TEXT, INTERPRETATION AND RITUAL USAGE OF TAMIL ŠAIVA POEMS

By

DEBORAH LOUISE WALDOCK
TEXT, INTERPRETATION AND RITUAL USAGE OF TAMIL ŚAIVA POEMS

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTE

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ABSTRACT

This study is about the nature of two Tamil Śaiva poems, "Tiruppaḷiyclucci" and "Tiruvempāvai", their structure as text, the style in which they are interpreted, and the way in which they are used in ritual events. These two poems are narrative moments rather than longer narrative sequences. They are interpreted in commentarial literature, and in ritual, by situating the utterance of them as events in different narrative worlds. The significance of the poem is the significance of the event in a particular world. The meaning therefore changes from narrative world to narrative world, and even within the same narrative world if the poem is situated as a number of different events. In this study, the poems were generally situated in one or more of six narrative worlds: the ākam world of love, the puram world of heroism, the theological world of Šaiva Siddhānta, the world of the hero's biography, the world of the poet-saint's (Māṇikkavācakar) life, and the world viewed from the perspective of one's own life.

This study contributes to scholarship firstly as an understanding of Tamil Šaivism, by studying the interaction between the Tamil Šaiva poems, their interpretation and their use in ritual, which illustrates a basic style of interpretation within which there is considerable interpretive freedom. Secondly, this research contributes to the wider area of "Tamil Studies" in that it shows links between this style of interpretation, and that of the classical Tamil ākam and puram poems. Thirdly, this research contributes to performance and ritual studies by focusing on the "ritual text" as a text in itself, and by suggesting that the significance and principle of coherence of the "ritual text" lies in the specific situation in which it is created and interpreted, rather than in the nature of the source texts. Lastly, this study includes field research on two relatively new temples in the village of Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai, west of the city of Madurai.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the course of this research I have been fortunate to have received a substantial amount of valuable guidance and assistance. I would first and foremost like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Paul Younger for his ongoing guidance and patience, and for allowing me the freedom to explore without letting me go too far astray. Secondly, I would like to acknowledge the late Dr. K. Sivaraman for suggesting to me that an entire thesis could be written on the two poems, "Tiruppa[liyelucci]" and "Tiruvempavai", and for his introductions on my behalf to Dr. T. B. Siddalingaiah and Tiru T. N. Ramachandran. Thirdly, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. David Kinsley and Dr. Kay Kopperdayer, for kindly reading the draft of this thesis and providing suggestions.

An earlier version of part of the argument made in Parts I and II was presented in a paper entitled "An Example of Text and Interpretation in Tamil Culture" at the joint Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute - Canadian Asian Studies Association session of the 1993 Learned Societies Conference. I would like to thank all those who commented on my presentation, and especially Dr. Paula Richman who later read the paper and made valuable comments.

I would like to thank the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute for granting me a Junior Research Fellowship for 1990-91, and for facilitating my second research trip. I would also like to thank the Government of India for allowing me to conduct this research, and the various archives and libraries in Madras and Madurai for assisting me and allowing me to make use of their facilities.

I would like to thank the Department of Śaiva Siddhānta at Madurai Kamaraj University for granting me affiliation in 1990-91. Dr. Siddalingaiah, as Head of the Department during my first research trip, graciously welcomed me, guided me and gave me valuable introductions. Dr. S. Gangadharan, as Head of the Department during my 1993-
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Many people in India helped me in this research, and I would like to express my gratitude to three in particular. Firstly, my two teachers, Dr. (Munai)va) Ā. Ānantarācaṇaṇ and Dr. Gomathi Sōriamoorthi patiently guided me during both my field trips. Dr. Ānantarācaṇaṇ painstakingly read through with me most of the Tamil commentaries presented in this thesis, as well as other Tamil works. He also patiently explained many aspects of Tamil grammar and literature, and Śaiva Siddhāṇṭa theology. Dr. Gomathi helped me in two capacities, as a Śaiva Siddhāṇṭa scholar and as a singer at the Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai temples. She patiently explained to me aspects of Śaiva worship and theology. She invited me to participate in the "Pāvai Singing" at Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai, facilitated in every way my research there, and made every effort to make me feel at home. Her contribution to my understanding of the singing at Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai is thus substantial. Next, I would like to thank Tiru. T. N. Ramachandran for his guidance and hospitality during my first field-trip and for providing me with many editions and commentaries on Tiruvācakam from his personal collection.

I am indebted to all those who agreed to be interviewed, and who responded to my questionnaires. I am grateful in particular to several of the ōtuvaṇs and priests at Miṇaṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. I am also grateful to the people at the two Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai temples, in particular the ladies and priests for encouraging my participation and for responding to my many inquiries regarding their worship. I would also like to thank Mrs.
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Finally, I would like to thank Michilynn Dubeau, my colleague and friend, for reading various drafts, for making many valuable suggestions made all the more valuable by her first hand knowledge of my field-work area and for enduring the tedious job of being a "sounding board".
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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I have generally followed the scheme of transliteration found in the Tamil Lexicon:

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Tamil uses Sanskrit loan words, and there is usually more than one way of transliterating these words into Tamil, and then from Tamil into English. Since this is a thesis about Tamil works and worship in the Tamil language, I generally use a Tamilized form of Sanskrit words because, in my experience, Tamilized Sanskrit loan words have become Tamil words, and are pronounced and enjoyed in their Tamil forms as part of the Tamil language.

There are situations in which I have not followed the above scheme. Words that are found in an English dictionary, such as karma, appear as spelled in the dictionary and are not in italics. I have used the English transliteration of a Tamil name, if a person provided one. Tamil names of authors of works in English appear as they do in that work. I have used the common transliterated form of place names such as Madurai. The names of Sanskrit works such as the Śaiva Āgamas are transliterated directly from their Sanskrit rather than from their Tamilized forms. I have conformed to the standard transliterated form of some words such as Śiva and Śaiva Siddhānta rather than the strict Tamil forms of Civam, Civân or Caiva Cittânta. I have transliterated the Tamilized form, however, when referring to the manifestation of Śiva or other deities in particular temples in Tamil Nadu.
INTRODUCTION

This is a study of Tamil Śaiva poems: their structure, the style of their interpretation and the pattern of their use in ritual. In this thesis I have focused on two poems, "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷiyelucci". On the basis of an analysis of the characteristics of these two poems and the strategies utilized in their interpretation, I have articulated a style of interpretation and a particular view of text assumed by this style. This style of interpretation also provides a framework for understanding how these two poems are used in worship. I believe the perspective of text and interpretation presented here can be used to understand the way in which other Tamil Śaiva poems are interpreted and used in worship.

"Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷiyelucci"

The two poems studied here are included in the canon of the Tamil tradition of Śaiva Siddhānta which is found predominantly in Tamil Nadu, South India. Tamil culture and literature has a long and continuous history. Inscriptional evidence attests to the existence of the great Tamil kingdoms in the third century BCE. The earliest extant Tamil literature,  

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1 I use "Tamil tradition of Śaiva Siddhānta" to refer to the tradition which takes the twelve Tirumurai and fourteen Meykāṇṭa Cāttirām as their central texts (see below). Other traditions of Śaiva Siddhānta exist, such as those which emphasize some of the Sanskrit Śaiva Āgamas. The Tamil tradition acknowledges the Śaiva Āgamas (as well as the Vedas) as authoritative texts.

the classical poetry, is dated to at least the early centuries of the common era, and some scholars date parts of it to even a few centuries earlier.\(^3\)

The central texts of Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta are divided into two groups: the twelve \textit{Tirumūrai} and the fourteen \textit{Meykanṭa Cāttiram}. The first eleven \textit{Tirumūrai} are collections of devotional poems by a number of authors. The twelfth \textit{Tirumūrai}, commonly referred to as the \textit{Periya Purāṇam} (The Great Story), is a hagiographical account of the lives of sixty-three saints in poetic form. The twelve \textit{Tirumūrai} were composed between the third and twelfth centuries, although the dating of some of the texts is highly controversial. The fourteen \textit{Meykanṭa Cāttiram}, composed between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, are regarded as the core philosophical texts for this tradition.

"Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" are sections of the \textit{Tiruvācakam}, which is one of the two parts of the eighth \textit{Tirumūrai} composed by the saint, Māṇikkavācakar. Māṇikkavācakar has been placed as early as the third century CE and as late as the tenth, although most scholars place him in the ninth century. He is not included as one of the sixty-three saints whose stories are told in the twelfth century \textit{Periya Purāṇam}.\(^4\)

There are several accounts of Māṇikkavācakar's life. One of the earliest is found in the \textit{Tiruvālāvāyuṭaiyār Tiruvilaiyāṭai Purāṇam} by Cellinakar Perumparappu Puliyūr Nampi composed probably in the thirteen century. This text relates the "sixty-four sports of Śiva" in the Madurai area of Tamil Nadu. Four episodes of this text relate events in

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\(^3\) There are many discussions of the dates of the classical literature. For approaches to dating Tamil literature see Kamil V. Zvelebil, \textit{Companion Studies to the History of Tamil Literature} (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 97-101.

\(^4\) Glenn Yocum provides a discussion of Māṇikkavācakar's date in \textit{Hymns to the Dancing Siva: A Study of Māṇikkavācakar’s Tiruvācakam} (New Delhi: Heritage Publisher, 1982), 46-50. Paul Younger, an exception among current scholars, provides a fresh analysis of the available data and in agreement with the thirteenth \textit{Tiruvālāvāyuṭaiyār Tiruvilaiyāṭai Purāṇam} argues for a fifth century dating of the saint: Paul Younger, \textit{The Home of the Dancing Śivan: The Traditions of the Hindu Temple in Citamparam} (Forthcoming), c. 197-207 n. 9, 10.
Māṇikkavācakar's life. A full biography, the *Tiruvāṭavāraṭikal Purāṇam*, was composed in the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century.5

"Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷuccu" and "Tiruvempāvai" are associated with specific periods in the ritual cycle of Śaiva temples. "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷuccu" is primarily associated with the earliest daily worship period in which the presiding deity of a temple is awakened.

"Tiruvempāvai" (and also "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷuccu") is specifically connected with ritual activity during the Tamil month of Mārkaḷi (mid-December to mid-January). The singing of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷuccu" and "Tiruvempāvai" during these ritual periods was studied in two different temple settings in Madurai, South India: Miṇḍci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple in the heart of Madurai city and the Citti Viṇāyakar and the Nākamalai Murukan Temples in the village of Nākamalai Putukkōṭtai.

The Status of Current Research

A substantial amount of scholarly work has been done on classical Tamil poetry, including Śaiva and Vaiśṇava devotional poetry, Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam*, Śaiva Siddhānta theology, temples, and the prescriptive texts for Śaiva ritual, the Śaiva Āgarasmas.

The research on classical Tamil poetry includes translations and descriptions of the poems, considerations of themes in the poetry, attempts to understand the milieu in which the poetry was composed, and explanations of the poetic system. Some of the important translations are A. K. Ramanujan's *The Interior Landscape* (1967) and *Poems of Love and War* (1985), G. Hart's *Poets of the Tamil Anthologies* (1979), and J. V. Chelliah's *Pattupattu* (ca. 1946). Descriptions of the poetry and explanations of the poetic system are

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5 See William Harman, "Two Versions of a Tamil Text and the Context in which They were Written," *Journal of South Asian Studies* 5, 1 (Sept. 1987), 1-18. See chapter 6 below for biographical data on Māṇikkavācakar.

Recent English scholarship has begun to explore the relationship between classical Tamil poetry and the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava devotional poetry. Ramanujan in Hymns for the Drowning (1981), Norman Cutler in Songs of Experience (1987), and their combined effort in "From Classicism to Bhakti" (1983) in Essays on Gupta Culture suggest how the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava poets have utilized classical poetic conventions. Friedhelm Hardy in Viraha Bhakti (1983) discusses how the theme of "separation" in classical poetry was incorporated into Vaiṣṇava poetry. G. Subbiah in "Patterns of Religious Thought in Early South India" (1988) suggests that the world view implicit in the classical poetry underlies the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava devotional perspective.

Various works are available on Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy. These include: translations of some of the fourteen Meykāṇṭha Cāttiram, such as the Civaṇānapōtam translated by G. Matthews (1948), J. Piet (1952), and M. Dhavamony (1971); a review of the basic ideas found in a variety of canonical texts such as T. B. Siddalingaiah's Origin and Development of Saiva Siddhanta Upto 14th Century (1979) and Dhavamony's Love of God According to Saiva Siddhanta (1968); a translation and study of one cāttiram such as Rama Ghose's Grace in Saiva Siddhanta (1984) on the Tiruvvaruppayan; or a study of a particular cāttiram and its commentaries such as Devasenapathi's Śaiva Siddhānta as Expounded in the Śivajñāna-Siddhiyār and its Six Commentaries (1966); and the more encompassing study of Śaiva Siddhānta by K. Sivaraman, Śaivism in Philosophical Perspective (1973).

Many studies have been done on temples in India. Of particular relevance to this thesis are those on the Madurai Miṉāḷ-Cuntaṅcuvarar Temple such as A. V. Jeyechandrun's The Madurai Temple Complex (1985), C. Fuller's Servants of the Goddess: The Priests of a South Indian Temple (1984), and Carol Breckenridge's "The Śri Miṉāṉ Śundaresvarar Temple: Worship and Endowments in South India, 1833 to
1925" (1976). Also of importance for this study is Richard Davis's *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe* (1991) which describes the ritual universe of the Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas. Davis relies substantially on the Kāmiṇīgāma, which is one of the two Āgamas said to be the basis of worship at Miśāći-Cūtarēcuvarar Temple.

Although there is a substantial amount of scholarship on classical and Śaiva devotional poetry, Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta and temples and temple ritual, there has been no particular study of the strategies of interpretation of Śaiva poems nor of their usage in ritual. Cutler makes a strong move in this direction with his theory of Tamil devotional poetics in *Songs of Experience* (1987). He develops his theory in the context of Śrīvaiśnava theology and the Śrīraṅkam Temple ritual. He notes parallels that suggest the same model is at work in the Tamil Śaiva context. The perspective presented here is based on research conducted in the Śaiva context. It has been influenced by Cutler's theory but it also differs from his in important ways. Peterson, in the introduction to her translation of Śaiva poems, discusses the interpretation of the poems by the traditional singers of the Śaiva poems, the ātuvārs. She argues that they interpret in public performance outside the pūcaī context firstly through their selection of songs and secondly by repeating and embellishing portions of poems. Peterson notes that the constraints of ritual limit the opportunities for the ātuvār to interpret the poems. This study does not look at the role of the ātuvār outside temple ritual as Peterson does, but focuses on the use of the poems in ritual situations whether or not they are sung by an ātuvār.

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Approaches, Scholarly Influences and Sources

My strategy has been to take up two Śaiva poems for a case study, with the expectation that the conclusions would be applicable to the wider context of the interpretation and use of Śaiva poems. The approach has been three-fold. I first analysed the structure of the poems. I then, endeavoured to identify strategies of interpretation evident in understandings of the poems. Finally, I observed and participated in rituals during which the two poems, "Tiruppalliyēḷuccci" and "Tiruvempāvai", are sung.

I have found the work of several scholars particularly helpful for this study. Norman Cutler, in Songs of Experience, analyses the Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva canonical poems, and the classical akam and puram poems in terms of speakers and addressees. I found this approach very useful and began my study of the structures of "Tiruppalliyēḷuccci" and "Tiruvempāvai" along the same lines. My analysis of the interpretive strategies was influenced by the "reader-response" perspective that a text has meaning when it is read or recited. I have been influenced in particular by Wolfgang Iser's "The Reading Process" and Stanley Fish's Is there a Text in this Class? and "Why No One's Afraid of Wolfgang Iser". My discussion of the nature of the poems has been informed by Iser's idea that the reader fills in ambiguities in the text during the reading process. I have been influenced by Fish's view that the reader's experience of a text is shaped by interpretive strategies which the individual brings to the text, that these strategies determine the formal units of the text around which the reader builds meaning, and that the interpretive strategies that the individual might use are determined by the interpretive communities of which the person is

a member.9 I found Stuart Blackburn's monograph on the bow song tradition of Southern Tamil Nadu, Singing of Birth and Death (1988) helpful for the study of the ritual usage of texts. His study shows how a source text can be changed and its significance dramatically altered when it is used in ritual.

The fieldwork for this study was conducted in the area of Madurai city, Tamil Nadu in 1990-91 and 1993-94. During these periods I collected a number of editions of the poems, and a variety of interpretations in the form of questionnaires, interviews, commentaries and other secondary literature. I conducted questionnaires and interviews in order to gather individuals' views on the poems, their meanings, the significance of the rituals in which they are used, and the individuals' own worship activity. I gathered fifty-seven questionnaires and conducted fifty-two interviews. The questionnaires were gathered and the interviews conducted almost exclusively with adherents of Śaivism. Slightly more men than women responded to questionnaires or were interviewed.10 During my field work in 1993-94, I had the opportunity to interact in a more leisurely and extended way with many of those who had responded to questionnaires or had been interviewed on my previous field trip. Although I refer to these interviews and

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9 Stanley E. Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).
10 Twenty-one interviews were with women while thirty-one were with men. I received twenty-nine questionnaires from women and twenty-eight from men. Generally I have not mentioned the names of those interviewed or those who responded to the questionnaires as in most cases these were conducted with the understanding that I would not be mentioning names. This was not a random sample. I found people were more willing to co-operate if I had been referred to them. The interviews often took place in a small group. The questionnaire formed the basis of the interview, but the interviews did not necessarily follow the order of the questionnaire. The questions of the interview were adjusted when interviewing specialists such as the professional singers, the ṭūvārs, or the priests. The order and concerns of the questions of the questionnaire were collecting biographical data; ascertaining the person's degree of acquaintance with the poems and their personal worship pattern; determining the individual's understanding of the poems and certain ritual events; and collecting any other comments the person wished to make.
questionnaires only to a limited extent, they were a necessary preliminary step in my research as it is the pattern which I saw initially in those interviews and questionnaires that has been developed into the discussion of text and interpretation presented in this thesis.

The earliest known written commentaries on the *Tiruvācakam* date from the eighteen or nineteenth centuries. There are several collections of short aphorisms of unknown authorship on *Tiruvācakam* providing the meaning of the poems which probably predate the first written commentaries. The interpretations presented here were selected from published works as they were generally more thoroughly worked out than those received from individuals in the interviews and questionnaires. The major interpretations presented here are drawn from the work of five men and one woman, all of whom belong to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is an additional interpretation, whose authorship is uncertain, which is usually dated in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Five of the interpretations were written in Tamil and two in English.

The two ritual settings focused on in this study are the Miṇāci-Cuntārēcuvarar Temple in Madurai and the Citti Viṇāyakar and the Nākamalai Murukan Temples in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai, a village approximately ten kilometres west of Madurai city. I studied the same three ritual events during both field trips: the early morning pūcai and the ten day "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, both at the Miṇāci-Cuntārēcuvarar Temple, and the thirty day recitation of the poems, known as "Pāvai Singing" at the two temples in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai.

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11 See Mu. Aruṇācalam, "Tiruvācaka Uraip Patippukkal" in *Tiruvācakam: Cila Ārāyyccik Kurippukkal* (Citamparam: Caiva Cittānta Makā Čamāja, 1965), 143-53. The interpretation of Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar is thought to be the earliest written commentary on the *Tiruvācakam*, although the "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" on "Tiruvempāvai" alone seems to predate Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation. See chapter 5 below for a discussion of these two commentaries.

The Argument

The theory proposed here is that Śaiva poems, in both secondary literature and in ritual usage, constitute a text which is interpreted within one or more narrative worlds. The "text" (what is interpreted) may be a single poem, a verse of a poem, or a collection of poems or parts of poems. These poems or their parts are episodic moments rather than longer narratives. They are monologic or dialogic utterances. The particular identity of the speaker is not made known in the poem. The poem may, however, contain information about the gender or role of the speaker or speakers. The addressee may or may not be provided with a specific identity. The poems also may convey varying degrees of information about the time and place in which they are spoken.

Interpretation consists primarily of providing a particular context in which to understand the "text". This is accomplished by situating the poem as an event in one or more narrative worlds, usually by providing an identity for the speaker and identifying the occasion on which it was uttered. A more detailed interpretation may provide an identity for the addressee and details of the setting also. By narrative world, I mean a world in which a particular story takes place. Each narrative world is constituted by a sequence of events which sets the broad parameters of activity within that world. The poems considered in this study were generally situated into one or more of six narrative worlds. These were the akam world of love, the puram world of heroism, the theological world of Śaiva Siddhaṁta, the world of the hero's biography, the world of the author saint's life, and the world viewed from the perspective of one's own life. The significance of the utterance (i.e. the meaning of the text) and the coherence of the meaning depend to some extent upon the poem being situated coherently in the narrative world.

Viewed from Fish's perspective, this style of interpretation is a strategy evident in Tamil culture, and the individual narrative worlds or combinations would be the interpretive
sub-communities. Fish understands Iser’s 'gaps' to be the result of the interpretive strategy brought to the text rather than being in the text itself.\textsuperscript{13} It seems that part of the interpretive strategy of the examples cited in this study is to assign identities to the speaker or addressee and identify the utterance as a particular occasion or situation in a narrative world. This implies that the strategies at work assume an ambiguity regarding the identity of the speaker or addressee, and the particularities of the occasion or situation of the utterance. In this study, I refer to these ambiguities as though they are in the poem itself, when more precisely I should say that they are gaps assumed by the common style of interpretation.

In the three rituals studied this conception of text and style of interpretation was operative. The poems were situated in narrative worlds, specifically biographies. In the early morning worship, the poems were situated in the biography of the presiding deity, Cuntarēcuvarar. In the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, "Tiruvempāvai" was situated in the biography of the poet, Māṇikkavācakar. In the "Pāvai Singing" in the two village temples, the singing of the poems was situated in the lives of individual devotees, first person biographies.

In these three ritual events, however, the utterances which were situated were not the poems, "Tiruppaḷiyelucci" and "Tiruvempāvai", as they appear in their canonical state. In the ritual contexts of this study, the utterances consisted of a collection of source texts, which included all or parts of "Tiruppaḷiyelucci" and "Tiruvempāvai". The combining of source texts into the utterance of a performance actually constitutes the creation of a new text which will be referred to as the "ritual text" in this study. Furthermore, the

significance of this new text and the coherence of its meaning depend to some extent upon the narrative world in which the utterance is situated. Extending Fish's idea that interpretive strategies determine the formal units of the text around which one builds meaning, I am suggesting that the interpretive strategies at work in the construction of the "ritual text" determine not only the formal units of the text, but also its composition and boundaries.

The understanding of text and interpretation proposed here, and the pattern of usage evident in the use of Śaiva poems in ritual have precedents in the earliest Tamil literature, the classical akam and puram poetry. The structure of the devotional poems is the same as that of the classical poems. The strategy of interpretation has antecedents in the colophons of the classical poems. The pattern of behaviour evident in the use of the poems in the three rituals studied here follows a pattern of behaviour implicit in the puram poems. The religious world of the modern Śaiva has been strongly influenced by the world of the classical poetry.

**Scholarly Significance**

This study makes a contribution to scholarship in several ways. Firstly, it contributes to an understanding of Tamil Śaivism by studying the interaction between the Tamil Śaiva poems, their interpretation and their use in ritual. It illustrates that there is a basic style of interpretation of the poems and that within this basic style there is considerable interpretive freedom. It also illustrates the contrast between the use of the hymns in a large well established temple and in two small local temples. Secondly, this thesis contributes to the wider area of Tamil Studies, by showing links between the style of interpretation of Tamil Śaiva poems and Tamil classical poems, and by suggesting links between a pattern of religious behaviour and a pattern of relating to the hero expressed in the classical puram poems.
poetry. Thirdly, the study contributes to the field of performance and ritual studies by focusing on the "ritual text" as a text in itself, and by suggesting the significance and principle of coherence of the "ritual text" lies in the specific situation in which the text is created and interpreted rather than in the nature of the source texts. Lastly, the data collected on the new village temples, in which the "Pāvai Singing" takes place, contributes to studies on local temples in the making.

**Organization**

The thesis is organized into three parts. In the perspective of text and interpretation being presented here, the "text" is what is interpreted and the interpretation is the meaning or significance that results by providing a context (i.e. a narrative world) in which to understand the "text". Part I and Part II are complementary in that the "texts" presented in Part I are the subjects of the interpretation in Part II. Part I describes the characteristics of the "texts". Chapter 1 provides a translation of "Tiruppalliyelucci" and "Tiruvempīvai" and highlights characteristics of the poems relevant for the interpretations presented in Part II. Chapter 2 argues that these structures and characteristics are found in the classical akam and puram poems, and illustrates how these same features are evident even in poems which were composed later than the twelve Tirumurai.

Part II: Interpretation explains and illustrates the strategies of interpretation of "Tiruvempīvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" primarily as found in commentaries. Each of the first four chapters of Part II describes a different narrative world, and considers interpretations and the strategies utilized by particular interpreters of the poems. Chapter 3 describes the akam narrative world, and provides two interpretations of "Tiruvempīvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" as framed by this world. Chapter 4 considers "Tiruppalliyelucci" as framed by the puram world. Chapter 5 considers two interpretations of "Tiruvempīvai"
and one of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" as framed by the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world. Chapter 6 considers "Tiruvempāvai" as understood within Māṇikkavācakar's biography and both "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" as understood in a general way within the first person biography. In chapter 7 it is argued that the strategies evident in the examples given in the previous chapters have antecedents in the colophons of the classical poems.

Part III: Modern Usage examines the use of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" in the Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple and in the Citti Viṇāyakar and Nākamalai Murukan Temples. The conception of text and the style of interpretation developed in Parts I and II is operative in the rituals presented in Part III also. In these rituals, however, "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" are source texts even though the poems are especially associated with these rituals. A new text is constructed (the "ritual text") which is the subject of interpretation in the following three ritual events. Chapter 8 provides a description of the Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, the first early morning pūcaī and the singing and interpretation of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" as part of the "ritual text" of this event. Chapter 9 consists of a description of the ten day "Tiruvempāvai" Festival at the Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, and the interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai" as part of the "ritual text" of this festival. Chapter 10 provides descriptions of the Citti Viṇāyakar and the Nākamalai Murukan Temples and of the "Pāvai Singing". Chapter 11 consists of the interpretation of the "ritual text" of "Pāvai Singing" and of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" and "Tiruvempāvai" as part of this text. In chapter 12, I argue that the pattern of behaviour evident in these three ritual events is the same as a pattern implicit in puram poetry, and that the boundaries, composition and meaning of the "ritual texts" of these events is dependent upon the narrative world in which the singing of the poems is situated and upon the particularities of the specific ritual settings.
First she heard his name;
She heard about the beauty of his form;
Then she heard about his place, Ārūr;
Even though they tried to redeem her,
she became mad for him;
That day she abandoned her mother and father
and all such things;
She did not care about worldly customs;
She forgot herself; She forgot her name;
Our sister reached the hero's foot.¹

¹Tirunāvukkaracar, poem 6512, transliterated from Tēvāram: Hymnes Śivaïtes Du Pays Tamoul, Publications De L'Institut Français D'Indologie No. 68, 2 (Pondichéry: Institut Français D'Indologie, 1985) 256. Translated with the guidance of Dr. (Muṇaiyar) A. Ānantarācan, Department of Śaiva Siddhānta, Madurai Kamaraj University.
Ten of the twelve Tirumurai, the Tamil Śaiva canonical poems, are anthologies of collections of poems. These anthologies are in part organized by author. One of these poems can be enjoyed by itself or it can be appreciated along with other poems.

Devotees and the traditional singers of the poems, the ṛāṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟ tamil Tirumurai, they may choose from thousands of verses. Devotees also choose poems from non-canonical anthologies as well. There are many modern anthologies of poems culled from the Tirumurai and non-canonical collections of poems. Songs from these new anthologies are selected and sung by devotees during group or personal worship.

The characteristics of the Tamil Śaiva poems lend themselves to this kind of use. They tend to be short. Even if they are longer poems, portions of a poem can be selected and used. The poems also tend to be discrete episodic moments rather than longer narratives. Furthermore, there tends to be an ambiguity regarding the identity of the speaker, the event which the poem represents and the setting in which the poem takes place. Therefore, the poems can be strung together easily and can be shifted from context to context within the larger Śaiva universe.

These characteristics are evident in the earlier classical Tamil akam and puram poems, and a large number of poems composed after the Tirumurai poems. They also are organized into collections of poems. These poems also can be appreciated by themselves or along with other poems. Furthermore, they exhibit the same types of ambiguities evident in the Tamil Śaiva canonical poems.

In chapter I, these characteristics of Śaiva canonical poems will be illustrated by an analysis of "Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci". In Chapter 2, these characteristics will be illustrated by reference to specific examples of classical akam and puram poems, and briefly by reference to some later poems.
I: Chapter 1: The Poems

Both "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyēlucci" are collections of poems (or verses) which individually represent single moments or events rather than a continuous narrative. The speaker or speakers of these poems do not have a particular identity explicitly expressed in the poem. The poem may or may not indicate the speaker's gender. The addressee in some poems is given a particular identity, and in others is only identified by gender or by second person pronouns or by verbal forms. The extent to which the setting is provided varies from poem to poem.

The chapter begins with a short explanation of the organization of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyēlucci". This is followed by a transliteration and then a translation of each poem. The chapter concludes with a short description of the two poems.

"Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyēlucci" are from Tiruvācakam. Tiruvācakam has 656 poems divided into fifty-one units, each of which has its own title. All but the first four units are subdivided into smaller units without titles. Editions of Tiruvācakam tend to number the poems primarily according to their position within the 656 poems, and secondarily according to their position within the smaller unit. Tiruvācakam, and a second work consisting of 400 poems entitled Tirukkōvaiyār, constitute the eighth Tirumūṟai, all of which, according to tradition, was written by the saint, Māṇikkavācakar. The eighth Tirumūṟai is part of the twelve Tirumūṟai which collectively constitute the first part of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta canon.

"Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyēlucci" occur regularly in the same form, order and position in all the editions of Tiruvācakam which I have seen. That is to say,
"Tiruvempāvai" always has twenty poems in the same order, and it always appears as the seventh unit in the Tiruvācakam. The first poem of "Tiruvempāvai" is the 155th poem of the Tiruvācakam. "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" always has ten poems in the same order, and always is the twentieth unit in the Tiruvācakam. The first poem of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" is the 366th poem of Tiruvācakam.

The poems of each of these two units are linked together by a phrase which concludes each poem in the group. In "Tiruvempāvai" this phrase is "ēl or empāvai" and in "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" it is "paḷḷiyeluntarulāyē". The titles of these poems are thus thought to come from the refrains.

**Translation**

"Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" have been translated into English before. The purpose of providing a translation here is to focus attention on the markers of the speakers and addressees. These markers are in bold type in the transliteration of the poems and in the translation. As a result of this emphasis, the translation may be somewhat awkward at times. For example some of the poems of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" end with "emperumān paḷḷi eluntarulāyē". I have translated this phrase with two subjects, "our Lord" and "you", because both are present in the Tamil. This translation does not attempt to duplicate rhythm or rhyme. I have tried to some extent to present the order of ideas in translation as they occur in the poem in Tamil.

I have consulted primarily three Tamil and two English sources for these translations. Kantacāmi Piḷḷai's edition of Tiruvācakam presents two versions of the

poems: one split into discrete words and one unsplit. The transliteration presented here is based on his split version of the poems. I have used Varatarāja's commentary for the syntactic expansion of phrases, and Aruṇāvaṭivēl Mutaliyār's commentary for his grammatical and explanatory notes. I have also consulted Pope's and Vanmikanathan's translations of the poems.

"Tiruvempāvai"

Poem 155/1:

Without beginning or end
the precious great Effulgence
we sang about;

---

6 G. Vanmikanathan, Pathway to God through the Thiruvaṭachakam: An Original Interpretation and Complete Translation (Thiruppanandal: Sri Kasi Mutt, 1980).
7 This translation is a modified version of the one presented in my M.A. thesis: "An Interpretation of Māṇikkavācagar's "Tiruvempāvai" (University of Calgary, 1987).
8 Poem 155/1 means: poem 155 in Tiruvācakam which is poem 1 in "Tiruvempāvai".
although you heard,9

    Oh Bright wide-eyed Maiden,

still you sleep?
Are your ears hard?

Upon hearing the loud sounds,
the praise of Mățeșan's long anklets in the street
exclaiming overwhelmingly
forgetting [her]self
rolling on the bed filled with flowers
incapacitated like this
she lay.

Ah! Ah!
What indeed is this nature of our friend?

Oh our Lady!

In this poem the speaker or speakers are indicated by first person plural markers (yām, em). The reference "emtōli" suggests that the speaker or speakers and addressee are female, as "tōli" is a word used to indicate friendship between females.10 The addressee is indicated by second person markers and vocatives (kēṭṭēy, māṭē, vaḷarutiyō, niṇ). No particular setting is suggested in the poem.11

Poem 156/2:

pācam paraṇcōtikku enpāy irāppakal nām
pecum pōtu ippōtō ār amalikkē
ucamum vaḷṟaiyō nērāḷiyāy nērāḷiyīr
ći cī ivațiym cilavō vilaiyāți
ēcum ḷām itō vānčōrkaḷ ēttuṭarku
kūcum malarppatam tantarulā vantarulum
tecān civalōkaṇ tillaic cirrampalattul
īcaṇārkku aṇpu ār yām ār ēl ūr empāvāy

You used to express love for the Supreme Effulgence

---

10 Tamil Lexicon (Madras: University of Madras, 1982).
11 The reader familiar with Norman Cutler's Songs of Experience will recognize the style of analysis of trying to identify the speaker and addressees, and the way in which they are present or absent in the poem. I am not, however, using his elaborate typology for a variety of reasons. Norman Cutler, Songs of Experience: The Poetics of Tamil Devotion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 11, 19-38, 61-70.
night or day
whenever we spoke.
Now, is your affection for the full bed?
O well-adorned One!

O well-adorned Ones!
Shame! Is this really the place to playfully reproach?

for he who is luminous
who graciously comes to give the blossom-foot
which withdraws from the praises of the celestials
for the Lord of Śivaloka
for the Lord in the hall at Tillai
Do we have love?

O our Lady!

This poem, and the following two poems, are frequently understood to be a dialogue
between a single female and a group of females, or someone speaking on behalf of the
group. The basis for this perspective in this poem is the two second person addresses,
one in the plural (nerijaiylr) and one in the singular (nerijaiyay), as well as first person
markers (nām, yām) and second person singular markers (enpāy, vaittaiyō). The female
gender of the speakers is inferred from "nerijai" meaning 'suitable ornaments' used about
ladies. Here the setting would seem to be the sleeping area of the person addressed.

Poem 157/3:

muttu appavel nakaiyay mun vanju etir ełuntu en
attañ ānttan amutan eñru aluirit
tittikkap pecuvay vanju uñ kañai tiravay
pattu utaiyir icañ pala atiyir pāñku utaiyir
puttu atiyōm puñmai tīrttu añkoṅtāla pollāto
etto nin anputamai ellom ariyōmō
iittam alaṅiyar pāḷām nam civanai
ittañaiyum vēṭum emakkul eł īr empavay

O You with a white smile like a pearl!

---

12 In the discussion of the remaining poems of "Tiruvempavai", I will refer to
speakers in the plural when plural markers are used, even though the speaker may be one
person speaking on behalf of the group.
13 Tamil Lexicon gives the meaning for "nēriṅai" as "Lady, as adorned with fine
jewels" and cites "nēriṅaiyay nēriṅaiyir" from this poem.
previously you came before us
and sweetly, mouth watering would say:
"My Father!, Blissful One, Ambrosial One!"

