

**Nāyaka *Chefs-d’œuvre*
Structure and Iconography of the Śrīvilliputtūr Tēr¹**

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Abstract

Śrīvilliputtūr is an important base of Visnuism in the deep south of peninsular India. The area round is full of archaeological monuments relating to Śiva and the folk divinities of the Little Tradition, the

¹ The authors are obliged to Prof. Raju Kalidos (The Tamil University of Thanjavur) and Dr. Deepak John Mathew (IIT: Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad) for the expertise offered in the present final output of the article. The present article is the outcome of several field-visits to the Āṇṭāl-Vaṭapatraśāyī Temple at Śrīvilliputtūr by the authors. It may be of interest for like-minded scholars to know R.K. Parthiban (Parthiban Rajukalidoss) is working on “Architectural and Intangible Cultural Heritage: Significance of Āṇṭāl-Vaṭapatraśāyī Temple, Śrīvilliputtūr” (doctoral programme, IIT, Hyderabad). Rajarajan and Parthiban are associated with Prof. Raju Kalidos (to begin with his independent work) on the following two self-financed projects: 1) “Hymns for Cosmic Harmony”, 2) “Comprehensive Dictionary of Viṣṇuism” with reference to the ‘Nālāyiram’. These projects are completed making up a total of 4,500 pages.

‘Cīrukuṭiyōr’. With the advent of Ālvārs in the 7th-9th centuries CE (e.g. Nammālvār, Periyālvār, Āṇṭāl and Maturakavi), the landscape was thoroughly reset with temples of Viṣṇu; Tiruttaṅkal to the Tāmiraparaṇi basin (Navatiruppatis) being the nodal zone. The present article traces the Vaiṣṇava phase of Śrīvilliputtūr based on literary and epigraphical sources. The major concentration is on the massive wooden vehicle of Āṇṭāl and Vaṭapatraśāyī, called *tēr*. The structure and iconography of the *tēr* is the main theme for investigation occasionally throwing light on the changing phase of religious culture from the 7th to the 17th century. The *chefs-d’œuvre* from the *tēr* are examined in detail as they seem to include rare elements hitherto unreported. The article is appended with a plan of the city to understand the importance that the temple and the *ter* command within the organization of the *Himmelreich*. The photographic illustrations present an illuminating peep into the structure and iconography of the temple-car. The present temple-car is a remodeling of an old one that was demolished 100 years ago.

Keywords: Śrīvilliputtūr, *tēr* (temple-car), Nāyaka, Ālvārs, Periyālvār (Viṭṭucittan), Āṇṭāl, ‘Nālāyiram’, epigraphy (ARE), wooden monuments, iconography.

Ratham devamayaṁ² vipra sarvadevamayaṁ tathā

Sarvayajñamayaṁ ...

“The car-temple³ is an embodiment of the gods, an embodiment of the multitude of gods; An embodiment of all sacrifices...”

(*Viṣṇutattvasaṁhita* cited in Smith & Venkatachari 1969: 296, cf. Kalidos 1989: 17)

The temple-car is a significant monument of the Hindu temple in south India, particularly Tamilnāḍu famous for its wooden plinth decorated with a wide variety of sculptures bearing on Hindu

² *Mayaṁ* is an affix meaning “made of”, “consisting of”, “full of” (e.g. *kanakamayaṁ* “full of gold”, *tejomayaṁ* “full of luster”); *mayaḥ* denotes a demon, horse, camel, mule (Apte 2012: 426, cf. Monier-Williams 2015: 789).

³ The title of the doctoral thesis of Raju Kalidos (1981, published 1989) was “Temple Cars” that Professor Mario Bussagli, the external expert in his report designated “Car-Temple”.

iconography (Kalidos 1984: 153-73, fig. 1; 1988: 98-125, 1989: 397-400; Rajarajan 1998: 329-48, 2006: 199-201, Kandan 1999).⁴ Research on the temple cars of Tamilnāḍu is a deserving subject that deems encouragement in these days when the centuries-old monuments are withering due to the perishable nature of the material employed, i.e., wood and the perfunctory temple administration. Many of the priceless sculptures in the wood-carved cars had perished due to sheer negligence. It is highly warranted at least the remaining vestiges are properly documented.⁵ The present authors have examined the architectural vestiges in the temples of Śrīvilliputtūr.⁶ Most of the existing structures are of the Vijayanagara-Nāyaka period (16th-18th century).⁷ The present article throws light on the structure and iconographical heritage of the Śrīvilliputtūr tēr (Sanskrit *ratha*) on which subject the pioneer, Raju Kalidos (1981/1989) did his doctoral thesis and published a number of articles in *East and West*, *Acta Orientalia*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London 1988), and *Annali dell' Università di Napoli "L'Orientale"* (AION).⁸ We are

⁴ Ragnath (2014) has illustrated a number of temple-car sculptures in the Naṭunāṭu sector of the Tamil county. See also George Michell 1992: 29-52, Dallapiccola 1994: 11-24. These two micro studies follow the patterns set in Kalidos 1989: 397-400. Michell and Dallapiccola visited several temple-cars in the Kāviri delta in the company of Raju Kalidos at the time of commencing their work on "Chariots" (see Kalidos 2006: II, pl. VIII.2).

⁵ Writing in 1981, Raju Kalidos (1989: 15-16) says the total existing temple-cars are 866. A group of twenty architects would have taken 433 years for construction and the total cost 754-billion of Indian money. Today, it may be ten times higher than what was estimated in 1980.

⁶ The region round Śrīvilliputtūr is gorged with archaeological vestiges dating from the Early Pāṇḍya period of which R.K.K. Rajarajan's two articles on Mahiṣamardīnī and the Mātṛkās are published in *Religions of South Asia* (UK 2015, 9.2, 164-85) and AION (Naples 2015, 75, 101-118).

⁷ The possibilities of Tirumalai Nāyaka's (c. 1623-59 CE) Palace at Śrīvilliputtūr had been explored by the State Department of Archaeology, Tamilnāḍu (*nāḍu* and *nāṭu* are interchangeable, the latter word according to the *Tamil Lexicon*) on which a separate article is worked out by Parthiban.

⁸ For detailed history and variety of temple cars and chariots see Kalidos (1989: chaps. I & II). In popular usage a sharp distinction between tēr (temple-car) and ratha (chariot) is understood in Tamil elite tradition. One with a solid wooden plinth rising five to ten meters and temporary superstructure is called tēr and a permanent wooden car from base to finial is ratha (Kalidos 1989: pls. 7-9, 11 & 12-13, 15-21). Most scholars do not differentiate subtleties between the two. Chariot, ratha is not in the sense they appear in the *Vedas* and Tamil Caṅkam works.

informed the French scholars, Rita Reigner and L'Hernault were interested in the subject (Kalidos 1988: 100).

The Venue

Śrīvilliputtūr is a sacred center of Viṣṇuism that is located in district Virutunakar at the far end of peninsular India. Nearby is found another venue, called [Tirut]Taṅkal (Kalidos 2006: I, pl. V.2, Rajarajan 2012: 80, fig. 5) and away in the Deep South are the Navatiruppatis on the Tāmiraparaṇi basin. Moving further south, the Malanātu zone comes to picture of which Vanparicāram, Vaṭṭāru and Aṇantapuram (Kalidos 2015: 312-18) are set in typical Malainātu-Kēraḷa atmosphere of temple culture. The popularization of Viṣṇuism in this zone and Malainātu was mainly due to the inspiration of Nammālvār (Rajarajan 2013: 49), who had his base at Kurukūr/Ālvārtirunakari, one among the Navatiruppartis.

Śrīvilliputtūr is the Sanskritized name of Villiputtūr (*Nācciyār Tirumoli* 2.10) that appears redundantly in the hymns of Periyālvār and his adopted daughter, Āṇṭāl alias Kōṭai/Godā (c. 8th-9th century).⁹ The Great (Tamil *Periya[var]*) Ālvār hailed from a family of dedicated *brāhmaṇa* servants of the temple called *vēyar* or *paṭṭar/bhaṭṭa* (Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 4.10.10, 5.4.11, cf. Vijaya-bhaskara-*bhaṭṭar* 2015: 5).¹⁰ The hagiography of the mystics is told in the traditional register of Ācāryas such as *Guruparamparaprabhāvam*, e.g. *Ārāyirappaṭi* (for Periyālvār and Āṇṭāl see pp. 37-50) that profusely cites an early literature, the *Divyasūricaritam* (Sastri 1984: 106, 295, 636). Periyālvār was known as Putuvaiyar-*kōṇ* (Figs. 21a-b) or Paṭṭarpirāṇ-Viṭṭicittan/ Bhaṭṭanātha-Viṣṇusiddha (cf. Kalidos 2015:

⁹ The hymnal compilations of their works are Periyālvār's *Tirumoli*, and *Tiruppāvai* and *Nācciyār Tirumoli* perhaps codified by Nātamūṇi in the 10th century CE (Zvelebil 1974: 91).

¹⁰ They are today known as 'Veda-pirāṇ-bhaṭṭar' and do *kaiṅkaryam*, including participation in the *Veda-viṇṇappam* and recital of *itihāsa-purāṇas* in the temple. They claim their pedigree from Periyālvār and say they are dedicated in service of the Lord for the past 225 generations. The living *bhaṭṭar* is G. Anantarāmakrishṇaṇ and his son, A. Sudarsan (Figs. 21-22). Interview with the Temple Priests by Parthiban.

