrot coming back to it;
the little bee buzzing as if it were sighing
with a woman separated from her lover;
the cuckoo on the branch,
the cuckoo coming back to it…

Tivadi, Ādipurāṇaṁ 6.100 (941 CE)

[1: vi.] [2: vi.] [3: vi.] [4: vi.]

[ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ] [ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ] [ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ] [ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ]

surayiyoḷ # giḷi# magulv’ # aragi ḷi # birayige #

[5: vi.] [6: bra.] [7: vi.] [8: bra.]

[ɪ ɪ ʂ ɪ] [ɪ ɪ ɪ] [ɪ ɪ ʂ ɪ] [ɪ ɪ ʂ]

morevante # mo re va # maṟidumbi # taḷi roḷ #

[9: vi.] [10: bra.] [11: vi.]

[ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ] [ɪ ɪ ɪ] [ɪ ɪ ɪ ʂ]

parabhṛtaṁ # magul va # parabhṛtaṁ #

For the “unexpected” brahmā group in position 8, we could either just admit that brahmā alternates with viṣṇu in some positions (the view of M. Chidanandamurthy).

Alternatively, observe that, if we don’t apply final consonant extrametricality, this group would be parsed as (ɪɪ)(ʂ), i.e., two feet, just like a viṣṇu (and in fact we have only non-branching viṣṇus in most other positions: (ɪɪ)(ɪɪ)).

The *gītike*

The *gītike* is, philologically speaking, the worst of the Kannada *dēvagaṇa* meters:

- The definition given by Nāgavarma is unhelpful, if not corrupt.
- It is only attested in about 20 verses, most in the earliest surviving text, the *Kavirājamārgaṁ*, and a few in the later *Kāvyāvalōkanaṁ* (there are no inscriptional examples), where we are not sure the text has been transmitted correctly.
- These verses very often don't conform to the definition.
- We are almost certainly dealing with a family of meters, rather than just one.
- Without a known pattern, multiple parses of syllables into groups are possible.

Next steps

I presented this talk as preliminaries. What comes next?

- Transcribing all of the attested *dēvagaṇa* verses in Kannada (almost done) and Telugu (not yet started)
- Writing a program to scan them (with and without final-consonant extrametricality) and note incidence of word boundaries (including within compounds)
- Calculating positional variation (for a given position in a given line of a given verse, what are the percentages of different configurations of syllables, depending on the parameters noted above)

Thank you!

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