You come and open the door!

O you with devotion! O you ancient devotees of the Lord! O you beautiful ones!
Is it wrong to accept and forgive the faults of us who are new devotees?

Would you mislead us?
Don’t we all know your affection?
Shouldn’t those with beautiful hearts sing to our Śiva?
All this is necessary for us.

O our Lady!

The dialogue in this poem is also indicated by second person singular (nakaiyāy, pēcuvāy,
tiravāy, niṇ) and plural addressees (uṭaiyīr, aṭiyīr). It has as well some first person plural
markers (aṭiyōm, ellen aṛiyōmō, nam, emakkū). No gender is indicated. The poem
includes the reported speech of the single addressees. The setting suggested is the house of
the single addressee.

Poem 158/4:

o| nilattil nakaiyāy innam pulamtingō
vannakkilimoliyār cīlarum vantārō
enik kōtu ullam collūkōm avvalavum
kannait tuyinru avame kālattaip pōkkatē
viṇṇukku oru maruntai vētavilup porulai
kannukku iniyānai pāṭik kacintu ullam
ul nekkku niru uruka yām māṭṭōm niyē vantu
enīi kūraiyyil tuyil ēl ŏr empāvāy

O you whose smile is like a luminous pearl!
Has it not dawned yet?

Have all those who speak like beautiful parrots come?

We will count and tell you. Don’t you waste time sleeping!

about the one Medicine for Heaven,
about the Excellent Sense of the Vedas,
about the He who is agreeable to the eyes,
singing
heart melting,
mind dissolving,
while dissolving,
we won't [do it].

You come and count!
If it is deficient, [go back to] sleep!

O Our Lady!

This poem contains first person plural markers (collukōm, yām māṭṭom) and second person singular forms (nakaiyā, pōkkātē, nīyē, tuyil). This structure suggests that the poem is a monologue. However it is often understood to be a dialogue. The sentence "Have all those who speak like parrots come?" is taken to be the utterance of the one person in response to the question by the group, "Has it not dawned yet?" The location also seems to be the house of the single addressee. This poem has the first explicit suggestion that the time of the activity is dawn (pularntingō).

Poem 159/5:

māl ariyā nāṃmukanum kānā malaiyinai nām
pōl ariyām enru uḷḷa pokkaṅkalē pēcum
pāḷ ūru tēṇvāppatīrī kāṭāi tiravāy
nālamē viṇē piṇavē ariyē ariyān
kōلامum nammāi ṣāṅkṣāṇ̄ālik kōtāṭṭum
cilamum pāṭi civanē civanē enru
ōḷam itinum unarāy unarāy kāṇ
ēḷakkuḷali paricu ēḷ ōr empavāy

"That mountain unknown by Māl, unseen by even the Four-faced One,14 those like us can know"

You deceitful One, whose honied mouth flows with milk, speak such lies.
you open the door!

about the beauty of him who is unknown by the knowledge of the world, the heavens and other [worlds],
about the characteristics that remove faults
and graciously accepts and rules us;
even if [we] cry unrestrainedly singing,
See! you do not feel! You do not feel!

Oh you fragrant locked one!

Consider [this] nature,

14 "Māl" and "the Four-faced One" are respectively Viṣṇu and Brahmā.
O our Lady!

This poem is usually interpreted to be a monologue. The speakers are indicated by the first person plural marker (nammai). The addressee is one female indicated by the singular vocatives "patiri" and "ēlakkulali", and other singular second person forms (tiravāy, unarāy unarāy kān). This poem also contains the reported speech of the addressee. Again the setting seems to be the house of the addressed person.

Poem 160/6:

mānē ni neṇṇalai nālai vantu unkalai
nānē eluppuvan enralum nāṇānē
pōna ticai pakarāy innam pulamirrō
vānē nīlānē piravē arivē ariyān
tānē vantu emmait talaíyalittu ātkoṇatarulum
vān vārkaḷal pāṭi vantorkku unvāy tiravāy
ūnē urukāy unakkē urum emakkum
ēṇōrkum tam kōṇaip pāṭu ēl ēr empāvāy

O Doe!
Yesterday, even though you said:
"Tomorrow I indeed will come and awaken you, [you did not come]"
Tell [us], without feeling ashamed, what happened to that promise.
Has it not dawned?

for those who came singing about the great anklets of Him
who comes
gives us grace
and accepts [us]
Open your door!

Your body does not melt.15

Only you can feel [this way].
for us
for those like [us]
sing about our king.

O Our Lady!

15 "urukāy" can be taken as either a negative statement (you do not melt) or an imperative (melt!).
This poem, and the remaining poems of "Tiruvempāvai", are often taken to be the address of the group or representative of the group to a single individual. The speakers are indicated by first person pronouns (emmai, and emakkum) and the addressee by second person pronouns (ni, un, unakkē), the singular culturally feminine vocative (māṇē) and singular imperatives or negatives (pakarāy, tiravāy, urukāy, and pātu). The reported speech also maintains the distinction between the group (unkaḷai) and the person addressed (nāṇē eluppuvan). The setting suggested is dawn at the addressee's house. The word translated here as "door", vāy, may also mean "mouth".

Poem 161/7:

\[
\text{annē ivaiyum cilavō pala amarar} \\
\text{unāarku ariyān oruvaṇ irum cīrān} \\
\text{cinnaṇkāl kēṭpa civān eṇē vāy tirappāy} \\
\text{tenṇā eṇā munṇam tīcēr meluku oppay} \\
\text{eṇānai en araiyaṇ iṇ amutu eṇru ellōmum} \\
\text{conmōm kē lcvērrāy inmaṇ tūyilutiyō} \\
\text{vaṇ noīcap pētaiyar pōl vālā kitattiyāl} \\
\text{eṇē tūyilin paricu ēl ēr empāvāy}
\]

Sister! Could it be: that You would open [your] mouth "Śiva" upon hearing of the emblems of Him of great beauty who is without equal who is unknowable to the conceptualization of the gods; that You would be like wax before a fire [upon hearing] "O Southern One"?

Listen!
all of us individually without exception have cried: "My Lord, My King, Sweet Ambrosia!".

Still you sleep?

What is this blissful sleep that You would lie indifferent inactive like a naive one with a hard heart.

O our Lady!

In this poem the speakers are indicated collectively by first person plural markers (ellōmum
conñōm) and individually by a first person singular marker (ey). The addressee is indicated by a singular feminine vocative (amnē) and singular second person markers (tiṟappāy, oppāy, tyyilutai, and kiṟatiti). The setting in this poem is the sleeping place of the addressee.

Poem 162/8:

kōli cilança cilampa kuruku ēṅkum
cēl ēyampa ēyampum vēncanķu ēṅkum
kēl il paraṅcōtī kēl il paraṅkarunāi
kēl il vilup porulkal paṭīnōm keṭṭilaiyō
vāḷī itu ēṅnā urakkamō vāy tiṟavāy
āliyān anputaimai ām ārūm ivvāgo
ūḷi mutālvanāy niṅna oruvanāi
cḷai paṅkāḷanaiyē pāṭu ēḷ or empāvāy

Everywhere
the rooster crows
the birds chirp.
Everywhere
in seven notes music sounds
the white conch shells resound.
We have sung about:
the noble things without compare,
the Supreme Grace beyond compare,
the Supreme Effulgence without compare.
Did you not hear?

Bless [you]!
What is this? Is it sleep?
You open [your] door!
Is this indeed the manner in which [you] show [your] affection
for him who is the sea [of grace]?

Sing about Him
who is without equal,
who stands underlying the cosmic rest,
who is part woman.

O our Lady!

There are few explicit indicators of the speakers and addressee in this poem. The speakers are indentified by a first person plural marker (paṭīnōm) and the addressee by second
person singular markers (*kettilai*, *tiravāy*, and *pātu*). The poem lists the sounds of dawn. This suggests that the time at which the poem is set is dawn.

Poem 163/9:

munnaip palaṃporukum munnaip palaṃporulē
ninaip putumaikkum pērtum apperiyanē
unnaip pirāṇākap perra un cir atiyōm
un atiyār tāl panivōm ānku avarkē pānku āvōm
ānnavarē emkaṇavar āvār avar ukantu
coonparicē tolumpāyp paniceyvōm
innavakaiyē emakku em kōn nalkutiyēl
nen kuṟaiyum ilōm ēl ēr empāvay

Oh Ancient of ancient things!
Oh Newness of new things!\(^\text{16}\)

\begin{itemize}
\item We who have attained you as Lord are at your holy feet.
\item We bow to the feet of your devotees.
\item We will be companions to them only.
\item Only they will be our husbands.
\item We will serve [them]
\item obediently doing what they desiringly say.
\end{itemize}

If you grant this to us O our King,\(^\text{17}\)
we will be without want.

O our Lady!

The speakers are identified here by a number of first person plural forms (*atiyōm, panivōm, āvōm, paniceyvōm, em, ilōm*). The reference to obtaining husbands implies that the speakers are females. The addressee or addressees were female in previous poems when gender was indicated. In this poem, the addressee is male which is conveyed by *pirāṇ*, a masculine noun. The addressee is also indentified by singular second person pronouns (*unnaï, un, nalkuti*). This poem provides no clues which suggest a setting.

\(^{16}\) I thank Dr. R. Radhakrishnan, University of Calgary for the translation of these lines.

\(^{17}\) "King" (*kōn*) is grammatically in the nominative case. It is often taken as an address. See Varatarājaṉ, *Tiruvācakam*, 244; Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God*, 223; and Pope, *Tiruvaçaγam*, 109.
The foot-blossom
surpassing words
lies below the seven netherworlds.
The crown
filled with flowers
alone is the end to all things.
His form
is not only the form
which is part woman.
He is to his devotees
the one friend
who cannot be contained by the praise
of the Vedas, celestials and humans.

O Young Girls of the temple of Aran of the faultless lineage!
What is his village?
What is his name?
Who are relatives?
Who are neighbours?
How can [one] sing about his nature?

O our Lady!

The speakers are not indicated explicitly in the poem by any markers except em in the
refrain. The addressees are identified only by the feminine plural marker pināppillaikāl.

Most of the poem is a third person description of the male God, Śiva (aran). The setting is
often interpreted to be a temple based on the vocative "O young girls of the temple".
Entering the wide tank
swarming with bees,
scooping, scooping with [our] hands
sounding "mukēr",
singing about your anklet:

Oh Father, see!
   That is how we
   who have been devotees for generations
   have lived.

O Red One
   like a full flame!
O Rich One
   smeared with sacred white ash!
O Husband of the woman
   with wide blackened eyes and a small waist!
O Father!
   We have been saved
   by all the redemptive ways of those who are saved
   by your sport that graciously enslaves.
Without failing in strength.
   you will protect us.

O our Lady!

The speakers and addressee are mentioned explicitly a number of times in this poem. The
speakers refer to themselves with first person plural markers (atiyōm vālintōm, olintōm,
emai). The addressee is indicated by singular male vocatives (aiyā, ceyyā, celvā,
maṇavālā), singular imperatives (kāṇ) and other singular second person markers (uy, ni,
kāppāy). The setting is often taken to be a tank or some other type of pond from the
reference to tank in the poem.

Poem 166/12:

ärtta piraвит tuyar keṭa nām ärntu āṭum
titraṇ nāl tillaic ciṟrampalattē ti āṭum
kūttān ivvānum kuvalayamum cilānum
kāttuṃ paṭaitum karantuṃ vilaiyāṭi
vārttaiyum pōci vāḷaičilampā vār kalaikaḷ
ārppu aravam ccyā anikulāl mēḷ vaṇṭu āṛppa
Praising
He who is the holy water
in whom we joyfully bathe to remove the suffering of binding birth,
He who is the dancer
who dances with fire in the little hall in good Tillai,
He who sports
preserving, creating and concealing the heavens, the earth and all [others],
scooping in the pond
resplendent with flowers,
while bees buzz around [our] pretty hair,
while waistlets loudly jangle,
while bangles tinkle,

praising the golden foot of Him who possesses,

**play**
in the waters of the great hill tank!

O our Lady!

In this poem, the speakers are indicated explicitly by one plural pronoun (*nām*). However, the female gender of the speakers in this poem and also in poems 13, 14 and 15 is understood from the description of them in the poem. The addressee is not identified at all. The singular imperative "play" (*ātu*) suggests a single addressee. This poem and the remaining poems, with the exception of poems 16 and 19, end with the single imperative "play". Much of the poem talks about a male figure in the third person who can be identified as Śiva by the reference to the dancer in Tillai. In Tillai, Śiva has the form of Naṭarācar. The reference to pond or mountain tank suggests the setting is a small body of water.

Poem 167/13:

*paim kuvaJaik kār malarāl cemkalappaim pōtāl*
*aṅkam kuruku inattāl pinḍum aravattāl*
*taṅkal malam kaḷuvuvār vantu ċārtalinaḷ*
*enkaḷ pirāṭiyum emkōṇum pōṇru icainta*
*pōṅku maṭuvil pukap pāyntu pāyntu nam*
*caṅkam cilampa cilampu kalantu āṟppa*
*koṅkaikāḷ poṅka kuṭaiyum puṇal poṅka*
*paṅkayappūm puṇal pāyntu ātu ēl ēr empāvāy*
With the flowers of the beautiful blue water-lily,
with the beautiful full buds of the red lotus,
with the flocks of birds,
with woven sounds,

[because of those who have come to wash off their blemishes,]
this pond resembles our King and our Lady;

springing, springing into that swelling pond,
our bangles jangle and anklets tinkle together,
[filled with happiness our] breasts rise,
fo menting the stirred waters,
leaping into the waters with lotus flowers,

play!

O our Lady!

The speakers are identified by plural first person pronouns (eṅkal, em, nam). In this poem also, the addressee is not indicated explicitly. The reference to pond here suggests the setting is the pond.

Poem 168/14:

kātu ār kulai āṭa paim pūn kalan āṭa
kōtai kulai āṭa vanṭin kuḷam āṭa
ciṟappunal āṭi ciṟṟampalam pāṭi
vēṭap porul pāṭi apporūl āmā pāṭi
cōṭi tiram pāṭi cūḷkōṇrait tār pāṭi
āṭi tiram pāṭi antam āmā pāṭi
petittu nammai vaḷaṟtu eḻutta peyvalai taṇ
pāṭattiram pāṭi āṭu ēḷ or empāvāy

while

pretty earrings wave,
beautiful adorning ornaments sway,
flower-adorned locks wave,
and swarms of bees sway,

moving the cool waters,
singing of the sacred hall,
singing of the substance of the Vedas,
singing of the essence of that substance,
singing about the nature of the Effulgence,
singing about the wreath of kōṇrai,
singing of the nature of the beginning,
singing the way which is the end,
singing of the nature of the foot of the bangle-wearer
who separates and fosters us,
Play!

O our Lady!

The speakers are identified in the poem by only one plural first person pronoun (*nammai*).

The addressee is not indicated explicitly. Again the setting suggested is the pond.

Poem 169/15:

ör oru kāl emperumāṇ enru enē nam perumāṇ
cīr oru kāl väy ovāl cittam kalikūra
nīr oru kāl ovā neṭum tārai kaṇ pañippa
pār oru kāl vantaṇaiyāl viṇṇorait tānpanaiyāl
pēr araiyarku innanē pittu oruvara am ārūm
ār oruvara ṣyvaṇṇam ā[kollum vittakar tāl]
vār uruvap pūn mulaiyir väy āra nam päti
er uruvap pūm puṇal pāyntu ātu el or ēmpāvāy

She would speak unceasingly:
sometimes about the glories of our Lord
sometimes repeatedly crying: "Our Lord".

Sometimes she would be on the ground
eyes wet with long streams [of tears],
sometimes due to the happiness in [her] heart
the tears would not stop.
She would not show respect even to the celestials.

This is the manner of a person
who is maddened for the great King.

Who is such a person?

O Ones whose breasts are adorned with an embossed band!
Let us,
singing with a full mouth
of the foot of the knowing One who takes and rules in this way
leaping into the waters with beautiful flowers.

play!

O our lady!

In this poem the speakers are indicated by the first person plural pronouns (*nam, nām*).

The addressee is mentioned explicitly by the second person plural vocative, *mulaiyir*.

Again the setting is suggested by the word, pond (*puṇal*).

Poem 170/16:

muṇṇi kaṭalaic curukki eluntu uṭaiyāl
Advancing, compressing the sea, arising and being visible like she who possesses, appearing, flashing like the small waist of her who possesses and rules us, resounding like the beautiful gold anklets on the holy feet of our Lady, bending a bow like the holy brows,
like her sweet grace which advances and abounds for the devotees of the King who is inseparable from her who possesses us and for us first of all

Pour [your rain] O Cloud!\(^\text{18}\)

O our Lady!

The speakers of this poem are identified explicitly in the poem by five first person plural pronouns (emmai, em, nam tammai, namakkku). The addressee, a rain cloud, is indicated explicitly by the second person verbal form, "pour" (poliyay), by the noun malai which means both rain and cloud, and by the comparison of the Goddess to the storm cloud. No particular setting is indicated in the poem.

Poem 171/17:

---

\(^{18}\) "Cloud" (malai) is not in a vocative form. It is, however, taken that way. See Varatarājaṉ, Tiruvācakam, 251. It also can be taken as the subject of the first line of the poem. See Aruṇaivaṭīṉel Mutaliyār, Tiruvācakam, 296.
That one delight is not
the Red-eyed One's
the Four-faced One's
the celestials'
it is ours

O One with the Fragrant Black Locks!

when [he]
removes our faults
graciously arises in each of our homes
and bestows the red-lotus golden foot.

about that guardian who thereby graces:
about the King with beautiful eyes:
about the Supreme Ambrosia for us who are devotees:
about our Lord;
singing
so that well-being will flourish
springing into the waters
beautiful with lotus flowers

play!

O our Lady!

The speakers are indicated by a number of first person plural markers (nam, nam tammai, aṭiyōṅkaṭku, naṅkal). The addressee is distinguished by a single vocative. The vocative suggests that the person addressed is female as kaḷal is a word which is used to indicate a female's hairstyle, although it also has a broader meaning as well. The setting suggested in the poem is a pond (pupaḷ).

Poem 172/18:

annāmalaiyān aṭikkamalam cenru iraṅcum
viṅmor muṭiyin manittokaiivre aral pōl
kaṅ ār iravik katiṟ vanu kār kalappa
tan āl oḷi maḷunki tārakaikal tām akala
peṇ ākī āṇ āy ali āy piṟanku oḷi cēr
viṅ ākī maṇ ākī ittaṇaiyum vēṟu ākī
daṅ ār amutamura āy niṟṇaṇ kaḷal pāṭi
peṇē ippūm puṇal pāyntu āṭu ēḷ őr empāvāy

Like the lotus-foot of Him who is in Annāmalai
before which the diamonds on the crowns of the gods who bow there
lose their lustre
the sun's rays
come, pervade space
conceal darkness
and the cool light of the stars dulls and yields.
Singing of the anklet of Him who remains apart [yet]
becomes female, male and neuter,
becomes the sky with bright light,
becomes the earth,
becomes all these,
and becomes ambrosia which fills the eye,
leap into the flower-filled waters,
O Girl!
and play!
O our Lady!

There are no explicit markers identifying the speakers in this poem. The addressee is a
single girl indicated by the singular vocative pennē. The setting suggested in this poem is a
pond (puṅgal) also.

Poem 173/19:

umkaiyil pillai unakkē ataikkalam enru
āṅku appalaṅ cōl putukkum em accattāl
ēṅkai perumān unakku onru urajjo mē!
em koṅkai niṅ anpar allār tōḷ ċēṟako
emkai unakku allātu cpanyiyum ceyyarka
kaṅkul pakal emkaṅ marru onṟum kāṅkarka
iṅku ipparicē emakku em kōṇ naktuyyēl
ēṅku ejjē en ṅāyūr emakku ēḷ ör empāvāy

"The child in your hands is given to you! in trust",
because of our fear which is renewed by that old saying,
we will say one thing to you our Lord, listen:
Let not our breasts join the shoulders of those who are not your devotees.
Let not our hands do any service which is not for you.
Let not our eyes see anything else [but you] night or day.
If [you] grant, our King, to us here this status,
what does it matter to us where the sun rises?

O our Lady!

This poem has a relatively large number of markers indicating the speakers and addressee.

There are nine first person plural markers referring to the speakers (em, ēṅkal, urajjo, emakku) and three singular second person pronouns referring to the addressee (unakku, niṅ). The speakers reveal their gender by referring to their breasts. The addressee is male (perumān, kōṇ). The setting is not specified.
Poem 174/20:

Praise [be to you]!
Let [us] be graced with your foot-flower which is the beginning.

Praise [be to you]!
Let [us] be graced with your red sprouts which are the end.

Praise [be to you]!
[Your] golden foot is the basis of all life.

Praise [be to you]!
[Your] flowery anklets are happiness to all that lives.

Praise [be to you]!
[Your] two feet are the end for all life.

Praise [be to you]!
[Your] white lotus was not seen either by Māl or the Four-Faced-One.

Praise [be to you]!
[Your] golden flowers graciously accept [us] so that we are redeemed.

Praise [be to you]!
Let us play in the water during Mārkaḷi!
O our Lady!

In this poem the speakers are identified by two first person plural pronouns (yām) and the addressee is also indicated by two second person singular pronouns (nin). The reference to the white lotus that Viṣṇu and Brahmā did not see, indicates that the addressee is Śiva.

"Tirupalliyeucci"

Poem 366/1:

Praise [be to you]!
Let us play in the water during Mārkaḷi!
O our Lady!
Praise [be to you]!

O Substance which is the Source of my life!

It has dawned!

offering entwined flowers to [your] beautiful anklets,
seeing the beautiful smile on your face which radiates grace to us,
we will serve your feet.

O Lord Śiva who dwells in Tirupperunturai!
surrounded by cool fields in which lotuses blossom in the mud,
You possess the banner of the bull!
You possess me!
O our Lord

You graciously arise from the bed!

The speaker or speakers in this poem are indicated by singular (ey), and plural first person pronouns and verb forms (emakku, toļukōm, emai, em). The addressee is indicated by second person singular pronouns (ni), second person addresses (uṭaiyāy, ēluntaruḷāyē), a masculine address (civaperumānē), and a non-gendered address (poruḷē). The time of day is dawn (pularntu). The place would seem to be the presence of an image of the deity based on the reference to offering flowers to the deity's feet and seeing the smile on the deity's face. More specifically the place could be the town of Tirupperunturai.

Poem 367/2:

aruṇaṅ intiran ticai anukinaṅ irul pōy
akaṅtatu utayam niṅ malart tirumukattiṅ
karunaiyin cūriyaṅ cī cī nayaṅak
kaṭi malar malaṛ maṅṛ anṭal am kaṅ ām
tīrā nirai arupatam muralvana ivai ōr
tirupperunturai urai civaperumānē
aruḷ niṭi ṭara varum ōmaṭaṭa malaiyē
alai kāṭalē pălli ēluntaruḷāyē

---

19 This form of "Lord" (Perumāṅ) is nominative. It is often taken as a vocative. See Aruṇaiavlī Mutaiyār, Tiruvācakam, 456; and Varāṭarāṇ, Tiruvācakam, 392. In this translation it will be treated as a vocative in the poems in which it appears except poem five.
Aruṇān has reached Intiran’s direction.\(^{20}\)
Darkness has gone.
While the sun rises higher and higher,
  like the compassion that radiates on your face,\(^{21}\)
  and while the scented flowers bloom
  [like your] eyes
  the ordered crowds of bees\(^{22}\) there begin to buzz.
Consider these [things].
O Lord Śiva who dwells in Tirupperunturai!
O Mountain of Bliss who comes to give the treasure of grace.
O wavy Ocean!

You graciously arise from the bed!

The speaker or speakers of this poem are not identified at all. The addressee, Śiva, is indicated by a second person singular pronoun (niṇ), a masculine address (civaperumānē), and non-gendered vocatives (malaīyē, kaṭalē). The time of day is again dawn indicated by the rising of the sun.

Poem 368/3:

\[
\begin{align*}
kūviṇā pūm kuyil kūviṇā kōli \\
kurukukai iyampiņa iyampiņa caṅkam \\
oviṇa tārakai oļi oļi utayattu \\
oruppatukinratu viruppoṭu namakkur \\
tēva nal cēri kalal tāl inai kāttāy \\
tirupperunturai urai civaperumānē \\
yāvarum arivu ariyāy emakkul eliyāy \\
emperumān paļi eluntarulāyē
\end{align*}
\]

The kuyil has called.
  The rooster has crowed,
  The birds have chirped.
  The conches have sounded.
  The light of the stars has gone.
  The light of the sun has appeared.

\(^{20}\) Intiran is the Lord of the east. Aruṇān is the charioteer of the sun. The arrival of Aruṇān represents the red color that precedes the dawning of the sun. Aruṇaiṭivēl Mutaliyār, Tiruvācakam, 456.

\(^{21}\) I am following Aruṇaiṭivēl Mutaliyār in connecting utayam with cūriyan:
Aruṇaiṭivēl Mutaliyār, Tiruvācakam, 456.

\(^{22}\) Arupatam (6-footed) is usually understood to mean bees (vaṇṭu). See Aruṇaiṭivēl Mutaliyār, Tiruvācakam, 456; Kantacāmip Pillai, Tiruvācakam, 245; Varatarājaṇ, Tiruvācakam, 393; Pope, Tiruvāṣagam, 208.
O God! Lovingly, you showed [your] two good special ankleted feet to us.

O Lord Śiva who dwells in Tirupperunturai!

You are unknowable to everyone,

[yet] you are easily accessible to us.

Our Lord,

You graciously arise from the bed.

The speakers are indicated by three plural first person pronouns (namakku, emakku, em).

The addressee, Śiva, is identified by singular addresses (kāṭṭāy, ariyāy, eliyāy), and masculine addresses (tēva, civaperumāṇē, perumān). The poem indicates it is dawn by reference to the appearance of the sun and the disappearance of the light of the stars.

Poem 369/4:

\[
\begin{align*}
in\ icai\ viṇaiyar\ yālīnar\ orupāl \\
irukkōtu\ tōṭiram\ iyampinār\ orupāl \\
tunniya\ piṇai\ malark\ kaiyinār\ orupāl \\
tolukaiyar\ alukaiyar\ tuvalkaiyar\ orupāl \\
čenniyil\ aṅcali\ kūppinar\ orupāl \\
tirupperunturai\ urai\ civaperumāṇē \\
enmaiyum\ ānṭukonṭu\ in\ arul\ puriyum \\
em\ perumān\ paḷḷi\ elunteerulāyē
\end{align*}
\]

In one group are those who play the sweet music of the viṇai and yāl.

In one group are those who recite the stotras and the Rg Veda.

In one group are those whose hands hold woven flowers.

In one group are those who worship, those who weep and those who tremble.

In one group are those who worship with hands on [their] heads.

O Lord Śiva who dwells in Tirupperunturai!

Our Lord

who accepts even me and gives sweet grace,

You graciously arise from the bed.

In this poem the speaker is identified by a singular (enma) and a plural first person pronoun (em). The addressee, Śiva, is indicated by two addresses (civaperumāṇē, perumān). The poem does not speak about dawn, but rather describes a scene of worshippers.

---

Poem 370/5:

Besides many saying that you are in each element, besides the knowledgeable
singing songs about you that say
"he does not go. he does not come"
and dancing,
we have not heard and do not know about those who see and know you.24

O King of Tirupperunthai with cool fields!
You who are inaccessible to thought,
are our Lord who
comes before us
removes [our] faults
rules us
and gives grace.

You please arise from the bed!

In this poem the speakers are identified by first person plural pronouns (enkal, emmai, em) and a first person plural verb (ariyom). The addressee is indicated by vocative (manga) and other second person singular forms (ninray, ninaip, unai, ariyay). The addressee is not explicitly identified as Siva in this poem. The only suggestion for the setting is the reference to Tirupperunthai.

Poem 371/6:

24 Arupaiavativel Mutaliyar explains that this line refers to those who try to see and know God in the same way as they know worldly things. Tiruvacakam, 459.
Your devotees who are in release with quieted [minds]
who removed [their] bonds
worship
as human [women] with eyes [highlighted in] black.

O husband of Aňaňku!
O Lord Šiva who dwells in Tirupperunturai
surrounded by cool fields with blossoming red lotuses,

Our Lord who
removes this birth
rules us
and gives grace,

You please rise from the bed.

The speakers in this poem are only identified by two first person plural pronouns (emai, em). The addressee is identified as the male God, Šiva (civaperumānē). He is also indicated by a second person singular pronoun (niń) and other masculine vocatives (maňavālā, perumān). The only reference to a possible setting is the mention of Tirupperunturai.

Poem 372/7:

atupalacuvaieñaanuruñanauritarku
arituenaelituenamaramarumariyār
ituavanțiruruivanavanenavē
eńkalaiañtoñuïnkueluntarulum
matuvalarpolițiruttarakōca
mańkaiuljāytirupperunturai mano
etuemaipañokolumāruthukētpōm
emperumānpańi eluntarulāyē

Even the immortals do not know
that is the taste of fruit,
[that is] ambrosia,
[that is] inaccessible to knowledge,
[that is] accessible,
[But we know and declare]²⁵
this is his holy form,

²⁵This follows Aruňaivaţīvēl Mutaliyār, Tiruvācakam, 460; and Varatarājañ, Tiruvācakam, 398.
this "He" is that "He",
You who are in Tiruvuttarakōcamaṅkai [surrounded by] sweet groves!
graciously rules us
and arises here.
O King of Tirupperuntuṟai!
We ask what is the way in which we may serve?
Our Lord.

Please arise from the bed.

In this poem the speakers are again indicated by first person plural pronouns (enkalai, emai, em). The addressee is not identified explicitly as Śiva. He is however mentioned as being in Tiruvuttarakōcamaṅkai and the king of Tirupperuntuṟai. The first reference is a second person singular form and the second is a singular male vocative. The setting suggested by this poem is Tiruvuttarakōcamaṅkai.

Poem 373/8:

muniya mutal naṭu ṭutiyum āṇāy
muvarum arikalar yāvar maṛtu arivār
pantu anai viraliyum niyum niṅ āṭiyār
pāḷam kutṭil torum elūntaruliya paranē
cem talal purai tirumēṇiyum kāṭṭi
tirupperuntuṟai uṟai kōyilum kāṭṭi
antaṇaṅ āvatum kāṭṭi vantu āntāy
ār amute pāḷḷi elūntarulaṅē

You are the
beginning which preceeds [all],
the middle
and the end.

[when] the three26 do not know [you], who else will know [you]?

O Lord
you and she whose fingers holds a ball
graciously appear in each of the ancient huts of your devotees.
Showing the form like [the column of] red fire,
showing the temple in Tirupperuntuṟai,
showing the brahman,
you came and ruled.
O full Ambrosia!

26 Vanmikanathan identifies the three as the gods who perform the three cosmic functions of creating, preserving and destruction: Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. Vanmikanathan, Pathway to God, 318 n. 8.i, 8.ii, 8.iii.
You graciously arise from the bed.

The speakers are not identified in this poem at all. The addressee is indicated by second person singular pronouns (niyum, nin) and verb forms (änäy, änțäy), as well as vocatives. The vocative, paragy (O Lord), indicates the addressee is male, while the vocative, amutē (O Ambrosia), is neither male nor female. The setting is not indicated, although the mention of Tirupperunturai suggests that it may be the setting.

Poem 374/9:

vinṇakat tevarum naṇṇavum māṭiā
vilupporuḷe unā27 tōḷpuru atiyōnkal
maṇṇakattē vantu vāḷac ceytānē
van tirupperunturaiyā vali atiyōm
kaṇ akattē ninru kalitaru tēnē
katal amutē karumpe virumpu atiyār
akattāy ulakukku uyir ānāy
em perumān paḷi ēlantarulāyē

O Excellent Substance
whom the gods who live in the sky cannot approach.
O he who came on earth and gave well being to us who are your devotees who serve.
O You of abundant Tirupperunturai!
O Honey who gives joy
to the eyes of us who are hereditary devotees!
O Ocean of Ambrosia! O Sugarcane!
You are in devotees who desire [you]!
You are the soul of the world.

Our Lord,

Graciously arise from the bed.

The speakers in this poem are identified by first person plural forms (atiyōnkal, atiyōm, em). The addressee is identified by second person singular addresses (tirupperunturaiyā, akattāy, ānāy) or vocatives which are male (ceytānē, perumān) or ungendered

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27 See Ka. Cu. Navanita Kiruṣṇa Pārātyār, commentator, Śri Maṇivācakapa Perumān Tiruvāy Malarntaruṅiya Tiruvācakam Ārāyecip Pērurai (Maviṭṭapum, Ilāṅkai: Patmā Patippakam, 1954), 784 for an explanation of this form. I thank Dr. Ā. Ānantarācan for explaining the form to me: Ā. Ānantarācan, Interviews with the author, Madurai, 1990.
The reference to Tirupperunturai suggests that place is the setting.

Poem 375/10:

puvaniyil pōyp piṟavāmaiṉ nāḷ nām
pōkkukinīṟōm avami intap pūmi
ćivaṅ uyyak kolkiṅa āru ēṇu nōkkī
tirupperunturai uraiyāy tirumāl ām
avaṅ viruppu cytavum alaravāṅ ācaip
paṭavum niṅ alamta mcyk karunaiyum niyum
avaṇiyil pukuntu emai āṭkōḷ[la vallāy
ār amutē palī cūntaru[āyē

O You who dwell in Tirupperunturai,
when Tirumāl and He of the flower28
desired [your grace]
realizing that:
"by not being born on earth
we have wasted [our] days:
this earth is the way in which Śiva saves;"

You with your true manifested grace,
you are able to enter earth
and enslave us.

O abundant Ambrosia!

You graciously arise from the bed.

The speakers refer to themselves with one first person plural pronoun (emai). The speakers report the speech of Viṣṇu and Brahmā in which they refer to themselves with first person plural forms (nām pōkkukinīṟōm). The addressee is identified by second person singular pronouns (niṅ, niyum), two second person singular addresses (tirupperunturai uraiyāy, vallāy) as well as a non-gendered address (amutē). Here also the setting could be Tirupperunturai.

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28 Brahmā.
Description

The structures of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" differ from each other. Each of the ten poems of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" are monologues. The refrain, "You please arise from the bed", is easily incorporated into the rest of the poem, structurally and semantically.

The structure of "Tiruvempāvai" is more complicated. Some of the poems are understood to be dialogues, particularly poems 2, 3 and 4. Sometimes, however, more of the poems, or even all of the first ten poems, are taken as dialogues. The structure is further complicated by the refrain which is not always easily incorporated into each poem. For example in poem 9, all of the poem except the refrain is addressed to a male; the refrain is addressed to a female. Interpreters of "Tiruvempāvai" resolve this difficulty differently.

Kāli Tantavārayar incorporates it into his interpretation. The refrain is important in Navanīta Kūruṣṇa Pāratiyār's interpretation for determining that the poem is associated with a vow. The pāvai addressed in the poem is the goddess to whom the speakers are doing the vow. Aruṇāvaṭīvēl Mutaliyār, on the other hand, maintains that the refrain has no meaning beyond identifying the poems as part of a particular type of song, the pāvai songs. I have omitted the refrain when considering the addressees in "Tiruvempāvai".

