

Prolegomena to an Etymological Dictionary to the Irula Language

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The etymological dictionary of the Irula language should represent my ultimate and closing work on the Irulas — a work which began as early as in 1968 with the publication of a short paper entitled 'Irula — a South Dravidian Language' (*New Orient Bimonthly*, Prague, 7.3.94 - 95). Since then, I have published, apart from a number of papers, three more or less detailed accounts of the Irula language and texts with introduction to their social and cultural structure, and a more 'popular' account (what is so nicely termed in French *vulgarisation*) of the Irula Community and their milieu.¹

There is something deeply satisfying in the "salvage operation" of a culture/language, however small or insignificant it may be seem to be, just like there is something undoubtedly valuable and even moving in the attempts to save some species in the world of plants and fish and birds and animals, endangered by our civilization, a work which is, unfortunately, so very much needed nowadays.

The Irulas are small tribal-demitribal community in the Nilgiri Mountains of southern India, and are — as an independent sociocultural unit — on the verge of extinction. Having survived the acculturation pressures of lowland Hindu Tamils and other Hindu Indians, of Muslim invaders, of British plantation-owners, having lived in the low forests of the Nilgiris for at least two thousand years and perhaps even longer, they will sooner or later, as a separate, individual community disintegrate and their language and culture disappear, due to the unbearable pressure of contemporary civilization. I doubt whether within a few decades one will see or hear any Irula at all.

I was working in the field and at various home-bases on Irula language and culture between 1968 and 1988, and sporadically after that, too, and in 2001 was published a large volume referred to in footnote 1. The months spent among the Irula in the Blue Mountains repeatedly in 1968, 1976, 1978 and 1981 belong to the happiest days of my life.

I would like to remember with a feelings of deep gratitude and warm friendship a number of persons whose help, encouragement and assistance made the work on several Nilgiri communities² possible and even enjoyable. I

¹ For the bibliography on Irula, cf. VII. Appendices, in K.V. Zvelebil, *Nilgiri Areal Studies*. Charles University in Prague, The Karolinum Press, 2001. This work of 535 pp. is the fruit of three decades of labours with various communities and languages in the Blue Mountains of South India (in addition to four volumes on Irula and the Irulas). I am of course most grateful to my colleagues and students who helped in the preparation of these texts for print. However, to my great regret, I must add that the publication contains a number of printing and other editorial errors; the reader should take this unfortunate fact into consideration.

² Apart from the Irulas and their language and culture, I worked with informants from the Jenu Kurumba (Kāḍu Nāyika), Bēṭṭu Kurumba, Shōlega and Paṇiyan communities.

am much indebted, naturally, to my many informants of these communities, in particular to P.Sivaraj of Kunjapene, born in 1953, son of Puliyan of the Kuppā kula, my chief Mele Nāḍu Iṛula informant. I owe special thanks to Mr. J.D. Rajiah, retired deputy Tahsildar, Ootacamund, who was my interpreter and assistant during two of my fieldworks, particularly with the Todas and other tribals; to Prof. Dr. D.B. Kapp, University of Cologne, for his hospitality and many friendly discussions with a colleague who loves the Nilgiris as much as I do. I think with affection of Dr. Saskia C. Kersenboom, my former student, for her encouragement and care. I am also grateful to Mrs. Kokilam Subbiah and to Evam Devika Beryl Pilijean-Wiedeman; Evam introduced me in a friendly and profitable manner to the Todas and their customs. To Professor Murray B. Emeneau I am indebted in innumerable ways, particularly for his critical and friendly comments. The more I plunge myself in Emeneau's work, in particular his *Kota Texts* (1944–46), his *Toda Songs* (1971) and his *Toda Grammar and Texts* (1984), the more increases my admiration and gratitude for his immense contribution to Indian, particularly Nilgiri studies. Last but not least I wish to thank my wife Nina for her understanding and generosity.