139), and Godā as Cūṭikkoṭutta-nācciyār.¹¹ The city was known by allied place-names listed below:

Villiputtūr¹² (Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 1.1.12, 2.2.11, 2.5.10, 2.6.10, 2.7.10, 4.2.11, 4.7.11, 4.10.10)¹³; *Nācciyār Tirumoli* 6.11)

Villiputuvai (*Nācciyār Tirumoli* 10.10, 13.10)

Putuvai (Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 1.3.10, 1.7.11, 1.8.11, 2.3.13, 2.4.10, 2.10.10, 3.1.11, 3.2.10, 3.4.10, 3.6.11, 3.7.11, 3.10.10, 4.1.10, 5.1.10, 5.3.10; *Nācciyār Tirumoli* 1.10, 3.10, 5.11, 7.10, 8.10, 12.10)

Tenputuvai (*ten* “southern” Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 1.2.21, 3.3.10, 3.9.11)

Tanputuvai, *taṇ* or *kuḷir* “cold or watery”¹⁴ (Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 3.8.10, 4.4.11)

Puttūr (Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 3.5.11, 4.5.10)

Oḷiputtūr¹⁵ (*oḷi/tejas* “illuminating” Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 1.4.10)

The above names suggest the place-name was basically Puttūr, Putuvai and Villi-putuvai. Later mythologies link the place with two archers¹⁶, *villi* who are supposed to have discovered the temple of Vaṭapatraśāyī¹⁷ on the site (Etirājan 2006: 519 citing the *Varāha*

¹¹ See *Tiruppāvai* (v. 30) notes the name, ‘Paṭṭarpirāṇ-Kōtai’; *Nācciyār Tirumoli* (1.10) notes *Putuvaiyarkōṇ-Viṭṭucittāṇ-Kōtai* “king of Putuvai, Viṣṇusiddha’s (daughter) Godā”.

¹² *Villi* (*Tiruccantaviruttam* 93, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 3.6.2) means “expert in archery”, *dhanurdhara*; may denote Dāśarathi-Rāma, Arjuna, Kāmadeva and Vīrabhadra (*Tamil Lexicon* VI, 3709).

¹³ The sacred centers of Viṣṇuism are called *tiruppati* (in ‘Nālāyiram’) or *divyadeśa* (in Ācārya commentaries, e.g. Nam Piḷḷai and Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai 12th-13th century CE). They were the meeting places for the “northern” and “southern” factions (cf. *teṇkalai* vs. *vaṭakalai* Kalidos 1976: 159-60) of South Asian Viṣṇuism; *teṇ-nāṭum vaṭa-nāṭum toḷa niṇṇa* (Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 4.9.11).

¹⁴ It was surrounded by fertile paddy fields, *viḷai-kaḷaṇip*-Putuvai (Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 4.1.10).

¹⁵ “Hamlet of the shining ant-hill” that is a hint at the origin of a temple on the site of an ant-hill, a common trend in mythological narratives, e.g. Tirumala-Tirupati (Ramesan 2009: 193).

¹⁶ The two archers are likely to be metaphors for Nara-Nārāyaṇa (i.e. Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa), alter ego par excellence in Hindu tradition (Williams 1983: pl. 206).

¹⁷ Vaṭapatraśāyī is an iconographical device that shows baby-Kṛṣṇa reclining on a tiny leaf of the banyan tree; *vaṭa/āl* (*Ficus bengalensis*), *patra* “leaf”, *śāyī* “recliner” (Kalidos 1989: pl. 34). Cf. *Periya Tirumoli* (6.6.1) of Tirumaṅkai Ālvār: *vaṭa-maratti-nilai-mēl-paḷḷi-kūṭiṇāṇ* (Kalidos 2006: I, 15).

Purāṇa). In any case the temple for Vaṭapatraśāyī was earlier in point of time and later the Āṇṭāl shrine was added. This shift over seems to have occurred during the Later Pāṇḍya period in the 12th-13th century (*vide*, epigraphical attestation below). The architecture and ongoing rituals of the temple would confirm more importance was added to Āṇṭāl vis-à-vis Vaṭapatraśāyī¹⁸; the Feminine Principle overtaking the Masculine. This is exactly a Vaiṣṇava parallel of the Śaiva-Śākta Mīnākṣī-Sundareśvara temple at Maturai (Rajarajan & Jeyapriya 2013: Annexure IV). The common platforms for the meeting of Vaṭapatraśāyī and Āṇṭāl are the various *maṇḍapas* in the Āṇṭāl sector and the temple-car oriented toward festivals, *mahotsavas* (Kalidos 1989: chap. IX).

The venue, *kṣetra* or *divyadeśa* (Rajarajan 2012 & 2013) and temple are closely intertwined in the organization of a city or village (Kalidos ed. 1993-1994). The temple constitutes the central sector from which the city expands as a flower (cf. Figs. 1-2), the streets studded like petals on the four cardinal directions¹⁹; cf. a model of the *rāyagopura* carved in the wooden plinth of the temple-car (Fig. 6). The temple-core plan of the city is true of the *tempel-stadt*, otherwise *Himmelreich* of Śrīvilliputtūr (Kalidos 1993-95), Tiruvārūr and Maturai (Rajarajan 1998: figs. 2-3). The focal points of the city are the *śrīvimāna* (the sacred temple) and the *tiruttēr/ratha* (the sacred temple-car). This is true of most temple-cities in Tamilnāḍu; the singularly unique other example is Pūri in Oḍiśa²⁰. Ancient Tamil literary works such as the *Paripāṭal* (-*tiraṭṭu* 7) and *Perumpāṇārruppāṭai* (ll. 373-411) eloquently point out this phenomenon pertaining to Maturai and Kāñci's *divyadeśa*-*Veḥkā* (Rajarajan 2007: 41-44, Kalidos 2016). The *Paripāṭal*-*tirattu* says:

Māyōṇ koppūḷ malarnta tāmaraip/ Pūvoṭu puraiyuñ cīrūr pūvin

Itaḷakattanaiya teruvam itaḷakat/ Tarumpokuṭ ṭaṇaittē aṇṇal kōyil

¹⁸ The Vijayanagara emperors were patrons of the temple. Kṛṣṇadevarāya (1509-29 CE) is assigned the authorship of the Telugu-*kāvya*, *Āmuktamālyada* telling the story of Viṣṇusiddha-Godā, i.e. Periyālvār-Āṇṭāl (Sastri 1977: 412).

¹⁹ In case of Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam the city is to the south of the temple. The granite hill accommodating rock-cut temples and structural *maṇḍapas* is the nodal point (Rajarajan 2015: 173-77, cf. Kalidos 2016a: 183-184), the Meru round which the temple-car moves.

²⁰ This later place-name is called 'Puruṣottamam' in the *Ārāyirappaṭi* (p. 116).

Précis: “The city of Maturai is the lotus emanating from the umbilicus of Viṣṇu; the central zone of pollen-grains is reserved for the temple of the Lord, the streets spreading out in all directions as petals”.

Cf. Nīlnīra uruviṇ Neṭiyōṇ koppūḷ/ Nāṇmuka oruvaṇ payanta palitaḷ

Tāmaraip pokuṭṭiṇ kāṇvarattōṇri/ Cuṭumaṇ ṇṅkiya neṭunakar

“The city encased within a rampart of burnt-bricks is on the likeness of petals of the lotus emanating from the navel of Neṭiyōṇ-Viṣṇu on which the four-faced Brahmā is seated” (*Perumpāṇārupaṭai*, ll. 402-405).

The vast street going round the temple was a hallmark of identification in case of a city, which is noted in the *Maṇimēkalai* (21.120): *koṭittēr vitiyum tēvar kōṭṭamum* “chariot moving street and the temple of the God”.

The Venue and the Temple in Epigraphical Sources

The earliest account of the city-temple is based on literary sources, and archaeological remnants (e.g. Mūvaraivenṇrāṇ rock-cut temple) in the region round within a radius of ten kilometers, datable since the 7th-8th century CE (Rajarajan 2015b). Solid inscriptional evidences²¹ are traceable since the later Cōḷa period of Kulōttuṅga 11th-12th century CE (ARE 1926: 551), later Pāṇḍya (Empire II²², ARE 1906: 525, 1926, 523, 526, 527, 535, 538, 541, 542, 550)²³, and Vijayanagara-Nāyaka rulers (16th-17th century CE) of Maturai (ARE 1926: 571, 573, 579, 582, 585, 586, 591)²⁴. Some interesting facets of the epigraphical sources are reflected hereunder (Parthiban 2015).

²¹ Most of the inscriptions (not less than 100) bearing on Śrīvilliputtūr are unpublished. We have cited the epigraphs numbered by the Epigraphical Survey of India, obtained by R.K. Parthiban from the Office of the Chief Epigraphist, Mysore.

²² The Pāṇḍyas of Empire I are dated during c. 575-920 and Empire II during c. 1190-1311 CE that coincides with the Islamic iconoclasts from the north (Sastri 1972, Kalidos 1976: 305). The Sūltān's of Mā'bar held charge of Maturai for a brief spell of 75 years which was retrieved by Kumāra Kampaṇa in 1371 CE.

²³ The Pāṇḍya kings (Empire II) appearing in inscriptional sources are Vīra (ARE 1906: 525), Vikrama (ibid. 550), Kulaśekhara (ibid. 526), Parākrama (ibid. 527), Sundara (ibid. 541), and Ativīrārāma c. 1573 CE (ibid. 591).

²⁴ Vijayanagara-Nāyaka donors are Sadāśīva-rāya (ARE 1926: 579), Devarāra-mahārāya (ibid. 571), Narasiṃha (ibid. 573), Rāma-rāya (ibid. 585), and the Nāyakas of Maturai (ibid. 582, 586, 591, 585).