In both poems each individual poem is a single event. Since each poem is a monologue or short dialogue, the utterance of it constitutes a single event - a short episode. The duration of the utterance when recited or sung equals the duration of the event dramatized in the poem. Each poem can stand autonomously as a single event, or they can be taken together as a sequence or as a collection of utterances on the same topic. Both situations occur in interpretation and usage. All the poems taken together, either as a

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29 See Part II, chapter 5 on Śaiva Siddhānta.
30 Navanīta Kūruṣṇa Pāratiyār, Tiruvācakam, 460, 468.
31 Aruṇāvaṭīvēl Mutaliyār, Tiruvācakam, 276. Varatarājaṇ, Tiruvācakam, 236 also says that the refrain has no meaning.
sequence or as a collection, also constitute an event when uttered. In this situation also, the
time it takes to recite or sing all the poems equals the duration of the event.

The event of each poem can be identified in a basic way. In "Tiruvempāvai", the
event is generally taken to be female characters awakening one or more friends, making
requests, praising and bathing. In "Tiruppaḷḷiyāḷucci" the event is commonly understood to
be the speaker awakening the addressee.

The speakers in both poems do not have particular identities. For the most part the
speakers are identified only by first person pronouns. First person pronouns do not
convey a specific identity. In Tamil, they convey number, but not gender. In
"Tiruvempāvai", the speakers can be understood to be female in poems 1, 2, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 19. The speaker in "Tiruppaḷḷiyāḷucci" is only identified by first person pronouns. The poems provide no more information about the identity of the speaker.

The addressees of both poems are particularized to a varying extent. In
"Tiruvempāvai", all the poems but 12, 13, and 14 have second person markers. Second
person markers in Tamil convey number, but neither gender nor a particular identity.
However the gender is known in many of the poems. The addressee or addressees are
female in poems 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 15, 17 and 18. In poems 9, 11, and 19 the addressee is
male. In poem 9, the addressee is also identified by non-gendered terms. Poem 11
suggests that the addressee is Śiva. Śiva's identity in poem 11, is deduced from the
reference to ash and the column of fire. Śaivas wear ash as one of their symbols. Śiva
took the form of a column of fire in order to resolve a dispute between Viṣṇu and Brahmā
about whom was greater.\(^{32}\)

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\(^{32}\) Yoeum discusses the frequent references to this myth in the *Tiruvācakam.*
*Hymns to the Dancing Śiva*, 142-4: 161 n.6.
The identity of the addressee is given more precisely in "Tiruppalliyelucci". All poems utilized second person forms of pronouns or verbs except poem 4, which has these only in the refrain. In poems 5, 7, 8 and 9 the addressee is also male. The male God is identified as Śiva in poems 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6. These masculine vocatives are accompanied by ungendered addresses in poems 1, 2, 8, 9 and 10.

The extent to which the setting is indicated in the poems varies. In "Tiruvempāvai" the temporal setting is mentioned in several of the poems as dawn, and in the final poem the Tamil month of Mārkaḷi is mentioned. The place of the activity inferred from the poem is a house or several houses in the earlier poems, and a body of water in the later poems. In several poems of "Tiruppalliyelucci" dawn also is mentioned. The setting can be taken to be Tirupperunturai as Śiva is addressed as the Lord who dwells in Tirupperunturai. Yet in poem 7 the addressee is also mentioned as being in Tiruvattarakōcamaṅkai.

"Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" are collections of poems linked together by a refrain. The poems of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" are discrete monologues or dialogues, the utterance of which constitutes an event. The speakers of the poems do not have a specific identity. At most the gender of the speaker is given or suggested. The addressees may or may not have a particular identity. The extent to which the setting is described varies. It is never identified in a definite way. These basic characteristics of the two poems are also found in the earliest Tamil poetry and in poetry composed in later times.
I: Chapter 2: Precedents and Later Developments

The features of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyuchi" described in the previous chapter are characteristic of a large portion of Tamil literature from the first extant forms, the classical poetry, to modern times. The classical poems and the post-canonical Śaiva devotional literature exhibit similar organizational features. These poems are also discrete episodic verses. They are primarily monologues. The particular identity of the speaker is not provided, however the gender of the speaker may be known either explicitly or by inference. The addressees, as in "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyuchi", are sometimes given a particular identity. Likewise the setting is specified in varying detail.

The prominence of the episodic single poem in Tamil Literature cannot be overstated. Kamil Zvelebil writes:

As a matter of fact, it is possible to classify almost the entire literary production in the Tamil language under the binary division of tokainilai and toţarnilai, i.e. solitary stanzas arranged in anthologies (tokai), and connected, narrative or descriptive discourses. (Zvelebil’s n. 18). It is hardly an overstatement when we maintain that the solitary, independent, individual poem has always been the most characteristic, most typical, also probably most productive, form of ancient and modern, and to a lesser extent, even medieval poetry in Tamil. It is distinct and detached from other poems, self-sufficient and self-contained, and can be comprehended and enjoyed in itself. It is fit to be anthologized in collections (cf. Sanskrit kosa, Tamil tokai or kottu). . . . In contrast, toţar-nilai (Zvelebil’s n. 19) represents connected narrative, or descriptive discourse (epics, puranas, prabandhas, novels).1

The longevity of this type of literature is significant. G. Subbiah has argued that the world view implicit in the classical poetry underlies the perspective of the devotional

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1 Kamil Zvelebil, Companion Studies to the History of Tamil Literature (Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1992), 139-40. Others have made the observation that Tamil Literature can be viewed from the perspective of this binary division; see for example: A.M. Thomas, "Literary Genres in Tamil: A Diachronic Study," in Encyclopaedia of Tamil Literature, vol. 1 (Madras: Institute of Asian Studies, 1990), 347-8. Zvelebil sees the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava devotional poems to be direct descendents of the akam and puram individual poems. K. V. Zvelebil, Tamil Literature, vol. 10 of A History of Indian Literature (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974), 93-4.
poetry. The structural features of the poetry are integral to actualizing important aspects of that world view in the devotional context. That poetry continues to be composed and used in this style suggests a continuity of world view and values extending from at least the early centuries of the common era to the present.

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the classical poetry. The structural features will be illustrated by reference to specific classical poems. Finally, these features will be briefly highlighted in poems composed later than "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyēlucči".

The classical poems are organized into collections of collections. The poems in individual anthologies are ordered by some criteria other than chronology. They are generally classified into two types: those which are about love (akam) and those which are about matters other than love (puram). Each type of poem has its own set of poetic conventions. Sometimes there is disagreement regarding whether a poem should be classified as either akam or puram, as it shares conventions of both.

The body of classical poetry consists of two collections: Pattuppāṭṭu (The Ten Poems) and _ATTokai (The Eight Collections). Pattuppāṭṭu is a collection of ten poems, each of which is by one author and is dedicated to one human hero. The exception to this

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3 The possible exception to this is Pattuppattu. See Subbiah, "Patterns in Religious Thought in Early South India," 180-1.

4 J. Parthasarathi, "Puram Poetry," in The Encyclopaedia of Tamil Literature, vol. 1 (Madras: Institute of Asian Studies, 1990), 163. A basic explanation of the poetics of akam and puram poetry will be given in the following section on interpretation. There is a substantial amount of literature on the classical poems. Some titles have been listed in the introduction to this thesis and could provide a point of departure for those not already familiar with classical Tamil poetry.
is "Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai" which is dedicated to the God, Murukaṉ. The poems are not divided into verses. They range in length from 103 lines to 782 lines. N. Subrahmanian classifies three of the ten poems ("Mullaippāṭṭu", "Kurincippāṭṭu" and "Paṭṭinappāḷai") as akam poems and the remaining seven as puram poems. There is not, however, really a consensus on the classification of all of these poems as either akam or puram.

Tiruttokai is a collection of eight anthologies of poems. Four collections of the eight have four hundred poems: Neṭuntokai (The Collection of Long [Poems]), Naṟṇai (The Good Tinai), Kuruntokai (The Collection of Short [Poems]), and Puranāṇūru (The Four Hundred Puram [Poems]). The first three are anthologies of akam poems and are in akaval metre. The last is a collection of puram poems and has poems in akaval and vaṅci meters. Neṭuntokai is organized according to a numerical scheme based on poetic situations. For example, the poems of pāḷai situation appear as poems 1, 3, 5, and so on in the collections. Poems on kuriṇci situations are numbered 2, 8, 12, and so on. The poems of Naṟṇai and Kuruntokai show no particular organizational scheme. Puranāṇūru tends to be grouped according to the hero praised, if this is known, as well as the theme of the poems. The poems of Neṭuntokai are thirteen to thirty-one lines long. Those of Naṟṇai are eight to thirteen lines long. The Kuruntokai poems are four to eight lines long. The poems of Puranāṇūru are generally between five and twenty-five lines.

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5 This poem is also included in the eleventh Tirumurai of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta canon.
8 This is also known a Akanāṇūru (The Four Hundred Akam [Poems]).
9 This is also known a Akanāṇūru (The Four Hundred Akam [Poems]).
The remaining four collections are: *Kalittokai*, *Aiṅkūṟunīṟu*, *Patirṟuppattu* and *Paripāṭal*. *Kalittokai* (The Anthology of Kali [Poems]) and *Aiṅkūṟunīṟu* (The Five Short Hundred [Poems]) are collections of *akam* poems. *Patirṟuppattu* (The Ten Tens) is a collection of *puṟam* poems. *Paripāṭal* is classified as either *akam* or *puṟam*. All the 150 poems in *Kalittokai* are in *kāli* metre. Likewise all the 22 extant poems of the original 70 in *Paripāṭal* are in *paripāṭal* metre. *Aiṅkūṟunīṟu*'s 500 poems and *Patirṟuppattu*'s poems are in *akavāl* metre. The poems of *Kalittokai* and *Aiṅkūṟunīṟu* are grouped according to the five situations of *akam* poetry. *Aiṅkūṟunīṟu* has 100 poems on each situation. The poems of *Kalittokai* are divided unevenly among the five situations. In both collections, a single author is credited with all the poems on one situation. *Patirṟuppattu* is a collection of ten decades each dedicated to a king of the Cēra lineage. Eight of the ten decades are extant today. The poems in *Aiṅkūṟunīṟu* are 3 to 5 lines long. Those of *Kalittokai* vary from 11 to 80 lines. The poems of *Paripāṭal* run from 32 to 140 lines. *Patirṟuppattu* poems are between 8 and 57 lines in length.

*Aiṅkūṟunīṟu* exhibits a further organizational pattern. Each group of one hundred poems is organized into a decade. The poems of each decade are on the same theme or linked together by a repeated phrase or word and sometimes also with the technique of *antāṭi*. The repeated phrase or word, or the common theme is also the title of the decade. For example, the twenty-fifth decade of the second hundred is called "Veṭi pattu". As Jotimuttu explains: "Veṭi is the process of divination of the priest of Murukan, the deity of the mountainous region." Each of the poems in this decade is on this theme. Decade

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11 For example, Marr refers to it as an *akam* collection (The Eight Anthologies, 369-70, 327), and Parthasarathi as *puṟam* ("Puṟam Poetry," 613).
12 Subbiah, "Patterns in Religious Thought in Early South India," 45-6.
26 is an example in which all the poems repeat the same phrase. Each poems begins with the phrase: "kuṟṟak kuṟṟavan" which means "Inhabitant of the Mountain". Decade 39 is called "The Peacock Decade". The word maññai, peacock, appears in each poem of the decade. The examples four and five for akam poems below are taken from this decade.

Antāti is a poetic technique in which the last segment of the preceeding poem begins the following poem. Sometimes the last segment of the final poem begins the first poem of a group allowing all the poems enclosed in this way to be taken together as a unit. This technique is used to some extent in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu decade 18. The title of the decade is "The Toṇṭi Decade" because Toṇṭi, the name of a town appears in each decade. Most of the poems are linked by antāti. "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" are like the decades of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu in which poems with repeating phrases are grouped together and entitled by that same phrase. Furthermore, "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" is also like those decades in which the poems are all on the same theme. Whether or not these collections of poems should be taken as a sequence is a matter of interpretation, and will be discussed in Part II.

The dating of the classical poetry is tentative. Zvelebil has written extensively on the subject. In his more recent, Companion Studies to the History of Tamil Literature, he devotes a chapter to the discussion of problems and issues on dating the classical literature. Zvelebil dates all of the Pattuppāṭu poems except "Tirumurukāṟṟuppatai" between 190 CE and 275 CE. He is not so clear about the date of "Tirumurukāṟṟuppatai", putting it both around 250 CE and also later at the close of the classical period and the

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14 See Jotimuttu's explanations of each verse. He does not attempt to link the verses in a sequence. Aiṅkuṟunūṟu, 24-29.
15 Marr cites this example. The Eight Anthologies, 345.
16 Thomas suggests that the organizing and linking features of the classical anthologies are the forerunners of the toṭar-nilai (the sequencing of verses). "Literary Genres in Tamil," 347.
17 Zvelebil, Companion Studies, 98-128.
beginning of the bhakti period. Zvelebil dates the poems of *Nayinai* and *Kuruntokai* between 100 and 250 CE. He places the poems of *Ainkurunuru* slightly later, between 150 and 300 CE. He suggests that the poems of *Purananuru* were composed over a longer period, 100 BCE to 300 CE. Of the second group of four collections, Zvelebil dates *Patiruppattu* as the earliest with its poems being composed between 150 to 200 CE. He places the composition of the poems of *Ainkurunuru* slightly later at 180 to 250 CE. Zvelebil dates both *Paripatal* and *Kalittokai* in the transition stage from the classical era to the bhakti era between the fourth century to fifth century CE.\(^{18}\)

The characteristics of "Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppatiyelucci" identified in the previous chapter are like many of the *akam* and *puram* poems of the earlier classical age. The structure of *akam* and *puram* poems continues on into the devotional period, although the content is adapted to the devotional milieu. In the following pages, I will show that the structure of the *akam*, *puram* and devotional poetry is the same. The examples of classical poems presented below have been selected from four of the anthologies: *Kuruntokai*, *Ainkurunuru*, *Kalittokai* and *Purananuru*.

**Akam Poems\(^{19}\)**

1. *Kuruntokai* 42

O man from the land  
where a waterfall  
in the cleft of a mountain

\(^{18}\) K. V. Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature* (1975), 78-102 and Subbiah, "Patterns in Religious Thought in Early South India," 54. As Subbiah notes, Vaiyapuri Pillai dates "Tirumurukarruppatai" as late as the eighth century.

declares that a great rain
fell in torrents
last night:
even if your passion dies,
will the love between us
ever fade?

Kapilar
(trans. M. Shanmugam Pillai and David E. Ludden\textsuperscript{20})

In this poem the speaker and addressee are explicitly indicated by first \textit{em} and second
person markers \textit{(nāṭa, niṇ)}. The gender of the speaker is not known. The vocative \textit{nāṭa}
indicates that the addressee is male. The setting of the utterance is ambiguous.

2. \textit{Kuruntokai} 36

That day when my man
from the hilly land,
where a \textit{māṇai} vine clings
to an elephant that sleeps
by a boulder,
embraced my shoulders and spoke
an undying oath,
saying, "You are in my heart
and without you. I am not!"
was it painful to you, my friend?

Paraṇar
(trans. M. Shanmugam Pillai and David E. Ludden\textsuperscript{21})

The speaker is not identified explicitly in the poem, even though the translation includes
first person markers.\textsuperscript{22} First person markers are present in the speech of the man which is
reported by the speaker of the poem \textit{(alēṉ, yāṉ)}. The addressee is indicated explicitly in the
poem by "you friend" \textit{(tōli niṅvēyin)}. The setting in which the speaker speaks is not
indicated.

\textsuperscript{20} M. Shanmugam Pillai and David Ludden, trans. \textit{Kuruntokai: An Anthology of
\textsuperscript{21} Shanmugam Pillai and David Ludden, \textit{Kuruntokai}, 141.
\textsuperscript{22} "[M]y man" in the translation is "he" \textit{(avaṉ)} or "he of the land" \textit{(nāṭan)} in the
poem. Likewise, "my shoulders" in the translation is "good shoulders" \textit{(naṟṟōḷ)} and "my
friend" is "friend" \textit{(tōli)}. 
These bangles, 
carved from the shining conch, 
slip from my wrists. 
Everyday, sleepless, I live in loneliness 
with my weeping eyes. 
O my heart: 
we will escape from living here 
like this; 
rise up and lead the way 
to where he is! 
He is beyond the good land 
where Vatukars [wear] garlands of basil flower, 
beyond the frontiers of many-speared Kaṭṭi: 
and even though they speak in foreign tongues. 
I will follow him.

Maramūlanār  
(trans. M. Shanmugam Pillai and David E. Ludden

This poem is addressed to the speaker's heart. The speaker is indicated by first person 
singular markers (*etç, valipatta*) and the plural marker (*uykumam*). The addressee is 
indicated by a vocative (*neîce*), an imperative (*elu*), and an optative (*våli*). The time and 
place of the utterances are not mentioned in the poem.

4. Aṅkurumuru 295

My heart that went away with the chieftain 
of the mountainous region, where 
the peacock that returns to its abode 
because of the fire of the mountaineers 
goes like girls playing ball, 
afflicting the birds on the stubbles— 
will it ever return by itself? 
Or since it longs to stay, will it abide there?

Kapilar  
(trans. P. Jotimuttu

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The speaker is indicated explicitly in this poem by the first person singular pronoun 
(ey).\textsuperscript{25} The addressee is not indicated explicitly. The setting of the poem is not specified.

5. \textit{Aiṅkuṟunūṟu} 299

Even the long-petalled blue water-lily
which blossomed in the lovely pool
on the slope of the mountain of the chieftain of the hills
does not have the radiance like the eyes
of the mountain lassie of lovely, adorned hair and a swinging gait.
Nor does the peacock have a grandeur like hers!

Kapilar
(trans. P. Jotimuttu\textsuperscript{26})

There are no first person or second person markers identifying the speaker or addressee in this poem. The setting for this poem also is not explicitly indicated.

\textit{Akam} Dialogue

1. \textit{Kalittokai} 94

The following is an excerpt from \textit{Kalittokai} poem 94 which is forty-five lines long and is not divided into verses. I have selected Ramanujan's translation of only the first eight lines to illustrate the existence of dialogue in the classical collections. Many of the poems in \textit{Kalittokai} are dialogues.\textsuperscript{27}

Hunchback woman,
the way you move is gentle
and crooked as a reflection
in the water,
what good deeds
did you do that I should want you so?

\textsuperscript{25} In this poem and the previous poem, the first person speaker is indicated by exactly the same phrase, \textit{ey neñće} (my heart). Here the \texttt{če} is an emphatic, not a vocative as in the previous poem. The verb endings referring to the heart are in the third person singular.

\textsuperscript{26} Jotimuttu, \textit{Aiṅkuṟunūṟu}, 54.

\textsuperscript{27} Subbiah, "Patterns in Religious Thought in Early South India," 79-80.
O mother! (she swore to herself) Some auspicious moment made you dwarf,
so tiny you're almost invisible,
you whelp born to a man-faced owl,
how dare you stop us to say
you want us? Would such midgets
ever get to touch such as us!28

The dialogue is between a male dwarf and a hunchback woman. In both exchanges the speakers are indicated explicitly in the poem by first person markers (ucānuvēn, emmai). Also in both exchanges the addressee is explicitly identified by second person markers (tōriṇāi, iyaluvāy, niṅṉōtu, ni, vilakkinai, niṅ). The characters' identities as a hunchback and a dwarf are know by description. Their respective genders are conveyed by gendered references: O son! (makanē); and, later on in the poem, female hunchback (kūni). The setting, mentioned further on in the poem, is a palace at high noon.

_Puram Poems_29

1. _Purāṇāṇūru_ 92

You cannot compare them with a lute.  
The tenses are wrong, the meanings unclear,  
and yet the words of a little son  
fill a father with love.  
The words of my mouth are like that also,  
O Nećumān Añci  
who have taken many enemy forts with guarded walls,  
for they make you show your love.

Auvaiyār  
(trans. George L. Hart III30)

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The speaker is indicated by the first person singular pronoun (en). The addressee is also the hero of the poem. He is identified by name in a form which can be understood to be a vocative (Neṟumāṇ Aṇci) and by the second person singular familiar pronoun (ni). No particular setting is evident in the poem.

2. *Puranāṇūṟu* 87

Enemies, be careful when you take the field.  
Among us is a warrior  
who will face you in battle.  
He is like a wheel made over a month painstakingly  
by a carpenter who makes eight chariots  
in a day.  

Auvaiyar  
(trans. George L. Hart III)

The speaker is indicated by one first person singular marker (em). The addressees are identified by a second person plural imperative (impumith) and a second person plural address (tevvir). The address conveys the addressees' role as enemies. The identity of the hero of the poem is not known.

3. *Puranāṇūṟu* 101

He welcomes us still  
as on the first of days,  
though we go there  
not just one day,  
or two days,  
but many days  
with many friends,  

does Atiyamāṇ Aṇci of the jeweled elephant  
and the artful chariot.  

Whether the time for gifts

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31 Hart, *Poets of the Tamil Anthologies*, 160. This poem was cited by Cutler also in the context of identifying the structures of puṟam poems. Norman Cutler, *Songs of Experience: The Poetics of Tamil Devotion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 64.
comes right now
or is put off for later,

it's like fodder
left in reserve
on the elephant's tusk,

always there
at hand, waiting:
it won't become a lie.

O wishful heart,
do not scramble for it.

Bless him.
his works.

Auvaiyar
(trans., A. K. Ramanujan\textsuperscript{32})

The speaker is indicated in the poem by the first person plural verb, cellalam. The addressee, according to Ramanujan's translation and the notes in the Tamil edition, is the heart indicated by "heart" (neñcam) and the optative (vālka). However, there remains some ambiguity regarding whether or not the "heart" is the addressee, as it is not in the vocative form and the optative in Tamil conveys no person, number or gender. The hero, Atiyamān Anici, is explicitly mentioned in the poem.

4. Puranāṇūṟu 312

To bring forth and rear a son is my duty.
To make him noble is the father's.
To make spears for him is the blacksmith's.
To show him good ways is the king's.

And to bear
a bright sword and do battle.
to butcher enemy elephants,
and come back:

that is the young man's duty.

Ponmuṭiyar
(trans., A. K. Ramanujan\textsuperscript{33})

\textsuperscript{32} Ramanujan, \textit{Poems of Love and War}, 139.
\textsuperscript{33} Ramanujan, \textit{Poems of Love and War}, 185.
The speaker is identified explicitly in the poem by first person singular pronoun (ey). It is clear that the speaker is a woman from the reference to giving birth in the poem. The addressee is not explicitly indicated in the poem. No setting is indicated in the poem.

5. Puranāñāru 128

When the ape
on the bough
of the jackfruit tree
in the town's commons

mistakes for fruit
the eye
on the thonged drumheads
hung up there by mendicant bards,

he taps it.

and the sound rouses
the male swans below
to answering song

in Potiyil, that hill where the clouds crawl,
hill of Āy
with war anklets on his feet,

hill inaccessible
to great kings.

yet open to the approaches
of dancers.

Muțamŏciyār
(trans., A. K. Ramanujan34)

There are no markers in the poem which identify the speaker or addressee. The hero of the poem is named, Āy. The poem describes his place, Potiyil. His place may or may not be the setting for the poem.

34 Ramanujan, Poems of Love and War, 152.
Description

Each of the akam and puram poems cited is a monologue, with the exception of Kalittokai 94. Each represents a single scene or episode. As with "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" the time it takes to utter the poems is the duration of the action of the poem. This episodic quality of the poems is characteristic of the classical poems in general.

As G. Subbiah says:

Perhaps the most striking feature of the classical Tamil poems is that each has been conceived and delivered within a discrete spacial context and moment. The relatively longer poems in the pattu. [sic] collection also are 'occasional' or solitary poems which do not develop or expand any story in a linear or continuous manner over an extended period of time.35

The speakers in both the akam and puram poems are anonymous. At most the speaker's gender or role is conveyed either explicitly or implicitly. In Kalittokai 94, the speakers are a male dwarf and a female hunchback. In Puranāṇīru 312, the speaker is a female, more specifically a mother. The examples of the classical poems provided here, and the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" are exactly the same in that no speaker has an identity beyond gender or role.

The treatment of addressees varies. In some poems the addressee is anonymous without even the characteristics of gender or role as in the akam poems Aṅkukurunīru 295 and 299, and the puram poems Puranāṇīru 312 and 128. In some poems, gender or role is provided, as in the akam poems Kuruntokai 42, 36, 11 and Kalittokai 94, as well as in the puram poems Puranāṇīru 87 and 101. In the puram poem Puranāṇīru 92, the addressee has a particular identity; he is Neṭumāṇ Añci. "Tiruvempāvai" and

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35 Subbiah, "Patterns in Religious Thought in Early South India," 173. Some scholars suggest that the akam and puram poems were originally part of long narratives and were taken from these narratives and collected into anthologies. Subbiah provides a strong argument against this position (173-81). In any event, the classical poems have been preserved as anthologies of single solitary stanzas.
"Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" are the same as the examples provided with respect to the treatment of the identity of the addressees, as the addressee in those poems varied from simply having gender to being specifically identified as Śiva.

The setting in the classical poems, as in "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci", is suggested but never certainly provided. Kuruntokai 42 refers to the man of the hills, but it is not clear where or when the poem is actually spoken. Likewise Puranāṇūru 128, refers to Potiyil, the place of Āy. The poem may be spoken there or it may be spoken somewhere else, perhaps to inform others about this particular place. So also in "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci", the addressee is referred to in a number of poems as Lord of Tirupparuntuṟai. This suggests that the setting of the poems is Tirupparuntuṟai. The poem could, however, be uttered anywhere with Śiva of Tirupparuntuṟai in mind. Although the hero of a particular poem is connected to a particular place, the event of the poem (its utterance) need not necessarily be tied to that place. Some poems do not provide a specific setting but only a type of setting such as the suggested battlefield in Puranāṇūru 87. The poem could be spoken at any battlefield. Likewise in "Tiruvempāvai", a number of poems refer to bathing in a pond, but the pond could be any pond. There is ambiguity regarding the settings of the classical poems and the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci".

The examples of the classical akam and puram poems, and "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci", as examples of Śaiva Siddhānta canonical poems, share the characteristics of being episodic poems whose speakers are anonymous, whose addressees may or may not be particularized, and whose settings are ambiguous. These characteristics are also found in later Tamil poetry. Furthermore the organizational features evident in the bodies of poetry from which the classical examples and "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" have been taken are found in later poetry as well.
Later Developments

"Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppalliyejucci" are themselves early forms of what became two independent genres. Tamil texts divide Tamil literature into genres by varying criteria such as content, form, pattern arrangement, number of stanzas, folk verse rhythms and content, letters of the alphabet, garland (malai) (grouping verses on basis of content, or formal devices such as refrains), two or more criteria, and whether or not it is narrative verse. "Tiruvempavai" is an example of a genre based on refrain. "Tiruppalliyejucci" is an example of a genre based both on theme (awaking from sleep) and refrain.36

There are at least six other pāvai collections of poems. The most famous of these is "Tiruppavai" by Anṭāḷ who is often dated slightly before Māṇikkavācakar. There is evidence of a Jain pāvai poem based on a verse quoted in the Yapparuṇkalavirutti. In addition to those, there are two Tiruvempavai poems by the Advaitan Tattuvarāya of the fifteenth century,37 one by another Advaitan Kācikānantānānāccārya Svāmikāl about Śrī Virācēkaraṇānatēcikar, and one composed by Uṭumalai Iḷaṅkaṇaṇaṅ in 1982 about Murukāṅ at Tirucentūr.

There are at least fourteen collections of pālliyējucci poems composed from the ninth century until now. Mu. Aruṇācālam identifies the following ten pālliyējucci poems by six different authors: Tontaraṭipotiyāḷgār's (nineth - early tenth century)

"Tiruppalliyejucci" addressed to Viṣṇu in Śrīraṅkām; Tattuvarāya Cuvāmikāḷ's (fifteenth century) five pālliyējuccis poems addressed to Grace, Civappirakāca Cuvāmikāḷ, Corūpāṇanta Cuvāmikāḷ, Tattuvappirakāca Nāyaṅār and Paripūrṇappirakāca Nāyaṅār; Citampara Cuvāmikāḷ's "Tiruppalliyejucci" to Murukan at Tiruppūr (eighteenth century);

37 Mu. Aruṇācālam, "Tiruppalliyejucci" in Tiruvācakaṭam - Cīla Aṟṟyccik Kurippukkal (Citamparam; Caiva Cittānta Maṅa Camāja, 1965), 14-16.
Iramaliinka Cuvamikals "Tiruppalilyclucci" (nineteenth century) addressed primarily to the
great light of grace; the famous Subramania Bharati's "Piratamata TiruppaHiyclucci"
(twentieth century); and Cẽnakalvaraya Pillai's "Tanikēcya Tiruppalilyclucci" (composed in
1959). In addition to these there are: Vẽliyampala Tamprān's (seventeenth century);39
Civappirakacam's (seventeenth century);40 Tiruppuvaṇam Kācikānantaṇāņaccārya
Svāmikal about Tirukkaļ Śrī Viracēkāraṇāntacīcar; and recent one by Uțumalai
Iļaṅkaṇṇa about Murukat about Tiruccentir.

I have been able to see four of the pāvai poems and five of the palliyelucci poems
listed above.41 The basic structure remains the same. They are collections of episodic
poems, although the number of poems varies, linked together by a common concluding
phrase. In the pāvai poems, the concluding phrase is a variation of "empāvai". In the
palliyelucci collections, it is a variation of "eluntaruḷāyē". Most of the poems in these
collections of poems are monologues. An exception is poem fifteen of Aṇṭāl's
"Tiruppāvai" which can be interpreted as a dialogue. As with the examples of classical
poems and Māṇikkavācakar's "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalilyclucci", the addressees in
the poems are particularized to a varying extent. The addressees change in Aṇṭāl's
"Tiruppāvai" as they do in Māṇikkavācakar's Tiruvempāvai.

Generally in these poems the speaker is either not indicated at all in the poems, or is
only indicated by first person pronouns or by gender. In other words the speaker is
anonymous. There are two exceptions to this: the last poem of the Vaiṣṇava

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38 Aruṇacalam, Tiruvācakam, 13-17.
39 Zvelebil, Tamil Literature (1975), 205
41 The pāvai poems are: Antal's "Tiruppāvai", the Jain verse,
Kācikānantaṇāņaccāraya Svāmikal's, and Uțumalai Iļaṅkaṇṇa's.
The palliyelucci poems are: Tontaratippotipāyārs, Iramaliinka Cuvamikals,
Subrahmania Bharati's, Kācikānantaṇāņaccāraya Svāmikal's, and Uțumalai Iļaṅkaṇṇa's.
"Tiruppalliyelucci" by Toṇḍaraiṭīppotiyālvār and the last poem of Aṇṭāl's Vaiṣṇava "Tiruppāvai". Both of these are signature verses which identify the author of all the poems of the collection. A signature verse is the last poem of a small collection of poems (usually ten) which generally identifies the poet of the collection and the benefit to be gained from singing or hearing the poem.

There is some debate regarding whether the signature verses were composed by the poet of the collections or by later authors, and were then added by redactors of the poems. These poems, however, are present in the canonical presentations of the poems, and do make a connection between the poet and the previous poems of the collections, even though the previous poems do not themselves identify the poet.

It is important to understand that signature verses make up only a small portion of the Śaiva devotional poems. For example, the canonical collection of the four major Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta poets, Tiruṇāṇacampantar, Tiruṇāvukkaracar ("Appar"), Cuntarar and Māṇikkavācakar consists of 8928 poems. Only about five percent of the poems by these four poets are signature verses.

Furthermore, poems that are associated with a signature verse in a canonical presentation, may in usage be disassociated from the signature verse. Śaivas often sing a combination of their favourite poems culled from various decades of the canonical poems.

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42 Cutler, Songs of Experience, 28.
44 Tiruvācakam has no signature verses, and I am told that Tiruṇāvukkaracar did not use signature verses either. This means that there are 3722 poems without associated signature verses. Of the remaining 5206 poems which constitute the work of Tiruṇāṇacampantar and Cuntarar, if we assume that there is a signature verse for approximately every 10 poems, then there are about 475 signature verses out of a collection of 8928 poems.
as well as other poems. Therefore the significance of the signature verses and connection between the voice of the poem and the poet becomes even more tenuous in actual usage.

Most of the pāvai and palliyclucci genre poems referred to here are indisputably later than Māṇikkavācakar's. They illustrate the same structure as the examples of the classical poems provided in this chapter, and Māṇikkavācakar's "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyclucci". They are just small samples of a large volume of poetry composed since Māṇikkavācakar's time. In Part III further examples of poems composed in the post-Śaiva Siddhānta canonical period which share this structure will be discussed.

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An example of this will be provided in Part III. During the interviews, and particularly in the questionnaires, the respondents listed the poems which they usually sang in personal worship, usually identifying them by the first few words of the poem. The group of poems were usually culled from from various authors.
PART I: Summary

The focus in Part I has been on "texts", poems which will be the subject of the interpretations in Part II. "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaljiyelucci" are collections of poems, while they are also parts of larger collections. The status of the links between individual poems within the collections called "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaljiyelucci" is somewhat ambiguous. The poems are short, and each poem in itself represents an event. The collection of poems also constitute an event. The setting of this event may be specified to a limited extent. Most of the thirty poems are monologues. A few poems are dialogues, although the exact number varies with interpretation. The speakers of the individual poems have no identity. They may be identified in the poem only by first person markers or descriptive material which may indicate gender or role. The addressees are sometimes anonymous and sometimes identified as specific individuals.

These characteristics are also found in the earliest Tamil literature, the classical akam and puram poems, and Tamil poems composed after the Śaiva Siddhānta canonical poems. All these poems are organized into nested collections. Both the classical and later poems also have specific poems representing individual events in which the speaker is unidentified, the addressee may be identified (puram poems only), and the setting is specified only to a certain extent.

These characteristics allow considerable flexibility for interpreting the poems. In Part II, I will show how different interpretations provide different contexts in which to understand "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaljiyelucci" and how within these different contexts the poems take on different meanings.
WHAT SHE SAID

(to her friend who had talked ill of him when he could overhear, so he would hurry to marry;)

Wider than the earth
and higher than the sky,
and deeper than the vast ocean
is my love for this man of the hills.
where bees make honey
from the black-stalked kurinci flower.

Tēvakulattār
Kuruntokai 31

The primary strategy used to interpret "Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" is to provide a context in which to understand them. More precisely, these two poems are interpreted by situating them as events which occur in one or more narrative worlds. Five different worlds in particular reoccurred in my questionnaires and interviews and in the commentaries, as frames of interpretation: the akam world, the puram world, the world of Śaiva Siddhānṭa theology, the poet's biography, and the personal biography.

A "narrative world" here refers to a world in which a particular story takes place. In the akam narrative world the events are connected to the private world of the unfolding love relationship between a hero and heroine. The puram narrative world is constituted by events which may acceptably occur in public such as heroic acts, grief over death, displays of power or generosity, and praise of virtue, honour or fame, and which may be understood within the biography of a hero or poet. The events of the Śaiva Siddhānṭa narrative world are connected to a particular view of the spiritual development of the soul. In the narrative world of the poet's traditional biography, the events are religiously significant developments in his or her life. In the first person or personal biographical narrative world the events belong to the life of the reader or reciter.2

2 Cutler has already noted the tendency to use narrative as an interpretive device for devotional poetry and its precedent in the classical Tamil poetry. According to Cutler, devotional poetry is interpreted to be the direct expression of the author, just as puram poetry is interpreted to be the direct expression of the puram poet, and thus both the devotional and puram poets' biographies serve as the frame of interpretation for devotional and puram poetry respectively. A "narrative of love" serves as the interpretive frame for akam poetry. Cutler emphasizes the poem tied to a particular narrative context: the akam poem understood within the akam context; the puram within the puram poet's biography and the devotional poem within the devotional poet's biography. Norman Cutler, Songs of Experience: The Poetics of Tamil Devotion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 62, 102, 107.