Nilgiri Areal Typology

When I first began gathering the data in the Iṛula settlements in the Nilgiris, I did not have any clear vision of an "areal" approach to the region of the Blue Mountains. After my first data on Iṛula had been gathered and to some extent evaluated, it appeared clear to me that there must have been two tendencies in the development of the language: one, of Iṛula *diverging* from some common Proto-Tamil (?) ancestor and source, another, of Iṛula *converging* with its neighbours, Kurumba, Muḍuga, Toda, Kota, Badaga, and may be with yet other "undiscovered" tongues. After having studied Emeneau's path-breaking article of 1956 (*Language* 32.1.2-16) and the elaboration of that vision by a colleague and friend, the late A.K. Ramanujan and another colleague, C. Masica and, in particular, Emeneau's excellent article 'Diffusion and Evolution in Comparative Linguistics' (1965), I have adopted, from about 1980 on, the structural and areal approach to the linguistic, anthropological and cultural phenomena of the Nilgiri area. Very kindly, M.B. Emeneau wrote, in 1989, "Nilgiri areal studies have been begun by Zvelebil (1980), and already show interesting results".³ And again, in a paper on 'Linguistics and Botany in Nilgiris',⁴ "This essay in general owes much to Zvelebil's proposal of treatment of the Nilgiris as a linguistic microarea... The microareal treatment was begun by Zvelebil in 1980 (Emeneau 1989 and Zvelebil 1990)."

The Iṛula Dictionary should have comparative and etymological character, with strong emphasis on areal (or 'microareal') features of the Nilgiris. The entries are compared with corresponding lexemes of Ālu Kurumba and Badaga

³ "The Languages of the Nilgiris", in P.Hockings, ed., *The Ethnography and Biogeography of a South Indian region*, 1989, 133-4.

⁴ In P.Hockings, ed., *Blue Mountains Revisited*. Oxford University Press, Calcutta-Chennai-Mumbai, 1997.

(since for these languages, excellent sources are available thanks to D.B. Kapp and P.Hockings–Ch.Pilot-Raichoor), but also to some extent with Bēṭṭu Kuṛumba, Jēnu Kuṛumba (alias Kāḍu Nāyika), Shōlega and Paṇiyan.

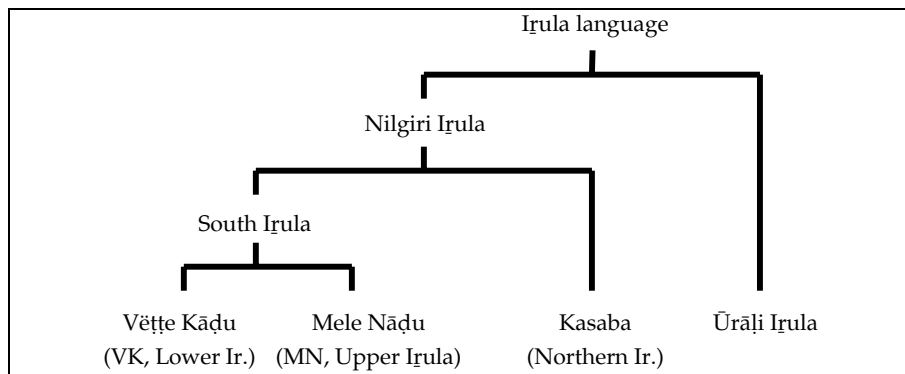
I would like to mention below several of these areal features. I believe (on the ground of some data gathered thus far) that we are entitled to speak not only of Nilgiri areal *linguistics* but, more generally of Nilgiri areal *typology*, including features of *culture* (material culture as well as e.g. mythology). In somewhat more precise terms, I would like to designate the region in question as the Nilgiri *multiethnic and multilingual convergence* area.

Iṛula Dialects

I argued the independent status of the Iṛula language several times, lastly in my 1982 publication.⁵ I have no reason to change my opinion expressed then: Iṛula is a “separate” preliterate South Dravidian language, a close relative to Tamil, with a few archaic features and a few striking innovations. Ēṛula na:ya or Iṛula language manifests four different dialects, exemplified well by the Ir. words designating “red colour”:

- Mele Nāḍu (MN) Ir. *kanape, kenape* (DEDR 1931, cf. e.g. Kota *ken*, Ka. *kempu*)
- Vēṭṭe Kāḍu (VK) Ir. *ratta* (cf. Ta. *irattam* < Skt. *rakta*-)
- Ūṛāḷi *cenga* (DEDR 1931, Ta. etc. *cem*- < * *kem*)
- Kasaba *kempu* (DEDR 1931, e.g. Ka. *kempu*)