The venue in later Cōḷa records was named Vikramacōḷa-*caturvedi-maṅkalam* in Rājarāja-Pāṇḍinātu falling within the jurisdiction of Madhurāntaka-*vaḷanātu* in Malli-*nātu* (ARE 1926: 551). Other inscriptions name the place Tirumalli-*nātu* (ibid. 532, 559) and Malli-*nātu* in Vīraviṇḍa-*caturvedi-maṅkalam* (ibid. 558). It was a *tiruppati* “sacred venue” (cf. *Cilappatikāram* 20.56, *Nācciyār Tirumoli* 8.9, *Kaṇṇinunṇiruttāmpu* 1, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 10.9.10) that could be the equal of *kṣetra* or *sthala* and *divyadeśa*. The designation *caturvedi-maṅkalam* is a clear pointer of the fact that the precinct falling within the bounds of the *agrahāra* (brāhmaṇical settlement) was meant for the residences of scholars’ proficient in the *Caturvedas* and that it was a tax-free zone, *brahmadeya* or *iraiyil-devadāna* (Sastri 1984: 578-80, 536, 540).

The temple was known as Vaṭaperuṅkōyil “Vaṭa[*vrkṣa*]patraśāyī (or ‘northern’?) Great Temple” (ARE 1926: 532, 550) and ‘Iṭarkeṭutta-perumāṇ-viṇṇakar’²⁵-Ālvār-kōyil “temple of the Lord resides in the unearthly temple to protect devotees from *iṭar/vigna* (obstacle)” (ibid. 557).

The Lord was Vaṭaperuṅkōyil-paḷḷikoṇṭaruliya-paramasvāmi “the Eternal Lord who is pleased to repose and bless from his abode at the temple of Vaṭaptraśāyī” (ARE 1926: 556), Vaṭaperuṅkōyil-Ālvāṇ “His Majesty of the Vaṭaptraśāyī Temple” (ibid. 541) and Aḷakiya-maṇavāḷaṇ “Handsome Groom” (ibid. 541).

The Goddess in her chamber was known as Cūṭikkoṭutta-nācciyār “Mother who decorated herself with a garland and offered it to the Lord” (ARE 1926: 535, 573, 576).

No detailed information relating to the foundation of the Vaṭaptraśāyī and Āṇṭāl temples is traceable. However, an inscription of Sadāśivārāya (1472 CE) provides endowments for the golden roof of the temple that was called *porukōyil* “Golden Temple” (ARE 1926: 679). The *tiruk-kōpuram* “Sacred Gateway” was branded the peak of Golden Meru, Axis mundi (ibid. 560). The *koṭimaram/dvajastambha* and *tirut-tēr* (sacred temple-car) were the donations of Tiruṇṇācampanta-*piḷḷai* (ibid. 559)²⁶. The *nantavaṇam* “flower

²⁵ *Viṇṇakar* “celestial abode” is the place-name suffix of the several *divyadeśas*; e.g. Tiru-*viṇṇakaram* (Oppiliyappaṅkōyil), Nantipura-*viṇṇakaram*, Kāḷicirāma-*viṇṇakaram*, Arimēya-*viṇṇakaram*, Vaikunta-*viṇṇakaram* (Nāṅkūr) in the Kāviri delta and Paramēccura-*viṇṇakaram* in Kāñcīpuram.

²⁶ Cf. the names of donors listed in the *Kōyiloḷuku* of Tiruvaraṅkam/Śrīrangam and [Tiruvālavāyūṭaiyār]-*Tiruppaṇimālai* of the Maturai temple (Rajarajan 2006: 23-260).

garden”²⁷ and *tirumatil* “sacred wall” of the temple are notified (ibid. 556, 561). Separate chapels for Cēṇaimutaliyār/Viśvakṣeṇa and Periyālvār existed by about the Nāyaka time (ibid. 533).

Most inscriptions pertain to the endowment of perpetual lamps, called *n[a]ontāvilakku*, *pūjās* “daily services”, *utsavas* “festivals” by way of land or sheep, feeding mendicant-*brāhmaṇas* or those dedicated to temple service, food offerings to the presiding gods and goddesses, gift of precious jewels and so on.

Few literary expressions in the hymns of Periyālvār and Āṇṭāl are standardized in inscriptions; e.g. ‘Putuvaiyarkōṇ-Viṭṭucittan’ as Putuvaiyarkōṇ-Viṣṇusiddha (ARE 1926: 575-78) and Āṇṭāl ‘Cūṭikkoṭutta-nācciyār’ (ibid. 535, 573, 575-578).

It is evident from the above review of epigraphy the temples, today called Vaṭapatraśāyī and Āṇṭāl and the temple-car had got an indelible place in the cultural matrix of the venue by about the Later Pāṇḍya (Empire II) and Vijayanagara-Nāyaka rulers of the Tamil country.

The Temple and Temple-Car

The Hindu temple and temple car are designed analogously in architectural design. The Hindu temple basically consists of three vertical members called plinth (i.e., *upapīṭha* and *adhiṣṭhāna*), *pada* or *bhīṭṭi* (accommodating *kumbha* and *koṣṭhapaṇjaras*) and *śikhara* standing on *prastara*, including *grīva* and *kalaśa*. These members are naïvely adjusted in designing the structure of the temple-car (cf. Rajarajan 1998: figs. 4-5) and fitted with wheels for *ulā* “procession” (Fig. 3 as on 2014, for an earlier make-up in 1980 see Kalidos 1984: fig. 19). The wooden plinth of the temple-car includes structural members such as *upapīṭha*, *adhiṣṭhāna*, *nārasana*, *siṃhāsana*, colonnade (Latin *pera* or pier) standing on *tērttaṭṭu*, *koṭuṅkai*, *grīva*,

The name *Ñāṇappirakāca-panṭāram* is listed in the *Tiruppaṇimālai*. Most donors listed in these traditional registers are of Vijayanagara-Nāyaka lineage.

²⁷ Within the present temple complex the *nantavaṇam* falls in between the Svāmi, popularly ‘Emperumāṇ’ in Tamil lore and Pirāṭṭi-Āṇṭāl shrines. It is supposed to be venue where Periyālvār discovered the baby-Āṇṭāl and brought up her brāhmaṇical tradition (see Nantavaṇam in Fig. 2). Cf. the *parppaṇac-cittārkaḷ* “brāhmaṇical boys” playing a role in the dream-marriage of Kōtai (*Nācciyār Tirumoli* (6.4).

śikhara and *kalaśa* (Kalidos 1984: fig. 1).²⁸ The plinth in a temple-car (Fig. 4) is an assembled mass of solid wooden frames outwardly finished with three dimensional sculptures or relief work. Each temple-car accommodates 200-300 sculptures in the massive plinth of which statistics have been presented in Kalidos 1989 (cf. Rajarajan 1998: fig. 1, 2006: 200, fig). The dismantled temple-car of the Rājēndracōḷīśvaram at Periyakuḷam included not less than 300 wooden sculptures (Kalidos 1989: 400) as listed in the following chart.²⁹

Structural part	number of images	<i>yālīs</i>	horse-riders	total
<i>Upapīṭha</i>	72	16	4	92
<i>Adhiṣṭhāna</i>	40	56	-nil-	96
<i>Nārāsana</i>	82	36	-nil-	118
Total	194	108	4	306

R.K.K. Rajarajan (1998 & 2006) had ascertained the Kūṭal Aḷakar and Maṇṇārkuṭi temple-cars as early as 1998 consisted of 164 and 212 sustainable images. He adds some sculptures were found lost (Rajarajan 1998, 2006). The Śrīvilliputtūr temple-car is one of the tallest in India (the solid plinth alone measure 7-8 meters (Fig. 4) and the total height ±30 meters (Figs. 3-4). The carved wooden plinth accommodates not less than 300 icons.

The present temple-car is said to have been created some 100 years ago on the model of a Nāyaka *tēr* that was dismantled; cf. image of Tirumalai Nāyaka in the old *tēr* (Rajarajan 2010: pl. CP XVI-1). The sculptures from the old *ter* were assembled in the *agramaṇḍapa* of the Vaṭapatraśāyī temple (*ibidem* 97-103, figs. CPXVI-XVII). A comparative study of the images in the present *tēr* and the old one is

²⁸ These architectural components are ingeniously accommodated to suit the structural make-up of the mobile-temple (cf. Kalidos 1989: figs. 2-3). The temple is *acala* (*iyaṅkā* “immovable”, *sthāvara*) and the temple-car is basically *cala* (*iyaṅkum* “movable”, *jaṅgama*), and by function *calācala* (*iyaṅkum-nīlāittēr* “movable-immovable temple”). Stone chariots or temples, e.g. Mēlaikkāṭampur (Kalidos 1984: 162, fig. 14; Lorenzetti 2008: fig. 3) are known as *iyaṅkā-nīlāittēr* “stationary immobile car”. It is because the temple-car remains immovable all through the year and operated only on occasions of *rathotsava* (car festival).

²⁹ The old temple-car documented in Kalidos (1989) is dismantled and a new one added. The sculptures of the withered car are heaped in a corner of the temple (cf. Parthiban 2013).

warranted to bring out the changing cultural scenario. Parthiban has thoroughly documented these images that may be reported separately.

The *chefs-d'œuvre* from the iconographic point of view is discussed hereunder. Though a chariot for Viṣṇu, the images belong to all categories of divinities that include Śiva, Devī and gods of the folk tradition. It is practically impossible to illustrate all the images in a succinct article. We present an overview³⁰ of consolidated list and then proceed with the examination of few select icons.