In the perspective I am developing here, I am emphasizing the free-floating poem capable of being tied to many narrative contexts because in the following examples of Śaiva interpretations the same poem is in fact situated in different narrative worlds. "Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" are devotional poems and they are interpreted within the devotional poet's biography, but Śaivas also interpret them within the akam
The different interpreters situate the poem usually by providing an identity for the speaker and indicating the occasion on which the poem was uttered or its theme. In doing so, the interpreters identify the act of uttering the poem as an event in a specific narrative world.

The significance or "meaning" of the poem then depends on the world in which it has been situated, on its position as an event in that specific world. Therefore, the meaning or significance of the poem changes when it is situated in different worlds or even differently in the same world. The meaning of the poem to some extent depends on the poem being understood to be a situation which fits coherently in the narrative world in which the poem is being interpreted, and on the poem being shown to correspond adequately to that situation. In the examples of interpretations to be presented below, this generally has been accomplished by correlating elements of the poems to aspects of an event in a particular narrative world.

All of the following interpretations understand the poems to be religious poems. The use of various narrative worlds are different ways of conveying the religious significance of the poem.

Part II of this thesis will consist of examples of interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" in the five narrative worlds. Two interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" understood within the akam narrative world are presented in chapter 3. A puram perspective of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" is provided in chapter 4. I did not find any explicitly puram interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai", but I will argue in Part III that the use of "Tiruvempāvai" in ritual is sometimes puram in form. Two interpretations of

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narrative world, within the puram narrative world, within the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world and within the reader or reciter's own life. I am suggesting that the poems are able to float freely and be interpreted within different frames most importantly because the poems themselves generally do not explicitly provide the identity of the speaker.
"Tiruvempāvai" and one of "Tiruppaliyelucci" in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world are provided in chapter 5. In chapter 6, the poems are situated in the poet's and in the "first person" biographies. Finally, in chapter 7 the strategy of interpretation evident in these examples will be shown to have precedents in the colophons and poetics associated with the earlier classical poems.
II: Chapter 3: The Poems in the Akam Narrative World

The *akam* interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppāḷḷiyēḷucci" place the poems in the world of love. This frames the divine-human relationship in terms of a humanized love situation in which God is the male lover and the soul, devotee or poet is the female lover. The framing of the relationship in this way is controversial in Śaiva Siddhānta circles. The dominant view is to reject such an interpretation, but there are people who do construe the relationship in the lover-beloved mode.¹

Two interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppāḷḷiyēḷucci" within the *akam* world will be presented here.² The first is by Navanīṭa Kirusna Pāṇatiyār and the second by G. Vanmikanathan. Navanīṭa Kirusna Pāṇatiyār's commentary on "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppāḷḷiyēḷucci" is taken from his voluminous commentary on the *Tiruvācakam* published shortly before his death in 1954. He was a scholar of classical Tamil literature who early in his career conducted research on the *Tirumurai* at one of the major Śaiva Siddhānta institutions, Tiruvāvatuturai Āṭīṇam. The middle and later parts of his career were spent in Sri Lanka as an educator. He maintained his connections to Tamil Nadu through the Madurai Tamil Cankam (Sangam) as an examiner, and through contributions to their publication, *Centamīl.*³

¹ Four questionnaire respondents (two male and two female) framed "Tiruvempāvai" in terms of the lover-beloved relationship with God as hero and the soul or Māṇikkavācakar as heroine. I know for certain that one of the four is a follower of the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition. I deduced that the other three are also Śaivas based on attendance at a Śaiva temple, knowledge of Śaiva Siddhānta tradition, and the singing of Śaiva songs in personal worship. In an interview, another important spokesperson for Śaiva Siddhānta said that Māṇikkavācakar represents the lover-beloved relationship with God.

² Radha Thiagarajan also interprets "Tiruvempāvai" in this frame: *A Study of Mysticism in Tiruvācakam* (Madurai: Madurai Kamaraj University, 1983), 144-5.

G. Vanmikanathan was an important lay scholar of Tamil religious literature. His interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucchi" are taken from the introductions to individual poems and the essay at the beginning of his English translation of the Tiruvācaṅkam, first published in 1971. He maintained that he arrived at his akam interpretation prior to seeing Navanītā Kṛṣṇa Pāratiyār's commentary. Vanmikanathan regarded the Advaitan Śāṅkarācārya of Kaṇci as his guru, but was an adherent of Śaiva Siddhānta theology. Interestingly enough his potentially controversial translation was re-issued in 1980 by Śrī Kāsi Maṭam, another important Śaiva Siddhānta institution. He died in the late 1980s.

The chapter will begin with a brief overview of akam poetics in order to provide a context for understanding the interpretations of Navanītā Kṛṣṇa Pāratiyār and Vanmikanathan. This will be followed by presentations of their interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai", and then their interpretations of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucchi".

The Akam Narrative World

In explaining the basic parameters of akam poetry, I will use the Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram, a grammatical and poetic treatise, usually dated with the classical Tamil poetry in the early centuries of the common era, and the Nampiyakapporul Viḻakkam, a late thirteenth

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5 Details about Vanmikanathan's life are taken from the back cover of Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam, 1980 edition. Information about his death was communicated to me in 1990.
century or early fourteenth century work on *akam* poetics, as well as the insights of modern scholars.\(^6\) The theory of *akam* poetry is defined in terms of different poetic situations, the number of characters and the occasions on which the characters may speak. The different *akam* poetics situations were not explicitly linked into a narrative sequence in the early theory of the *Tolkāppiyam*.\(^7\) Theoreticians of later times did create a narrative out of these poetic situations.

*Akam* poetry proper has 5 situations (*tiṇai*).\(^8\) The five divisions and the corresponding situations of love are: *kurinji* - lovers' union, *mullai* - patient waiting, *neytal* - anxious waiting, *marulam* - infidelity, and *pālai* - separation. Each situation is correlated to a time, a place, and a set of animate and inanimate things appropriate to that

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\(^6\) Scholars have debated the date of the *Tolkāppiyam*. Some of the issues are whether the text precedes the classical poetry, or was composed after, or was composed in sections over a period of time. Generally it is associated with the same time frame as the classical poetry. There has been a substantial amount of scholarly work on classical poetics. Some titles have been cited in the introduction (2-3). My intention here is to provide what is needed to understand the *akam* interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyuluccu".

All references to the *Tolkāppiyam* are to the *Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram sūtras* numbered according to P. S. Subrahmanya Sastri, *Tolkāppiyam: The Earliest Extant Tamil Grammar* (Madras: Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, 1949).


\(^8\) *Akam* in its broadest understanding has two additional situations, *kaikkilai* and *peruntina*. *Peruntina* is "forced loveless relationship: a man and a woman, mismatched in age, coming together for duty, convenience, or lust," while *kaikkilai* is "(literally, the 'base relationship'), the one-sided affair, unrequited love, or desire inflicted on an immature girl who does not understand it." Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War*, 236.
spatio-temporal circumstance. These phenomena are used to suggest the particular theme of the situation. For example, kuñci is associated with the mountains, the cold and early frost seasons, and night time. A poet attempting to suggest a theme in the situation of lovers' union could use any one or more of these elements to indicate the general situation of lovers' union. Occasionally, phenomena from two different regions could be combined in a poem, thereby providing different nuances on a theme in a situation.

The people described in *akam* poetry are generally thought to be characters in roles, rather than particular individuals. The basis for this view is the *Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram* sutras which say: "In the five tinas which are in the middle where mention is made of human beings, their individual names should not be mentioned. Individual names may be mentioned in puga-t-tina and not in akattina." This rule ensures that no individual identity, nor any particular historical context, is provided for *akam* characters.

The *Tolkāppiyam* and *Nampiyakapporul* indicate which kinds of characters may inhabit the *akam* narrative world by indicating who may speak, the occasions on which they are permitted to speak, who may have their speech reported, and whom can be

9 Pālai is not assigned a separate region as it is thought to be a condition which can occur in the other four situation. It is, however, assigned a temporal circumstance with its own animate and inanimate objects. See Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War*, 237 and Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature* (1974), 36-40.


12 On the basis of these sutras the characters of *akam* poetry are usually understood to be human archetypes or human ideals. See Shanmugam Pillai and David Ludden, *Kuruntokai*, 3; Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War*, 235; Cutler 1987: 62.

13 *Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram* sutras 56-7. Sūtra 80 on the other hand says that gods are not prohibited from verses concerned with love or human beings, and sūtra 84 says that "Predecessors have said that the true names of heroes may be mentioned in erotic verses". The issue of the use of names is further discussed in chapters 4 and 7 below.

addressed. The Tolkāppiyam recognizes the akam relationships as having two main stages: premarital (kalavu) and marital (karpu). In the premarital stage of love, there are six characters who may speak: the hero (kilavan), the heroine (kilatti), the hero's friend (pāṅkāŋ), the heroine's friend (tūli), the foster mother (cevili) and brahmins (pārppāŋ).15 After marriage, six additional characters may speak: the minstrel (pāṇay), the dancer (kūṭaŋ), one female dancer (viŋali), the courtesan (parattai), learned men (arivar) and passers-by (kauṭör).16 The Nampiyakapporu adds one's own mother to this second group.17 The following characters do not speak directly, but may have their speech reported: villagers (ūrār), neighbours (ayalōr), residents of the street (ēriyōr), those who know of the stages of lovesickness (nōy maruṅkariŋar), the father (tantai) and the elder brother (tayŋai).18 The heroine's mother never speaks to the heroine or the hero,19 but she may speak with those who saw (kauṭör) the event, her daughter's friend (pāṅki), the foster mother (cevili), those who know the affliction of the daughter's mind (cintainōy arivōr), the wise (arivar), neighbours (ayalōr), divinity (teyvan), and brahmins (antaŋar).20 The Nampiyakapporu indicates that all the characters who are allowed to speak (except the heroine's mother), are also permitted to hear the speech of the hero and heroine.21 The speeches of the brahmins and the wise can be heard by all characters.22

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15 Sundaramoorthy, Early Literary Theories in Tamil, 57; Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram, sutra 492. See also the Nampiyakapporu sutra 213.
10 Sundaramoorthy, Early Literary Theories in Tamil, 68-69; Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram, sutra 493.
18 Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram, sutra 494. See also Nampiyakapporu, 215.
19 Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram, sutra 495: Nampiyakapporu, 218.
20 Nampiyakapporu, 219. See Subrahmanya Sastri, Tolkāppiyam, 73.
21 Nampiyakapporu, 225 and the accompanying note.
22 Nampiyakapporu, 226.
The main characters, the hero and heroine, are expected to reflect a standard for a love relationship. Zvelebil, explains:

According to TP 25-6, and llampūraṇar's commentary, only free men can lead a happy life. Servants and workmen are outside the five akam-types, for they cannot attain wealth, virtue and happiness; they do not have the necessary strength of character; they are moved only by passion and impulses. Only the cultured and well-matched pair is capable of the full range of love . . . . The lovers should be well-matched in lineage, conduct, will, age, beauty (or figure), passion, humility, benevolence, intelligence and wealth (TP 273).23

The Tolkāppiyam Poruḷ Atikāram indicates on which occasions a character may speak. The following are a few examples of the many possible occasions. The hero may speak to the heroine after their first meeting describing how attractive she is or trying to make her understand his suffering (sūtra 98). He may speak when he has been sent away, or when the heroine's friend is about to decide to help him meet the heroine (sūtra 100).24

The connecting of akam poetic events into a sequence which constituted a narrative world evolved over time. The sequencing of akam situations in poetry is manifest, in the kōvai genre. The earliest of the kōvai is Pāntikkōvai, thought to have been composed in approximately the 7th century.25 Another early kōvai work is Tirukkōvaiyār attributed to Māṇikkavācakar. It consists of four-hundred verses representing a sequence of akam situations.26

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23 Zvelebil, The Smile of Murukan on Tamil Literature of South India , 92.
24 More occasions are provided in the Tolkāppiyam Poruḷ Atikāram regarding when a character may speak. There is some disagreement among commentators in the discussion of sūtra 105 regarding whether the occasions listed apply to the hero or heroine. See Subrahmanya Sastri, Tolkāppiyam, 73.
25 C. Manoharan and M. Mathialagan, "Akapporul Kovai" in The Encyclopaedia of Tamil Literature, vol. 2 (Madras: Institute of Asian Studies, 1992), 48-50. If however, an early date for Māṇikkavācakar is accepted, then his Tirukkōvaiyār would be the earliest kōvai collection.
26 Cutler discusses the kōvai genre and Tirukkōvaiyār in Songs of Experience, chapters 4 (81-110) and 5.
Over time, in theoretical works, sequences of akam events were articulated in great detail. The exact details vary somewhat among the different trends of akam theory.27 J. Parthasarathi provides an overview of the sequence of akam events based on the trend of Nampiyakapporu! and its successors, which has been, according to him, the most influential tradition of akam poetic theory. His sequence of akam events is broadly divided into kaļavu (secret love) and kaṟpu (married love). In kaļavu there are four main sequential situations: 1) natural union (iyarkaippanarcei); 2) union which occurs on the second day (iṟuntalaippaṭu); 3) the situation in which the hero’s friend finds out about the relationship (pāṅkaṟkattam); and 4) the situation in which the heroine’s friend finds out about the relationship (tōḷiyikattam). Within these four situations there are many sub-situations. Here, only the last will be elaborated as it has direct relevance for understanding the interpretations to be discussed below.

According to Parthasarathi, the majority of akam poems are concerned with the fourth of the premarital situations. He illustrates this division with a few sub-situations. One subdivision is the group of possible situations in which the heroine’s friend actually learns about the relationship. He provides three examples: a) the friend realizes that the hero is up to something when he comes into the presence of the heroine or the friend under a pretext; b) the friend realises that the heroine has had union because she will not violate

27 Parthasarathi divides most of the theoretical work on akam poetry from the Tolkāppiyam up to the nineteenth century into four main trends. The four main trends stem from the Tolkāppiyam, Ittaiyanaṟakapporu!, Nampiyakapporu! and Pēṟāciriyar’s commentary on the Tirukkovaliyar as reproduced in the Muttuviriyam, "Akam Poetry," 149. Other summaries of the sequence can be found in Sundaramoorthy, Early Literary Theories in Tamil, 26-39 and Shanmugam Pillai and David Ludden, Kuruntokai, 5 -14. Sundaramoorthy describes this narrative structure in great detail, and closely relates his description to the sūtras of the Tolkāppiyam. He suggests that the hero and heroine have no verbal or physical contact on their first meeting. This is reserved for subsequent meetings. He notes that the Tolkāppiyam is not clear on whether or not the lovers are sexually intimate before marriage. He indicates that the poetry suggests that they are. Sundaramoorthy, Early Literary Theories in Tamil, 26-34.
her chastity by worshipping another besides her "husband": c) the friend realizes that there is a relationship when the hero comes to give the heroine the talai (dress made of foliage).

A number of sub-divisions follow the heroine's friend's discovery of the relationship. Each sub-division has its own set of possible situations. After finding out about the relationship, the friend may refuse to help the hero meet the heroine. As a result, the hero may threaten to make the relationship public by taking drastic action such as riding the palmyra horse or jumping off a mountain. The hero will eventually convince the heroine's friend to help him. She will then arrange for the hero and heroine to meet in fields near her house or even within the boundaries of her house. These clandestine meetings may lead to gossip and scandal, which results in the heroine being confined to the house. The heroine's friend may then demand that the hero marry the heroine. According to Shanmugan Pillai and Ludden, also during the arranged meeting stage the hero may leave the heroine for several reasons, one of which is to search for wealth for their marriage and married life. During this stage the heroine may show physical signs of stress, either because of the hero's absence, because of gossip, or because of fear that he may not become her husband for some reason or other. The heroine's mother may become concerned about her state and call in a diviner to identify what is ailing her. The friend may then reveal the cause of the heroine's suffering to the foster mother out of concern for the heroine, who in turn tells the heroine's mother. This results in either the marriage of the hero and heroine, or in their elopement if the parents do not approve of the marriage.

Parthasarathi lists six situations of the marital stage in the relationship (kalpu): 1) making the relationship public; 2) enjoyment of married life; 3) sulking; 4) love quarrel; 5)

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28 Shanmugam Pillai and David Ludden, Kuruntokai, 8-9.
29 Shanmugam Pillai and David Ludden, Kuruntokai, 9-10.
restoration of normalcy; and 6) separation. The sulking and love quarrel are usually a result of the husband's affairs with other women. In the marital stage, as in the premarital stage, the hero may leave the heroine for various reasons, such as to study, to be an ambassador, to go to war, or to acquire wealth.

The Poems in the Akam Narrative World

Navañiça Kiruśṇa Pāratiyār and Vanmikanathan understand themselves to be interpreting "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluci" within the akam narrative world. Their interpretive efforts are for the most part directed towards showing how the poems fit into the akam world by identifying the speakers and addressees as characters of that world, and by showing that the poems are events in that world. They generally agree on what akam identities are assigned to the speakers and to the addressees, but, they do not agree on the akam occasions on which the two poems are spoken. The two poems have different meanings in the two interpretations, because the interpreters emphasise different aspects of the poems and place them in different positions in the akam narrative world.

In Navañiça Kiruśṇa Pāratiyār's interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai", the main characters are the heroine, her friends, and the hero. The event to which the poem

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33 Navañiça Kiruśṇa Pāratiyār's commentary on "Tiruvempāvai" is found on 457-504, and his commentary on "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluci" is found on 770-87 of Tiruvācakam. The relevant pages for Vanmikanathan's interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluci" are in Vanmikanathan, Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam, 37-70, 213-228, 314-19, and 325-6. See Navañiça Kiruśṇa Pāratiyār, Tiruvācakam, 457 for an explicit reference to his view that "Tiruvempāvai" is akam.

Vanmikanathan's interpretation is in English, and he actually uses very little of the technical terminology of Tamil poetics. Besides explicit statements that he is interpreting within the Tamil frame of love, the occasional akam technical term does appear such as "thalaivi" (heroine), "kalaviyal" (secret courtship), and "karpiyal" (public declaration), 37-47.
corresponds is the Mārkaḷī bathing ritual in which young girls undertake a vow directed toward a pāvai (a doll or temporary image) in order to obtain good husbands for themselves and rain for the land. The friends have already discovered the relationship between the heroine and the hero. Situated in this way, the poem is understood to be about the heroine's friends prodding the heroine to participate in the vow so that she may marry her lover and they may marry his followers.

Navanīṭa Kīruṣṇā Pāratiyar provides identities from the akam world for most of the speakers and addresses of the poems. The speakers in "Tiruvempāvai" are the heroine (talaimakal, talaivi) or her friends (āyattār). The addressees are each other, the hero (talaiyan) who is god, the temple girls or a cloud. The speaker or speakers are one or more of the friends in poems 1, 5 to 8, 13 through 15, 17 and 18. All these poems are addressed to the heroine. The fifth poem is also in part addressed by one companion to another. The dialogue poems (2, 3 and 4) are an exchange between the companions and the heroine. In poem 9 the friends address the hero, who is God. The companions and the heroine address the temple girls who have rights to serve in the temple in poem 10. Navanīṭa Kīruṣṇā Pāratiyar identifies the speakers of poem 11 only by the third person plural pronoun (avar), but in the preceeding (10) and the following poem (12) the companions and the heroine both speak. Navanīṭa Kīruṣṇā Pāratiyar seems to take poem 11 also as the speech of the companions and heroine together. God is the one addressed in poem 11. In poem 12, the companions and the heroine encourage each other to praise and bathe. Again in poem 16 there is some ambiguity as to whether or not when the companions speak the heroine is included. This poem is addressed to a cloud. Poem 19 is the companions'
address to God. Poem 20 is addressed to God and we assume Navanîta Kîrusîna Pâratiyâr who uses the third person plural (avar), means it is to be spoken by the companions.

Navanîta Kîrusîna Pâratiyâr provides a full explanation of how he understands the setting and sequence of events in "Tiruvempâvai". He argues that poems 1 through 5 occur before the heroine has opened her door, which means that the event which the poems represent takes place at her house. Poems 6 to 9 are uttered while the companions and the heroine proceed along the street.\(^\text{35}\) He does not specifically state the setting for poems 10 through 20, but poem 10 is addressed to the temple girls, so it seems clear that he assumes the group is at the temple. Poems 11 through 20 enjoin bathing, so he again seems to assume that they are at the water. His analysis implies that poems 1 through 10 represent a fixed sequence of events, and he assumes they should be taken in the order in which they occur in the canon.

The point of connection between "Tiruvempâvai" and an event in the \textit{akam} narrative world is the bathing ritual. Navanîta Kîrusîna Pâratiyâr explains how the bathing ritual fits into the \textit{akam} world.

All the ancient books call the Mârkali bath the "Tai bath". The hero comes of his own accord to virgin girls and he gives the garland and waist dress of leaves in such a way that they accept, and thereby he makes public his hidden love and leaves. These virgin girls who naively accept that [gift], being chaste (karpu), feel they should marry [him]: this is the tradition - so the Mârkali bath is intended for the purpose of obtaining marriage (translation mine).\(^\text{36}\)

In the sequence of \textit{akam} situations described by Parthasarathi (see above), the hero's giving of the waist dress is a situation in the premarital stage of love in which the


\(^\text{36}\) Navanîta Kîrusîna Pâratiyâr, \textit{Tiruvâcakam}, 463-4. In support of this he cites the classical poems: \textit{Narînai} 80; \textit{Kalittokai} 59; \textit{Paripâtal} 11, 74-92, 116-21, 134-40. The word Navanîta Kîrusîna Pâratiyâr uses for garland is "târ", and for waist dress leaves is "tajai". Cutler discusses the possible association between the Mârkali and the Tai bath in \textit{Consider Our Vow}, 5-14.
heroine’s friend comes to realize that there is a relationship between the heroine and the hero. Placing "Tiruvempāvai" at the time of the Mārkajī bathing ritual indicates that the heroine has already received the waist dress and that the friends already know about the relationship between the hero and heroine. In Navanīta Kuṟuṇa Pāratiyār’s view, the friends want the heroine to marry the hero so that they in turn can marry the hero’s friends and all can enjoy a good life.37 "Tiruvempāvai" is about a heroine who has a relationship with a hero which has been discovered by her friends already. She and her friends are doing the Mārkajī bathing ritual in order to obtain the hero as her husband and to ensure her chastity so that in due course the friends can marry his followers.38

Navanīta Kuṟuṇa Pāratiyār situates "Tiruvempāvai" even more specifically within this general situation. The heroine had promised to awaken her foster-mother and her companions, but the heroine did not come. The poem begins with the speech of a person who is angry firstly because the heroine did not come and awaken her, and secondly because the heroine did not get up when they all came to awaken her. Instead of getting up she sobs and rolls around because she had forgotten her promise to awaken them.39

Navanīta Kuṟuṇa Pāratiyār also makes connections between many of the individual poems and the akam world by showing how specific elements of the poem bear an akam interpretation.40 As an example, we may consider his interpretation of the word, āliyānu.
which occurs in poem 8. He takes this to mean "because of drawing the circle".

According to him, the hero has come, given the garland, instilled love in the heroine and left. The heroine who is now separated from the hero, draws a circle as a way of divining when the hero will return.41

"Tiruvempāvai", in Navanīta Kīruṣṇā Pāratiyār's interpretation, is a poem about a heroine in a love relationship. Her friends have discovered the relationship and are eager that she undertake the bathing ritual with them, so that she will quickly marry the hero and they will soon marry his friends.

"Tiruvempāvai" - Vanmikanathan's Interpretation

"Tiruvempāvai", in Vanmikanathan's interpretation, is a poem about how the friends of the heroine discover that she is in love with the hero. The main characters and the setting are the same as in Navanīta Kīruṣṇā Pāratiyār's interpretation. Vanmikanathan, however emphasises a different aspect of the poem when situating it as a different event in the akam narrative world.

Vanmikanathan's characters are also drawn from the akam world. They are the heroine, the hero and the heroine's friends. Unlike Navanīta Kīruṣṇā Pāratiyār, however Vanmikanathan assigns a specific identity to the heroine. The heroine is "Māṇikkavācakar" who has "become a young girl" in this poetic situation. He gives "her" the name of

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41 Navanīta Kīruṣṇā Pāratiyār, Tiruvācaṅkam, 482-3; Dr. Ā. Ṭaṇantarācana explained to me that, following an old superstition, she closes her eyes and draws the circle. If the two ends of the circle join it means the hero will return quickly, and if they do not join, his return will be delayed. Ā. Ṭaṇantarācana, interview with the author, Palkalainakar, Madurai, 15 April 1991. The line in the verse then becomes: "Is this the way of love in which you draw the loop?" Vanmikanathan's translation of the same line is: "Is this the way to become love-filled towards the Sea of grace?" Vanmikanathan takes "āḷiyuṇṭ" to mean "Sea of grace" thereby interpreting "āḷi" to mean "sea".
"Civakaami". He understands poems 1, 5 through 9 and 11 through 19 as entirely taken up with the speech of the friends. Poem 9, 11, and 19 are addressed to the pāvai. On the other hand in his translation he uses male addresses which suggest the poem is addressed to the hero. The pāvai is the female deity to whom the girls direct their vow. It is an image temporarily constructed for and worshipped during the vow. In poems 12 through 15, 17 and 18, the girls address the heroine, enjoining her to join them in the bathing ritual.

Like Navanīta Kiriṣṇa Pāratīyār, Vanmikanathan takes poems 2, 3, and 4 to be dialogues between the friends and the heroine. Vanmikanathan understands the heroine to speak to her friends in poem 10. He also implies that poem 16 is said by the girls. In his translation it is addressed to the cloud. Poem 20 is the speech of the girls and perhaps also the heroine.

Vanmikanathan discusses the setting in more detail than Navanīta Kiriṣṇa Pāratīyār did. He sees the general setting as the Markāli bathing ritual undertaken in order to gain a suitable husband. Undertaking the bath does not imply any prior relationship with the hero, as it does in Navanīta Kiriṣṇa Pāratīyār's interpretation.

Vanmikanathan also provides settings for most of the individual poems. Poems 1 through 10 are set at the heroine's house and poems 12 through 18 take place at the pond. The location of poems 11, 19, and 20 are not specified but he seems to place poem 11 at

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42 Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 41-3. Civakaami is the name of Naṭarācar's (or the Dancing Śiva's) consort in Citamparam. This is an interesting correlation as Māṇikkavācakar's biography depicts Māṇikkavācakar's attainment of mutti as a merging with the image of Naṭarācar at Citamparam.

43 Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 41-2. Vanmikanathan identifies most of the speakers explicitly, except for poems 8, 16 and 20. From his comments about these verses it seems clear that they are the words of the girls. Furthermore, he has put the heroine's words in italics and explicitly says this.

44 Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 215-6. Since the words in verses 8 and 20 are not in italics and he does not identify any other characters for this poem, it seems reasonable to conclude that these verses are attributed to the girls.

45 Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 41-4.
the heroine's house, and poems 19 and 20 still at the pond. He suggests that the girls arrive at the heroine's house between 4 and 5 AM, and that the time of the event in poem 8 occurs at about 5:15 or 5:30 AM when dawn is just breaking. He sets poem 18 at 6:30 AM at the earliest.

Like Navanīta Kṛiṣṇa Pārātiyar, Vanmikanathan also sees the events alluded to in the poems in a definite sequence. In poem 1 the girls have arrived to take the heroine to the river. Poems 2, 3, and 4 represent an argument between the heroine and the girls at the heroine's house. In poems 5, 6, 7 and 8 the girls stand at her window. She has not gotten out of bed and will not speak to her friends. In poem 9 the friends, exasperated with her, make the image of the pāvai and make their vow without her. In poem 10 the heroine, drowsy, annoyed and impatient, comes out and addresses her friends. In poem 11 the astonished girls again address the pāvai. Poems 9, 11, 16 and 19 represent occasions when the friends remember their vow, which they had forgotten as a result of being distracted by the state of the heroine. In addition to remembering their vow in poem 19 (requesting devotees for husbands) they also ask the pāvai "to take care of this God-intoxicated child". In poem 20 they praise the feet of God. Vanmikanathan understands the injunction to play in the water to be spoken by the companions, who are themselves in the water, to the heroine, who is at the water's edge and does not participate in the bathing activity. He suggests that because the friends urge the heroine to join them in verse 18 ("play") the heroine never did leave the water's edge and participate in the bathing ritual.

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46 According to Vanmikanathan, they worship the pāvai at the heroine's house, and in poem 11 seem to turn to make one more prayer to it.
47 Vanmikanathan, Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam, 215-217, 227, n. 18.
48 Vanmikanathan, Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam, 215-7.
The aspect of "Tiruvempāvai" that Vanmikanathan focuses on when situating the poem in the akam narrative world is the state of the girl described in the first poem as crying, rolling and falling on the floor, completely unaware of herself. He writes:

"A single song of St. Thirunaavukkarasar serves as a summary of the 20 stanzas of this decad[e] and as an irrefutable authority for my interpretation. (pp. 40 et. seq.). St. Tirunaavukkarasar sings:

First, His name she heard;  
The colour of His form she heard;  
Later, of His AAroor she heard;  
Straightway, mad after Him she became.  
Mother and father the same day she forsook;  
She abandoned the traditions of her neighbours;  
She forgot herself; her name she lost;  
And set forth, our maid, to the Chief's feet.\(^{49}\)

In Tirunavukkaracar's poem the girl hears of the hero, becomes mad for him, abandons all conventional reality, goes to the hero and reaches him. Vanmikanathan's interpretation of the first poem of "Tiruvempāvai" is that the heroine heard her friends coming down the street singing about Śiva and became overwhelmed with love. This is the state in which her friends found her. Her friends did not understand her state because of their own immaturity.\(^ {50}\) The purpose of Vanmikanathan's citation of Tirunavukkaracar's poem seems to be to indicate that the behaviour of the girl in the first poem is that of one overwhelmed by love. The puzzled reaction of the girl's friends suggests to Vanmikanathan that these girls do not know about her love and therefore the relationship has been a secret. During the Mārkāli bathing ritual the friends begin to discover the relationship. The central event in this interpretation is a stage of premarital love, where the love is not yet known to her friends, and certainly not yet to the wider public.

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\(^{49}\) Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 214.  
\(^{50}\) Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 40-44.  
*Tolkāppiyam Porul Attikāram* 97 identifies continuous thinking of the loved one as a stage in *kālvu*.
Vanmikanathan's interpretation of the poem, places the event earlier in the sequence of the lovers' relationship than Navanita Kiruṣṇa Pārātiyār's interpretation did.

Both interpreters place "Tiruvempāvai" in the akam narrative world which means that both understand the poem to be about a love relationship between a hero and heroine. They differ in that they position the event of the poem at different stages in the narrative. The interpreters give different elements of the poem priority when situating them. For Navanīta Kiruṣṇa Pārātiyār the important factor for placing the poem is the Märkali bathing ritual itself, which indicates to him that the heroine is in a relationship which is known to her friends, and that the heroine undertakes the bath in order to obtain the hero as her husband. Vanmikanathan, however, focuses on the state of the heroine in the first poem, and the discovery of that state by her friends who mock her because they do not understand her to be in love. Vanmikanathan then interprets the poems to be about a strong secret love. The meaning of "Tiruvempāvai" is different in the two interpretations, even though the same interpretive frame is used, because the interpreters focus on different aspects of the poem when identifying it as an akam event.

"Tiruppalliylelucci" - Navanita Kiruṣṇa Pārātiyār's Interpretation

The main characters of Navanīta Kiruṣṇa Pārātiyār's interpretation of "Tiruppalliylelucci" are again the heroine, her friends and the hero. The akam event which the poem represents is the heroine and her friends awakening the hero from sleep on the morning after the marriage of the hero and heroine at his house. This places the event later on in the akam narrative sequence than "Tiruvempāvai".

Navanīta Kiruṣṇa Pārātiyār assigns the identities of akam characters to the speakers and addressees of "Tiruppalliylelucci". He generally identifies the speakers as the heroine and her companions when he discusses the whole of "Tiruppalliylelucci" in his
introduction. When commenting on each poem he attributes the poems to either the heroine (1 and 4), the companions (2), or both the companions and the heroine (3), although it is sometimes unclear which one of these three possibilities he intends. He understands the addressee to be the hero in every poem.

The individual poems represent a sequence of mood-events experienced by the heroine and her friends while they try to awaken the hero. The chronology of mood changes, however, is not found in the traditional order of the poems. In Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyar's alternative order the 10th poem is understood to be first, the 5th second, the 8th third, the 9th fourth, the 7th fifth, the 1st sixth, the 3rd seventh, the 2nd eighth, the 4th ninth and the 6th last. He rearranges the poems in an order which illustrates a progressive frustration on the part of the heroine and companions. The heroine and companions feel that by not getting up the hero is keeping himself from them, and they become disappointed and then frustrated. Initially they respectfully and cheerfully ask him to get up (10 and 5). In his third poem in the sequence (8), the cheerful effort to awaken him gives way to other feelings. They become frustrated because they cannot awaken him unless he is willing. In the next poem (9), Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyar sees a suggestion of separation due to a love quarrel, for by prolonging sleep he is keeping himself from them. In the following poem (7) they think he is not arising because he is displeased with them, so they ask him what it

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51 For example in poem 2, Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyar indicates that the attendents and the heroine (avañai uññitâ) awaken the hero (avan). He concludes the prose rendering of the verse with 'she said' (éngal), in the expanded explanation of the verse he attributes at least a part of the verse to "the companions" (itu tâliyâr kîyru). Tiruvâcakam, 775-76. Because of this explicit statement, I take it that he assumes the companions are speaking in this verse. In poems 5 through 10 the speakers are referred to in the third person plural (avar), so it is not clear whether he means the companions or both the companions and the heroine are speaking.

52 Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyar deduces the love quarrel from the reference to sugar cane. Love quarrels, whether real or fake, are thought to enhance the relationship. Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyar, Tiruvâcakam, 784-5.
is that he wants them to do so that he will again be pleased with them. In the next poem (1), they decide that what they should do is serve his feet, but he must get up so that they can do that, so in the following poem (3), they ask him to show his feet. Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyâr sees in verse 3 a suggestion of the akam theme of separation in the reference to a kind of bird called kuyil.53 They ask him why he is inaccessible to them now when previously he was accessible to them. In the next poem (2), the companions say that the hero has not come and seen the sights of dawn, and therefore they have not seen his face. They are disappointed and the heroine has closed her eyes because of this. Finally, in the last two poems (poems 4 and 6) they ask him if he is not willing to arise for them, would he please at least do so for the others who have come and are waiting to see him.54

Before setting the poem in the akam frame, Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyâr acknowledges that the theme of awakening the hero from sleep is mentioned in two puram theoretical texts as a theme of puram poetry.55 His argument is that when the hero is awakened in the encampment by bards, the theme is a puram theme. On the other hand, when the hero is awakened in his house by female attendents the poem should be understood as an akam poem. He makes several points to support this argument. Firstly,

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53 Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyâr actually connects the kuyil to the hot season in the situation of akam. Dr. AṉantarâcaṆ explains that the akam situation here is separation. Á. AṉantarâcaṆ, interview with the author, Palkalainakar, Madurai, July 1990.