The stemma indicating the dialect division of Iṛula may be written out as follows:



Since the main body of the entries in the etymological dictionary contains items current in the MN Iṛula dialect, these forms are, for the purpose of this dictionary, regarded as “unmarked”. This procedure is, in point of fact, in agreement with the actual overall importance and very probable numerical predominance of Mele Nāḍu Iṛula(s) over the other three dialect communities of the language. Strikingly diverging lexical entries current in the other three dialects are marked as such in the dictionary: VK = Vēṭṭe Kāḍu, Kas. = Kasaba, Ur. = Ūṛāḷi. Whenever it is necessary to indicate a Mele Nāḍu form it is marked MN.

⁵ *The Iṛula (Ēṛla) Language, Part III*, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1982, in particular pp. 174-78.

The Irula Phonological system

The language in its four dialects known to date contains 23 contoids, 10 vocoids, and 5 additional sounds.

Contoids

	Labial	dental	alveolar	domal	palatal	velar
Voiceless Obstruants	p	t	t̪	ʈ	c	k
Voiced Obstruants	b	d	d̪	ɖ	j	g
Nasals	m	n		ɳ		ɳ̠
Fricative	v	Trills	r and ɽ	Glide	y	
				Glide	.y	
Laterals			l	ɭ		

The nasal phonemes are *m*, *n*, *ɳ* and *ɳ̠* [ŋ]. Palatal nasal is a predictable variant of /n/. /n/ is thus a single phoneme with three phonetically conditioned positional variants: dental to postdental in the neighbourhood of *t*, *d*, and initially; dento-alveolar in the neighbourhood of *t̪*, *d̪* and intervocally; palatal in the neighbourhood of *c*, *j*. /n/ has contrastive function in a limited number of items, e.g. *mãna* son: *mana* mind. Another phoneme with extremely restricted occurrence is the domal glide /y/, e.g. *va.y* to wipe, rub, scrape. The contrast of /r/ : /ɽ/ is not equally valid in all the dialects. When fully preserved (as with most Ūrāli speakers), /r/ is a dento-alveolar tongue-flat trill, whereas /ɽ/ is a back alveolar tongue-retracted trill, e.g. *ve:ru* root : *ṽe:ɽu* another.

Vocoids

i	ĩ	ü	u
e	ẽ	ö	o
	ä	a	

Length is contrastive, e.g. *nila* moon : *ni:la* blue.

Additional sounds

s – in Indo-aryan loanwords, rarely in other loans

ʂ – in IA loanwords, rarely in other loans

ɳ̠ – in a few items in dialects when not positionally conditioned and hence unpredictable, as in Ur. *pāñ̠ɖi* pig.

ɽ – in Ta./Ma. loanwords and when imitating Ta. pronunciation, e.g. Tamilized Ir. *vā̃ɽi* path

w – in a few items in several districts, e.g. VK *og̃gwe* mother.

Long consonants are treated as sequences of identical sounds, e.g. *kallu* [kál:u] stone. /u/ in most unstressed positions and in almost all final positions has the predictable variant [u̠], a somewhat centralized, retracted, only partly rounded back high vowel, e.g. *irundu* [írundu̠] having stayed. /c/ is almost predictable either as [s] or [ʂ] in loanwords, e.g. *ca:mi* [sá:mi] lord, god, *kacta* [káʂta] / [káʂ̠ta] trouble.

Length is indicated by /:/; occasional nasalization by /~/.

Sources of the Dictionary.

As mentioned above, a very considerable majority of the entries in the Dictionary were provided by my chief informant, P. Sivaraj of Kunjapene, son of Puliyan, of the Kuppä Kula, Mele Nāḍu Irula tribe, born in 1953. Hence, the majority of all entries are MNIr lexemes, and since they form the bulk of the Dictionary, and since the MN dialect is the Irula sociolinguistic “standard” (economically, socially and culturally the most important of the four dialects), these entries are as a rule unmarked. Apart from the data provided by P. Sivaraj in 1981 specifically for the Dictionary, the following sources were used:

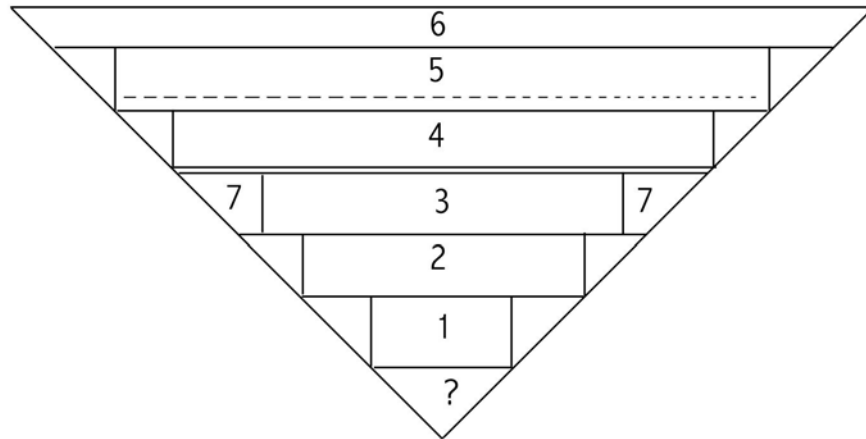
1. The two glossaries appended to Zvelebil, K.V., *The Irula language*, Wiesbaden, 1973 (indicated if necessary as ILI-1) and *The Irula (Ērla) Language – Part II*, Wiesbaden, 1979 (indicated as ILI-2).
2. Lexical items occurring passim in Zvelebil, K.V., *The Irula (Ērla) language – part III*, Wiesbaden 1982, and in Zvelebil K.V., *The Irulas of the Blue Mountains*, Syracuse University, 1988.
3. Zvelebil, K.V., “The Body in Nilgiri Tribal Languages”, *JAOS* 105.4 (1985) 653–74.
4. Fieldnotes gathered during fieldtrips in 1968, 1976, 1978 and 1981 with the view of compiling a comparative dictionary of Nilgiri languages.
5. personal communication Prof. M.B. Emeneau and Prof. D.B. Kapp.
6. Burrow, T., and M.B. Emeneau, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1984.

Various layers of Irula lexis and instances of areal features

The “Wortschatz” of Irula as reflected in my lexical data does not fundamentally contradict the hypothesis that a pre-Dravidian (?) Melanid population which forms the bulk of the Irulas anthropologically adopted (or was made to adopt) an ancient pre-Tamil or proto-Tamil dialect which was superimposed almost totally on their native (pre-Dravidian?) speech, and that this speech-form became the core of the Irula language as we know it.

To go yet deeper into the the past, there exists some very striking and perhaps, originally, rather close connection between Nilgiri Irula, Ūrālī and Shōlega, and a yet deeper specific relationship between Irula, Muḍuga, Shōlega, and Ālu and Pālu Kuṛumba (probably some other Kuṛumba languages included).

The Various layers of Irula lexicon may be symbolized (in a simplified manner) by the following sketch:



In this sketch,

- ? represents 'enigmatic items', "deep down" in the lexicon, without any etymological connection: substratum?
- 1 – items occurring only in Iṛula, so far without convincing etymology.
- 2 - items found only in Iṛula plus one more Tamil and/or Malayalam dialects; also items occurring only in Iṛula and Old Tamil (or rather, some early form/s of Tamil) ± sporadically in some other Dravidian language.
- 3 – items found only in Iṛula and or more Kuṛumba languages (Ālu and Pālu Kuṛumba, Muḍuga, Jēnu Kuṛumba, Bēṭṭu Kuṛumba) and Shōlega. This is an important layer of the lexicon since I propose a specific Iṛula-Kuṛumba-Shōlega linguistic plus cultural relationship (this cultural relationship being convincingly demonstrated in mythology).
- 4 – items found in Iṛula plus some other language(s) of the Nilgiri area (other than Kuṛumba and Shōlega only): the proper realm of Nilgiri areal linguistics.
- 5 - items found in Iṛula, one or more Tamil and/or Malayalam dialects, some others South Dravidian non-literary language(s), and some other SDr language.
- 6 – items with plausible SDr or Dravidian etymological connection, with or without typical Iṛula developments: the majority of Iṛula vocabulary.
- 7 – Peripheral layer of obvious borrowings from Badaga, and/or from non-Nilgiri language (mostly Tamil, Malayalam or Kannaḍa, but also from Indo-Aryan and English).