Viṣṇu: Ādimūrti, Śeṣaśāyī, Nṛsiṃha (in different modes: Hiranya-yuddham, Hiranya-vadham, Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṃha, Aṣṭamukhagaṇḍa-bheruṇḍa-Nṛsiṃha), Trivikrama, Mohinī in several modes, Rāma breaking the *dhanus*, Rāma seated on the shoulder of Hanumat, Garuḍa-Nārāyaṇa, Dancing Kṛṣṇa, Kāliyamardana, Gopīvastrapaharaṇa, Veṇugopāla shielded by the five-hooded Śeṣa, Kṛṣṇa with Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā, Churning the Ocean of Milk and so on.

Śiva: Vṛṣabhavāhana (different modes: stated on the bull or standing and with or without Devī), Vīrabhadra as Aghoramūrti, Naṭarāja, Ardhanārīśvara, Harihara (Viṣṇu-Śiva union merged; cf. Rajarajan 2012: fig. 9), Kaṇṇappa-nāyaṇār and so on.

Devī: An important form exclusive of temple-car iconography is Bhū with Ananta and *Kūrma* appearing at the base of the wooden plinth bearing the weight (Kalidos 1989: pl. 27), suggesting the cosmic symbolism of the temple-car; Sarasvatī seated on *haṃsa* “swan”.

Gaṇapati: *Sthānaka*-, Śakti-

Folk divinities: Kālī, *Cankili*-Kaṇṇuppu

Decorative motifs: Horse-riders, *yālīs* (Fig. 17), couchant lions, *surasundarīs*, instrument players, lady in toilet (Fig. 19) and so on.

Erotic motifs: A number of erotic sculptures appear in between the lines (Fig. 20).

The prospective images are taken up for further examination in the following account. These forms seem to be rooted in Tamil thought as adumbrated by the Ālvārs, particularly Periyālvār and Āṇṭāl or the

³⁰ The temple-car documented in 1980 by Raju Kalidos and ten years later by the same author with Gerd J.R. Mevissen (1990s) seems to be altered when we examined the monument during 2014-2015. Some sculptures are missing today. Few fallen images had been refitted with new icons.

canonic mandate stipulated in the *āgamas* and *śilpaśāstras* in addition to incorporating folk idioms.

Śeṣaśāyī

The Lord is reclining on the couch provided by a five-hooded snake (*pāmpumettai* Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 5.1.7, Kalidos 1989: pl. 33). The snake itself is rested on a *bhadrapīṭha*. A thoroughly decorated figure (Fig. 7), fitted with *sakalābharaṇas*; the head is decked with a *kirīṭamakuṭa*, supported by the twisted right-hand. The left-hand is laid up on the body that extends up to the knee. A stalk emanating from the umbilicus blossoms into a lotus in which the four-faced Brahmā is seated. The legs are massaged by Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī. *Garuḍapuruṣa* appears near the Lord's shoulder with hands held in *añjalibandha*, cf. the early Gupta image in Udayagiri-Vidiśā (Parimoo 1983: fig. 9). This is a rare element that is a pointer of his intimacy with the Lord having been placed so close to his *śiras* "head". Above the panel appear a *kīrtimukha*-fitted *prabhāvali* and two *vidyādhara*s floating in the air holding garlands in hands. North Indian images associate a cavalcade of divinities with Śeṣaśāyī (Parimoo 1983: figs. 26-8, 12, 14-16, 18-20, 22-24; missing in Settar 1991: pls. 132-133a-c). In addition to the Sanskritic lore (Desai 1973: 24-30, Parimoo 1983), the Tamil *Periyatirumaṭal* of Tirumaṅkai Ālvār provides a graphic description of the Lord (Kalidos 2006: I 15-16).

Śeṣaśāyī is a coveted theme in early medieval art (c. 550-850), especially when the Lord appears in the *garbhagrha* of the rock-cut temples at Tiruttaṅkal, Tirumeyyam, Cīnkāvaram, Maliyaṭippaṭṭi and Nāmakkaḷ (Kalidos 2006: I, pls. I-III, V.2). The *aṣṭāṅga-vimānas* of Paramēcura-*viṇṇakaram* in Kāñci and the Kūṭal Aḷakar temple at Maturai accommodate the *sthānaka*, *āsana* and *śayana* Mūrtis in the three vertical chambers of this unique temple-type, missing in other parts of South India.³¹ Tiruttaṅkal and Tirumeyyam are *divyadeśas* extolled in the hymns of the Ālvārs. The Tamil mystics perceive the *nidrā* is deceitful, *kaḷḷa-nittirai* (Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 5.1.7) and that it symbolizes *yoga*, *yōkanittirai* (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 2.6.5). Nammālvār is

³¹ Basically a Buddhist idea, this seems to have been adapted to the format of a Hindu temple; e.g. the dilapidated Temple no. 45 in the Sāñchī hill was meant for the seated, standing and *parinirvāṇa* (reclining) aspects of the Buddha (Mittra 1978: pl. VIII).

inquisitive and poses the question: “Lord, Thou were sleeping all these days, how long will you pretend to sleep” (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 9.2.3):

Kiṭantanāl kiṭantāy ettaṇai kālam kiṭatti?

This question is apt in application to several hundreds of reclining Mūrtis in South and Southeast Asian art.

Ādimūrti

A canonical form, an aesthetically appealing image of the type may be found in Cave III Badāmī (Kalidos 1996: I, pl. XXXVIII.2; cf. Kumaran 2015: 50, figs. 1-3). The Lord appears in the *garbhagrha* of the west-facing chamber of the Tirupparaṅkunṇam north group of caves (Rajaraṇjan 2015: 173-77, 182). In the wooden image under study (Fig. 8), Ādimūrti is seated on a *bhadrapīṭha*. The five hoods of Śeṣa appear behind the Lord’s head (cf. Kalidos 1989: pl. 33). The image is in *mahārājajalāsana* with the front right hand rested on the erect knee of the right-leg. He holds the *śaṅkha* and *cakra* in *parahastas*. Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī are seated to the right and left.

Three dwarfish divinities that appear below the pedestal are of considerable importance. The divinity with hands folded in *añjalibandha* is likely to be *Garuḍa*. Of the remaining two one stands and holds the right hand near the Lord’s suspended leg. She is fitted with a *karaṇḍamakūṭa*. This icon may be identified with Āṇṭāl.³² The seated male figure is likely to be Periyālvār. If our conjecture is right, this is a rare image on the subject. Which inducts the Ālvārs into the realm of iconography. Images of Āṇṭāl have been reported in the *vimāna* of the Vīra-Nārāyaṇa Perumāḷ temple at Kāṭṭumaṇṇārkuṭi (Kalidos 2012: fig. 17), the birth place of Nātamūṇi, and the *gopura* of the *divyadeśa*-Nantipura-*viṇṇakaram*.³³ These are very rare icons unreported in scholarly studies, and also due to the reason that Nappiṇṇai and Āṇṭāl came to be equated with Śrī and Bhū in Tamil tradition.

³² Raju Kalidos (2012: figs. 1-3) has reported an image of Garuḍa-Viṣṇu from the *grīvakoṣṭha* of the Kaḷḷarpirāṇ temple at Vaikuntam in which the Lord is united with three Devīs that are identified with Śrī, Bhū and Nappiṇṇai.

³³ Stucco images of the Nāyaka tradition, the twelve Ālvārs are found in a row in the latter temple. The images are unreported.

Nṛsiṃha

A *sthānaka* image portrays the *yuddham* with Hiranya (Fig. 9), the face of Nṛsiṃha is terrific with the mouth agape, eyes bulging and the teeth protruding. Multi-armed, he lifts Hiranya one hand holding the ankle, one the hip and the other the neck. Hiranya is equally dynamic and lifts a sword in the right-hand to strike the Man-Lion. He is a dwarf when compared with the majestic Nṛsiṃha (cf. *Tiruppāvai* 23, cited in Kalidos 1999: 171). *Garuḍa* is present near the foot of the Lord to the right. It is a rare element because *Garuḍa*'s presence in Hiranya episode has no mythological or canonical justification (Kalidos 1999: 168-82). Another dwarfish figure, Prahlāda is present on the other side.

Another image illustrates Hiranya *vadham* (Fig. 10). Nṛsiṃha is aghast, the triangular face with the mouth agape. He is seated on a *bhadrāsana* with Hiranya laid upon his thighs. Hiranya is in *pretāsana* mode and inactive. The Lord's *pūrvahastas* tear open the demon's bowels. One hand tightly holds the demon's leg. Two of the upper hands hold the pulled out entrails. Four of the hands seem to hold the *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *khadga* and *khetaka*. Prahlāda is present below the pedestal. According to mythology Nṛsiṃha is not supposed to carry any weapon.

A miniature carving appearing below the *vadham* scene illustrates Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṃha that relates to the pacification of the Ugramūrti when the terrorist pest is wiped out. Divinities of the Indian pantheon acquire wrathful forms to annihilate evil-mongers and when the destined job is complete they return to normalcy that is the original ethos. When *sattva* (manifest destiny) emerges victorious, *rājasa* (egoism) and *tāmasa* (*saṃhāra* "destruction", *vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām*) automatically vanish. Therefore, the Nṛsiṃha theme in Indian art is a narrative panel that includes several sub-variables beginning with the emergence of Nṛsiṃha from a pillar to Lakṣmī- or Yoga-Nṛsiṃha (cf. Kalidos 1999: pl. 1, 2006: I, pl. XLVII.1; Desai 1973: fig. 68; Settar fig. 20; Kalidos 1989: pl 54, 1999: pl. VI). The Upaniṣadic dictum is "Peace for the Milky Way" whether it is Pathāṅkoṭ, Paris or New York: *Oṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ*.