54 This understanding of Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyâr’s interpretation comes from his explanation of the reordered verses in the introduction (Tiruvãacakam, 772), and his commentary on each verse.

55 The two sūtras are:

1. Tolkâppiyam Puṟattinai 36 (Tolkâppiyam Porul Atikâram 87). Subrahmanyâ Sastri translates this sūtra as "bards singing about the King’s spotless good fame to wake him while asleep" (tâvil nallicai karutiyâ kîṭântorkkuc cūtar âṭtiya tûyil âṭai nilaiyum).

2. Puṟapporu! Vempâ 9,9: "So that the kings of the earth who have extensive tribute may honor you with the spear who/which gives abundance, open the eyes which are like the white blossoms of lotus which surround the ponds around which birds sound on the flower blossoms which flourish in the place" (Âlantatirîyâr akalitattu maṇḍar vaḷan tarum vēḷō vaṇâṅkak - kâlampolîya pûmâlarmêl puḷ olikkum poykai cû[î] tâmarai tûmâlarkkan ōrkatuyil) (quoted from Navanîta Kiruṣṇa Pâratiyâr’s commentary).
he says there is no poetic rule prohibiting the theme of a hero being awakened at home by
temale attendents. Secondly, the theme of women awakening a hero never occurs as a
p\textit{uram} theme. Thirdly, he claims that there are other \textit{akam} poems with the theme of
awakening from sleep: i.e. \textit{Kuruntokai} 147 and \textit{Kuruntokai} 107.\textsuperscript{56}

After arguing in support of an \textit{akam} interpretation of "Tiruppa\textit{l}iyelucci" Navanita
Kiru\textsc{\textsc{n}}a P\text{\textscript{\textsc{r}}}atiy\textsc{\textsc{\textsc{y}}}r situates the whole poem in the \textit{akam} narrative world. I will translate this
portion as it illustrates several important aspects of the argument of this thesis:

\begin{quote}
Let \textit{us} take the meaning appropriate for this section to be that the heroine and the
female attendents awaken the hero who prolongs sleep desiring sexual union: "We saw
the beauty of you sleeping on the bed and stand desiring to see the beautiful sight of
you sitting majestically in the audience hall in the morning. We and your other female
attendents have been expecting you with intense desire."

Let \textit{us} take it as: All the companions including the very modest heroine, awaken
from sleep the hero who prolongs false sleep because of a great desire for sexual union,
even though it has dawned, even though the sun has risen and even though many wise
ones and devotees had come to see [him].

This is the awakening from sleep at early dawn of the day after marriage to the hero
who had delayed marriage [in order to collect] wealth, and upon collecting wealth,
returned.\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

Navanita Kiru\textsc{n}a P\text{\textscript{\textsc{r}}}atiy\textsc{\textsc{y}}}r indicates that he is explaining the "meaning" (\textit{poruf}) of this
section. His explanation of the meaning consists of: identifying the speakers as the
heroine and female attendents; identifying the addressee as the hero; identifying the setting
as around dawn; and stating that the specific event was the awakening of the hero on the
morning after the marriage. He elaborates on the situation by saying that the hero prolongs

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Kuruntokai} 147 is addressed to the dream which had awakened the hero from
sleep. The dream was about the speaker's lover. The colophon attributes the dream to the
hero, and indicates that the poem was said after the hero had awakened from a dream which
he dreamed while he was separated from his lover.

\item \textit{Kuruntokai} 107 is addressed to a rooster which had awakened the heroine while
she slept with her lover. The colophon identifies the speaker as the heroine (she) and
situates the occasion as being after the hero had returned from collecting wealth.

\item For translations see Shanmugam Pillai and David Ludden, \textit{Kuruntokai}, 409, 249.

\item Navanita Kiru\textsc{n}a P\text{\textscript{\textsc{r}}}atiy\textsc{\textsc{y}}}r, \textit{Tiruv\textsc{\textsc{v}}\textsc{\textsc{c}}\textsc{\textsc{vakam}}, \S 1-3, 771.
\end{itemize}
sleep even though people are waiting to see him because he desires sexual union. The heroine and the female attendents wish to see him in his audience hall.

Navanīta Kīrūṣṇa Pāratiyār’s commentary on poem 1 provides an explanation of why he places the poem after marriage in the akam sequence. He interprets two vocatives in poem 1 as referring to the heroine’s married state: "O Source of my life" is understood to mean "O lover who is the source for my domestic life", and, "You who possess me" is understood to mean "O He who made me a housewife".58 Navanīta Kīrūṣṇa Pāratiyār understands the epithets, "O Lord Civan who dwells in Tirupperunturai", "You who possessed the raised banner", and "You who possess me" cumulatively to be referring to the hero’s coming, possessing her, then leaving to make money, and finally returning to marry her. He identifies Tirupperunturai as the place where the hero entered into the love relationship with her (enslaved her). The reference to the banner is the banner that he carried when coming to her on a horse. The reference to possessing her is understood to indicate both sexual possession and marriage.59 In addition, her attitude of appreciation and devotion, and the fact that she has arisen earlier than her husband indicates that she is a proper wife.60

Navanīta Kīrūṣṇa Pāratiyār utilizes several aspects of the poem in order to situate it in the akam world. The primary focus seems to be the repeated reference to arising from bed and the several references to dawn. He identifies the awakening as a situation early in


59 Navanīta Kīrūṣṇa Pāratiyār, Tiruvacakam, 772, 773-5.

60 "She said: ‘I enjoyed seeing [you] lying on the bed, and upon seeing you arise from sleep [I] must praise [you]’. This section indicates that: 'sleeping after [the husband], rising before [the husband]' and worshipping the husband's feet is the duty of a chaste [wife]" (translation mine). Navanīta Kīrūṣṇa Pāratiyār, Tiruvacakam, 771-2, 773-4. See also Tirukkuṟṟal, chapter 6 kūṟṟa 5.
married life on the basis of his interpretation of the vocatives and the behaviour of the speaker in poem 1.

"Tiruppalliyelucci", in Navanita Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār's interpretation is, then, a poem about a wife and her companions awakening her husband from sleep the morning after their marriage. Her husband playfully pretends not to be awakened, while she and her companions, misunderstanding his playfulness, become progressively frustrated with him.

"Tiruppalliyeįlucci" - Vanmikanathan's Interpretation

Vanmikanathan's interpretation of "Tiruppalliyeįlucci" is brief and somewhat confusing. He seems to move back and forth between an akam interpretation and a more mystical interpretation of the poem. The characters in his interpretation are the heroine, the hero and her family. The setting is her house. The event is a request for the consummation of the heroine's sexual desire.

Vanmikanathan's choice of akam characters differs from Navanita Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār's. Vanmikanathan includes the heroine's family, but excludes the heroine's friends. The heroine is the speaker in all the poems. The addressee is the hero, God. Vanmikanathan understands the heroine's own family to be her audience.61

Vanmikanathan does not explicitly provide a setting for "Tiruppalliyeįlucci". The setting can be deduced from his reference in the collection of poems preceeding "Tiruppalliyeįlucci" ("Thiruttacāṅkam"), where he explains that the hero comes to her house, and that poem 7 of "Tiruppalliyeįlucci" is intended to be heard by her family.62 We can only assume that he also sets "Tiruppalliyeįlucci" at her place. Vanmikanathan provides no specific time at which the poem takes place.

61 Vanmikanathan, Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam, 59.
62 Vanmikanathan, Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam, 57-9.
There is also no explicit indication whether or not he considers the poems to represent a sequence of events. Since Vanmikanathan does not mention a sequence as he did for "Tiruvempāvai", and since he refers to a single realization by the heroine about the nature of the hero, it would seem that he takes all ten poems collectively as representing a single state of mind.

Vanmikanathan does not explicitly identify "Tiruppaḷiyelucci" as an akam event. Rather he situates "Tiruppaḷiyelucci" by placing the previous and following collections of poems as a sequence of events in the akam narrative. It is, therefore, possible to infer the akam event from the chronological position of "Tiruppaḷiyelucci" within the others.

Vanmikanathan implies that the event of the poem is a request by the heroine to the hero for sexual fulfillment. Vanmikanathan places "Tiruppaḷiyelucci" prior to, but at the verge of, marital consummation. He divides the sixteen collections of poems which he interprets in the akam frame into kalavu (secret relationship) and karpu (public relationship). The transition from the secret to the public stage occurs in collections fifteen to seventeen. In collection fifteen ("Tirutōkkam"), the heroine declares her love to the hero directly, in violation of all norms of behaviour, because of her intense passion. In collection sixteen ("Tiruppoṅţūcal"), she despairs over whether or not he will accept that love. According to Vanmikanathan, the actual shift to the karpu stage occurs in collection seventeen ("Annaippattu") in which she, prompted by town gossip, publicly declares her love for the hero to her mother. In collection eighteen ("Kuyirpattu") she asks the kuyil bird to call her lover to her, and in collection nineteen ("Tiruttacāṅkam") the hero comes. I have inferred that for Vanmikanathan, the hero's arrival represents acceptance of her love. Collections

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63 Tolkāppiṭam Porul Atikāram 97, as translated by Subrahmanya Sastri, identifies "transgressing the bonds of modesty" as a state in kalavu.
twenty ("Tiruppalliyelucchi") through twenty-two ("Kōyil Tiruppattikam") represent the movement into marital status which culminates in sexual union.\(^64\)

Although Vanmikanathan situates and understands "Tiruppalliyelucchi" and the following two collections within the akam frame, his discussion of them tends to digress into spiritual issues. In his discussion of collection twenty-two ("Kōyil Tiruppattikam") he explicitly correlates sexual and mystical union, and supports this equation with reference to the Hindu understanding of spiritual development. Collection twenty-two represents the consumation of marriage. The heroine has experienced sexual union with the hero, even as the soul is mystically united with God. The saint, "Māñikkavācakar", has become a jīvānmukta (a soul who is released while embodied).\(^65\) "Tiruppalliyelucchi" represents a movement into marriage and a corresponding movement into mystical realization. Vanmikanathan does not say what preliminary stage of marriage this is, only that it is at "the threshold of the nuptial chamber".\(^66\) He translates the concluding refrain of each poem as, "Do graciously rise (in my heart)").\(^67\) This implies that union has yet to occur. Nevertheless, some realization does take place at this stage according to Vanmikanathan, which is expressed in poem 7: "This is He, this is His beautiful form". The hero has come to the heroine, and he is before her. This immediacy gives her greater clarity about him which Vanmikanathan interprets to be a realization that God is already in the soul waiting to be recognized.\(^68\) The saint is on the verge of mystical union with God.

\(^{64}\) Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 44, 47, 54-70, 314.

\(^{65}\) Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 70, 314, 325-6.

\(^{66}\) Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 314.

\(^{67}\) He also uses two variations of this translation of the refrain: "Do rise in Your grace, (in my heart)", and "Do, in Your grace, rise (in my heart)".

\(^{68}\) Vanmikanathan, *Pathway to God through the Thiruvaachakam*, 58-9.

Vanmikanathan specifically invokes the Mahāvākya statement, "Tat tvam asi", which he translates as, "that art thou", 59. His interpretation is somewhat ambiguous as he heads his discussion with, "He is arisen in me", yet translates the refrain as a request: "Do graciously
heroine is on the verge of sexual union with the hero. Vanmikanathan, in emphasising the spiritual implications of his *akam* interpretations of "TiruppaUiye!ucci", chooses not to be explicit about the *akam* correlate of the spiritual interpretation of, "Do graciously rise (in my heart)." There is no doubt, however, that in the *akam* frame, "TiruppaUiye!ucci" represents the heroine's request to have her intense desire consummated.

As in the case of "Tiruvempāvai", both Navanīta Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār and Vanmikanathan understand "TiruppaUiye!ucci" within the *akam* narrative frame, and thereby understand the poem to be about the love relationship between a hero and heroine. However, they place the poem differently, and thus the poem has two different meanings. Navanīta Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār places the poem later in the narrative sequence after the marriage and presumably consummation has taken place. The poem is about the frustrations of the heroine and her friends when they try to awaken the hero while he playfully resists. Vanmikanathan places "TiruppaUiye!ucci" at the verge of sexual consummation. The poem is about the heroine's intense sexual desire for the hero. Both interpretations emphasize the awakening expressed in the refrain which ends each of the poems of "TiruppaUiye!ucci". The awakening is understood by Navanīta Kiruṣṇa

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69 Vanmikanathan does not imply that sexual union occurs in the stage of secret love.

70 See Part III: chapter 11 for a description of the extreme state of desire of the heroine at this point in the sequence of love.
Pāratiyār’s interpretation to refer to the impatience of a married heroine. In Vanmikanathan’s interpretation, the awakening refers to the longing for consummation of the marriage.

Summary

Navanītā Kīrusṇā Pāratiyār and Vanmikanathan employ the same strategy for interpreting "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci". They place the two poems as events in the ākam narrative world by assigning the characters of the poems the identities of characters of the ākam world, and by identifying the occasion on which the poems are uttered as circumstances in that world. They differ regarding what events in that narrative world the two poems represent because they focus on different aspects of the poem when situating them. As a result of being situated differently the same poem sometimes has different meanings.

In the following chapter, I will show how the meaning changes even more drastically when "Tiruppalīyelucci" is placed in the other classical frame of interpretation, the puram world.
II: Chapter 4: "Tiruppaṇiyeḻući" in the Puṟam Narrative World

Interpretations of poems in the puṟam narrative world construe the divine-human relationship in terms of the king-subject, hero-bard, or master-servant relationship. In devotional poetry God is the king, hero, or master, while the devotee, soul or saint is the subject, bard, or servant. The relationships of the puṟam world are public in contrast to the private relationships of akam.

In the secondary literature, and in the questionnaires and interviews I conducted, "Tiruppaṇiyeḻući" was quite often connected to the puṟam narrative world. I have not seen "Tiruvempāvai" explicitly connected to the puṟam narrative world. However in chapter 7, and in Part III, I will show how it is interpreted in terms of individual biographies, which is a puṟam style of interpretation.

In this chapter, Mu. Aruṇācalam's interpretation of "Tiruppaṇiyeḻući" will be presented, following a description of the parameters of the puṟam narrative world.1 This interpretation appears in a collection of essays written on the Tiruvācakam published in 1965.2 Aruṇācalam, who died only recently, was a widely respected Tamil scholar who wrote a number of books in both Tamil and English on Tamil culture and on Śaivism. He was connected to the Śaiva Siddhānta organization, Caiva Cittānta Makā Camāja.

The Puṟam Narrative World

Whereas the akam narrative world is about the love relationship between the hero and heroine, the puṟam narrative world is constituted by events which may acceptably occur in

public, such as heroic acts, grief over death, displays of power or generosity, and praise of virtue, honour or fame.  

There are two main Tamil theoretical works about *puram* poetry: *Tolkāppiyam* *Porul Atikāram* (TOL) and *PurapporulVENPAMALAI* (PPVM). These texts articulate *puram* poetics primarily in terms of poetic situations and themes, rather than in terms of characters and the occasions on which they speak. These poetic situations and their corresponding themes are listed below.  

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<tr>
<th>TOL Akam Situations</th>
<th>TOL Puram Situations</th>
<th>No. of Themes</th>
<th>PPVM Situations</th>
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<td><em>kaikkilai</em></td>
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<td><em>pātān</em></td>
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The *Tolkëppiyam* lists seven situations, five of which deal with various aspects of war, and the remaining two which are praise and the transience of life. The *Tolkëppiyam* correlates the five situations of war with the five situations of *akam* proper. It also correlates the two situations of love which are inappropriate to *akam* proper, *peruntinäi* and *kaikkiläi*, to worldly transience and praise. The correlation of the *puram* situation to the *akam* situations indicates that one could establish a correspondence of *puram* situations to *akam* geography. Ramanujan, however argues that the *puram* poets do not always use geographical indicators to suggest a *puram* situation. The *Purapporuinenpämäläi* expands on the situations set out in the *Tolkëppiyam* by including under *puram* the two kinds of love inappropriate to *akam* proper (*kaikkiläi* and *peruntinäi*), and by introducing a category for general heroism and one for miscellaneous matters.

Although *Tolkëppiyam* and *Purapporuinenpämäläi* do not discuss *puram* poetry in terms of characters, characters can be deduced from the situations listed in the *Tolkëppiyam* and the poems. There does seem to be some restriction on roles in *puram* poetry as there was in *akam* poetry. The heroes are not depicted as lovers, rather they are depicted as kings, chieftans, patrons, warriors and noblemen. Kings and warriors are usually the dominant characters: many of the themes listed in the *Tolkëppiyam* and poems are directly concerned with them.

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8 A perusal of the description of the themes in the *puram* section of the *Tolkëppiyam* illustrates this. See sūtras 58-87. Ramanujan makes the interesting point that female characters are prominent in *akam* poetry, while male characters are dominant in *puram* poetry. He illustrates this by a comparison of the *akam* collection, *Kuruntokai*, with the *puram* collection, *Purunānuru*. He says that in *Kuruntokai*, 334 poems are assigned to women characters, whereas only 64 are assigned to male characters.
The women characters of *puram* poetry, rather than being the young heroine, her friends, foster-mother and real mother, are older. They are usually mothers and wives of male heroes. In the list of themes found in the *Tolkāppiyam*, female characters appear most prominently in the situation of *kānci* (transitoriness). There are two themes of mothers lamenting a famous son's death, and a theme about a mother ready to die on behalf of her son's honour. In the same situation (*tiṇai*) there are themes of the wife fearing demons, and, therefore, not going near her wounded husband: the magnanimity of the wife killing herself with the spear left by the dying husband; the wife lamenting the loss of her husband, the pitiable life of a widow; and the words of a wife to those who try to prevent her from entering the funeral pyre. The woman's role in these themes is primarily one of responding to the death of her son or her husband. The mother or wife may herself be a hero by virtue of her response to the death of her husband or son. *Puyanāṇīru* 278 depicts a mother who has heard that her son died in a cowardly way on the battle field. She declares that if that is true she will slash the breast that nursed him. This poem powerfully expresses the valour of both the warrior and his mother.

*Puram* poetry exhibits some of the same male and female characters as *akam* poetry, but their function is different. Dancers (*kūttrai*), minstrel (*pānai*), and female dancer (*viraliyarr*), are characters in both types of poems. In *akam* poetry one of their roles is to be messengers between the quarreling husband and wife. In *puram* poetry their role is to praise the patron and direct others to him.

The theoreticians of *puram* poetry did not connect the *puram* situations into a sequence of events as the theoreticians did for *akam* poetry, nor did a genre of poetry.

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*Puvaṇāṇīru*, discounting poems by women in the role of bards, he says that there are only 18 poems about or by women. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War*, 268.


10 See *Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram* 87, 150, 166, 167, 176 and 191.
develop linking heroic events. It is possible that the poeticians provided for a sequence of events through the rule in the *Tolkāppiyam* that permits the use of individual names in *puram* poetry. Parthasarathi writes:

The line of demarcation between *puram* and *akam* poems is stated to be the avoidance of specific personal names of the heroes in the latter, mentioning only generic appellations; this contrasts with the use of such names allowed in the former (*Tolkāppiyam Porul. Akattinaiyiyal*-54). (Incidently we find that notwithstanding this freedom to use personal names, *puram* poetry in practice prefers to use generic appellations to an overwhelming extent).  

The rule permitting the use of individual names, whether actually used or not, invites interpretation of the poem in terms of its place in an individual's life. This suggests that the sequential component of the *puram* narrative world could be supplied by individual biographies, even though the poem itself may mention only generic appellations. However, only that portion of the individual's biography which falls into the *puram* world of public activity is appropriately provided. The portion of the individual's life concerned with the private world of love should not be used. By using a particular biography as the sequence within which to understand an event, the *puram* character is given a specific identity.

The poeticians, therefore, provide for sequence differently in the *akam* and *puram* narrative worlds. In the *akam* narrative world, the poeticians constructed a general sequence of events from which poems are framed or against which poems are understood. In the *puram* narrative world the poeticians did not construct the sequence, but provided for the possibility of sequence by allowing the introductions of names in the poems. The name situates the poem as an event in the public life of a person.

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11 Parthasarathi, "Puram Poetry," 163. In fact names are permitted in *akam* poetry, as Parthasarathi goes on to say, but only as names of figures who form part of the background landscape. For a translation of the rule see chapter 3 above.
Interpretation in the puram narrative world is then a two-fold process. Firstly, the characters in a poem must be assigned a role from the puram narrative world - such as bard. Secondly the poem must be given a sequence, in which the event the poem represents is understood, by assigning a character a particular identity. One or more biographies could be assigned: one for the addressee, one for the speaker, and one for the hero if his name is not mentioned in the poem or if he is not the addressee.

In emphasizing this two-fold process for situating poems in the puram narrative world I am aware that I depart somewhat from the widely held view that puram poems are concerned with specific historic individuals. I am aware that the poetic rules for puram poems allows them to be about specific historic individuals, but this is the case only where poems mention a specific individual. According to Parthasarathi the use of specific names in puram poems is actually not very common.\textsuperscript{12} Among the classical puram poems I am familiar with, specific names are used for heroes and addressees, but never for speakers. It is, therefore, not quite correct to say that specific historic poets normally speak in their own voices in the puram poems, as Ramanujan, Cutler, Samuel and Zvelebil seem to imply.\textsuperscript{13}

"TiruppaJIyelucci" in the Puram Narrative World

AruNacalam's interpretation of "TiruppaJIyelucci" has to be understood in two stages. He first situates the poem in the puram world, and then he places it as a specific event in the

\textsuperscript{12}See the long quotation on the previous page (Parthasarathi, "Puram Poetry," 163).


Cutler, in an endnote, acknowledges that "based on textual evidence alone, the narrator's identity may be ambiguous", Songs of Experience, 76 n. 9.
life sequence of a specific individual, Māṇikkavācakar. In working through this interpretation he has to superimpose a number of roles upon one another.

The several superimposed roles in Aruṇācalam's interpretation are the bard-king relationship, the servant-master relationship, and the particularized relationship of Māṇikkavācakar and Śiva. The bard and king are puram characters. When "Tiruppalliyelucci" is understood in terms of these roles, the speaker of all the poems is the bard and the addressee is the king. The roles of servant and master are not so clearly puram characters. However, they provide an overlap of probable inhabitants of the puram world and the world in which Māṇikkavācakar lived. Framed in this relationship, the speaker of the poems is the servant, and the addressee is the master. Finally, the relationship between Māṇikkavācakar and Śiva becomes the particular example of the other two relationships, and "Tiruppalliyelucci" is understood as a poem Māṇikkavācakar addresses to Śiva. In Aruṇācalam's interpretation, Māṇikkavācakar, in the roles of bard and servant, sings "Tiruppalliyelucci" to Śiva, his king and his master.

The setting for the event of "Tiruppalliyelucci" when framed by these different relationships is in each case the home of the addressee early in the morning. The bard sings the song to the king in his encampment, or in his palace, at daybreak. The servant sings to his master in the early morning at his house. Māṇikkavācakar sings to Śiva in his temple at dawn.

Aruṇācalam emphasises two features of "Tiruppalliyelucci" when he argues for understanding the poem as a puram event. The first feature is the reference to awakening in the refrain of each verse. The second is the question regarding what form of service the addressee requires of the speaker in poem 7.

Aruṇācalam indicates that awakening the hero is a well-known theme in puram poetry:
"We know from the caṅkaṁ texts and the Tolkāppiyām . . . that when the king who had gone to war is sleeping without worry because of his great power in the army camp, the cūtar sing in order to awaken him from sleep at daybreak; the pāṉar sing to awaken the king from sleep at daybreak in the castle."14

One type of bard, the cūtar, awakens the king in the army camp, and another type of bard, the pāṉar, awakens the king in his castle. The question of how to interpret awakening the hero in his own home is a point of disagreement between Aruṇācalam and Navanītā Kiruṣṇā Pāratiyār. According to Aruṇācalam it is a normal puṟam theme. According to Navanītā Kiruṣṇā Pāratiyār it is an akam theme.15

Aruṇācalam also focuses on the idea of service expressed in poem 7: "O King of Tirupperuntārai! We ask what is the way in which we may serve [you]?”16 In order to explain this phrase he brings up two situations which he suggests Māṇikkavācakar would have witnessed frequently. The first is the servant-master relationship in an agricultural setting, and the second is the servant-master relationship in a palace. According to Aruṇācalam, a landholder of the nobility would have had a number of scattered fields requiring different kinds of care. A good servant would come to the master even if the master had not arisen, awaken him, praise and worship him, and then ask what fields he

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14 Translated from Aruṇācalam, "Tiruppaḷḷiyecchi," 13. See also pp. 12, 18. The Tolkāppiyām Porul Atikāram reference for this theme is sūtra 87.

15 Aruṇācalam, "Tiruppaḷḷiyecchi," does not provide the specific references to support his argument. Neither the Tolkāppiyām Porul Atikāram sūtra nor the Puṟapporuṇaṇpāmālai sūtra specify where the king is awakened, and the Tolkāppiyām sūtra mentions only that the cūtar was awakening the king.

Navanītā Kiruṣṇā Pāratiyār understands this sūtra to refer to awakening the king in the encampment (pācaṟai) only. See Ka. Cu. Navanītā Kiruṣṇā Pāratiyār, commentator. Śrī Maṇivācaṭapā Perūmāṉ Tiruvāy Malanṭaraiya Tiruvācakam Ārāyccī Pēṟurai (Maviṭṭapum, Ilaiṅkai: Pāṭmā Pāṭippakam, 1954), 770.

The Puṟapporuṇaṇpāmālai sūtra does not mention who does the awakening, and it seems that Aruṇācalam only surmises that a pāṉar might awaken the king in the palace. It is an important point, as Navanītā Kiruṣṇā Pāratiyār argues, as we have seen, that the setting is a house, and that the heroine and other female attendants perform the task of awakening.

16 "etu cmaic pani kolum āru atu kētpōm".
should work in and what duties he should attend to that day. In a similar way the army commanders and royal administrators would enquire about their duties each day.\textsuperscript{17}

According to Aruṇācalam, Māṇikkavācakar, as the prime minister to the Pāṇṭiya king would have witnessed both these types of situations.

Aruṇācalam suggests that when Māṇikkavācakar renounced worldly life, he continued with this servant role in his relations with Śiva; he went to Śiva awakened him, and asked what service he should perform:

When he renounced the world, and was made a servant and taken into the service of God, he did not forget this. With this thought he went and asked God what service [he should do]. He awakened and asked: "How do you accept me into service today? What service will I do today? Please give the command (translation mine).\textsuperscript{18}

"Tiruppañjīyēucci" then, when fully interpreted by Aruṇācalam, is a \textit{puram} event situated in a particular individual's life. It is about Māṇikkavācakar (the bard-servant) awakening Śiva (the king-master) from sleep, and inquiring how he should serve him. The event occurs after he has renounced his position as prime minister to the Pāṇṭiya king.

The basic contours of the \textit{puram} frame provides the substance of the interpretation. Aruṇācalam identifies the event as a \textit{puram} event, and assigns \textit{puram} roles to the speaker and addressee in the poem. He then provides a \textit{puram} setting, and finally provides an individual biography as the background narrative sequence against which the single event of uttering "Tiruppañjīyēucci" should be understood. This interpretation contrasts sharply with the \textit{akam} interpretations of Navanṭa Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār and Vanmikanathan. In the first case the heroine and her friends were seen as trying to awaken the playful hero. In the second, the intensely passionate heroine was asking the hero for sexual fulfillment. In this

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{17} Aruṇācalam, "Tiruppañjīyēucci," 21-2.
\textsuperscript{18} Translated from Aruṇācalam, "Tiruppañjīyēucci," 22-3. Aruṇācalam follows this statement with a full quotation of poem 7.
\end{flushleft}
pūram framework the poem becomes respectful awakening of a king/master by a
bard/servant. In chapter 5, I will show how the meaning of the poems change once again
when understood in terms of the theological narrative world of Śaiva Siddhānta.
II: Chapter 5: The Poems in the Śaiva Siddhānta Narrative World

Interpretations of the poems in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world construe the divine-human relationship in terms of the relationship between Ultimate Reality, Śivam, and the soul.\(^1\) Whereas in *akam* and *puṟam* poetry the relationships are portrayed as those appropriate to human life in the world, the Ultimate Reality-soul relationship is appropriate to all worlds, and its final fulfillment is beyond corporeal existence.\(^2\)

In this chapter, two interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" and one of "Tiruppalliyeluccci" which situate the poems in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world will be considered. The three Śaiva Siddhānta commentaries under consideration are dated in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Aphorisms explaining the meaning of the *Tiruvācakam* predate these commentaries,\(^3\) but these interpretations are the earliest known written explanations of any length on the poems of the *Tiruvācakam*.

The first interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai" is called "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" ("Intention of "Tiruvempāvai") and is of uncertain authorship. Almost all subsequent publications of "Tiruvempāvai" make some reference to this interpretation. A Tiruvāvattuturai Āṭīṇam publication attributes the authorship to Tiruttanikai Śrī Vicākapperumāḷai, and its initial publication to Kāṇcipuram Śrī Capāpati Mutaliyār in 1871.\(^4\) According to Zvelebil, Tiruttanikai Śrī Vicākapperumāḷaiyar was born in 1798 and was the son of a famous Vīraśaiva scholar. He became a professor of Tamil and a prolific author. Among his commentaries are one on the grammar, *Naṟṟiḻ*, and one on

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\(^1\) Ultimate Reality is referred to by neuter gender in Śaiva Siddhānta.

\(^2\) Śaiva Siddhānta regards the earth as one of many worlds.

\(^3\) See the list in the introduction.

Maṇikkavācakar's Tirukkōvaiyār. He also coauthored Winslow's well known Tamil Dictionary.\(^5\)

Another source attributes the authorship of "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" to the eighteenth century Tiruppōrūr Citamparacuvāmikāl.\(^6\) He also was a Viraśaiva, and a native of Madurai. According to tradition, the Goddess of Madurai, Miṇāṭci, directed Tiruppōrūr Citamparacuvāmikāl in a dream to go to Tiruppōrūr. There he was associated with the Murukān temple. He wrote a number of poetic works on the God, Murukān, and one on Miṇāṭci, as well as commentaries on various works. There is a story that he began a commentary on Tiruvācakam, but did not finish it.\(^7\)

If either of these people were the author of "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu", we could say that the interpretation is dated to the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Since we are not sure of the authorship, I will refer to it as "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu". The presentation of it here is based on the version found in the Tiruvāvaṭuturai Āṭṭānam publication of 1952, which is a prose explanation of about five small pages on the first ten poems of "Tiruvempāvai".\(^8\)

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\(^8\) Miṇāṭciuntuṟam Piḷḷai, *Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu Mutaliyāna*.  

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Although the authorship of "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" is linked to scholars with Viraśaiva backgrounds, the interpretation has considerable authority in Śaiva Siddhānta contexts. Vanmikanathan and Navaratnam both acknowledge it before proceeding with their own interpretations. Vanmikanathan even makes "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" sound like the official Śaiva Siddhānta interpretation when he says in his introduction to "Tiruvempāvai" that "Sri Dhandapaani Dhesikar of Thiruvaavaduthurai Mutt (monastery), in fact, condemns those who do not subscribe to this view". Each of the three main Śaiva Siddhānta institutions (Tiruvāvaṭuturai Āṭīṇam, Tarumapuram Āṭīṇam, Tiruppaṇantāḷ Śrī Kāci Maṭam) have included it with their published "Tiruvempāvai" editions.

The second Śaiva Siddhānta interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai" and the one of "Tiruppalliyelucci" are taken from Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's commentary on the Tiruvācaṭakam. Little is known about "Cikāli" Tāṇṭavarāyar. His name suggests that he is from Cikāli. He was a disciple of Civaṇurunāṭarāṇakur Cuvāmiyāṭikaḷ in the Pōṟṟattakamala Ācāriya spiritual lineage at Tiruvārūr. The commentary was written in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This places Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar in the early to mid-nineteenth century.

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In a later Tarumapuram Āṭīṇam edition of *Tiruvācaṭakam*, Aruṇāvaṭiśvēl Mutaliyār criticizes "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" for it takes the meaning of one or two poems as the meaning for all the poems. Aruṇāvaṭiśvēl Mutaliyār, *Māṇikkavāca Cuvāmiyakā Tiruvācaṭakam Tirukkōvaiyār Āṭiyā Eṭṭān Tirumuraj [Kuyippuraiyaṭaṇ] (Tarumapuram: Tarumapuram Āṭīṇam, 1966), 271-2. This issue will be discussed in chapter 7.

The Tiruppaṇantāḷ Śrī Kāci Maṭam version is: *Māṇikkavāca Cuvāmiyakā Aruliyā Tiruvempāvai Kuyippuraiyaṭaṇ Tiruppalliyelucci (Polippuraiyaṭaṇ) (Tiruppaṇantāḷ Śrī Kāci Maṭam, 1961).*
The commentary was edited by R. Visvanathaiyar and published by the Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. V. Swaminathaiyar Library in 1954.\textsuperscript{12}

In contrast to the abbreviated "Tiruvempavaik Karuttu", Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar provides a general overview of the meaning as well as a poem by poem explanation. The commentaries on both "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyēḻucci" begin with the Akattiya Cūttiram and are followed by a summary commentary (poḷippurai anupūṭi). In addition, each poem has its own commentary. The poem is introduced with a phrase, which often seems to be a sentence fragment. It is followed by the poem and then a small section giving a Śaiva Siddhānta prose expansion of the poem. The commentaries are extremely terse and damaged in some places, and in spite of the fact that they are full commentaries, it is still difficult to gain an overall understanding of his view of the poem.\textsuperscript{13}

This commentary was chosen, in spite of the difficulties in understanding it, for three main reasons: it is the first known full commentary on the Tiruvācakam; the author

\textsuperscript{12} The biodata is from Visvanathaiyar, "Muṇṇurai," xvii. According to this introduction, Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar began the commentary in Kaliyukam 4945 or Cālivākārayam 1756 (i.e. 1833).

\textsuperscript{13} In his introduction to the commentary, Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar writes that his guru taught him the meaning of the Akattiya Cūttiram and the summary commentary. The commentator says he wrote a word by word commentary (patavaiyākkiyāṉam), an explanation of the minute details (mutpam) and an elaborate commentary (virī). The detailed commentary on "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyēḻucci" to which he refers are apparently missing. See the "Uraippāyiram", 11-12.

The editor of Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's commentary provides the version of "Tiruvempavaik Karuttu" but does not provide much help in understanding this commentary. My presentation of Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyēḻucci" is particularly dependent upon the guidance received from Dr. (Muṇaiyar) A. Ānantārācaṉ who is a scholar of both Tamil language and literature, and of Śaiva Siddhānta. He was able to recognize a number of oblique references to other texts and partial quotes whose source was not identified either by the commentator or by the editor, and thereby suggest what invoking that text in the particular context might mean. Interviews with the author, Palkalainagar, Madurai, February - April 1991: February-July, 1994. Notwithstanding A. Ānantārācaṉ's invaluable insights, the presentation of the commentary is still somewhat tentative.
explicitly states that it has a Śaiva Siddhānta perspective; and it exhibits interpretive strategies which seem to me to situate the poems in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world.

As in the previous two chapters, I will begin with an explanation of the narrative world. This will be followed by "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" of "Tiruvempāvai", and then Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyār's interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai" and then "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccī".