Items 'below' the double line go back to a hypothetical proto-Iṛula-Kuṛumba-Shōlega entity; items 'below' the interrupted line go back to a hypothetical Nilgiri microareal linguistic reservoir.

To quote a few illustrations of each of these seven groups:

- ? – *ḍēkēṇe, ḍōkēṇe, dekkāḍa* (VK) panther; *bunḍri* (VK) grasshopper: *riē-, riā-, ri:ya-* a kind of edible tuber (*riēkaṅgu, riyaḍu:* etc.); *a:li* small vegetable garden, small plot of cultivated land.
- 1 – *vēṇḍi, vēṇḍi* idol of deity (cf. DEDR 5530? 4438? 5529?); *anducu* beauty (cf. DEDR 2328 ?); *omuda, omeda* heap (cf. DEDR 5065?); *a:re* digging stick (cf. DED 371?); however, this item goes more probably with 4094 Ta. *pārai* “crowbar, small hoe”; Ka. *pāre* short hoe, etc.
- 2 – *meguru, megaru* (VK), *moyiru, möyiru* (MN) hair: Yerukala *mogurū,* Korvī *magara,* Kaikāḍi *magri* (DEDR 4704): retention from pre- or proto-Tamil **makVr;* *algane:ra, algapo:du* evening: DEDR 235 old Ta. *al* night, darkness, evening, *alku* night, afternoon, *alkal* night; found also in Malayalam and Kurux. Irula has preserved the old Ta. form in current use.
- 3 – *mattu* (etymology?) lip(s) in all Ir. dialects: Pālu Kurumba, Muduga *mattu;* *ja:ya* (etymology?) trance, possession by deity, demon, divination: Ālu Kur. *já:ya* [dza:ya] Prophezeiung; *muññā* [muṅṅæ], *mañe* [maṅe] son (DEDR 4616): Ālu Kur. *maña* Sohn; Jēnu Kur. *maṅṅ;* Bēṭṭu Kur. *mañṅnu,* Shōlega *maña* [maṅṅ].
- 4 – *kunni, künni* bee (DEDR 1867): Ālu Kur. *künni,* “Insekt, bes. Biene”, Pālu Kur. *kunni* bee, Kota *kuṅy* id.; *bugari, bugiriya* a large bamboo flute (DEDR 4239): Ālu Kur. *búguri* bamboo flute, Pālu Kur. *bugiri* id., Kota *bugi:r* flute, Toda *puxury* Toda flute, Badaga *buguri* id.
- 5 – *mani* to talk, speak (DEDR 4671): Ko. *mayṅ-*, Tuḷu *maṅipuni, manipuni;* *mā:* rain (DEDR 4753) Ta. *maṅai,* Ma. *maṅa,* Ko. *may,* To. *maw,* Ka. *maṅe,* Koḍagu *maḷe,* Tuḷu *maḷe:* South Dr. and Tulu **maṅay.*
- 6 – *mēkku* wax (DEDR 5082): Ta *meṅuku* cow-dung, wax etc. through to Brahui; *i:ppi* fly (DEDR 533): Ta. *i* fly, bee etc. through to Brahui; *pammu, pa:mu* ripe fruit (DEDR 4004): Ta. *paṅam* etc. through to Malto; *mele* mountain (DEDR 4742); Ta. *malai* etc., through to Brahui.
- 7 – *la:ba* profit (< Ta./Skt.); *badilu* reply (< Ta./Urdu); *sku:lu* school (< Engl.).

There is also a small number of items occurring (as far as our knowledge goes) only in Irula, Tamil-Malayalam, and one of the Kurumba languages: Ir. *ku:re* house (DEDR 1904): Ta. *kūrai* sloping roof, small hut, Ma. *kūra* hut, thatch, Bēṭṭu Kur. *ki:ri* house.