Aṣṭamukhagaṇḍabheruṇḍa-Nṛsimha

A very rare theme in Indian iconography, a similar image was discovered in the Gaṇapati *tēr* of the Tirukkāmeśvara temple at Villiyaṇūr (Kalidos 1989: pl. 77, Ragunath 2014: pl. 112) and subsequently on *gopura* of the Śrīraṅgam temple and painting in its Nṛsimha chapel (Rajaraman 2006: pls. 74, 118). The image under study is already reported (Rajaraman 1993: fig. ii). The ideological disputes among the Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas during the high Cōla period contrived a counter to Nṛsimha. He was Śarabhamūrti, combining the features of a man, animal-*simha* and bird-*śarabhaḥ* (cf. Kalidos ed. 1997: 61-88, figs. 5-6, 8); the earliest images are reported from the Cōla temples at Tukkācci, Tārācuram (Sita-Narasimhan 2006: pl. 41) and Tiripuvaṇam, the last enshrined in a separate chapel. An opposite of Śarabhamūrti was discovered by the Vaiṣṇavas that was *Aṣṭamukhagaṇḍabheruṇḍa-Nṛsimha* with eight faces, combining the features of *naraḥ*, *simha* and *gaṇḍabheruṇḍaḥ*. *Śarabha* eats a lion (i.e. Nṛsimha) and the *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍaḥ*'s snack included the *śarabhaḥ* (cf. Rajaraman 2015: 8-15, fig. 1).

The image under study is an *aṣṭamukha* “eight-faced” Nṛsimha.³⁴ The eight *mukhas* are supposed to be those of *mahāgaṇḍabheruṇḍaḥ* (a fabulous mythical bird), *simha* or *daṁṣṭri* “lion”, *vyāgra* or *nakhara* “tiger”, *aśva* or *sapti* “horse”, *kroḍa* or *koḷam* “boar”, *śakhāmukha* or *mārutam* “monkey”, *khagarāt* or *vajrasamānataṇḍa* “kite” and *bhallukaḥ* or *ṛkṣam* “bear” (Rajaraman 1993: 177, citing the *Śrītattvanidhi* 2. 60 based on the *Mantrasāra* of the *Atharvanarahasya*). The eight faces, arranged in the horizontal row, could be observed in the cited image. The Lord is seated on a *bhadrāsana* in *sukhāsana*. His suspended leg tramples *śarabha* that is found below the pedestal. It may be casually observed here the Ālvārs do not talk of sectarian iconic subjects such as the eight-faced Nṛsimha but make a note of mythical animals and aquatic creatures such as [y]āḷi (*Tiruvantāti* III, 71, *Nāṇmukaṇ Tiruvantāti* 47) and *makara[m]* (*Nāṇmukaṇ Tiruvantāti* 64, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 7.7.6). This is to

³⁴ We are not illustrating images in the present article that are already published. The image under notes was discovered by Gerd J.R. Mevissen in the 1990s when he visited the temple along with Raju Kalidos. Later Vidya Dehejia, Raju Kalidos and Rajaraman visited the temple to observe this unique icon.

confirm the sectarian form under note is a product of the later Cōla period.

Trivikrama

A coveted theme in Indian art, perhaps the most vibrant picture of the striding Lord may be found in Badāmī Cave III (Kalidos 2000: I, pl. XLI. 1). The wooden image under study finds the Lord lifting the right leg up to the forehead (Śrīvilliputtūr image illustrated in Kalidos 1983: fig. 3). Four-armed, the front right hand is gracefully extended parallel to the lifted foot. The front left hand is in *ūruhasta*. Two other hands seem to hold the *śaṅkha* and *cakra*. The upper part of the illustration is illegible and seems to portray flying *vidyādhara*s. Mahābali is seated near the Lord's foot to the right. His wife is found on the other side. Āṇṭāl's hymn on the striding Lord (*Tiruppāvai* 3) is recited in auspicious domestic rituals of ardent Vaiṣṇava families that promise peace and plenty for the cosmic multitude. To quote:

Ōṅkiyulakaḷanta uttamaṇ pērpāṭi ... Tīṅkiṇṇināṭellāmtiṅkaḷ mummāri peytu ... Nīṅkāta celvam nīraitēlōrempāvay

"Praise the Lord who has lifted the leg (to measure the worlds) ... The rains shall shower thrice a month without fail in the fields of the country around ... Dear girls! Enjoy the munificence of the Lord who offers all the riches."

This hymn is a pointer of the symbolism of the striding Lord who assures unfailing rains and all the riches that the devotee solicits. Āgamic sources pinpoint three different postures of the lifted leg, i) up to knee, ii) up to hip and iii) up to the shoulder and above, i.e. *ūrdhva* (Rao 1999: I, 164; for illustrations see Kalidos 1983: figs. 1-3, 5-6).

Rṣyaśṛṅga

Rṣyaśṛṅga was a celibate *ṛṣi* who was attracted from his forest-abode to conduct a Vedic sacrifice when Daśaratha wanted to beget children and propagate the Sūryavaṁśa (*Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bālakāṇḍa*, Cantos 11-15). The *ṛṣi* was the son of sage Vibhāṇḍaka of the lineage of Kaśyapa born to a doe (Dowson 1998: 268-69 citing the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, Mani 1996: 652-53) and had a small horn on his

forehead. In the arts *Ṛṣyaśṛṅga* is endowed with the head of a deer and called *Kalaikkōṭṭumuṇivaṇ* in Tamil (*Irāmāvatāram*, *Pālakāṇṭam*, 5. *Tiruvavatārappaṭalam*). The *Rāmāyana* of Vālmīki and Kampan do not present iconographic details of the *ṛṣi*. He had “sprung from the loins of Vibhāṇḍaka”, *dvijaśreṣṭha* “best among the twice-born” and was “resplendent as fire” (Vālmīki-*Rāmāyaṇa*, ‘Bālakāṇḍa’ *Sarga* 10: 23, *Sarga* 11: 13-21).³⁵

The illustration in the Śrīvilliputtūr *tēr* finds a dwarf buck-headed *ṛṣi*, and a man and woman in embrace. He is perhaps dallying in his forest abode in the company of amorous couples. Later, he was invited to Ayodhyā to conduct a *putrakāmeṣṭi-yajña* that may endow Daśaratha with male progeny. The deer-headed *ṛṣi* is a popular idiom in the *Rāmāyaṇa* art of Tamilnadu. Nāyaka paintings on the theme (cf. Fig. 11) have been spotted in the Saundararāja Perumāḷ temple at *divyadeśa*-Māliuṇcōlai/Aḷakarkōyil (Rajarajan 2012: 70-75) and Br̥hādāmbāl temple at Tirukōkaraṇam, early medieval rock-cut temple expanding into a macro-complex by about the Nāyaka time (Rajarajan 2006: 57-59).³⁶

Rāma seated on Hanumat’s shoulder

Dāśarathi-Rāma is seated in *pralambapāda* mode on the shoulder of Hanumat (Fig. 12). It is likely to portray one of the events related to the *Yuddhakāṇḍam* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Another person is found to the left with hands folded in *añjalibandha* who is likely to be Bhībhiṣaṇa. Such types of narrative sculptures are common in *tēr* (cf. Kalidos 1991: fig. 3). Hanumat is presented in *pratyālīḍha*, the archer’s attitude. Dāśarathi-Rāma and *vānara*-Hanumat is a good example of Emperumāṇ-Āṭiyār “Master-Slave” ethos in Tamil tradition. Emperumāṇ and *Āṭiyar/dāsa* (*Rg* Vedic “original tribes” [cf. *kūli* of

³⁵ Raju Kalidos (1989: 349-50) has reported five images of the stag-headed *ṛṣi* from the temple-cars at Kallītaikkuricci, Vaṭuvūr, Tiruvellārai, Tirumōkūr and Kaṇṇiyākumari; Mōkūr and Vellārai are *divyadeśas*. The total of the *Rāmāyaṇa* images in the catalogue (Annexure V) of the cited book includes 210 from the *Bāla* to *Yuddha-kāṇḍas*.

³⁶ The *Rāmāyaṇa* paintings of the Tirukōkaraṇam Temple were the subject for R.K.K. Rajarajan’s post-doctoral research in the Free University of Berlin under the Alexander von Humboldt *Stiftung*.

colonial India], variants Pakavar/Bhāgavata, Pattar/*bhakta*) are profusely cited in the Ālvārs' hymns.³⁷

In Tamil tradition, the Aṭiyār, Śrī, Bhū, Nappinnai and Āṇṭāl are on the same place (*infra*. Rukmiṇī-Satyabhāmā below). Therefore, Śrīvaiṣṇavism is only a superfluous ideology adumbrated by the Ācārayas during the post-Ālvār saga of Viṣṇuism in Tamilnāḍu that was a time of troubles for the Vaiṣṇavas; e.g. Rāmānujācārya vs. Kṛmikaṇṭhacōḷa. In this drama, an egalitarian researcher in Indian religious tradition could find Kūrattālvāṇ, a zealot Vaiṣṇava if Kṛmikaṇṭha was a fanatic.

Kṛṣṇa with Devīs

Kṛṣṇa appearing with his beloved mistresses, Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā is known as Rājagopāla.³⁸ Rarely the three make their presence felt in the traditional art of Tamilnāḍu. They appear in the temple-car due to the reason there are several Kṛṣṇa temples in the region round the Śrīvilliputtūr city; e.g. one near the Tāhsildār office, one on the Maturai road and few in the villages around (Venkatesan 2010). The presence of Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā with Kṛṣṇa is deemed essential in the *Dhyānamuktāvalī śloka* 6. 51, cited in *Caturviṃśatīmūtilakṣaṇam* (pp. 38-39):

Satyabhāmāmratnacelaṃtrinatamabhinavaṃ barhibarhāvacūḍaṃ

Bhāmā rukmiṇyadhīśaṃ viharāṇarasikaṃ śrāvaṇe rohiṇījam/

Yaṣṭim pāṇāvavāme dadhatamitaradoḥ kūrpare satyabhāmā

Mālbayāsīnamīḍe grathikacabharaṃ Kṛṣṇa madyantaramyam//

“He who is black, wears red garments, stands in *tribhaṅga*, wears the plumage of the peacock (cf. Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 3.4.1-10*) on his tiara and is present as Lord of Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā in their middle, holds a *daṇḍa* in a hand and has the left elbow rested on the shoulder of Satyabhāmā is the Lord Kṛṣṇa”.