The Śaiva Siddhānta Narrative World

The Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world is one in which all events are related to a particular understanding of the spiritual development of the soul. As there are a number of works in Tamil which articulate the poetics of the akam and puram poetry, so also there are treatises on Śaiva Siddhānta from which it is possible to extrapolate the parameters of the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world. These works are the Meykaṇṭa Cāṭṭiram and their subsequent commentaries and secondary literature. There are fourteen Meykaṇṭa Cāṭṭiram dated between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.15

The characters in this narrative world are the souls, devotees (souls who have become followers of Śivam), Śivam and Catti (Śakti). Śivam is Ultimate Reality in its

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14 He refers to the CivaṆaṆapōṭam and the CivaṆaṆacittiyār, two of the fourteen core Caiva Cittānta Cāṭṭiram in the introduction. According to Ānantarācāṇ with whom I went over this difficult portion of the author's introduction, Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyār's perspective is that civaṆaṆam (Śiva-knowledge) is the essence of Tiruvācakam, civaṆaṆam is explained in the CivaṆaṆapōṭam, and civaṆaṆam is what is elaborated on in the commentary. Ā. Ānantarācāṇ, interviews with the author, Palkalainagar, Madurai, 11 July 1994.

ultimate state or any one of its manifestations. Śivam's anthropomorphic manifestations are male. Catti is Śivam's power or grace. Catti also has many manifestations. Catti's anthropomorphic manifestations are female.\textsuperscript{16}

All the characters in this world except Śiva represent roles rather than particular historical or mythical figures, although they may be given a specific identity in a specific poem. For example souls which are not devotees may be given the identity of such figures as the demon, Rāvaṇa, or the Jains or Buddhists. Or in the other extreme a devotee may be given an identity such as the saint Māṇikkavācaṉar or the God Viṣṇu. Śivam, however, is a specific deity. His position as ultimate being cannot be fulfilled by any other deity.

In Śaiva Siddhānta theology, the souls are divided into three classes: viṁśāṅkalar, piralayākalar, and cakalar. The categorization is based on the number of bonds (malam) which bind each soul. The viṁśāṅkalar souls are only bound by one bond, ānavaṁalam, the primordial impurity attached to all souls. The viṁśāṅkalar souls dwell in the higher, pure regions of the Śaiva Siddhānta universe. The piralayākalar souls are bound by two bonds: ānavaṁalam and karma, the predispositions accumulated from previous existences which determine the situation of the souls' current and future lives. The piralayākalar souls live in the middle realms of the universe. The cakalar souls are bound by all the bonds: ānavaṁalam, karma and māyai, matter. The cakalar souls live in the lower realms of the universe. Human beings are counted among the cakalar class of souls. The last topic of the twelfth sūtra of the Tamil Civaṅṇapōtiḻam states that this text is for the souls with three malas, the cakalar (kuruvāl iṅṭu innūl mummaimalarkku).

Therefore, the sequence described here is concerned only with the cakalar.

\textsuperscript{16} The gendered distinction between Śiva and Catti cannot be maintained too rigourously. All forms of Śiva, including his adornments and weapons are grace.
The spiritual development of the cakala soul is divided broadly into three stages: kēvalam, cakalam, cuttam. Souls are understood to be beginninglessly covered by impurity (āṇavamalam), and are, therefore, considered to start life in an unconscious stage called kēvalam. Śiva brings about the worldly process so that the souls may enter the next stage, cakalam in which they attain partial consciousness through embodiment.

Embodied souls become attached to the world. A given soul may overcome this attachment by cultivating indifference to the outcome of its good and bad actions (iruvinaiyoppu) through various paths of devotion to Śiva. Therefore it is in the cakala stage, rather than the kēvala stage, that a soul has the possibility of becoming a devotee of Śiva. When equanimity with respect to the two kinds of action has been achieved the devotee's original impurity is considered to be mature and ready to be nullified (malaparipākam). This is accomplished through the descent of grace (cattinipātam).

Śiva's power (Tirūtānacatti) which up until this time had functioned concealed in the soul, now operates openly (Arujçatti), finally revealing Śiva's existence in the soul, the cutta stage. This enlightenment experience is generally referred to as attaining or seeing God's feet.17

Śiva's activities concerning the spiritual development of the soul are referred to as the five cosmic actions. They are: 1. creation (pataittal); 2. preservation (kāttal); 3.

17 The basic form of this sequence is found throughout the sūtras and sub-topics (atikaranam) of Meykaṇṭhār's Čivaṉāṇapōtam. For example see sūtras 1; 1.2.a, b; 2.1.c; 2.2; 2.3; 3.7.a; 4.2; 5.2.a; 6; 6.1; 6.2.a; 8 all; 11.2.d. The first number refers to the sūtra, the second number to the topic, and the letters to the examples under each topic.

An English translation of the sūtras and an exposition based on a commentary by Śivaṉānayōgi of the eighteenth century is found in Gordon Matthews, Śiva-nana-bodham: A Manual of Saiva Religious Doctrine (Oxford: University Press, 1948). Subsequent Śiva Siddhānta works elaborate the basic ideas found in the Čivaṉāṇapōtam and debate various interpretations. For example malaparipākam is thought to occur at four different rates which have been expanded into sixteen rates. Some of the terminology used in my summary such as malaparipākam and cattinipātam to my knowledge do not appear in the Čivaṉāṇapōtam itself.
destruction ("alittal"); 4. concealment ("mayittal"); and 5. gracing ("arulal"). The first three activities are God's action with respect to inert matter, activities which are indirectly done on behalf of the souls. Creation is the act by which God makes the appropriate body for the souls, the appropriate instruments of knowledge, and the appropriate world out of matter ("māyai"). Preservation means sustaining the world for a period of time so that the embodied souls may undergo experiences. Destruction refers to removing the souls from the grosser products of "māyai". It is a period of rest for the souls. The products of "māyai" devolve back into "acutta māyai" where they remain until it is time for the universe to be recreated.

The last two of the five activities are God's action with respect to the soul. Concealment refers to God's activity as "catti" of stimulating the soul so that it is capable of undergoing worldly experience in accordance with its karma. God's activity in the soul at this time is concealed from the soul. The mechanism by which God limits the soul's knowledge and remains concealed is "āṇavamalam", or primordial impurity. God activates "āṇavamalam" and makes it function over a number of the soul's different embodiments. This activity weakens the power of "āṇavamalam", and when its power has been sufficiently reduced, its effect is nullified. The soul's knowledge is then free from limitation, and the soul is able to experience God's presence within itself. God's first act of grace is the nullification of "āṇavamalam", and the second is God's revelation of himself within the soul. The "catti" which functions concealed in the soul while the soul's knowledge is limited by "āṇavamalam" is called "Tirōtāṇacatti" (the "catti" of concealment). The "catti" which removes "āṇavamalam" and is revealed within the soul is called "Arulcatti" (the "catti" of grace).\[18\]

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Śiva's five cosmic actions are depicted iconographically in Śiva's dancing form, Naṭarācar. Creation is symbolized by the drum in the upper right hand; preservation by the right hand raised as the symbol of hope; destruction by the fire held in the upper left hand, tīrōtāṇa or concealment by the right foot which stands on the demon, and mutti (mukti) by the raised left foot.¹⁹ The image of Naṭarācar is important for this study because Māṇikkavācakar, the author of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalḷiyēucci", is especially associated with this form of Śiva both in his biography and in one of the rituals studied here.²⁰

Four paths are prescribed for spiritual development while in the human form. These are: cariyai, kiriyai, yōkam, and ānām. These are generally thought to be successive stages, although those in the later stages may still follow the patterns of behaviour characteristic of the earlier paths. The first three lead to births in other worlds. The last, ānām, is the stage in which one attains enlightenment.²¹ In the path of ānām, when the individual has reached the stage of iruvīnaiyoppu, the guru comes to the individual and enlightens the person. The soul for the first time has a direct unmediated realization of Śiva, but even after enlightenment the soul in its human form is in danger of losing the clarity of its realization of Śiva due to the residual effects of malam. These souls

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¹⁹ Unmaivilakkam #35. See C. N. Singaravelu's translation in Unmai Vilakkam (The Exposition of Truth) of Manavasagam Kadaṇṭhār (Śaiva Siddhanta Maha Śamajam, 1981), 52-54. The Unmaivilakkam; is one of the fourteen Caiva Cittānta Cēṭṭīram.

²⁰ Māṇikkavācakar refers to Naṭarācar in "Tiruvempāvai", as any reference to Śiva in Tillai, The Place of the Dance, is taken as a reference to Naṭarācar. Poem 12 has a particularly clear reference.

²¹ Each of the four great Śaiva saints are thought to exemplify one of the four paths and one type of relationship with Śiva. Tirunāvukkaracar is the exemplar of cariyai who stands as a servant to Śiva the master. Tirunānacampantar is the exemplar of kiriyai and stands as a son to Śiva the father. Cuntarar is the exemplar of the path of yōkam and stands as friend to Śiva. Māṇikkavācakar is the exemplar of ānām and stands as disciple in relation to Śiva the guru. The first three are believed to have attained mutti (mukti), even though they exemplify the patterns of behaviour which do not directly lead to mutti.
may prevent this by keeping the company of other devotees and by continuing spiritual practice. 22

The Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world is like the *akam* narrative frame in that it provides a general sequence of events. It is like the *puram* frame in which the hero is identified in the poem, and the hero's biography is invoked as the specific sequence for interpreting the poem, but the speaker's identity is not indicated in the poem. In both the *puram* situation and the Śaiva Siddhānta sequence, the hero is given a particular identity, but anyone can be the follower of that hero.

The "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" Interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai"

"Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" situates the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" as utterances which are constitutive of the creation of the lower orders of the universe. The utterance of the poem is then God's act of creation which includes the embodiment of the souls. The interpretation begins with enough of an explanation of the temporal and spatial aspects of the Śaiva Siddhānta universe to situate the poem as an event of creation, and then it identifies the key characters and their activity. This is followed by situating each of the first ten poems, and by providing the speakers and addressees with the identities of characters within this world.

The characters in this interpretation are some of the *cattis* and souls of the purer realms of the Śaiva Siddhānta universe. The speakers are the nine *cattis* involved in the

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22 See *Civaṇānapōtām*, sūtras: 8 all; 9; 9.1; 9.3; 10, 10.1; 10.2.a, c, e; 11.2; 11.2.d; 12.2, 2.a; 12.3, 3.a; 12.4.a, b. Subsequent texts elaborate and debate various aspects of these paths such as the fruits of the first three, their relation to *nānam*, exactly what the guru does which leads to a discussion of initiation types, and types of aspirants. Specifically the *Civaṇānapōtām* enjoins meditation on Śiva (1.4.c), reciting the *paṇcākkaram* (9; 9.3), praising God (11.2), keeping the company of devotees (12, 12.2, 2.a), and worshipping the dress (and symbols) and the shrines of Śiva (13.3, 3.a; 12.4, 4.a).
periodic re-creation of the universe. Each of the first seven poems is addressed by one of the cattis to another. Maṇḍoṇmaṇi addresses poem 1 to another catti, Carvapūtamaṇi. Carvapūtamaṇi in turn addresses poem 2 to Pēlappiramataṇi. Pēlappiramataṇi then speaks poem 3 to Kalvikaraṇi. She in turn addresses Kālī with poem 4. Poem 5 is Kālī’s address to Rauttiri. Rauttiri addresses Cēṭṭai with poem 6. Poem 7 is Cēṭṭai’s address to Vāmai. Poem 8 is the speech of Vāmai. Lines one through five of poem 8 are addressed to Anantatēvar, and the remaining lines are addressed to a Civacatti (Śivaśakti) in the sphere of Viṣṇu. Anantatēvar is a highly evolved soul who is leader over the eight Vittiyēcuvarar, who act as Śiva’s agents in the impure realms of the universe. In particular, Anantatēvar initiates the re-creation of the mixed (impure mayai) and impure realms (pirakiruti) of the universe. The commentary indicates that the Civacatti who resides in the place of Viṣṇu is concerned with the re-creation of elements from pirakiruti. The nine cattis speak poem 9 amongst themselves. The identities of the speakers and addressees for poem 10 are not clear. It may be spoken by the nine cattis mentioned in the first eight poems. Other versions of this interpretation attribute poems 9 through 20 to the nine cattis as a group.

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24 Visvanathaiyar, editor of Kālī Tāntavarāyar’s commentary, suggests that others say all nine cattis sing this poem. He is supplying portions of Irāmacami Mutaliyār’s version which, with paṇarci or phonetic changes, are identical to this interpretation. Irāmacami Mutaliyār, *Tiruvācakam: Miḻamum Uraiyum* (Piruṅkimānakaram: Intu Yuniyaṅ Accukkuñ, 1897). Also in poem 10, Irāmacami’s version has two less worlds than Čapāpuṭi Mutaliyār’s, and one which has a different name.

In this interpretation, the activity of "Tiruvempāvai" is set in the higher and purer realms of the Śaiva Siddhānta universe. This universe has many worlds. They can be categorized into three groups according to the material out of which they evolve: those from pure māyai; those from impure māyai; and those from pirakiruti, which is an impurer sub-category of impure māyai. Each group has its own types of beings. The souls who live in pure māyai, the viṇṇāṇākalar, are the most evolved spiritually. The souls of impure māyai are the pirālayākalar. The souls of pirakiruti, the cakalar, are the least developed.

The human world is one of the many that evolve from pirakiruti. The events of "Tiruvempāvai" as understood in this interpretation take place in pure māyai.

In pure māyai there are five hierarchically arranged regions: nāta (the highest and the most subtle), viṇṭu, cāṭakkiyam, makēcuram and cuttavittai (the lowest and least subtle). Each has a presiding deity. The last three regions each have their own kinds of beings: the Anucaṭācivar in cāṭakkiyam, the eight Vittiyēcuvarar and a group of cattis in makēcuram, and the Mantirēcurar in cuttavittai. All three of these beings are viṇṇāṇākalar. More specifically the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" are uttered in the makēcuram tattva.

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26 Lines one and two of poem 10, which refer to Śiva's transcendence spatially, are elaborated into an apparently exhaustive listing of all the realms in the universe.

27 The interpretation, in its discussion of poem 10, provides a list of regions with the distance between each one from the lowest in pirakiruti to the highest in pure māyai.

28 "Tiruvempāvai Karuttu", 3.

29 "Tiruvempāvai Karuttu" places Maṇḍopmaṇi and Anantatēvar in the makēcuram tattva, and refers to the mandala of cattis in that region (1-2). The Māpūtiyam refers to the activation of Anantatēvar in the context of the discussion of the makēcuram tattva. Vajravelu Mudaliar, Civanana Mapatiyam, 246.18.
The main factor for situating "Tiruvempāvai", as a whole, is the reference to the month of Mārkaḷi in the last poem. In Śaiva Siddhānta cosmology, the human year is divided into a day and night for the Gods (tēvarkā). From Āṭi month (mid-July to mid-August) to Mārkaḷi month (mid-December to mid-January) is night time for the Gods; from Tai month (mid-January to mid-February) uptō Āṇi month (mid-June to mid-July) is day time for the Gods. These six months are respectively the periods during which the universe in which human beings live is destroyed (caṅkāram) and then recreated (ciruṣṭi). In the yearly cycle of the gods, Mārkaḷi month is dawn, and is the time of the re-creation of the universe for the benefit of the souls who exist in the lower realms. The events of "Tiruvempāvai" then constitute the re-creation of the lower universes, those of impure māyai and pirakiruti.

This interpretation explains the various references to awakening in the first eight poems of "Tiruvempāvai". The utterance of each of the first seven poems is intended to awaken the cattis involved in the creation of that universe. "Awakening" the cattis means "activating" them to their creative functions. The utterance of poem 8 activates Anantatēvar who is responsible for the evolution of the impure māyai, and Civacatti, who is responsible for the re-creation of the pirakiruti. Each of the first eight poems is then understood to be a stage in the creation of the universe.

The "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" interpretation thus situates the utterances in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world as part of an act of creation. In terms of the sequence of events of this narrative world, it situates "Tiruvempāvai" at the stage where the souls become embodied. Creation moves the soul from the kēvala state to the cakala state. In contrast to the akam and puram interpretations, the activity of these poems is thought of as occuring

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30 Mināṭcicuntaram Piḷḷai, Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu Mutaliyana, 1.
well beyond the human realm, in the higher and purer realms of existence. Both the
speakers and addressees are cattis (i.e. forms of divine energy).

Kāḷi Tāṇṭavarāyār's Interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai"

Kāḷi Tāṇṭavarāyār's commentary is terse and the text is damaged in places so that it is
difficult to gain a complete understanding of it. He does, however, illustrate the strategies
of identifying the speakers and addressees, and situating the poem in the Śaiva Siddhānta
narrative world. It is reasonably clear in the commentary what the poems taken as a whole
represent. According to Kāḷi Tāṇṭavarāyār's interpretation, "Tiruvempāvai" consists of a
series of events by which the cattis bring the soul to maturity, and the ensuing experience
of enlightenment which is enjoyed by both the cattis and the soul. The main characters are
the cattis, the purified soul and Śiva. The cattis in this interpretation are those whose
function it is to stimulate the soul, not those who activate inert matter as is the case in
"Tiruvempāvai Karuttu". The locus of activity in this case is the sentient soul, rather than
the insentient cutta realms.

Kāḷi Tāṇṭavarāyār assigns speakers and addressees to the poems of "Tiruvempāvai"
from the characters of the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world. The speakers and addressees in
most of the poems are cattis. The Tirōtāṇacattis appear as a group in each of the poems 1
through 10, but the identity of the other catti changes from poem to poem. In poem 1
Parācatti addresses, in sequence, Mūlāmalacatti (āṇavamalam), then the Tirōtāṇacattis, and
finally the soul. The text of the commentary on poem 2 is damaged. From the editor's
reconstruction it would seem to be a conversation between the Tirōtāṇacattis and
Nāṇacatti.³¹ Poem 3 is an exchange between "Iccācatti, the activator of Karmamalacatti",

³¹ The editor mentions that the commentary on this poem was damaged in eight places.
and the Tirōtānacattis. Poem 4 contains a discussion between the Tirōtānacattis and Kiriyācatti. Poem 5 is a dialogue between the Mature Catti and Āticatti. In poem 6 the discussion is between Mature Tirōtānacatti and Inpācatti. In poem 7 the Tirōtānacattis addresses Teruļcatti. Poem 8 is an exchange between the Tirōtānacattis and Aruļcatti. Poem 9 is the exchange between the Tirōtānacattis and Inpākiyaśivacatti, in which God also is addressed. Poem 10 is an exchange between the Tirōtānacattis and Inpātiita aruļcatti.

In poems 11 through 20, Śiva often is the addressee, and the soul or the cattis are the speakers. In Poem 11 the speaker is not identified. There are two addressees, the image of Śiva at the Madurai Mināci-Cunterēcurar Temple, Kaliyānacuntaran, and the "Girl of Knowledge". Poem 12 is the speech of the "Civacattis who desire maturity", who we can conclude are the Tirōtānacattis. It is addressed to the "Girl of Knowledge". In poem 13 the "Cattis of Grace" speak to each other. The text of poem 14 has a gap in the portion which summarizes the poem and identifies the speakers and events, but a portion indicates that some class of cattis are the speakers in this poem. In poem 15 Parācatti addresses the Tirōtānacattis.32 The identity of the speaker is not provided in poem 16 but the poem is addressed to the "Girls of Nāṇam who are the Friends of the Soul".33 In poem 17 the speaker is not identified, but the poem is addressed to the "cattis who activate the pure souls". Parācatti addresses the cattis such as Tirōtāna in poem 18. In poem 19 and 20 the pure soul (cuttāṃmā) speaks. In poem 19 the Tirōtānacatti address Parācatti, and then the pure soul addresses Śiva. Poem 20 is the statement of the soul who has attained release addressing God.

32 "Girls of Nāṇam" is probably the cattis addressed at the beginning of the commentary. Ā. Āqantarācañ commented that anything said about Tirōtānacattis is normally applicable to the soul. Interviews with the author, Palkalainagar, Madurai, 9 February 1994.

33 The choice of tōli to indicate friend is interesting, since it is a technical term used to refer to the friend of the heroine in akam poetics.
Eight of the first ten poems are interpreted as dialogues between various *cattis*. This contrasts with the interpretations of Navanīṭa Kīruṣṇa Pārātiyār and Vannikanathan which understand only poems 2, 3 and 4 to be dialogues, and "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" which does not seem to take any of the poems as dialogues. All of the three dialogue poems in Navanīṭa Kīruṣṇa Pārātiyār's and Vannikanathan's interpretations are between the heroine and her companions, suggesting that the three poems are part of the same event. For Kāli Tāṇṭavārayār, however, the dialogue poems seem to involve at least one different *catti* in each poem, which suggests that each poem is a separate event, as in "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu". Possibly each dialogue poem represents a different stage in the development of the soul.

The summary commentary (*polippurai anupūti*) at the beginning of Kāli Tāṇṭavārayār's explanation of "Tiruvempāvai" situates the whole poem in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world. It describes the first ten poems as events by which the soul is brought to maturity. It says that the first ten poems describes the Tīrūṭāṇacatti awakening the beginningless *malacatti* (i.e. āṉavamalam). The sentences preceeding the first reference to awakening *catti* situate the awakening activity in the context of the removal of the soul from āṉavamalam. The remaining ten poems are about the blissful experience of enlightenment. According to the summary commentary, the events of the last ten poems are those in which Aruḷcatti as Paraicatti gives the soul the highest bath of bliss. In the end the soul has reached the *cutta* state, or the soul is enlightened. The interpretation,

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34 There are some versions of this interpretation which interpret some of the first poems as dialogues. Irattīḷa Tecikar, *Tiruvempāvai Uraiṭṭalum Tiruppalliṭṭeṭṭi Uraiṭṭum* (poems 2-4) and Irāmacami Mutaliyar, *Tiruvācakam* (poem 4).
35 The *polippurai* suggests that another meaning for the last ten poems is that they are about the evolution of the universe from *cutta māyai*. The poem by poem commentary on the last ten poems focuses on the bath of bliss, and does not seem to make any reference to creation. I know only of "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" (discussed above) which interprets "Tiruvempāvai" as being about creation. It focuses on the first 10 poems.
therefore, focuses on God's two cosmic actions with respect to the soul, the concealment (poems 1 through 10) and granting of grace (poems 11 through 20).

Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's comments on poems 10 and 11 confirm that he is following the direction provided by his teacher. In the explanation of poem 10, he says that malaparipākam is occurring. Introducing poem 11 he says:

Now, because the malacatti, which is inside, becomes mature as a result of the question and answer of the ten cattis in the previous poems, tirōtānam arises outside becoming arul, so [the soul] stands and obtains the bath of pērinpam which is dancing without ego, awakening from the sleep of mala in the space of parai (ñāṇam) [it] bathes in the ultimate bliss (cukāṭītam).

Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar here indicates that the questions and answers of the previous ten poems constitute the actions which bring the soul (that is āṇavamalam) to maturity. When the soul is mature, when it has attained the state in which malam is mature (malaparipākam), the hidden catti (Tirōtānacatti) reveals itself (becomes Arulcatti), and the soul's consciousness transcends the world and experiences the consciousness of Śiva. The result of the events of the first ten poems is, then, the bliss or enlightenment of the soul. Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar says that tirōtāna becomes arul. This is a description of the event from the perspective of the activity of catti. This same event from the perspective of the soul is expressed as an "awakening from the sleep of malam (impurity) in the space of parai (ñāṇam) (knowledge)".

The point of departure for situating the first ten poems seems to be the "awakening" activity expressed in the form of dialogues in eight of the first ten poems. This question and answer, as we saw in the introductory remarks to poem 11, brought about the maturing of āṇavamalam. The point of departure for the remaining ten poems is the "bathing"

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36 Translated with the help of Ā. Āṇantarācaṇ, interviews with the author, Palkalainagar, Madurai, 30 April 1991. He says the sentence is not complete.
which is referred to in all the poems. Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar interprets this bath to be the bath of bliss, which is experienced when the soul is in the ultimate state of union with Śiva.

"Tiruvempāvai" in this interpretation reflects events which take place in the soul. In the first ten poems, the Tirūṭāṇacattis are awakening the āṇavamalam residing in the soul. The Tirūṭāṇacattis are the energies of Śiva that function concealed in the soul prior to enlightenment. The activity of the final ten poems is the soul bathing in the bath of bliss. The Tirūṭāṇacattis who have before functioned in a concealed way now reveal themselves in and to the soul. This is the enlightenment experience. Throughout the interpretation the locus of the activity of "Tiruvempāvai" is the soul.

It seems in general that Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar interprets the first ten poems as a sequence of events by which the soul is brought to maturity, and the last ten as a collection of poems on the experience of mutti. The introductory statement to poem 11 implies that the soul's attainment of enlightenment is a result of the sequence of events that lead up to poem 11. On the other hand Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar identifies poem 1 as Paracatti grasping the highest soul, a clear reference to a state of enlightenment, but in the other poems in the first group it seems that enlightenment has not been obtained. Probably he takes poem 1 as an introduction. Alternatively we might imagine, as in Navanīta Kṛṣṇa Pāratiyar's interpretation of "Tiruppaṛīyucjucci", that the order of the poems in the edition does not represent the order of the poems as a sequence of events. One could, for instance, imagine poem 1 as the final event in the sequence of the first ten poems. Poem 10 says

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37 For example, the elaboration of poem 2 says that the maturity of malu has not yet come. Poem 4 is understood to contain a request for the state of 'niṟṭai', a technical term referring to the soul's ultimate experience of Śiva or "Śivapōkam". In poem 5 there is a request to open the door of delusion, which suggests that āṇavamalam, the deluding principle, has not yet been removed. Poem 6 contains a reminder of the promise to give nāṇam (enlightenment). In poem 8 the addressee is asked if her sleep is the result of malam, again suggesting that āṇavamalam has not yet been removed.
malaparipākam has occurred, or the āṇavamalam has matured and is ready for removal. Poem 11 talks about the bath of bliss. Poem 1 would fit in between these chronologically as the actual removal of the mature āṇavamalam which leads to the bath of bliss. The last ten poems seem to be a collection of poems around the topic of experiencing mutti and do not seem to represent a sequence.

"Tiruvempāvai" has been situated differently by the two commentators in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world. In "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu", "Tiruvempāvai" is about the creation of the universe. The first eight poems represent a sequence of single events in that process. In Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation, "Tiruvempāvai" is about the maturing of āṇavamalam and the soul enjoying the experience of bliss in mutti. Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation assumes the creation of the world. "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" set the poems earlier in the sequence of the soul's spiritual development than does Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation. Both interpretations are quite different from the akam understandings discussed earlier.

Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's Interpretation of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēlucci"

Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's commentary on "Tiruppaḷḷiyēlucci" is very terse and difficult, and the ideas presented in the following analysis must be taken only as suggestions. He provides an identity for the addressees and some of the speakers in the poems of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēlucci". He also provides the situation for "Tiruppaḷḷiyēlucci" generally, and a suggested theme of each of the poems. Furthermore, in his prose expansions on the poems, he introduces a large number of Śaiva Siddhānta technical terms. "Tiruppaḷḷiyēlucci" in this interpretation, is taken as a collection of poems on the same theme, but the poems do not necessarily represent the same event, as they do, for example, in Vanmikanathan's interpretation. The poems also do not seem to reflect a sequence of events which add up to a single event, as in
"Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" of "Tiruvempāvai" or Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation of the first ten poems of "Tiruvempāvai". If this is the case, each poem would seem to have its own meaning, as each poem represents a separate event. Therefore it is not possible to provide a meaning for "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" as a whole.

Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar provides identities from the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world for the addressee in all the poems, but identities for the speakers only in poems 1 through 4. The addressee in all poems is God, specifically identified as Śiva except in poem 8. Part of poem 7 is also addressed to the tēvar (gods). The speakers in the first poem are the women, who are the "Cīcattis of the enlightened soul" (malapipākavāṭmacir- cattippēṇkaññ). The speaker in poems 2, 3 and 4 is a devotee (atiyēn). Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar refers to the speakers in the remaining six poems only by first person pronouns.

The setting for the poems of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" is not clear. In most of the poems, the speaker speaks about aspects of enlightenment, without any indication of where the act of speaking is taking place. In poems 1 and 2 the setting is clear. In poem 1 the Cīcattis in the enlightened soul address Śiva who is also in the soul. In a similar sense, the enlightened soul addresses Śiva within the soul in poem 2. The activity of these two poems, at least, takes place within the enlightened soul.

The summary commentary at the beginning of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" identifies the collection of poems as being about a state of enlightenment in which the soul is absorbed in Śiva to the exclusion of other experience. The summary commentary itself phrases it as the rising of the sun in the soul (uyir), which is the fifth state beyond the kēvala, cakala and cutta states. This places the theme of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" at an advanced stage in the

38 In the Śaiva Siddhānta world view, tēvas are souls who have attained a more exalted life form because of good karma in their previous life.
39 I am following an interpretation of the summary commentary suggested by Ā. Āṇantarācaññ, interviews with the author, Palkalainagar, Madurai, November 1990.
soul's spiritual development. The point of departure for situating the ten poems of "Tiruppalliyellucci" in this way is the reference to the rising sun in three of the poems, and the refrain which requests the addressee to arise.\textsuperscript{40}

In Śaiva Siddhānta theology, there are at least two schemes describing the devotee's evolving awareness of Śiva. One has four stages and the other has five stages.\textsuperscript{41} The last two stages in both schemes refer to the two different ways of being enlightened: Śivayōkam and Śivapōkam. Śivayōkam is the state of the soul in union with Aruḷcatti. It is a state of enlightenment in which the soul can be active in the world. The soul uses grace rather than the instruments of māyai for knowing the world. In other words the soul is directed by grace. In Śivapōkam the soul is completely immersed in the experience of Śiva and enjoys his qualities. Śivapōkam is a state of bliss. The soul is incapable of knowing anything else while in this state, and is incapable of functioning in the world. This is the highest state for the embodied soul, but it is only temporary because embodied souls continue to participate in the world. Viewed from this perspective the fully evolved embodied soul is capable of these two modes of being. Perhaps when the summary commentary says that the soul leaves the cutta state and is in the fifth state, it means as Ānantarācan suggests, that the soul enters Śivapōkam.\textsuperscript{42} This interpretation implies a more

\textsuperscript{40} Dawn is explicitly mentioned or described in poems 1, 2, and 3.

\textsuperscript{41} The stages in the four-fold scheme are: 1. kēṭtal (hearing); 2. cintal (reflecting); 3. telital (clarity); 4. nittai (experiential realization). The five-fold scheme is: 1. cutta vākkiram; 2. cutta coppamp; 3. cutta culuttī; 4. cutta turiyam; 5. cutta turiyatītam. The five stages are the normal stages of the embodied soul (waking, dream, sleep, deep sleep, deepest sleep) with the adjective "pure" attached. In the Śaiva Siddhānta view, as one proceeds from wakefulness to deep sleep one moves deeper into the darkness of ānāvamalam. On the other hand, the soul advancing spiritually moves into greater degrees of purity rather than impurity. Ā. Ānantarācan, interviews with the author, Palkalainagar, Madurai, August 1990 and February, 1994. See also Ā. Ānantarācan, Tacakāriyam (Tirunelveli: Aruṇnāṇi Civam Aruṇṭaṇi Maṇḍram, 1993), 13-4.

\textsuperscript{42} Ā. Ānantarācan, interviews with the author, Palkalainagar, Madurai, August, November 1990; February 1994.
limited definition of the *cutta* state as that of the pure embodied soul still functioning in the world.

Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar identifies the theme for each of the poems of "Tiruppalḷiyelucci" in the introductions to the individual poems. In poems 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 the connection between the general situation described in the summary commentary and the situation of the individual poems is fairly clear. The introductory comment on poem 1 says that it is about the "arising of grace", which is the experience of Śiva in the soul. Poem 2 speaks about "when pācam leaves and paraṇāṇam emerges". Pācam and paraṇāṇam are Śaiva Siddhānta technical terms. Pācam refers to the three bonds of the soul: māyai, karma and āñavam. Paraṇāṇam is the highest knowledge by which one experiences and realizes God. It is possible only when the soul has been freed from pācam. The situation provided for poem 3 is that "the feet which are rare for others are easily accessible to me a devotee". Experiencing Śiva in the soul is regularly referred to as "experiencing the feet". The theme provided for poem 5 is that the "bent red foot is the ultimate satisfaction". This is a reference to the raised left foot of Naṭārācar which symbolizes the bestowal of grace and the experience of enlightenment. The theme of poem 6 is "God lives in the mind which has become diffuse". The main point of the Śaiva Siddhānta prose expansion is that the special devotees in the Niṭṭai state have pervasive minds and they worship the feet as a symbol of God's human form. Niṭṭai is a technical term in Śaiva Siddhānta referring to the soul's ultimate experience of Śiva. It is also called Śivapōkam.

In Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation, the poems of "Tiruppalḷiyelucci" seems to be a collection of poems about various aspects of a situation, and they do not form a sequence

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44 See notes 38 and 42 above.
of events or represent a single event. This point can be suggested by considering three poems: 1, 2 and 7.

The theme Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar gives for poem 7 is that it is a request for grace. In his prose expansion of the poem, the speaker asks: "Will we receive the true teaching?" The "Tiruppaḷḷiḻuḷci" refrain is interpreted as a request for the arising from the bed which is a request for enlightenment. Poem 7 is a request for the experience of enlightenment. It therefore represents a stage prior to the attainment of that stage in the soul's development.

Poems 1 and 2 are expressions from two slightly different perspectives of the experience of Śiva in the soul while in that state. These two poems represent an advanced stage in the sequence of events leading to the full spiritual development of the soul. The introductory statement indicates that poem 1 is about the arising of grace. The next statement in the commentary identifies the exact event of the poem: "the cīt cattīs of the soul, in which malaparipākam has occurred, have gathered and are praising the vision of God who is sitting in the audience hall which is the mind" (translation mine). Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar explains the phrase, "It has dawned", in the poem as "leaving kēvala and cakala states, ūṇam which is the pure holy feet arose in [our/my] knowledge" (translation mine). The soul whose malam has matured has received enlightenment. We may conclude that the vision of God in the audience hall of the mind is another way of saying God has revealed himself to the soul and the soul is enlightened. The refrain is understood by Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar to be a request for God to accept the speakers' heart (emattulam) as his audience hall. An audience hall is where the ruler makes himself available or reveals himself to his subjects. We may suggest that this is a request that God, having revealed himself in the soul, should remain revealed.

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45 Tamil Lexicon (Madras: 1982) provides the following definitions for olakkam: Assembly of state, audience, royal presence, durbar; Hall.
The event of poem 2 is also an experience of Śiva in the soul, expressed this time from the perspective of the soul. Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's prose expansion of poem 2 is as follows:

Now, it tells how when pācam leaves, paraññānam emerged.