Some of the enigmatic items may ultimately be connected with known etymologies; thus *a:li* small lot of cultivated land may be perhaps connected with DEDR 4112 Ta. *pāri* temple, town, city, town of an agricultural tract, Ko. *va:y* < *pa:y* fields nears village which are ploughed in the sowing ceremony, Ka. *ha:i* field near village.

The areal features, i.e. features of phonology, morphology, lexicon, semantics (and even some mythemes) which define the Nilgiris as multiethnic and multilingual convergence area were discussed in some detail in my most recent publication *Nilgiri Areal studies*, Charles University in Prague, 2001, Introduction, pp.21–33. It has been demonstrated, e.g., that centralized vowel phonemes form part of the phonemic inventories “of Toda, Irula, Ālu Kurumba, Muḍuga, Jēnu Kurumba, Shōlega, Bēṭṭu Kurumba and Paṅiyān”,⁶ i.e. of eight Nilgiri languages. Another areal feature, occurring in Kota, Toda, Irula, Ālu Kurumba, Bēṭṭu Kurumba and Paṅiyān, is the three-way contrast among dentals, alveolars and retroflexes in addition to labials, palato-alveolars and

⁶ See D.B. Kapp, “Centralized Vowels in Ālu Kurumba”, *JAOS* 107 (3) 409-26, 1987.

velars.⁷ There are yet other unique and peculiar phonological developments found in some Nilgiri languages. A few features could be quoted from the realm of morphology, and we know at present a considerable number of lexical units with only Nilgiri etymologies and no related etyma elsewhere, and/or which may be regarded as Nilgiri areal words.⁸ Even several semantic features seem to be specific for at least some Nilgiri languages.

Arrangement of entries

The order of entries is that of the Devanāgarī alphabet, with letters and diacritics added in agreement with the Irula phonological system in the following sequence: *a a: i i: u u: e e: o o: ai au ä ä: ī ī: ü ü: ë ë: ö ö: k g ṅ c j ṭ ḍ ṇ ṭ ḍ t d n p b m y r l v r .y l v s ṣ r.*

Double (or more) phonological shapes of the same entry are due to dialectal differences. The assignment of word-classes is purely functional; the labels designate functional “parts of speech” as valid in contemporary Irula speech.

Several model entries

I would like to include here just eight “model” entries to show that almost every entry is linguistically and culturally interesting, relevant or even important. The entries were chosen at random from the data under preparation.

1. ákkara, ákkarä n. ear-wax (VK); *kà:d'ákkara* (VK) ear-wax (specif.). ILI-2, 1. Cf. Ālu Kur. *akára* “Kopfschuppen”; Bad. *akkure* dandruff, scurf; Vēṭṭuvar (S. Bhattacharya) *kaaram* ear-wax. Cf. DED S 55 Ta. *acarū* dandruff, scurf; scab in sheep and goats; *ayarū* excrescence resulting from a sore; *akir* a kind of scurf. Ka. *agaru*, *hagaru*, *adaru*, *aduru* dandruff. Another possible connection: with DEDR 3811 Ka. *hakku* crusted or dry mucus or rheum, scab, Ta. *pakku* scab of a sore, dry mucus of the nose, etc. It is possible that ultimately all these items are related (? ***pak-V-* > **hak-* > *ak-*) cf. Te. *pakku* scab, Ga. (S³) *pakku* dried portion of any bodily secretion, scab.
2. *a:yiraka:la künni* n.cpd. is interesting for several reasons: first, it is a compound of three members; the meaning is “centipede”, lit. “insect of one thousand legs”. Second, more importantly, it shows that its last component, *künni* (Cf. DEDR 1867 *kunni*, Bhattacharya, 1958; ex. DED{S} 1403) has a broader and more general meaning than the one given in DEDR, i.e. “bee”. It seems that, in fact, the proper designation of '(honey) bee' is *te:nukunni* / *ī:nukünni* (which is attested in my data) while *kunni* / *künni* designates “insect” in general or, in fast speech, may be used for the more precise *te:nukunni*. Finally, it is also interesting that we have here a compd. of *a:yira* derived ultimately from IA (DEDR App.11 / Skt. *sahasra-*) “thousand” with Dr. *ka:lu* (DEDR 1479) ‘leg’ and Ir. *kunni* / *künni*, so far without etymological connection, strictly a Nilgiri word, found in three Ir. dialects, in Pālu Kur. *kunni* and Kota *kuny*.⁹
3. *a:re*, *a:re* n. (simple) digging stick with sharp end. This is obviously a very important tool used in gathering tubers and roots, and in the swidden fields. Its picture occurs in Zvelebil,

⁷ Cf. G. Diffloth, “The South Dravidian Obstruent System in Irula”, in H. Schiffman and C.M. Eastman (eds.), *Dravidian Phonological Systems*, 1975, 47 - 56.