³⁷ See for example; ‘Aṭiyār’: *Tirumālai* 42, *Nācciyār Tirumoli* 8.10, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 9.8.7; ‘Pakavar’: *Tiruvāymoḷi* 4.4.9, 5.2.9; ‘Pattar’: *Pallāṇṭu* 4, *Nāṇmukaṇ Tiruvantāti* 55, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 7.9.3.

³⁸ The presiding God of the Maṇṇārkuṭi temple in the Kāviri delta is Rājagopālasvāmi (Rajarajan 2006: 64-66, 199-201), which temple is endowed with two temple-cars. The figure illustrated in Rajarajan (2006: pl. 140) is a *goratha* (see note 7 above).

* This *tirumoli* deals with the march-past or parade of Kṛṣṇa and his cowboy-mates at the evening twilight in the streets of Āyypāṭi/Gokula decorated with plumages of peacocks and carrying Palmyra-leaf umbrellas to enthuse the damsels of Gokula (cf. Randhawa 1982: pl. 24).

It is also added Rukmiṇī holds a bunch of flowers (*infra. kalpaka?*) in her hand, and is decorated with gem-fitted *sakalābharaṇas*. She is called the daughter of Bhīṣma, *Bhīṣmakasyā sutayā*. The same text (*śloka* 9. 52) adds Rukmiṇī is to the right, and Satyabhāmā³⁹ and *Garuḍa* to the left (cf. *Cilappatikāram*, 17 ‘Āycciyarkuravai’, *Eṭuttukkāṭṭu*).

Periyālvār refers to the mythologies of Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. Rukmiṇī is said to have eloped with Kṛṣṇa unwilling to marry Śiśupāla (TM 3.9.3, 4.3.1). Uruppiṇi is the Tamilized form of Rukmiṇī. Satyabhāmā wanted to possess the *Kalpaka-vṛkṣa* in the *Indra-loka* that was accomplished by Kṛṣṇa’s tour de force (TM 1.10.9, PTM 4.6.8). Satyabhāmā’s name is not specified. She is called *kātali* “sweet-heart” for whom the *karṇapakak-kāvu*⁴⁰ was transported from the *Intiraṇ-kāvu*; *kāvu* meaning “garden” or “forest”⁴¹, lost in Tamil usage but active in Malayiālam, e.g. Āriyaṇ-kāvu on the way to Śabarimala.

³⁹ Mythological equitation would place Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā on a par with Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī. Sītā is considered the daughter of Bhūdevī. Later Nappiṇṇai ushers in Tamil lore, and at once stage Āṇṭāl comes to the picture, followed by Mīrābāi of Rājasthān (Santhana-Lakshmi-Parthiban 2015). Āṇṭāl and Periyālvār would say the consorts of Kṛṣṇa are countless; *patiṇārāmāyiravar-Tēvimār* “the Devīs are 16,000” (NT 7.9), *pallāyiram-perun-Tēvimār* “the chief queens are in several thousands (concubines left out)” (TM 4.1.6). The folk saying in Tamil is: *āttumaṇala eṇṇiṇṇālum Arjunaṇ poṇṭāṭṭiya eṇṇa muṭiyātu* “even the sands on seashore are counted; the number of the wives of Arjuna is difficult to calculate”. Arjuna (Nara) was the *śiṣya* of *guru*-Kṛṣṇa (Nārāyaṇa). As is the teacher so is the student.

⁴⁰ She followed Kṛṣṇa in an expedition to dislodge Narakāsura. The *asura* was the son of Bhūdevī who got the boon that he should be killed only by his own mother. For a rare sculptural illustration from the Śārngapāṇisvāmi-Kumbhakoṇam temple-car see Kalidos (1989: pl. 46). For Narakāṇ/Narakāura see *Tiruviruttam* 78, Periyālvār-*Tirumoli* 1.6.4.

⁴¹ The *Tamil Lexicon* fails to give the meanings “forest or garden”. *Kāvu* is “sacrifice to inferior deities” (*Tamil Lexicon* II, 905, cf. *Peruṇcollakarāti* VI, 90). *Kāvutal* is the elite form of folk *kāvaṭi* meaning “to carry on the shoulder as a palanquin” or “a pole with a weight at each end” and “to bear or sustain anything heavy on arms or the head” (*ibidem*).

The image under study partly conforms to the enumeration of *Dhyānamuktāvalī*. Kṛṣṇa is in the center, resting his left hand on a *daṇḍa*. Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā are to the right and left. Rukmiṇī seems to hold a bunch of flowers in her left hand.⁴² Up above appear two *vidyādhara*s and *kīrtimukha* fitted *prabhāvali*. The love-bound *bhakti* modes of Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā are analogies for the two polarities of *prapatti* in which the devotee prostrates or commands the Lord come to his presence that the Ācāryas epitomized in the philosophies of *markaṭa-nyāya* and *mārjāra-nyāya* in which Viṣṇu is cartooned a monkey or cat.

The presiding God, Kṛṣṇa of the *divyadeśa*-Kāvaḷampāṭi in the Kāviri delta is accompanied by his consorts Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā (Parthiban & Rajarajan 2016: 243). In Tamil tradition these two goddesses are united with Kṛṣṇa in *divyadeśa*-Āypāṭi (Gokula) and Rukmiṇī alone in Dvārakā. It is a matter for speculation why Rādhā or Mīrabāī are not associated with Kṛṣṇa in any of the *divyadeśas*. It might suggest Rādhā and Mīrabāī did not acquire cult value that the Tamils attached to Nappiṇṇai (Srinivasan 1972: 51, Kalidos 2012: fig. 5) and Āṇṭāḷ (Kalidos 2012: figs. 1-3).

Mohinī

An aftermath to *Kṣīrābdhimanthana* (Kalidos 1986: figs. 1-2) is the incarnation of Mohinī (Fig. 13), one among the twenty-six *aṁśāvatāras* of Viṣṇu. The gods and demons were in a wrangle to share the *amṛta* “ambrosia” obtained from the Ocean of Milk, *Kṣīrābdhi*. Since the participants in the churning process were the *asuras* and *devas*, both had legitimate shares. The demons were already powerful by virtue of their brute strength that they deployed in the giant’s way. Therefore, Viṣṇu-Mohinī came as a mediator to distribute the nectar. According to another myth, Mohinī was destined to follow Bhikṣāṭana to the Dārukavana to beguile the *ṛṣis* (cf. Kalidos 1986: 184-86, figs. 4-9, 11).

⁴² This is because even though the *kalpaka-vṛkṣa* was obtained as a prize for Satyabhāmā all the flowers on their own flew to the house of Rukmiṇī because she was a meek personality following *prapatti* that the later Ācāryas propagated. Satyabhāmā was a commanding, rather termagant wife.

The Ālvārs employ the beautiful word, Aḷakiyār[ṇ] “He-beauty” (*Nāṇmukan Tiruvantāti* 2, *Tiruvaymoḷi* 6.2.6, *Periya Tirumoḷi* 9.2.10, Kalidos 2006: 16) to denote Mohinī. Aḷakiyāṇ is sharply contrasted with Aḷakan “the Handsome” (*Tirumālai* 16, *Periyālvār-Tirumoḷi* 2.4.4, 2.8.1, 3.3.6, *Nācciyār Tirumoḷi* 4.10, 11.2); cf. Aḷakar of the Māliṛuñcōlai temple, an elite epithet (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 2.10.2) transformed folk in contemporary usage. Interestingly, Cōmacuntaran is Somasundara, popular in folk circles as Cokkanāṭaṇ (He who makes one swoon by enchanting handsomeness).⁴³ These are very popular personal names in the Maturai circle.

The image under study finds Mohinī stark nude standing gracefully exhibiting here wide pudendum (cf. Comfort 1997: 23, 94). Several dwarfish persons are found round her that might be demons or *ṛṣis*. The various *maṇḍapas* in the Āṇṭāl enclave of the Śrīvilliputtūr temple accommodate a number of Mohinī images appended to the pillars (cf. Rajarajan 2006: pls. 195-197, 326). The proliferation of Mohinī icons in Nāyaka art may have an idea to convey. It suggests the wanton beauty of woman deluding man; they attract men by their alluring eyes and captivating breasts as the Tamil *siddhas* believed; *viḷiyāl uruṭṭi mulaiyāl kavār*, and for the *siddhas* the *yoni* is a graveyard, *piṇakkuli* where original sin originates (Rajarajan 2006: pl. 196, Jeyapriya 2009: pls. VI-VII). Therefore, a righteous gentleman is warned against deluding beauties. Devī is *māyā* both a creative and destructive force; she destroys terrorism and upholds *dharma*, e.g. Mahiṣāsura (Jeyapriya 2014: 46-47).