[citation of poem 2]

The two deeds of the knowledge of the soul which search after lower [things] became equal (iruvinaivyappāki) and malaparipākam was born; because of that their pācam left before Aruṇān who is atittivaraacattinipātam: māyai which resembles a lamp is gone: as a result of the dawn of grace, the sun which is great bliss (pērinpam) and the source for that grace shines, and gives grace for the soul, that compassion increases more and more, when the scent of Śiva which is in the soul diffuses, appearing as one with the soul (apētattuittitakātriyaśa), that great compassion of our Lord is the basis for that bliss [in the soul]: while the bees who are the devotees stand praising row by row, this is definitely the way of realizing the foot! O Highest Śiva of Tirupperunturai! O Mountain of pērinpam which is the glance of grace [which leads the soul to] experience of Śiva [in its] own experience giving [to it] the gem of bliss! O Ocean of Knowledge! It is necessary to celebrate the festival of awakening in the mind of me your devotee! (translation mine).46

The imagery of dawn in this poem is interpreted in Śaiva Siddhānta technical terminology. Aruṇān is the charioteer of the sun and represents dawn.47 Aruṇān's arrival is compared to the descent of grace. Darkness leaving is compared to pācam leaving when grace descends. The rising of the sun is compared to the occurrence of great bliss (pērinpam) which follows the descent of grace. The explanation indicates that the soul had attained equanimity with respect to the outcome of its good and bad actions (iruvinaivyoppu) and the maturity of malam (malaparipākam). Because of that pācam left when grace descended (cattinipātam). The lamp of māyai left. This means that the soul ceases to know by the instruments of māyai, the mental and sensory organs. It implies that the soul knows by grace, and therefore that the soul has achieved the state of Śivayōkam. Up until this point,

46 Kāli Tāṇḍavārayar, Tiruvācaka Vyākhanam, 737.
47 Tamil Lexicon: Aruṇān can also mean the sun. In the commentary, however, there is a clear distinction between dawn and the sun.
the commentator uses only the past tense, and he does so three times, thereby emphasising that the state described has been attained. The commentator then shifts to the present continuous form of the verb when he describes the rising of the sun and the experiencing of pleasure. As the result of the dawn of grace the sun of great bliss arises and fills the soul. This is attaining the feet *(tiruvāṭi)*. The use of the present continuous suggests that this is the state from which the speaker speaks. The soul moves into the state of Śivapōkam. The commentary concludes with the statement that God should enjoy the festival of the bed in the devotee's mind. We may suggest that this reference is a longing that God should remain revealed in the soul.

The events of poems 1 and 2 are the actual experience of Śivapōkam, and the speakers speak from that state. The event of poem 7 is a request for that experience, and the speaker speaks from a different state. The first two poems talk about the same experience from the viewpoint of two different speakers. This suggests that the poems of "Tiruppalḷiyelucci" are not a collection of poems expressing a single event as they are in Vanmikanathan's interpretation. It also seems that since the same experience is expressed from two different viewpoints, and that poem 7 is an event which occurs prior to the event of poems 1 and 2, that in Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation the poems of "Tiruppalḷiyelucci" do not represent a sequence, as they do in Navanīta Kīrūṣṇa Pāratiyār's interpretation.

The meaning of Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation of "Tiruppalḷiyelucci" differs from that arrived at through the interpretation of Navanīta Kīrūṣṇa Pāratiyār.

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48 "kiḷ nāṭalāṇa pacūpōta iruvinai yoppāki, malapariṇākam pirantatu; avargil atiṭivarā cattiniṇātaniṇa arūṇaṭ mun avar pācam akāntatu; viḷakkaṇaṭiy aṁyaiṇaṭatu viṭṭintatu; tiruvāl varul utayamākavē, avvarulukku mutalīya pērinpac ṣuriṇaṭ viḷaṅki...ivvakaiyō tiruvati peruvatu" (emphasis mine). Kāḷi Tāṇḍavarāyar, *Tiruvācaka Vyākhānam*, 737.
Vanmikanathan or Aruṇācalam. In Navanīta Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār's and Aruṇācalam's interpretations, the speaker(s) awaken the addressee from sleep. For Navanīta Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār, the speaker is the wife and her companions who want to see the hero sitting in state attending to those who have come to see him. For Aruṇācalam, the speaker is the bard-servant-devotee, Māṇikkavācakar, who wants to find out from Śiva what service he should perform for him. In Vanmikanathan's and Kālī Tāṇṭavarāyār's interpretations, the poems of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷucci" are about an awakening of the speaker. For Vanmikanathan this awakening is the heroine to sexual fulfillment which he correlates to mystical union. For Kālī Tāṇṭavarāyār it is an experience of Śivapōkam. In Vanmikanathan's interpretation the fulfillment has not yet happened. In Kālī Tāṇṭavarāyār's interpretation in at least two poems it is happening at the moment the poem is uttered, and in another it has yet to happen.

Summary

"Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷucci" have been situated as events in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world by the strategy of assigning characters of that world to be the addressees and speakers in the poems and by indicating the situation in that world to which the poems correspond. "Tiruvempāvai" was situated as two different events and therefore the meaning of it was also understood differently in the two interpretations. According to "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu", the utterance of "Tiruvempāvai" is the act of creation of the impure orders of the universe. In Kālī Tāṇṭavarāyār's interpretation, the utterance of the first ten poems effects the purification of the soul and the remaining ten poems are expressions of the resulting experience of bliss in the enlightened state. Kālī Tāṇṭavarāyār utilized the strategy of assigning identities to the speaker to a lesser extent in his commentary on "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷucci", but he did provide a theme for each of the poems, as
well as the general situation for the collection of poems as a whole. According to Kāli Taṇṭavarāyar, "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci" is about the experience of Śivapōkam, a complete blissful immersion in Śiva to the exclusion of all other experience.

In this chapter, "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci" have been understood in terms of Śaiva Siddhānta theology. The events as understood in the interpretations presented here occur beyond the world of every day experience, as part of a cosmic drama. In chapter 6, I will consider the meaning of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci" when they are understood in terms of the lives of individuals living in the human realm of experience.
II: Chapter 6: The Poems in the Biographical Narrative Worlds

Interpretations of the poems in biographical narrative worlds depict the divine-human relationship as one between a god and a particular individual. The events are ordered according to the chronology of the individual's own life. Either the speaker or the addressee have a specific identity. The setting is the specific time and place that the poem is uttered. The meaning or significance of the poems is the meaning or significance that it has when uttered at a particular point in the speaker's or addressee's own life.

Two biographical worlds will be considered in this chapter: the life of the composer of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci", Mānikkavācakar, and the "first person" narrative world. A brief summary of Mānikkavācakar's life will be provided, followed by an interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai", in terms of that biography, by R. Navaratnam. Then an explanation of the "first person" biographical world will be given, and several examples of the significance of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" to the lives of individuals will be presented.

"Tiruvempāvai" in Mānikkavācakar's Biographical World

There are several sources which provide information on Mānikkavācakar's life.1 His story has been told in four episodes in perhaps the earliest account of the "sixty-four sports of Śiva in the Madurai area", Tiruvālavāyutaiyār Tiruvilaiyāḻal Purāṇam, and retold again in a more popular and later account, Tiruvilaiyāḻal Purāṇam by Paraṅcōti.2 The main source

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1 K. V. Zvelebil, Tamil Literature (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 221. See the list of sources in Radha Thiagarajan, A Study of Mysticism in Tiruvācakam (Madurai: Madurai Kamaraj University, 1983), 1 n. 1.
2 See the introduction. According to Zvelebil references to Śiva's "sports" occur in various earlier sources, the earliest being the Cilappatikāram which mentions two sports. Zvelebil estimates a date for Paraṅcōti between 1450 and 1625. K. V. Zvelebil, Tamil
is the *Tiruvāṭavāraṭikā Purāṇam* by Kaṭavulmāmunivar. The whole *purāṇam* is an account of Mānīkkavācakar's life. The following account of Mānīkkavācakar's life is based on the English summaries of the *Tiruvāṭavāraṭikā Purāṇam* by G. U. Pope and Glenn Yocum.

**Mānīkkavācakar's Narrative World**

Mānīkkavācakar was a brahmin from Tiruvāṭavūr, a village located a short distance northeast of Madurai city. He was a talented and educated youth who at an early age became chief minister of the Pāṇṭiya king. He shone in this post. While chief minister, he was sent by the king to Tirupperuntuṟai to buy horses. Meanwhile, Śiva and his retinue appeared in Tirupperuntuṟai. Śiva sat under a tree, disguised as a human guru, surrounded by his retinue in human form. Mānīkkavācakar arrived in Tirupperuntuṟai, met this "guru", received spiritual teaching, and became enlightened. He then donated all his and the king's wealth to this guru. His assistants, unable to alter his course of action, returned and reported what had happened to the king. The king sent a message ordering Mānīkkavācakar to return. Mānīkkavācakar consulted Śiva who told him to return to Madurai and he would follow with the horses on an auspicious day. Mānīkkavācakar returned, and when the horses did not appear after some time, he was imprisoned.

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5 Today Tirupperuntuṟai is identified with Āvuṭaiyārkōyil.
Eventually, Śiva arrived with the horses disguised as a horse trader. Māṇikkavācakar was released. In the night, however, the horses turned into jackals, caused havoc and escaped. The horse trader was gone. The king, angry, ordered that Māṇikkavācakar stand in the dry Vaikai river-bed in the mid-day sun. The saint appealed to Śiva who, then, made the Vaikai River flood. Everyone was required to build up a portion of the river bank. An old lady who was not capable of doing the work herself, appealed to Śiva for help. He came disguised as a labourer and offered to do her work in exchange for the rice cakes that she sold. The labourer sported and behaved like a mad-man. The king ordered him to be beaten. The blow on his back was felt by all beings. The king realised that the labourer was Śiva, and as a result released Māṇikkavācakar from service.

Once Māṇikkavācakar was free from his worldly duties he became an ascetic. He returned to Tirupperunturai and remained there with Śiva and his devotees. After some time, Śiva prepared to return to Kailacarn. He told the devotees to remain with Māṇikkavācakar for a little while longer and then to return to Kailacarn also. He told Māṇikkavācakar to go to Citamparam, visiting shrines along the way. Māṇikkavācakar begged to go with Śiva, but was not permitted. Śiva left and the devotees remained for a little longer and then left also.

Māṇikkavācakar composed a number of poems while in Tirupperunturai. Then he travelled to Citamparam, visiting several places and composing poems along the way. He finally settled in Citamparam where he composed most of his poems. While in Citamparam he defeated the Buddhists in a debate.

One day Śiva came to him disguised as a ascetic from the Pāṇṭiya country. He asked Māṇikkavācakar to sing his songs, and while Māṇikkavācakar sang Śiva recorded them. The ascetic then asked him to sing a kōvai which he also recorded. Śiva took these songs to Kailacarn and sang them to all the gods. Then Śiva placed them on the steps of
Citamparam Temple. The priests of the temple discovered the songs and sang them before a crowd that had gathered. The crowd went to Maṇikkavācakar to ask him to explain the songs. Maṇikkavācakar took them all to the temple. At the temple, Maṇikkavācakar pointed to Naṭarācar and said that he was the meaning of the songs. Maṇikkavācakar then went into the sanctum and merged with Naṭarācar, attaining mutti.

"Tiruvempāvai" in Maṇikkavācakar's Biography: Navaratnam's Interpretation

The interpretation presented here is by Ratna Navaratnam, a Sri Lankan educator and scholar of Tamil Śaivism. She was educated in Tamil Nadu and in London, England. She was later the principal of Ramanathan College in Sri Lanka, and subsequently held positions in the education department of the Sri Lankan government, ultimately as Director of Education. She is a Śaiva. Her interpretation of "Tiruvempāvai" are found in her study of Tiruvācakam which she submitted as a thesis to Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu in 1946.⁶

Ratna Navaratnam uses Maṇikkavācakar's biography as the frame for interpreting the Tiruvācakam in general, and "Tiruvempāvai" in particular. In her view, the poems, in their canonical order, reflect Maṇikkavācakar's spiritual development.⁷ She provides an

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⁶ This thesis was published twice, firstly under the title of Tiruvachakam: The Hindu Testament of Love (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1963) and then under the title A New Approach to Tiruvacagam (Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1971). The second publication appears to be a somewhat revised version of the first. The information about her life comes from the back cover of the first publication, as well as from her introductory remarks.

⁷ See Navaratnam, New Approach to Tiruvacagam, 32-3. Yocum notes that the order of the poems in standard editions of the Tiruvācakam differs from the order provided in the Tiruvāṭavārāṭikāl Purāṇam. He also suggests that the poems in their standard order do not reflect a spiritual development, as the poems at the end are not much different from those at the beginning. Yocum, Hymns to the Dancing Śiva, 56. Vanmikanathan agrees with Navaratnam that the standard order of the 51 units reflects Maṇikkavācakar's spiritual growth. G. Vanmikanathan, Pathway to God through the Tiruvāchakam: An Original Interpretation and Complete Translation (Thiruppananadai: Sri Kasi Mutt, 1980), 19-26.
identity for the speakers and addressee(s), establishes the setting, and locates the
composition in the poet's life. According to Navaratnam, "Tiruvempāvai" was composed
in Tiruvanāṇampalai, while Māṇikkavacakar was travelling to Citamparam. It represents an
effort to lift his disheartened spirit.

Navaratnam assigns identities to the speakers and addressees in "Tiruvempāvai" in	hree ways. Firstly, the speakers and addressees are given a general role, and then are
assigned the identities of individuals from Māṇikkavacakar's biography. The speakers and
addressees in the first set of identities are young girls: girls inside different houses and
friends outside who try to encourage them to join them. The girls are historic individuals,
but they have no specific identities. In the second set of identities, Māṇikkavacakar is the
girl inside the house, and Śiva's incarnated devotees are the group of girls outside. In this
assignment of identities, the different girls in different houses from poem to poem become
the same girl, "Māṇikkavacakar", in all the first eight poems. In the third set of identites,
Māṇikkavacakar is the speaker as both the girl inside the house and the group outside. In
this set of identities he talks to himself.

Corresponding to the three sets of identities are two settings and three events. The
first setting is the town of Tiruvanāṇampalai in December at dawn. Māṇikkavacakar
witnesses young girls going from house to house awakening their friends and going to the

Radha Thiagarajan agrees that the poems of Tiruvācakam reflect Māṇikkavacakar's
spiritual development, however, she does not see this development in the standard order of
the poems. Rather, she suggests an alternative sequence for the poems which does reflect
it. In this new sequence, "TiruPPālīyālucu" is reflective of an experience which occurs
earlier in Māṇikkavacakar's development than "Tiruvempāvai". Thiagarajan, Mysticism in
Tiruvācakam, xiv, 193-7.

8 Navaratnam, New Approach to Tiruvacagam, 188-193, 195.
9 Navaratnam's first set of identities follows the same assumptions about the formal
units of the early poems of "Tiruvempāvai" as in the "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu". Her
second set of identities follows the same set of formal assumptions about the early poems
as in the akam interpretations of Vammikanathan and Navāṇīṭa Kiruṇā Pārāṭiyār.
tank to bathe.\(^{11}\) This activity is the inspiration for this song. Both this activity, and Māṇiṅkavācakar's utterance of it, according to this interpretation, occur in Tiruvaṅṅāmalai.\(^{12}\) The second setting is in the poet's mind. The poems of "Tiruvempāvai" are an imagined dialogue between himself and the incarnated devotees, and a real dialogue with himself. In the second event, the incarnated devotees urge a despondent Māṇiṅkavācakar to come, join them and go to Śiva. The third event is Māṇiṅkavācakar's effort, inspired by the exuberance of the girls whom he witnessed in Tiruvaṅṅāmalai, to arouse himself out of his discouraged state.

Navaratnam places the composition of "Tiruvempāvai", and the experience which she feels it expresses, during Māṇiṅkavācakar's travels from Tirupperunturai to Citamparam. The poet had been left by his guru and his guru's devotees in Tirupperunturai. Following the instructions of Śiva, he was proceeding to Citamparam, and on his way he passed through Tiruvaṅṅāmalai. While there he saw the young girls going from house to house, awakening their friends and going to the temple tank to bathe.\(^{13}\) This is the occasion which prompts the composition of the poem, according to Navaratnam.

In situating "Tiruvempāvai", Navaratnam emphasises the references to Śiva at Tiruvaṅṅāmalai, the Mārkali worship activity of awakening friends and going to bathe, and the state of the girl in poem 1. Navaratnam places Māṇiṅkavācakar in Tiruvaṅṅāmalai because in the poem Māṇiṅkavācakar can be understood to address Śiva in his particular form found in Tiruvaṅṅāmalai. In poem 18, Śiva is addressed as Lord of Tiruvaṅṅāmalai. Also she understands references to Śiva as cōṭi (effulgence) to refer to Śiva in

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\(^{13}\) Navaratnam, *New Approach to Tiruvacagam*, 195.
Tiruvan̄mālalai, because his form there is the Linga of Fire. The Mārkāḷi activity provides the temporal setting of December and dawn, as well as the activity of awakening and the injunctions to bathe, which represent MāṇikkavācaKar's effort to lift his spirits.

Navaratnam also focuses on the state of the girl in poem 1 when identifying MāṇikkavācaKar's state of mind during this period of his life. Rather than being overwhelmed by love, as in Vanmikanathan's akam interpretation, the girl is disheartened. According to Navaratnam, MāṇikkavācaKar was discouraged and lonely when he was left by Śiva and the devotees. He was discouraged because he felt that the reason he was left behind was because he was spiritually immature. He longs to be back in the community of devotees. It is in this state that he arrives in Tiruvan̄mālalai. He sees the joyfulness of the girls, and their efforts to encourage their friends to participate, and tries to coax himself out of his state of despondency. "Tiruvempāvai" is thus an expression of this effort.

The meaning of "Tiruvempāvai" in Navaratnam's interpretation differs from Vanmikanathan's, Navanīṭa Kiṛuṣṇa Pāratiyar's, the "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" and Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's. In Navanīṭa Kiṛuṣṇa Pāratiyar's, Vanmikanathan's and Navaratnam's the activity is similar, in that the group of girls awaken one girl and encourage her to join them in their activity, but the significance of this activity differs. In Navanīṭa Kiṛuṣṇa Pāratiyar's akam interpretation, the heroine's companions encourage the heroine to participate in the Mārkāḷi bathing ritual so she will marry the hero and they will marry his companions. In Vanmikanathan's akam interpretation, the girls are performing the appropriate ritual to gain a good husband. They try to encourage the heroine to participate in the bathing ritual but

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14 Navaratnam, *New Approach to Tiruvacagam*, 183-4. See poems 1, 2, 5, 8, and 14. The reference in poem 5 is to the story in which Śiva appears before Brahmā and Viṣṇu, as a unbounded Linga of Fire, in order to resolve a dispute between them regarding which of the three is the greatest.

she is so consumed with love for the hero, God, that she cannot. In Navaratnam's interpretation, Māṇikkavācakar tries to lift himself out of his depression. All three of these, more human, meanings of "Tiruvempāvai" are quite different from the meanings of the Śaiva Siddhānta interpretations, where "Tiruvempāvai" is seen as either the act of creation, or as the act of purifying the soul and submerging it in an experience of bliss.

**First Person Narrative World**

In the first person narrative world the poem is interpreted by situating it into the sequence of events in one's own life. In the previous four frames of interpretation the interpreter situates him or herself as part of the audience of the drama which is being enacted within the narrative world in which the interpreter understands the poem.\(^\text{16}\) In the first person narrative world, on the other hand, the interpreter puts him or herself completely within the drama. This is possible for several reasons. Firstly, the duration of the event of the poem equals the duration of the event dramatized in the poem. It is possible to actually live the event of the poem when reading or reciting it. Secondly, the narrators of "Tiruvempāvai" or "Tiruppāliyēucci" are minimal in that they simply report the speech of the poem without having any presence or identity in the poem at all.\(^\text{17}\) Therefore, the singer can easily become the narrator of that poem. In the first person narrative world then, the interpreter is the narrator of the poem. In monologue poems, the narrator may also identify with the speaker of the poems. The ambiguity regarding the identity of the speaker invites one to

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\(^{16}\) I am indebted to James Lindholm, an honours student in a course I was teaching in the winter term of 1993, for the insight that in *akam* poems the reader may situate him or herself variously with respect to the action of the poem and can then take up various attitudes concerning that action.

\(^{17}\) See Seymour Chatman's discussion of minimal or non-narrated narratives in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1978; rpt. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 166ff.
provide an identity. Since the narrator of the poems has no identity either, the narrator can become the speaker. This means that to speak about the event is to enact it. Finally, since the speaker is also the main character of the events of the poem, the interpreter can become the main character and situate the event within their own life while reciting or singing the poem.

The situation for dialogues is a bit more complicated. The possibility of the narrator taking on the role of the speaker in the dialogue poems is impeded by the change of speakers. The speaker may, however, take on the role of the narrator, and incorporate the event of relating the poems as an event in his or her own life.

"Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷiyelucci" in the First Person Narrative World

When people whose work I read, or with whom I spoke, situated "Tiruvempāvai" or "Tiruppaḷiyelucci" in the first person narrative world, they tended to do so in a brief and vague way. Generally, there was not the sustained discussion of the poems situated in this narrative world as there was in the interpretations presented so far.

The strategy people use to situate the poems in the first person narrative world differs somewhat from those in the interpretations presented earlier. Rather than providing a specific identity for the speaker and indicating the specific event which the utterance is in that narrative world, the interpreters indicate the significance of situating the poem in the first person biography in a general way. There is a general consensus among the examples of interpretation provided here that the significance of "Tiruvempāvai" or "Tiruppaḷiyelucci" is that one may receive benefits by singing the poems to God or that one

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18 Navaratnam overcomes this impediment between narrator and speaker in the dialogue poems by having the narrator take on both speaker roles - Māṇikkavācakar dialogues with himself.
may make requests to God through the poems. The suggested benefit or request may vary from interpretation to interpretation.

In this style of situating the poems, the identity of the speaker is not provided explicitly. It is assumed in the statement of the significance. The speaker is anyone who sings the songs or who makes requests through the songs. Anybody can sing the songs and therefore anybody can situate the poems in their own life and be eligible for the benefits or make requests to God through the poems. Sometimes an interpreter may also utilise singular or plural first person markers when explaining the poems. This technique emphasises that the poem is being situated in the first person biography.

People can suggest to others only in a general way what the meaning or significance of the poem is when it is situated in the first person narrative world because the meaning may vary from individual biography to individual biography. In order to know what "Tiruvempāvai" or "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" actually means in the first person narrative world one would have to look at specific examples of people situating the poems in specific contexts. We can, however, consider what people have suggested the significance is of interpreting "Tiruvempāvai" or "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" in the first person narrative world.

Three examples of the significance of "Tiruvempāvai" and four examples of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" are provided below. All the interpretations are from the twentieth century. The three interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" are taken from publications. Two of the interpretations of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" are from questionnaire respondents and one is from an interview. The fourth is from a twentieth century publication.

"Tiruvempāvai" in the First Person Narrative World

Civa Aruṇakiri Mutaliyār, in the introductory comments to "Tiruvempāvai" in his 1927 edition of the Tiruvācakam, says that one should recite "Tiruvempāvai" as part of one's
daily devotions. The person should arise before dawn, go outside, clean oneself, face north and east, apply ash on the forehead, worship Kaṇāpati and the guru, recite the Paṅcakṣaram and then recite Tiruvempāvai with great devotion. If one does not do the singing daily, it should be done at least during Mārkāṭi month. Those who worship in this way are worthy to receive God's grace, and they will obtain Tiruvaraḻiṇāṃ, enlightenment.19 Civa Aruṇākiri Mutaliyār's perspective emphasises the act of reciting rather than any aspect of the poem itself, but it is clear that the significance of the poem is that one personally gains enlightenment by singing it.

Ji. Cuppiramaṇīya Piḷḷai in an 1986 essay on "Tiruvempāvai"20 indicates that there are both worldly and other-worldly benefits to be gained by singing "Tiruvempāvai" in Mārkāṭi. When discussing these benefits he employs the first person plural markers which have the effect of emphasising that singing "Tiruvempāvai" should be an event done in one's own life. Firstly he indicates that Mārkāṭi itself is a good time for gaining personal benefits. Mārkāṭi is a time in which darkness leaves and light rises, and is, therefore, the appropriate time for the "destruction of our distress" (italics mine), for the "end of confusion", for the end of affliction, and for the arising of pleasure. Further on he explains that one should arise at dawn, bathe in cool water and sing the pāvai songs. If one does this, then one will obtain bodily strength, wisdom, knowledge and grace for the soul.21 He concludes his essay with the injunction to the reader: "Let us study those poems and obtain the fruits (translation mine)."22 The use of the first person plural markers

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19 Civa Aruṇākiri Mutaliyār, Tiruvācakamum Tirukkōvaiyār Ceyyūṭṭirattum: Kurippurūiyum Viṣaya Cicaṇṭamum, 2nd ed. (Cennai: Rōpil Akcentṭiračalai, 1927), 83.
emphasises that the people who should sing are himself and whoever reads his essay, i.e. particular individuals. The author then asserts that people should bathe and sing the "Tiruvempāvai" poems in Mārkāli so that they will be healthy and wise and will obtain grace. Cuppiramaniya Pillai emphasises both Mārkāli month and the act of singing when situating the poem in the first person narrative world.

"Tiruvempāvai" is included in a collection of songs of praise from the Tirumūrai and other texts, compiled and published in 1977 by a prominent industrialist of Madurai, Ti. Cu. Cokkaliṅkam Četiįyār. He also refers to the importance of recitation and its benefits. Under the heading of "tradition" (marapu) he indicates that those who customarily recite other Tirumūrai songs will recite only "Tiruvempāvai" during the ten days leading up to and including Tiruvatīrāi day in Mārkāli month. He argues in his introduction that such recitation brings worldly benefits. As he does not indicate any specific benefits for singing "Tiruvempāvai", perhaps he means the regular benefits of recitation, but under the heading of "fruit" he indicates that if the singing is done as a young girl's vow, the monsoon rain will come, the crops will grow, and the prosperity of the world will increase. In situating "Tiruvempāvai" in the first person narrative world, specifically for young girls, he is emphasizing the act of singing, and also emphasizing poem 16, which is usually understood to be a request for rain, and also possibly poem 17, which can be understood as a general injunction to bathe so that well-being will flourish.

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24 Cokkaliṅkam Četiįyār, Palaṇ Tarum Tirumūraip, 170.
"Tiruppalliyelucci" in the First Person Narrative World

"Tiruppalliyelucci" is also situated in first person biography as an event in which the person sings the poems in order to make requests with a view to obtaining benefits, or without specifically making requests, in order to receive some benefit. At least two types of requests can be made through singing "Tiruppalliyelucci": those which pertain to the singers' daily activities; and requests for ānām (enlightenment).

Two questionnaire respondents indicated that the significance of "Tiruppalliyelucci" is making requests connected with one's daily work. For one person, a 45 year old woman, it was awakening God and receiving permission to begin one's daily affairs. For the other respondent, a 36 year old man, it was awakening God and asking God about the appropriate duties to perform. Both people employed first person plural pronouns in their responses, indicating that others as well as themselves may situate "Tiruppalliyelucci" in their life in this way. These interpretations focus on the awakening of God and the request about service found in poem 7. These views of "Tiruppalliyelucci" are similar in this way to Arunācalam's puram interpretation, but different in that in these interpretations, it is any individual who may make this request, whereas in Arunācalam's interpretation, it was Mānīkkavācakār who made the request.

The idea that "Tiruppalliyelucci" is a means through which the singer requests enlightenment is brought out in the explanation of the meaning of the poem in an interview with an elderly woman who is well respected for her knowledge of Tiruvācakam:

One conception of palliyelucci is awakening God and saying "come into the heart". "O God! come into my heart, remove my ignorance, graciously arise in my heart so that

25 "Kālaiyil pāḷiyaraitirappattarkum muṇnāl pāṭappattum pāṭal. Iṟaivanāi ēluppuvatākā tōṁriṇum nām nam aluvalkaḷai tōḷaṅkuvatarku Iṟaivanṭam anumati pēṟuvatākā koḷḷalam".
26 "Pāṇaṇaiyil Iṟaiṇṭ uraṅkuvatākā eṇṭ Iṟaiṇṭai tiruppalliyiṁiṇiru ēḷuppi emakkuriya pāṇikaḷai āṇaṁiyiṭṭu eṇa veṇṭuvatu."
knowledge will come, give knowledge to me". The song which asks this is palliyeelucci (translation mine).27

The interpreter indicates that she is giving a general interpretation of "Tiruppalyyelucci" where she says: "the song which asks this is "Tiruppalyyelucci"." She, however, makes it clear that the significance of the poem is precisely as an individual request to God, by expanding on the initial statement about the song in a variety of ways, using a string of first person singular pronouns. This interpretation focuses on the refrain which requests God to arise from the bed. Here the bed is the speaker's heart and the arising is the arising of God as enlightening knowledge in the speaker's heart. This interpretation, like Kali Tanavarrayar's, associates the "arising" in "Tiruppalyyelucci" with enlightenment.

Civa Arunakiri Mutaliyar is more specific about the benefits of the daily recitation of "Tiruppalyyelucci". I translate as follows: "Those who recite this patikam daily in the early morning will be worthy of Siva's grace. Ñanavalam will wear away gradually and be reduced."28 Civa Arunakiri Mutaliyar's interpretation seems to have no obvious link with specific poems in "Tiruppalyyelucci", unless it is a correlation between the removal of spiritual darkness and the removal of physical darkness. This association is made in a poem by Cekkilâr, the author of the Periya Puranam. He says: "Tiruppalyyelucci is the removal of the inner darkness of those adorned with sacred ash and of the outer darkness of full night."29 If this is so, Civa Arunakiri Mutaliyar is focusing on the dawn described

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27 "Paalliyeelucci enral iraivanai eluppi ullattile� enrė collukira pavañai. Iraivanė ennuaitye ullattile� en, ennuaifye arijānavai pokki, ariyu varumpaitya ennuullattile cluntariuļ enakku nanattai koṭu enru kêķira pâtal palîiyelucci." Interview with the Author, Madurai District, October 1990.

28 Civa Arunakiri Mutaliyar, Tiruva伺akamum Tirukkôvaiyâr Ceyyuttiratṛum, 142.

in a number of the poems of "Tiruppalliyeluccii". In any case, the specific benefit, in his interpretation, is the removal of the individual singer's spiritual darkness.

Summary

The interpretations of "Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppalliyeluccii" in the biographical worlds indicate the significance of the utterance of the poem as an event in the life of particular individuals. Navaratnam understands "Tiruvempavai" in terms of Mañikkavacakar's biography as the poet's own efforts to lift himself out of his dispondent state after he had been left by Śiva and the other devotees. The significance of the poems in the first person biography is that specific requests can be made through the poems, or some benefit may be gained by singing them. The latter interpretation is similar to Arulacakam's interpretation of "Tiruppalliyeluccii" in which Mañikkavacakar is understood to be awakening God and asking what service he should perform. The examples of first person interpretation provided here indicate, in a general way, what the significance might be of situating "Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppalliyeluccii" in one's own life. To assess the actual meaning of situating these poems in first person biographies, specific examples from particular situations are required, which will be left to Part III.

However, before proceeding to Part III it is appropriate to bring into focus some of the issues evident in the understandings of "Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppalliyeluccii" presented in Part II. In chapter 7, the strategies of interpretation, and the implications of these strategies for the notion of "text" and the meaning of the "text", and their precedents in interpretation of classical poetry will be discussed.
II: Chapter 7: Interpretive Strategies and Classical Precedents

The strategies of interpretation seen in the preceding chapters have precedents in the colophons and organization of the classical poems. The classical poems are situated in the akam and puram frames by the colophons accompanying the poems, and also, in some collections, by the organizational pattern of the poems. These features situate the poems by providing identities for the speaker, and sometimes for the addressee, by indicating the occasion on which the poem was uttered, or by identifying the theme of the poem.

There are a few other aspects of the basic strategy of interpretation which were not specifically mentioned in the preceding chapters. One is that different interpreters will sometimes take the same poem and situate it as two different events in the same narrative frame. On the other hand the same interpreter may use more than one narrative world when interpreting a poem. Although there is considerable lattitude among interpreters regarding how one may interpret a poem, there are sometimes disagreements regarding the legitimacy of using some narrative worlds or frames of interpretation.

The interpretations in the preceding chapters and the poetics of classical poetry make similar assumptions about what constitutes a coherent understanding of a poem. The coherence of an interpretation of a poem depends upon whether the interpreter has been able to fit the poem coherently within his or her chosen narrative frame. In addition, there is an assumption, especially in akam poetics, that poems are inherently ambiguous. The combination of a principle of coherence lying outside the text, and the principle that the poetry is ambiguous, results in an interestingly fluid notion of "text" and "interpretation".

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the interpretive strategies of the akam and puram poems cited in chapter 2, in order to demonstrate that the same strategies are at work in the interpretations of classical poems and devotional poems. Then the use of
narrative frames in the classical context, and then in the devotional context, will be considered. Following that, the idea of coherence and ambiguity will be considered first with reference to the classical context, and then with reference to "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyḷucci".

Strategies for the Interpretation of Classical Poems

The combination of the organizational pattern and the colophons of the classical poems situate individual poems as a situation in either the *akam* or *puṟam* frames. Below are two tables providing the colophon information for the *akam* and *puṟam* poems cited in chapter 2. The sample of *akam* poems were selected from three anthologies: *Kuruntokai*, *Aṅkuntokai* and *Kalittokai*. The colophons for these poems provide *akam* characters' identities for the speakers and addressees of the poems. They also identify the *akam* occasion on which each poem was uttered. The *Kuruntokai* colophons also provides the name of the poet of each poem. The names of the poets and the general situation of the poems taken from *Aṅkuntokai* and *Kalittokai* are known from their position in their respective anthologies.

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1 The colophons of *Kuruntokai* provide the identity the speaker, the occasion on which the poem was uttered (which sometimes includes the identity of the addressee), and the name of the poet. The organizational pattern of *Aṅkuntokai* and *Kalittokai* provides the identity of the poet, and indicates in which of the five basic *akam* situations the poem should be placed. One poet is considered to be responsible for all the poems composed under one of the five situations. The colophons indicate the occasion on which the poem was uttered. M. Shanmugam Pillai and David Ludden, trans., *Kuruntokai: An Anthology of Classical Love Poetry* (Madurai: Koodal Publishers, 1976), xiii; John Ralston Marr, *The Eight Anthologies: A Study in Early Tamil Literature* (Madras: Institute of Asian Studies, 1985), 338-9, 348-9, 357-60, 363-4; K. V. Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature*, vol. 10 in *A History of Indian Literature* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974), 12-3, 47-8.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Occasion</th>
<th>Poet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuruntokai</td>
<td>&quot;what her friend (said to him, refusing politely, when he said he wanted more and more meetings with her at night)&quot;</td>
<td>Kapilar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42²</td>
<td>&quot;What she said (to her friend, who showed signs of grief during the pre-marital separation)&quot;</td>
<td>Parañar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuruntokai</td>
<td>&quot;What she said (to her heart, to be heard by her friend when he was gone)&quot;</td>
<td>Māmūlāṇār</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36³</td>
<td>&quot;What the heroine said thinking about [her] heart which had gone with [the hero who] when he had obtained permission to marry, left and was prolonged&quot;⁵</td>
<td>Kapilar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aitikunmilru</td>
<td>&quot;what the hero said to himself with a joyful heart when he saw the heroine who had experienced first union amongst her friends&quot;⁶</td>
<td>Kapilar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>295</td>
<td>&quot;a dialogue between the hunchback and the dwarf who are slaves because of the statement &quot;Learned men say that puṟartal [union], pirītal [separation] etc., are not avoided among slaves and servants, but they are outside the range of the five tiņais mentioned, i.e. they belong to kaikkilai and peruntiņai&quot;.⁷</td>
<td>Marutaṇilāṇā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299</td>
<td>&quot;what the hero said to himself with a joyful heart when he saw the heroine who had experienced first union amongst her friends&quot;⁶</td>
<td>Kapilar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalittokai</td>
<td>&quot;a dialogue between the hunchback and the dwarf who are slaves because of the statement &quot;Learned men say that puṟartal [union], pirītal [separation] etc., are not avoided among slaves and servants, but they are outside the range of the five tiņais mentioned, i.e. they belong to kaikkilai and peruntiņai&quot;.⁷</td>
<td>Marutaṇilāṇā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>&quot;a dialogue between the hunchback and the dwarf who are slaves because of the statement &quot;Learned men say that puṟartal [union], pirītal [separation] etc., are not avoided among slaves and servants, but they are outside the range of the five tiņais mentioned, i.e. they belong to kaikkilai and peruntiņai&quot;.⁷</td>
<td>Marutaṇilāṇā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴ Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden, trans., *Kuruntokai*, 416.
The colophon for Kuruntokai 42 indicates that the poem was addressed by the heroine's friend to the hero when he requested her to arrange meetings between him and the heroine. This clue places the poem in the fourth of the four premarital stages in the development of the love relationship. The colophon of Kuruntokai 36 indicates that the heroine is speaking to her friend, expressing her grief at the hero's absence. That places this poem in the fourth stage also because it assumes that the heroine has had union with the hero, the friend knows about it, and the hero has left. According to the colophon, Kuruntokai 11 is spoken by the heroine to her heart, to be overheard by her friend. This poem could be set at the same stage in the sequence as Kuruntokai 36.