⁸ Cf. e.g. pp.26 - 29 of the 2001 Prague publication, or, in particular, M.B. Emeneau, “Linguistics and Botany in the Nilgiris”, in: *Blue Mountains Revisited*, 1997, pp.74 - 105.

⁹ Cf. my “Etymological and Cultural Notes on Irula Lexis”, in *Ex Pede Pontis*, Prague, 1992, 279 - 87.

1982, 97.¹⁰ Sometimes it is called *gaḍepare* cpd. etc., however, this tool is rather a pick-axe (see below). According to a Mele Nāḍu myth (ibid. pp.228–9), it originated from a *velli taḍi* silver stick, given to the earliest Irulas by Paramaśiva. According to a comment on the Central Ūrālī Myth (ibid. 230 ff.), the Shōlegas told the Ūrālīs how to dig tubers with digging sticks (*pa:re*). This comment offers its etymology: DEDR 4093 Ta. *pārai* crowbar, small hoe for cutting grass, Ma. *pāra* iron crowbar, lever, bar used for digging, Ko. *pa:r*, To. *pa:r* “crowbar” etc. DED(S) 3367. It occurs also in Bad. cf. *a:re* / *ha:re* n. crowbar (made by Kotas), and in Mala Adiyar, Mala Ulladan tribal speeches as *pāra* wooden digging stick. The Irula word may be a loan from Badaga. *gaḍepare* (transcribed by me previously incorrectly as *gaḍepare* and etymologized incorrectly as DEDR 984 + 3317) is a compound to be compared with Ālu Kur. *gāḍḍa-pā:re* “Eisenstab mit zugespitztem vorderen Ende (wird zum graben verwendet)” (D.B.Kapp). The first part of the cpd. remains a problem. I would prefer a connection with 984 Ka. *gaḍḍe*, *geḍḍe* “any bulbous root”, but 1148 Ka. *gaḍḍe* “a mass, lump, concretion” is also a possibility, though more remote. The second component is certainly 4093 as in *a:re*, *a:re*. The short vowel [ā] occurs because it is in the second member of a compound; the - r - in Irula form of 4093 may be a mistake on my part. Thus the Ir. term for this sort of pick-axe/digging stick could possibly be glossed as “tool used for digging bulbous roots”.