Non-Vaiṣṇava Imagery

Śrīvilliputtūr is deep-rooted in Vaiṣṇava tradition. It was to begin with a base of Śaiva and folk religious cults. Many of the early medieval rock-cut temples for Śiva are concentrated in the region round within a radius of 60 kilometers; e.g. Kaḷukumalai, Mūvaraveṇṇāṇ, and so on (Kalidos 2006: I, 90-92, Maps 1, 3-4). Therefore, the Vaiṣṇavas had

⁴³ The *Tiruvilaiyāṭal-ammāṇai*, a minor literary work of the folk genre, i.e. *ciṇṇilakkiyam* calls the Lord Cokkan (v. 16) or Cokkar (v. 2) or Cokkan (v. 16), Cokkēcar (vv. 3, 13, 53), Cokkaliṇkar (vv. 20, 41) and Cuntaraṇ/Sundara (vv. 6, 9). Kṛṣṇa was the black-beauty and Śiva the “golden-hued”, *poṇṇār-mēṇiyaṇ* (*Tēvāram* 7.24.2).

no other option but to acclimatize the primitive religious traditions within their fold.⁴⁴ Though a typical Vaiṣṇava temple-car, the Śrīvilliputtūr *tēr* accommodates a number of icons relating to Śiva, Devī and the folk divinities. Another incentive was the catholicity of the Nāyakas' religious policy. Basically Vaiṣṇavas, most Nāyaka rulers of Maturai took Śaiva names such as Viśvanātha (*fons et origo* c. 1529), Vīrappa (after Vīrabhadra), Cokkanātha, Muttuliṅga and the femme Mīnākṣī (*bout* c. 1736). The *Tiruvālavāyūṭaiyār-Tiruppaṇimālai* adds Tirumalai Nāyaka (1623-59) built the *Putumaṇḍapa* (cf. the Tirumalai Nāyaka-mahal in Fig. 2) and the vast *teppakkūḷam* at Vaṇṭiyur in addition to donating several thousands of gold coins every time he visited the Mīnākṣī-Sundarēśvara temple (Rajarajan & Jeyapriya 2013: 115-21, 140-41). Maṭavārviḷakam, close to Śrīvilliputtūr is a vast Śiva temple harmonizing Nāyaka paintings of the Śiva-*tiruvīlaiyāṭals* on the ceiling of its *mahāmaṇḍapa*. They promoted religious amity by introducing cosmopolitanism in setting religious iconography. This way few Śaiva, Devī and folk deities had found a pretext to coexist with Viṣṇu in the Śrīvilliputtūr *tēr* (cf. contra in Rajendran 2013: 88-94).

Kaṇṇappa Nāyaṇār

Kaṇṇappa Nāyaṇār was one among the *aṟupattumūvar* (sixty-three Śaiva devotees) of Tamil tradition whose hagiography is retold in the *Tiruttoṇṭar Purāṇam* of Cēkkiḷār (12th century CE); earlier noted in *Tiruttoṇṭattokai* of Cuntarar, *kalimalinta-cīr-nampi* Kaṇṇapar “Lord Kaṇṇappa that was devoted to Śiva with overflowing excellence” (*Tēvāram* 7.39.2). Kaṇṇappu (means paste the eyes, *appu* is folk for *appa* “father”, also “paste”) is said to have offered his own eyes to the bleeding Mukhaliṅga of Kālatti (modern Kālahasti in Āndhra, cf. *Tēvāram* 6.282.9). Śiva caused this miracle in order so that the world may understand the finest traits of *bhakti* taught by a *vēṭaṇ/kirāta* to a *brāhmaṇa*-Civakōcariyār. He being the *caṇḍālaguru* of Śaṅkarācārya

⁴⁴ This is because Nammālvār discourages the worship of *paradevatās* (*mleccha*-gods) and animal sacrifices. Cf. *Tiruvāymoḷi* (5.2.4): *Itaṅkoḷ camyattai yellām eṭuttuk kalaivaṇa pōlē/ Taṭaṅkaṭar pallip perumāṇ ...* “The Lord is reclining on the snake in the Ocean of Milk in an effort to root out alien religions ...” *Itaṅkoḷ camayam* would literally mean the “*vāmācāra* cults”.

considered the devoted service of an original tribe (*infra. tolkuṭi*) was much more felicitous than an *āgama*-bound *ācārya* professed to Śivaism.

The image under study (Fig. 16) finds the hunter Kaṇṇappa-nāyaṇār (of the *tolkuṭi* “primeval clan”, *maṛakkuṭi* “family of heroes”, *kāṇavar* “foresters” *Tiruttoṇṭar Purāṇam*, 12, vv. 9, 18, 229) carrying a bow and arrow as he is said to have belonged to the family of forest-hunters, called *cīrukuṭiyīr* “Thou of the little Tradition” (cf. *Cilappatikāram* 24.11-15). Kaṇṇappa is plucking his own eye with an arrow. The toe is fixed on the pupil of the *mukha*-Liṅga for identification to paste his eye when he becomes blind after the operation. The hunter is carrying a few musical instruments on his shoulder. The *purāṇam* says Kaṇṇappa was the name given by Śiva (*ibid.* v. 228). A folk theme, it is elevated to iconographical status by the presence of *vidyādhara*s on top of the panel. Śiva as ‘Kīrāṭa’ is a cherished theme in the later medieval art of Tamilnāḍu, cf. Nagarajan (1993: figs. 1-2) reporting a wooden image and painting.

Aghoramūrti/Vīrabhadra

Vīrabhadra is a terrific manifestation of Śiva. He was created from the matted locks of the Lord to destroy the sacrilegious sacrifice of Dakṣa. The *Śrītattvanidhi* (3.4-5, 55) presents his iconographical features under the heads Aghoramūrti and Vīrabhadra. The mythological versions leading to Vīra’s creation and activities are summarized in Jeyapriya (2009a: Chap. I, 49-50). The *maṇḍapas* in the Āṇṭāl enclave of Śrīvilliputtūr accommodate a number of images in their sculptural pillars. Interestingly many of these are in dancing mode (Jeyapriya 2009a: 50 cf. the *Aparājitapṛccha* that talks of dancing Vīra). The *maṇḍapas* in the Āṇṭāl sector of the Śrīvilliputtūr temple house a number of images.⁴⁵ Vīrabhadra was the war god of the Nāyakas, and the *kula-devatā* of the Telugu-speaking *nāyaka*-[Naiḍu] of Tamilnāḍu (Jeyapriya 2009a: 55-57, 97-99); cf. the Nāyakas of Keḷadi erected temples for the Lord at Keḷadi and Ikkēri (Rajaraman 2006: 85-87).

The temple-car under study accommodates an image of the type in partly dancing mode. The Lord is *dvibhuja* (cf. the *dvātriṣatbhuja*

⁴⁵ For illustrations see Jeyapriya (2009: 61 plates, including temples) and Rajaraman (2006: pls. 87, 89-92, 245-47).

and *daśabhuja* types in the *Śrītattvanidhi*), lifting a *kheṭaka* in the left hand and holding a *khaḍga* in the right hand that is striking a fallen demon, presumably Dakṣa or one among those that participated in the latter's ignominious *yajña*.

Devī seated on *haṃsavāhana*

In Hindu iconography the Goddess seated on the *haṃsa-vāhana* (*haṃsa*, *haṃsā* Monier-Williams 2005:1286, *haṃsa* Liebert 1986: 99-100) is Sarasvatī⁴⁶ or Brāhmī (Panikkar 1997: 66). Ratī's usual *vāhana* is a parrot and occasionally she may be mounted on a *haṃsa* of which images are found in the Śrīvilliputtūr *maṇḍapas*. The image under note finds the Goddess seated in *mahārājāṭīlāsana* on the *haṃsa*. The objects in the two hands are not visible. Flying divinities appear up above the panel. The heads are not three if to be identified with Brāhmī. Another image of the same mould is found in the car in which case the Goddess is playing the *vīṇā* (Fig. 14), unmistakably Sarasvatī.

Dancing Kālī

A *daśabhuja* image, it shows Kālī dancing with the legs arranged in *ardhamāṇḍalī* mode and an awkward doleful face. The hands carry different weapons such as *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *khaḍga*, *śūla* and so on. Two instrument players are found on either side. Flying divinities appear up above. This image was part of a *ūrdhvatāṇḍavam* panel in which Śiva presents an acrobatic *karaṇa* to defeat Kālī in a dancing contest (Kalidos 1996: figs. 8-10; fig. 10 illustrates dancing Kālī, all these images are from the temple-cars of Tamilnāḍu). The image of *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*-Śiva is missing in the car. Kālī is the associate of Vīrabhadra in mythology sent on a mission to chastise Dakṣa.⁴⁷ Images in Karnāṭaka find the goat-headed Dakṣa and Kālī in

⁴⁶ The *Śrītattvanidhi* is exhaustive on Śakti iconography making note of Mahā-Sarasvatī (1.5), Brāhmī (1.43), Vidyādevī (1.86), Catusṣaṣṭikādevī (1.91), Sarasvatī (1.102), Vāgīśvarī (1.1.31) and so on (Santhana-Lakshmi-Parthiban 2014: 72-85).

⁴⁷ For an interesting account of Kālī cult see Ramachandran (1993-95: 177-90). The cited author is no more; he was working in the Asiatic Society, Calcutta and subsequently in the Puduchery Central University.

diminutive form standing to the right and left of Vīrabhadra (Jeyapriya 2009: pl. 23). Independent images of dancing Kālī are reported (Soundararajan 2003: fig. 4) from Amargol in Karnāṭaka.

Nṛtta-Gaṇapati

Gaṇapati in iconographical illustrations is usually presented in the three modes: *āsana* (seated), *sthānaka* (standing) and *nṛtya* (dancing). Mostly the Lord is seated. In the present case, a dancing image finds Śakti seated on his lifted thigh (Fig. 15). It seems the proboscis is touching the vagina of the Goddess. It is a very rare combination of Nṛtta-Śakti-Ucchiṣṭa Gaṇapati (Rawson 1984: fig. 60, Kalidos 1989: pl. 71). The *Śrītattvanidhi* citing the *Mudgala Purāṇa* talks of thirty-two forms of Gaṇapati of which Śakti- (3.74), Ucchiṣṭa- (3.77) and Nṛtta- (3.84) are independent forms (Rajaraman 2001: 379).

Symbolic images

The temple cars at the base find wooden bars fitted on axles in cross-wise pattern accommodating images that are supposed to be bearers of cosmic burden of which the temple-car is symbolic (Kalidos 1989: fig. 27). These may be the equals of *kumbāṇḍas*, *kīcakas* and *kiṅkaras* of the Indian artistic tradition (Savalia 2007: 11-31). A number of such images appear in the Śrīvilliputtūr car. Few other images defy identification. These are enumerated in the following account.

- i) A four-armed threatening God carries a *gadā* and iron-chains in four hands. He wears a *cannavīra*-like ornament. He is likely to be *caṅkili-Kaṛuppu* (“chained-Black”, folk *Kaṛuppaṇa-cāmi*) who is supposed to be virulent and always kept under control by being tied by an iron-chain (Fig. 17). It is a rare image. Raju Kalidos told us he had spotted a similar image in the Tirumeyyam temple-car. During a recent visit to Kurrālam, we found a separate chapel for this divinity in the outer *prākāra* of the temple.
- ii) Another divinity of the same mould carries a noose and blows the conch. He is called *caṅkupūtam* (*śaṅkha-bhūta*) in folk tradition.
- iii) A *ṛṣi* is endowed with matted locks of hair that are abnormally long (cf. the *nāga-sādhus* of the *Kuṇḥamelā*). His head is protected by a five-hooded snake that seems to be Śeṣa (Fig. 18).

iv) A lady seems to have emerged from her toilet who is helped by assistants to tide up herself (Fig. 19). It is not clear whether this image could be considered in the context of spinsters undertaking a *nōṇṇu/vrata* in the *Tiruppāvai* (cf. vv. 2 & 27) to take the hand of Araṅkaṇ-Viṣṇu. However, Periyālvār in *Tirumoli* (3.7.8) talks of a love-sick maid, *mālurraṇaḷ* who is decorated with a golden necklace and looks at the mirror, tosses her bangles, applies lipstick (?) and waits for the beloved Lord.

v) A number of erotic images are spotted that should form part of a separate study. We have found the image of a *virāt-puruṣa* laid upon a cart whose phallus is abnormally long (Fig. 20). It could not be a portrayal of the Śakaṭāsura myth of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and earlier repeatedly told in the hymns of the Ālvārs (Kalidos & Rajarajan 2015: see under ‘cakaṭam’). The myth of Śakaṭāsura is not associated with erotic symbolism in any of these accounts. A similar image is reported from the museum accommodated in the 1000-pillared hall of the Mīnākṣī-Sundaresvara temple at Maturai (Rajarajan 2006: pl. 320).

vi) A spectacular vision of the erotic imagery in temple-cars is presented in Kalidos (2006: 211-18, 389-96, figs. 93-97). For a review of this phase of the temple-car imagery see Taddei (1994: 557-58). The middle row cross bars at either extremity to the front and back are fitted with *yāli*-like bearers of burden. In other temple-cars, they are supposed to be supported by the *Kūrma*. Above the figure of *Kūrma* Bhūdevī is present (Fig. 5). The head of Bhū is masked by five-hooded Ādiśeṣa. The heads of these appear at the front plinth-base of the temple-car while the tail/legs appear on the rear part of the car. The symbol is that they bear the weight of the cosmic car.

Concluding remarks

The present study is a bird’s eye view of the temple and the temple-car at Śrīvilliputtūr. We have reported the select icons. A significant aspect of the Śrīvilliputtūr temple-car imagery is that the thoughts of the Ālvārs had played a vital role in the make-up of the general tenor of composition.

A word regarding the methodology for study of Nāyaka art may be added in conclusion (Rajarajan 2015: 169-71). The Hindu temple reached its optimum level of evolution during the Nāyaka period with the core, Brahmassthāna, expanding in concentric squares. There were chapels for Āvaraṇamūrtis (e.g. Ālvārs and Ācāryapuruṣas), several

maṇḍapas (e.g. *kalyāṇa*-, *vasanta*-, 100-pillared, 1000-pillared), *gopuras* in cardinal directions and above all *vāhanas* (e.g. Śrīraṅgam). The *vāhanas*, including the temple-car, *tēr* were vital to demonstrate gorgeous *utsavas*. The hero during these festive days is the temple-car. Therefore, a scholar working on Vijayanagara-Nāyaka art is expected to be thorough in his perception of the temple and its art heritage. Scholars of an elder generation disregarded the temple-cars. It is high-time that these monuments are given the due credit they deserve particularly in these days of international piracy of art. If you miss the temple-car you miss the temple, called “car-temple” by Prof. Mario Bussagli and “a temple on wheels” by Raju Kalidos.

Acknowledgement

The city-temple-plan is the work of Vijaya-Raghavan Vira-Visodhana (B.Tech., Department of Rural Technology Center, Gandhigram Rural University, Gandhigram, Tamilnadu).

Figures



Figure 1: View of the city and the temple, Śrīvilliputtūr



Figure 2: Plan of the city and the temple, Śrīvilliputtūr



Figure 3: Full view of the processional temple-car (2014)



Figure 4: Plinth of the temple-car (detail of fig. 3)



Figure 5: Bhūdevī and *Kūrma* bearing burden of the cosmic-car-temple, Śrīvilliputtūr Temple Car (hereinafter ŚTC)



Figure 6: Model *gopura* of the temple. ŚTC



Figure 7: Śeṣaśāyī, ŚTC

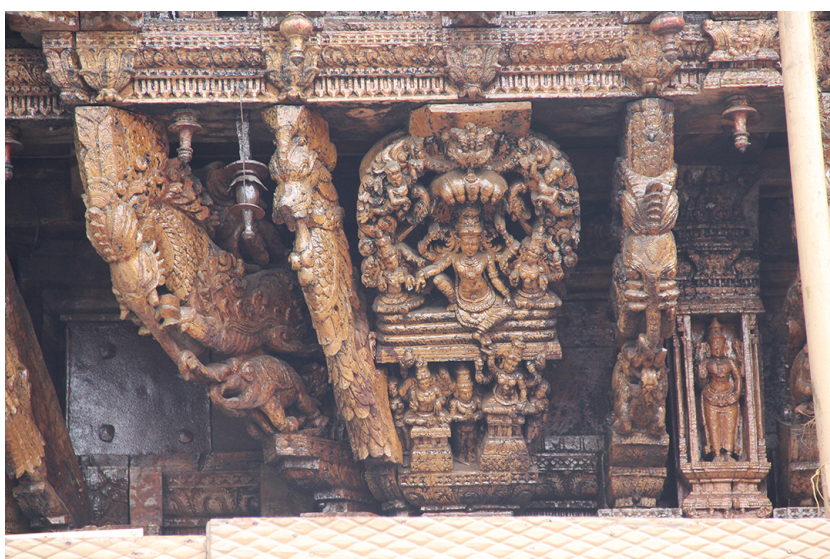


Figure 8: Ādimūrti, ŚTC



Figure 9: Nṛsiṃha-Hiranya-yuddham, ŚTC



Figure 10: (a) Hiraṇya-vadham & (b) Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṃha, ŚTC

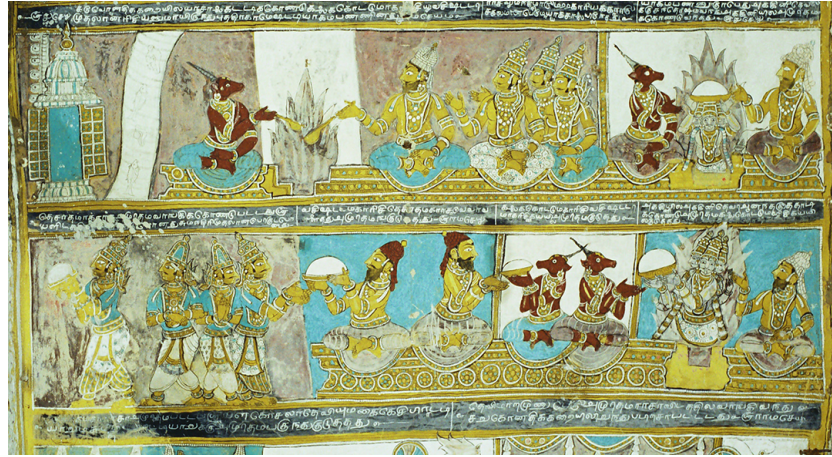


Figure 11: Rāyaśṛṅga, Nāyaka Painting, Saundarāja Perumāl Temple, Aḷakarkōyil



Figure 12: Dāśarathi-Rāma mounted on Hanumat, ŚTC



Figure 13: Mohinī, ŚTC



Figure 14: Sarasvati on *haṁsa-vāhana*, ŚTC



Figure 15: Śakti-Gaṇapati, ŚTC



Figure 16: Kāṇṇappa-Nāyaṇār, ŚTC



Figure 17: Caṅkili-Kaṇṇappa, ŚTC



Figure 18: R̥ṣi attended by Śeṣa, ŚTC



Figure 19: Lady in toilet, ŚTC



Figure 20: Virāṭpuruṣa on cart, ŚTC



Figure 21: Hereditary Veda-pirāṇ *bhaṭṭar* G. Anantarāmakrishṇan in his house with *pūjā* inheritance



Figure 22: Hereditary Veda-pirāṇ bhaṭṭar performing *Veda-viṇṇappam* during the Mārkaḷi Festival (2015) and his son A. Sudarsan

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