4. *a:li* n. small (private?) vegetable garden; small cultivated field. This word designates a small area of cultivated land gained by the slash burn process in the jungle; a small forest-field or forest-garden (cf. Zvelebil, 1982, 101-2 ; W.A.Noble 1978).¹¹ This very frequent, current term presents an etymological problem. There may be possibly a connection via * *ha:li* < * *pa:li* < ** *pa:ri* with DEDR 4112 Ta. *pāri* town of an agricultural tract, Ko. *e:r iṭ va:y* (< *pa:y*) fields in village which are ploughed in the sowing ceremony, Bad. *ha:i* / *ha:yi* “farmland near a village” (BED 581; Emeneau in Lg. 15.45, 1939, *ha:l* “field near village”). DEDR 4112.
5. *ebbukaṭṭe* the typical Nilgiri plant of *Strobilanthes*, conehead, the term found in various shapes in Irula, Ālu Kurumba, Toda, Kota and Badaga; it is one of the most convincing areal etymologies. The Ir. term is a compound, since Ālu Kur. has *kaṭṭe* for any Str. species as well as *ebbu-kaṭṭe* “üppig blühende *Strobilanthes* Art” (D.B. Kapp). For Toda, Emeneau has recorded *kaṭ*, cf. further Kota *kaṭ* and Bad. *kaṭṭe*. Bad. has in addition also *hebbukaṭṭe*, plus a number of toponyms connected with this plant. Emeneau has provided the original form, DEDR 1154 * *kaṭṭay*. As for the Bad. *hebbu-* and Ir. and Ālu Kur. *ebbu-*, D.B. Kapp has come up with a very plausible etymology for this part of the compound, namely * *per-pu:-*, i.e. ‘big blossom’, so that, finally, the Ir. *ebbukaṭṭe* would correspond to * *per-pu:-kaṭṭay*.
6. *ga:vu* n. blood sacrifice; ritual sacrifice; then, sacrifice in general. This is culturally a most important term, while it is easy to come up with its etymology. Cf. Ālu Kur. *gá:vu* n. Opfer, (bes.) “Tieropfer (zur Besänftigung böser Geister...)” (D.B. Kapp). This is a loan from Ta. *kāvu* “sacrifice, oblation to inferior deities” (*Tamil Lexicon*), cf. Pkt. *ghāu-kāma-* desirous of striking (CDIAL), Skt. *ghātuka-* killing. In terms of etymology, then, the Nilgiri words go back rather to the Prakritic form. In the Irula indigenous cult, the local place of worship contains usually two or three flat stones; the tallest represents the deity, the second, smaller one (if present) the deity’s śakti, and the third stone, *ga:vukallu*, represents the *ga:vutoga*, lit. “the deity of the ritual (bloody) sacrifice”. As a rule, if an animal is slaughtered in sacrifice, its blood is offered only to the *ga:vutoga*, i.e. the blood is poured over the *ga:vukallu*. The largest/larger stone is considered to be the *cele* idol, the image of the deity to which only nonbloody sacrifice is offered.¹²

¹⁰ *The Irula (Ērla) Language, Part III*, Wiesbaden, 1982. Fig. 7 offers drawings of six tools, all taken from my photographs.

¹¹ W.A.Noble, *Cultural Contrasts and Similarities among Five Ethnic Groups in the Nilgiri District, Madras State, South India, 1800-1963*, 1978.

¹² Cf. for a more detailed description, Zvelebil, *The Irulas of the Blue Mountains*, Syracuse University, 1988, p.144.

7. *mattu* n.lip; cf. Pālu Kur. *mattu*, Muḍuga *mattu* id. There is no DEDR entry for these words for 'lip'. This word of high frequency has so far no etymological connection, is thus a real Nilgiri isolate, and reflects perhaps a Proto-Iṛula-Kurumba word (although the Ālu Kur. word for "lip" is *duḍi* DEDR 3296).
8. *A:negaṭṭi* n. cpd., name of a Mele Nāḍu and Kasaba hamlet below Nilgiri slopes, 16,5 km NNE of Ootacamund, Ootacamund Taluk, revenue village Ebbanad. Tribal residential school. In existence before 1812. Another *A:negaṭṭi* refers to a former Iṛula hamlet 9 km ENE of Kotagiri (the site has old elephant tethers). DEDR 5161 +1148. Southern dialects of Ir. prefer the form *ā:ne*, even *e:ne* for "elephant"; *gaṭṭi* connects with Ta. *kaṭṭi*, Ka. *gaṭṭi* anything hardened, lump, clod. Hence, the meaning of the local name seems to be "solid lump of elephant dung". This may sound bizarre, but elephant dung is of considerable importance for the tribals. The name apparently points to (former?) density of elephant population in the area. Cf. Zvelebil, *JDL* XII, 1 (Jan. 1983) 48. Engl. versions of the name: Anaikatti, Anekatti, Anna Kattie, Anehatti. Bad. *A:nekaṭṭi*. The word for elephant (*a:ne*, *ā:ne*, *e:ne*, DEDR 5616) appears in several Iṛula local names, cf. also *A:nepaḷḷa* Elephant Valley (Coonoor Taluk), *A:nekēyi* "Elephant Trunk" (east of Coonoor) and *A:nemele* "Elephant Mountain" (5161 + 4742), Bad. *A:nemale Beṭṭu*, name of a mountain c. 2150 m in elevation, 31,5 km SW of Ootacamund.

The proposed Iṛula etymological dictionary would thus be not only a fundamental contribution to Nilgiri and Dravidian linguistics, but would also contain a wealth of cultural material, pertaining to the Nilgiris and to South India.