The two poems from Ainlurunuru are about lovers' union as these are included in the kurińci group of the anthology. The colophon of Ainlurunuru 295 indicates that the speaker of the poem is the heroine, but it does not provide an identity for the addressee. The colophon sets this poem at the very end of the premarital stage or at the beginning of the marital stage because the hero has obtained permission to marry and has gone, possibly to collect wealth for the wedding. The colophon indicates that Ainlurunuru 299 is spoken by the hero to himself. It sets the poem very early in the relationship as it mentions the first union with the heroine.

The placement of Kalittokai 94 in the anthology indicates that it is a dialogue between a hunchback and a dwarf. The colophon confirms the identity of the speaker and addressee implied in the poem. It does not, however, indicate an occasion for the utterance of the poem. The colophon justifies the hunchback and dwarf as being characters in a poem because they are slaves and can be involved in a love relationship. Kalittokai 94 is

_Tamil Poetics_ (Madras: The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, 1949). The translation of the sūtra is Subrahmanya Sastri's, p. 21.
not, however, considered to be a proper *akam* poem because slaves cannot be involved in a love relationship in the refined way of the hero and heroine of *akam* proper.\(^8\)

The *puram* poems provided in chapter 2 were selected from *Puṟaṇāṇīṟṟu*. Each of the *Puṟaṇāṇīṟṟu* poems is accompanied by a colophon which, when it is complete, identifies the situation (*tīṇai*), the theme (*tūrai*), the hero and the poet.\(^9\) Some colophons provide additional information such as the occasion on which the poem was sung.\(^10\)

The colophons which situate poems in the *puram* narrative world, therefore, provide slightly different information than do the *akam* colophons. Rather than providing the occasion on which the poem is uttered, the *puram* colophons provide the theme of the poem and the identity of the hero if it is known. They also suggest an identity for the speaker, but they only suggest an identity for the addressee if he is the hero of the poem.

The formula in the colophon for identifying the hero and the poet is: "he or she sang about him" (*avaṇai avar pāṭiyatu*).\(^11\) The poet's or the hero's name will be used in the formula if the poet and hero were not the author and subject of the previous poem in the anthology.

This formula for identifying the poet and the hero strongly suggests that the poet is usually identified as the speaker of the poem. This technique situates the poem as an event in the lives of two specific persons: the poet and the hero. In this way the previously known biography provides the sequence of events in which to understand *puram* poems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Tīṇai (Situation)</th>
<th>Tūrai (Theme)</th>
<th>Hero of Poem</th>
<th>Poet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | *Puṟaṇāṇīṟṟu* 92 | *pāṭūn* | *iyamolo* | Atiyamān | Auvaḷiyār | Neṭumān |}

\(^8\) See chapter 3 regarding why the hero and heroine, but not slaves and servants, are suitable characters for the five *akam* situations.


\(^10\) See for example the colophon accompanying *Puṟaṇāṇīṟṟu* 113 and 215.

\(^11\) This is a portion of the colophon from *Puṟaṇāṇīṟṟu* 92.
According to the colophons, *Puranāṇūru* 92, 87, and 101 are poems by Auvaiyar about Atiyamāṁ Naṭumāṁ Aṇci. *Puranāṇūru* 92 and 101 have the same situation of pāţān (praise) but different themes. The theme given for *Puranāṇūru* 92 is iyamolo. The *Puṟapporuḷvēṭṇamāḷai* offers two interpretations for this theme: it is a request that the donor give to the supplicant like generous people give; or it is praise of the king.\(^{13}\)

*Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikaram* 86 lists the theme iyamolivāḷtu and says it involves praising the king with reference to his ancestors. In this poem, it seems that Auvaiyar is praising Atiyamāṁ Naṭumāṁ Aṇci’s lineage. The theme for *Puranāṇūru* 101 is, on the other hand, paricīltāṇilai. Neither *Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikaram* nor the *Puṟapporuḷvēṭṇamāḷai* lists this theme. The *Tamil Lexicon* explains it as: "[the theme of soliciting bounty from a patron who delays favour."\(^{14}\)

In this poem, Auvaiyar is addressing her heart and indirectly requesting benefits from Atiyamāṁ Naṭumāṁ Aṇci.

The theme of *Puranāṇūru* 87 is tāṇaimaram in the situation of tumpai (open battle). *Puṟapporuḷvēṭṇamāḷai* provides three possible interpretations for this theme. The most appropriate one is that it is about expressing compassion for the enemies who have to

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\(^{12}\) I am following the colophon which says: "Āyai uraiyur ēñiccēri muṭamōciyār păṭiyatu" (*Puranāṇūru*, p. 245); and Marr (*The Eight Anthologies*, 80), in taking Āy to be the name of the hero rather than the name of the place.

\(^{13}\) *Puṟapporuḷvēṭṇamāḷai* 9:6, 7.

\(^{14}\) *Tamil Lexicon* (Madras: University of Madras, 1982) cites this poem as the reference.
meet the stronger army in battle.\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Purunāṇūru} 87 is Auvaïyar's warning to enemies about the capabilities of Ātiyamāṇ Neṭumāṇ Āṇci.

The colophon of \textit{Purunāṇūru} 312 identifies the poet as Poḷmuṭiyār.\textsuperscript{16} The colophon does not use the usual formula of saying the poet sings about someone. It just provides the poet's name and therefore does not suggest as strongly as is usually done that the poet is the speaker. The colophon does not indicate who either the addressee or the hero of the poem are. The theme, māṭiyumullai in the situation of vākai ("ideals of achievement, victory")\textsuperscript{17} is, according to the \textit{Purapporulvenpamālai}, about the heroic quality of women of a particular tribe, the Maṟakkutī.\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, Poḷmuṭiyār's poem is about the heroic quality of the Maṟakkutī women.

The colophon for \textit{Purunāṇūru} 128 indicates that the poem is by Uraiyūr Eṇicćiṛi Muṭamōciyiṛ about the hero Āy. The theme is vālttu or iyaṇmoli, as was the case for \textit{Purunāṇūru} 92, the most appropriate interpretation of this theme is praising the nature of the king. \textit{Purunāṇūru} 128 is therefore Uraiyūr Eṇicćiṛi Muṭamōciyiṛ's praise of Āy's nature.

The interpretive strategies exhibited in the classical poems are the same as those evident in the interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" presented above. As we saw in Part I, chapter 2, not one of the speakers of either an \textit{akam} or a \textit{puram} poem cited had a specific identity. At most, the poems conveyed the gender or role of the

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Purapporulvenpamālai} 9.5. The other two versions are: describing the warrior who because of his ability fights without perishing and this averts disaster; and describing the strength of the king who causes battle. \textit{Purapporulvenpamālai} 9:3 and 4.

\textsuperscript{16} Ramanujan does not include Poḷmuṭiyār among his list of women poets: \textit{Poems of Love and War}, 323. N. Subramanian identifies the poet as a woman in \textit{The Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index (Index of historical material in Pre-Pallavan Tamil Literature)}, Madras University Historical Series No. 23 (Madras: University of Madras, 1966), 618.

\textsuperscript{17} Ramanujan, \textit{Poems of Love and War}, 252.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Purapporulvenpamālai} 8.21.
speaker. The akam colophons of the interpreters supply the speaker with an identity from the akam narrative world. The colophons of the interpreters also provide identities for the addressees with the one exception of Ainkurunāru 295. Each colophon also identifies the occasion on which the poem was uttered, using the list of akam situations, and thereby makes the utterance of the poem an event in the akam narrative world. The poet's name is given for each poem, but the poet is not equated with the speaker of the poems. Therefore, we can say that akam poems are situated in the akam narrative world by identifying characters of the poems as akam characters, and by indicating that the occasion on which the poem was uttered is an akam event.

The colophons of the interpreters of the puram poems situate each poem in the puram world by identifying the themes of the poems as puram themes, and by situating the poems in particular biographical worlds. All five poems are given themes from the puram repertoire which indicate the type of puram event the utterance of the poem involves (praise, requesting benefits, giving advice). The colophons strongly suggest who the speaker is in four of the five poems, and less strongly in the fifth (Puranāṇūru 312). The colophons identify the hero in the same four, and in three of these the hero is identified in the poem itself.19 In sum, four of the poems are situated in the lives of two historical individuals, the poet and the hero. Puranāṇūru 312 alone is situated in one biography, the poet's.

The interpreters of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" in the preceeding chapters follow the same strategies evident in the classical colophons. "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" were situated in the akam world by identifying the speakers of the two poems as akam characters and by identifying the occasion of the utterance of the poem as

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19 The hero has no specific identity in either Puranāṇūru 87 or 312.
an *akam* event. "Tiruppalliyešuçi" was situated in the *puram* narrative world by casting the speaker of the poems as a *puram* bard, and as a particular person, the poet Māṇikkavācakar, and also by identifying the event of the poem as a *puram* event.

"Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyešuçi" were situated in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world by the two interpreters by assigning the speakers roles from the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world, and by identifying the event or theme of the poem (in Kāli Taṅtavārāyar's interpretation of "Tiruppalliyešuçi") to be an event or theme in that narrative world.

"Tiruvempāvai" was situated in Māṇikkavācakar's biographical narrative world by assigning Māṇikkavācakar the role of the speaker, and by identifying the utterance of the poem to be a particular event in Māṇikkavācakar's life. Finally, "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyešuçi" were situated in the first person biographical world by assuming that anyone could be the speaker of the poem, and by suggesting what type of event the utterance of the poem could be, when situated in one's own life.

**The Use of Narrative Worlds**

The classical poems, like "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyešuçi", can be situated differently by different interpreters within the same narrative frame, and they can be situated in more than one narrative frame at the same time. Interpreters of classical poems sometimes disagree about where in a particular frame a poem should be placed.

Shanmugan Pillai and Ludden make the following statement concerning the *akam* collection, *Kuṟuntokai*:

> Each poem is a dramatic monologue spoken by one of the characters at one narrative moment, although ambiguities in composition and interpretation of the poems sometimes renders it the case that one of several characters might be speaking in the poems, at one of several possible narrative moments. For example, many of the poems
attributed to "her friend" by the writers of the colophons might have been spoken by the female lover herself and vice versa.20

Parthasarathi makes a similar statement regarding the puṟam collection, Puranāṅuṟu:

it is also seen that the specifications of colophons often do not fit (or only loosely fit) the content of the poems and that a verse is, on many occasions, assignable to more than one tuṟai [theme].21

According to Parthasarathi, it is also the case that some poems identified as puṟam poems could be identified with several different puṟam events.

We recall that Navanīṭa Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār and Vanmikanathan situated "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷiḷiyṟucchi" as different events, even though both were within the akam narrative frame. Likewise, the author of "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu", and Kāli Tāntavāryayar situated "Tiruvempāvai" at different points in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world, and supplied different identities from that world for the speakers of the poems.

A second pattern of frame usage in the interpretations above involved more than one narrative frame to interpret the poem. Interpretations of classical poems are generally understood within one frame or the other, but even there an interpretation occasionally utilizes both the puṟam and akam frames at once. Shanmugan Pillai and Ludden provide a modern example. They made the following comments after their translation of Kuruntokai 147:

Those separated from their lovers do not scold dreams for waking them with visions of their lovers; even though it is usually unpleasant to be woken from sleep. The poet himself is a king; perhaps he had a dream of his wife when he was on a campaign of war.22

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20 Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden, trans., Kuruntokai, 22.
22 Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden, trans., Kuruntokai, 409. They say in the introduction that these comments are their own, pp. xiii–iv. Navanīṭa Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār refers to this poem when justifying his interpretation of "Tiruppaḷiḷiyṟucchi". See chapter 3.
In the above comments, Shanmugan Pillai and Ludden employ both the akam and puram frames of interpretation. Their translation of the colophon for this poem identifies the speaker as the hero, and the situation to be "separation from his lover after a dream". The event itself is an akam event, but that akam event is then situated as a puram event by suggesting that the king is at war, and more importantly, by making the utterance an event in the life of the poet, Kōpperuṅcōlaṇ. With this interpretive move the poet is now speaking in his own voice, so the "impersonal" akam poem is now a "personal" puram poem.

Some of the interpreters discussed in earlier chapters above combined narrative frames when interpreting "Tiruvempā vai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci". Vanmikanathan, for instance, employs both the akam frame and the poet's biography to interpret the poems. The collection of poems that Vanmikanathan interpreted within the akam frame were a group of poems that in turn were seen as part of a particular stage of Mānīkkavācakar's spiritual development. Civa Aruṇakiri Mutaliyār's dominant frame of interpretation is the first person biography, however his explanation of the benefits of singing "Tiruvempā vai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" were expressed in Śaiva Siddhānta terminology. He therefore utilises both the first person biography and the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative frames in explaining the poems. Navaratnam invokes the akam frame for poems 9, 15 and 19 within an interpretation of "Tiruvempā vai" where the dominant frame is the poet's biography.23

Disagreements among interpreters of "Tiruvempā vai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" regarding in which narrative world a poem should be placed has a counterpart in the classical context. The classification of poems into the narrative worlds of akam and puram

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23 Ratna Navaratnam, A New Approach to Tiruvacakam (Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1971), 190-3.
is sometimes difficult because even the fundamental criteria for deciding whether a poem is
akam or puram varies. John Samuel, for instance describes it as follows:

The classification of Caṅkam poetry into akam and puram is clearly made on the basis
of the thematic content rather than another criteria. The former deals with romantic
sentiments of love and associated situations; the latter is concerned with the heroic
sentiments and matters not based on the subjectivism of love.24

Parthasarathi, on the other hand, writes:

The line of demarcation between puram and akam verses is stated to be the avoidance
of specific personal names of the heroes in the latter, mentioning only generic
appellations: this contrasts with the use of such names allowed in the former
(Tolkāppiyam. Porul. Akattinattinaiyiyal -54). . . . There is, however, freedom in the
akam verse-division for using personal names as part of the descriptive equipment
of the landscape (karupporu). As a result of this position, the exposition of many
thematic details of puram (like battles, town and city life, etc.) gets included as
allusions in the backgrounds depicted by the akam verses. Long poems with the akam
content of love situations (e.g. Neṭunalvāṭa in Pattuppāṭu) are classified on
theoretical grounds under puram if they happen to slip in a personal name or an
indication thereof.

On the other hand, long poems predominantly dealing with puram detail but strung
on the frame-work of a love-situation as the speech of a character in the love drama
(like Pattinappālai in Pattuppāṭu) get classified under akam verse-division.25

Ramanujan provides another example: when a woman is thought to speak in her own voice
about love, the poem is classified as a puram poem.26 In this case the topic is love and
based on Samuel's criteria, we might expect it to be understood according to akam

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24 John Samuel, "Akappatal" in Encyclopaedia of Tamil Literature, vol. 2 (Madras:
Institute of Asian Studies, 1992), 40.
26 Ramanujan. Poems of Love and War. 257. He refers to Puranānūryu 84.
Interestingly enough, Ramanujan provides other examples of poems understood to be
spoken by the heroine, composed by women poets. These, however, remain classified as
akam poems. See for example Kuruntokai 68 (p. 21), 118 (p. 71), 202 (p. 91), and 325
(p. 49). Subbiah cites three examples of poems which in terms of content are love poems,
but because the name of the hero is mentioned in the colophon, the poems are classified as
puram poems. These poems are Puranānūryu 84, cited by Ramanujan. and Puranānūryu
83 and 85. G. Subbiah, "Patterns in Religious Thought in Early South India: A Study of
Classical Tamil Texts" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1988), 194 n. 215.
conventions, but, the sentiment is attributed to a specific person, and the interpretive strategy becomes puram.

Interpreters of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷuccī" also disagree over how the two poems should be understood. Vanmikanathan dismisses "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" because he cannot see what "Tiruvempāvai" has to do with creation. In Vanmikanathan's understanding, the poem makes sense as understood within the Tamil path of love (i.e. the akam narrative world).²⁷ Navaratnam on the other hand dismisses "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" because "much of the special charm of this group of spontaneous poetry gets lost under the weight of this philosophical approach". In her mind the true meaning of the poems is to be found in the poet's expressions of his spiritual experience, and therefore they must be understood within the poet's biography.²⁸ Both of these interpreters reject the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative frame.

On the other hand, according to Aruṇaivalivēl Mutaliyār, the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world is the correct context in which to understand "Tiruvempāvai". He rejects any interpretation which construes the devotee as the beloved and God as the lover. That is, he rejects any interpretations within the akam narrative world such as those of Nāvanīla Kīrūṣṇa Pāraṇiyār's and Vanmikanathan's. His primary reason is that such interpretations are inconsistent with the Śaiva perspective which he believes does not (like the Vaiṣṇavas) hold that the soul is embodied in the state of salvation. Since "Tiruvempāvai" is a Śaiva poem, he argues that it should be understood within the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative frame.²⁹

²⁸ Navaratnam, New Approach to Tiruvacagam, 194.
²⁹ Specifically, according to Aruṇaivalivēl Mutaliyār, Vaiṣṇavas understand the soul to have a divine body in the state of salvation (mutti) with which such a pleasure could be experienced. The Śaivas do not accept any embodied state as a state of release (mutti), and maintain that gender distinctions belong to the body alone. Secondly, the female
Interpretations of classical poems and of the devotional poems, "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tirupalliyclucci", thus both utilize the same basic strategy. They interpret a poem within a narrative frame by assigning identity to the characters of the poems, particularly the speaker, and by situating the utterance of the poem as an event in that particular narrative frame. Within the basic strategy there is considerable interpretive freedom. There are a number of narrative frames from which an interpreter may choose. An interpreter may situate a poem at more than one place in a particular narrative sequence. An interpreter may choose to use more than one frame to interpret a single poem. There is sometimes disagreement among interpreters, however, regarding where in a particular narrative frame a poem should be situated, or which narrative worlds are legitimate frames of interpretation for particular poems.

Coherence and Textual Ambiguity

Another feature which the interpretations in the preceding chapters share with the classical poetry is the presupposition that the coherency of the meaning of the poem is determined in part by the narrative background against which the poem is understood. This presupposition is seen in the articulation of akam poetics and is manifest in interpretations of akam poems. The theoretical texts which discuss akam poetics formulate a pattern of signs and things signified, which constitute the components of the akam narrative world. The signs are the elements of the poetic geography, which consists of the regions, the

Vaiṣṇava saint, Āṇṭāl, sang "Tiruppāvai", and is understood by tradition to have married God and to have obtained release. The Śaiva female poet saint, Kāraikkalammaiyār referred to God as "Appā" and does not ask for God to be a husband. Thirdly, the Śaivas accept four paths as a means for obtaining release: servant-master, son-father, friend-friend, and student-teacher; but they do not accept the beloved-lover path. Aruṇāvaṭivēl Mutaliyār, Māṇikkavācaka Cuvānikal Tiruvācakam Tirukkōvaiyār Ākiya Eṭṭān Tirumugai /Kurippuraiyutanañj (Tarumapuram: Tarumapuram Āṭiṇam, 1966), 264-6.
seasons, and the times of day (mutapporu). and the animate and inanimate elements which inhabit those regions (karupporu). The things signified are the human moods associated with love (uripporu). According to akam poetics, a poet wanting to create an akam poem should express a thought about one of the moods by using the elements of the poetic geography which function as signs for that mood. Understanding a poem in the akam frame, then, depends upon knowing the pattern of conventions which give each sign its significance, and upon recognizing the different elements of the poem as signs in a pattern.

Ramanujan’s explanation of Kuruntokai 3 provides an example of how an akam poem is understood in the akam frame:

**What She said**

Bigger than earth, certainly,
higher than the sky.
more unfathomable than the waters
is this love for this man
of the mountain slopes
where bees make rich honey
from the flowers of the kuriṇci
that has such black stalks.

Tēvakulattār
Kuruntokai 3

The kuriṇci flower and the mountain scene clearly mark this as a kuriṇci poem about lovers’ union. The union is not described or talked about; it is enacted by the “inset” scene of the bees making honey from the flowers of the kuriṇci. The lover is not only the lord of the mountain; he is like the mountain he owns. Describing the scene describes his passion. The kuriṇci, being a plant that takes about twelve years to come to flower, carries a suggestion assimilating the tree to the young tropical heroine who speaks the poem.  

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30 I am using Ramanujan’s language of signifiers and signifieds used in the discussion of akam poetics. Ramanujan, Poems of Love and War, 236-41.

31 Ramanujan, Poems of Love and War, 244. Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden translate the colophon for Kuruntokai 3 as follows: "What she said (to her friend who had talked ill of him when he could overhear, so he would hurry to marry).” Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden, trans., Kuruntokai, 92.
Ramanujan situates the poem in the *akam* world by focusing on the *kuriṇci* flower and the mountain which identify the poem as being about lovers' union. He then proceeds to correlate other elements of the poem to the situation of lovers' union: the activity of the bees to sexual union, the mountain to the hero, the *kuriṇci* stalk to the heroine. He ignores other elements, the waters or the sky, when situating the poem and assumes that they do not functions as signs in the *akam* narrative world.  

In *akam* poetics, there is an assumption that the *akam* poem has an inherent ambiguity. This allows the interpreter to correlate the remaining elements of the poem once it has been situated initially in the *akam* narrative world. This inherent ambiguity is referred to in *akam* poetics as *ullurai uvamam*, which is comparison between elements in the poem for which there are no explicit markers indicating what elements are being compared. This means that the interpreter must identify the comparison and work out the correspondences, and this is done against the *akam* pattern of signification.

Both Cutler and Ramanujan identify the bees making honey from the *kuriṇci* flowers with the sexual activity of lovers, in *Kuruntokai* 3, as an example of *ullurai uvamam*. The sexual activity of the lovers is not stated in the poem but rather is deduced and worked out from the elements of the poem, within the *akam* pattern of signification. Cutler's explanation of this comparison illustrates this process quite clearly:

*Kuruntokai* 3 contains several clues that it is a poem of *kuriṇci tīnai* and one dead giveaway is the reference to the *kuriṇci* flower. In this poem the image of bees making honey from the *kuriṇci* flower is implicitly compared with the hero and the heroine of

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32 Ramanujan brings the waters and the sky into the interpretation when talking about the movement of the poem from the cosmic to the specific: Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War*, 244-45.
the narrative and their union in love: the hero is likened to the bees, the heroine to the 
\textit{kuri\=ichi} flower, and honey to their love for each other.\textsuperscript{34}

Several points must be emphasised regarding the interpretation of \textit{Kuruntokai 3} according to \textit{akam} conventions. Firstly, the poem is situated in the \textit{akam} narrative world as a poem about lovers' union by focusing on certain elements in the poem which are understood to be signs in the \textit{akam} poetic conventions. Secondly, other correspondences are worked out either between elements in the poem or between elements of the poem and the narrative frame which are consistent with the basic situation of lovers' union. Thirdly, the concept of implied comparison provides flexibility in the poem itself for working out the points of comparison. This means that there is room for determining how elements of a poem will be related to each other, and to the situation of the narrative frame. The coherency of the meaning of the poem depends on the poem being situated within the \textit{akam} narrative world in a way which is consistent with the general patterns of signification of that world, and on the use of \textit{ullurai uvanam} which allows flexibility for patterning the correspondences of elements of the poem.

The suggestion here is that the presuppositions of coherency and ambiguity evident in \textit{akam} poetics are also at work in the interpretations one finds of the devotional poetry of "Tiruvemp\=avai" and "Tirupp\=aliy\=ucchi". The interpretations studied above use the strategy of situating a poem in the narrative world by corresponding an element or elements of the poem to a situation of that world. Utilising this strategy presupposes that the coherency of the meaning of the poem lies to some extent in the pattern of signification of the narrative world chosen by the interpreters.

\textsuperscript{34} Cutler, \textit{Songs of Experience}, 84. He goes on to say: "This network of associations was well known to the audience of \textit{akam} poetry, and the ability to discern this and other similarly implied meanings in the poems' imagery was an essential part of this audience's literary competence." See also pp. 82-3 regarding the importance of understanding the narrative frame in order to "successfully" interpret an \textit{akam} poem.
In the *akam* interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai", we see that Navanīta Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār focuses on the *Mārkali* bathing ritual in order to situate the poem, while Vanmikanathan gives priority to the state of the girl in poem 1. According to Navanīta Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār, the *Mārkali* bathing ritual indicates the stage of the relationship: the heroine had a relationship with the hero; it has been discovered by her friends; and now they are eager that she should marry the hero. For Vanmikanathan, the state of the girl in poem 1 is the state of the heroine when her friends come to call her to participate in the bathing ritual, a state in which she was consumed by love for the hero.

In situating the poems in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world, "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" emphasises *Mārkali* in the calendar year, and the awakening activity of the first eight poems. *Mārkali* is the time during which the universe is recreated. The awakening activity represents an early stage in the recreation in which the *cattīs* activate one another.

Kālī Taṉṭavāraṇāyār also seems to focus on the awakening activity in the first poems, but he interprets it as an awakening of the soul to *nāṇam*. He emphasises the bathing activity when situating the final ten poems of "Tiruvempāvai", which he takes to be the bathing of the soul in the bliss of *nāṇam*.

In situating "Tiruvempāvai" in the poet's biography, Navaratanam emphasises three elements of the poem: the references to Śiva being in the town of Tiruvaṅṇāmalai, the state of the girl in poem 1, and the awakening and summoning activity. The reference to Śiva of Tiruvaṅṇāmalai indicates where the poet composed "Tiruvempāvai", and this geographical reference enables Navaratanam to determine at what stage in the poet's life the poem was composed. The state of the girl in verse 1 indicates Māṇikkavācakar's depressed mood at this stage in his life, and the awakening activity corresponds to Māṇikkavācakar's efforts to lift himself out of this state.
In situating "Tiruvempāvai" in the first person biography, Civa Aruṇakiri Mutaliyar's perspective emphasises the act of reciting rather than the elements of the poem itself. Cuppiramaṇiyya Piḷḷai similarly emphasises the act of singing, as well as the fact that the singing is done in Mārkali month in particular. According to Cuppiramaṇiyya Piḷḷai, Mārkali is a good time of year for the individual to gain in physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Cōkkalīṅkam Čettiyār focuses on the act of singing the poem, but emphasises the request for rain as well. All three agree that the significance of the act of recitation is that the reciter will receive benefits.

The tendency to focus on an aspect of a poem in order to situate it in a narrative world is also seen in the interpretations of "Tiruppalliyēlucci". Navanītā Kiruṇa Pāratiyar emphasises the awakening activity, as well as references in poem 1 in order to situate "Tiruppalliyēlucci" as the act of the wife (the heroine) and her attendents awakening her husband (the hero). Vanmikanathan also focuses on the awakening activity, but relies on its position between other collections which he also has situated in the akam world, to place it specifically as the heroine's request for sexual fulfillment. Aruṇacalam focuses on the awakening activity as a puram theme and the request regarding service in poem 7 in order to place "Tiruppalliyēlucci" as the event of Māṇikkavācakar going to Śiva, awakening him, and requesting what service he should perform. Kālī Tāṇṭavarāyar situates "Tiruppalliyēlucci" in the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world also by reference to the awakening activity and takes the awakening to correspond to the experience of ńāṇam.

"Tiruppalliyēlucci" was situated in the first person biography in various ways. In one interpretation, when situating it as one's own act of awakening God and proceeding with the day's work, the emphasis was on the awakening activity and the request in poem 7 to know what service should be done. Another interpretation, understanding the poem as one's own request for enlightenment, correlated the awakening activity expressed in the
refrain with the arising of Śiva as enlightening knowledge in the soul. Civa Aruṇakiri Mutaliyār emphasises the act of reciting "Tiruppalliyelucci", but also seems to focus on the references to dawn as the removal of spiritual darkness.

The interpreters of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci", like the interpreters of the akam poems, situate the poems in the narrative world by emphasising one or two aspects of the poems. The interpreters of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci", again like the akam interpreters, assume an ambiguity regarding how the parts of the poem relate to each other, and to the narrative world in which the poem is to be situated. The primary point of reference, for removing the ambiguity between parts of the poem, is the event in the narrative world to which the event of the poem is correlated. The interpreters' treatment of the relationship between the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" illustrate this point. Whether or not interpreters understand the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" to represent a sequence, or a collection of poems, depends in part upon what event the poem is thought to represent in the narrative world to which it corresponds.

For Navanīta Kīrūṇa Pāratiyar, Vanmikanathan and Navaratnam the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" represent a sequence of events in the order in which they are traditionally received. This is consistent with their respective interpretations in which there is some sequence of activity. For all three interpreters, "Tiruvempāvai" most basically represents girls awakening each other and going to bathe, and so they retain the sequence of the poems. However the goal of this sequence of activity differs from interpreter to interpreter. In Navanīta Kīrūṇa Pāratiyar's interpretation the activity is encouraging the heroine to participate in the Mārkali bathing ritual so that her chastity can be preserved and they can get good husbands. In Vanmikanathan's interpretation, the sequence of activity represents the friends' progressive but still incomplete realization of the heroine's state. In
Navaratnam's interpretation the activity represents Māṇikkavācakar's ongoing efforts to improve his mood.

Similarly, in the "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" interpretation presented here, the first eight poems represent a sequence of events correlated to the creation activity. After these eight poems the creative activity is completed. Poems 9 and 10 and the remaining poems in other versions of this interpretation are taken as a collection of poems.

Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar seems to take the first ten poems of "Tiruvempāvai" as a sequence, but not necessarily in the received order, and he seems to see the last ten as a collection of poems not necessarily in a sequence. The sequence of activity in the first ten poems represent the progressive purification of the soul, and the remaining ten are collections of poems about the experience of the bliss of enlightenment.

"Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷucci" is interpreted as both a sequence and as a collection of events. Navantta Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār interprets "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷucci" as a sequence of events but not in the received order. The poem as a whole is thought to convey the progressive frustration of the heroine and her companions with the hero, so Navantta Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār reorders the poems so that the sequence reflects this progressive development. Vanmikanathan takes the poems of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḷucci" as a collection of poems portraying the same event. The poem is a request for marital consumation. All the poems seem to be taken together as a single expression of this request. Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar seems to take the poems as a collection on the same theme (enlightenment) but constituting different events. Some poems are taken as expressions of the soul or the soul's catti while in the experience of enlightenment, while another poem is taken as a request to be given the enlightenment experience.

The various interpretations of poem 9 of "Tiruvempāvai" also provide an example of the process by which the interpreters work out other correspondences once the poem has
been situated in a narrative frame. Poem 9 contains four lines in which the speakers promise to serve the devotees of the addressee who will become the speakers' husbands. Both Navanitha Kiruṣṇa Pāratiyār and Vanmikanathan agree that the companions of the heroine speak all four lines as part of a request that God's devotees become their husbands. The fact that the heroine does not speak in this poem is crucial for their interpretation, because the girl inside the house is already in a love relation with God, the hero, so she definitely could not ask God for one of his devotees as her husband. In the akam frame, the heroine is always faithful to the hero, whether or not he is faithful to her.35

In "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" these four lines are attributed to the nine cattis activated in the previous poems. The characters to whom the speakers refer are interpreted to be the beings of the lower realms of pure māyā. The nine cattis promise to serve the feet of the Añucatācivār and to be friends to the eight Vittiyēcuvarar. They assert that they will marry the Mantirēcurar.36

Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar attributes these four lines to different speakers: the Tirōṭānaccattis promise to serve the devotees; and Īnpākiya Civacacatti utters the line referring to husband(s). The devotees whom the Tirōṭānaccattis promise to serve are the souls in whom they operate, who have become God's devotees and have obtained God's feet. The Tirōṭānaccattis promise to operate according to the wishes of these souls.37 Civacatti says that the God whom they refer to is her husband whom they all will serve.

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35 Once the heroine and hero are married, his affairs with other women are a frequent source of quarrels.
36 Añucatācivār are indicated by the phrase tāl panivōm; the eight Vittiyēcuvarar by pāṅkāvōm (friends); and the Mantirēcurar by enkanavār.
37 The logic here may be something like this: before the soul gains enlightenment, the soul is activated by cattis concealed within them. They are not in a position to direct their cattis. After enlightenment the souls are guided by grace. They are aware of grace within them and act according to it. They do not need to be guided unknowingly.
The shift in meaning in these four interpretations of poem 9 is apparent. Navanīta Kīrṣṇa Pāratiyār's and Vanmikanathan's interpretations reflect the akam emphasis on this world and the human love relationship. "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu" reflects the Śaiva Siddhānta world view, but with an emphasis on creation and the spatial-temporal arrangement of worlds and their inhabitants, rather than on souls and their spiritual development. In Kāli Tāṇṭavarāyar's interpretation, the reference to devotees and service reflects the worldview of the Śaiva Siddhānta narrative world with an emphasis on God's action with respect to the souls through his various cattis, in particular those souls who are devotees and who have reached God's feet.

The presupposition that the coherency of meaning lies in the narrative frame and that a poem is inherently ambiguous allows considerable flexibility concerning how the text is treated when situating it in a narrative frame. In all the interpretations presented, the texts that are interpreted, are the twenty poems of "Tiruvempāvai", and the ten poems of "Tiruppalliyōccoli". They all agree on the boundaries of the text, that it consists of twenty or ten poems. They do not agree on how the parts of the texts are related to each other. For example interpreters disagree on whether the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyōccoli" should be taken as they are in their canonical order. They disagree on whether the verses should be taken as a collection of utterances on one topic or as a sequence of events. They also disagree on which poems are monologues and which are dialogues, and on divisions of speech and the meaning of the utterances within poems.38

38 All modern commentators do not operate on these assumptions to the same extent. Aruṇāṅvaiṭivēl Mutaliyār does not accept this assumption of coherency if it violates the internal coherency of the poem. "Tiruvempāvai" is usually introduced in publications with the Akattiya Cūṭra which summarizes the meaning for the poem as "In Praise of Catti (cattiyai viyantatu). He rejects this interpretation because, according to him, catti is mentioned only in poems 14 and 16. The other verses are not about catti and therefore it is not suitable to take the meaning of a part for the meaning of the whole (271-2). He also rejects the "Tiruvempāvaik Karuttu". He argues that if one accepts that the inner meaning
Summary

The strategies of interpretation evident in the interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" provided in this section have precedents in the interpretations of classical poetry. The classical poems and the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" are interpreted by situating them in a narrative frame. This is accomplished by assigning characters in the poems identities from the narrative world, and by identifying the event which the poem represents as an event in the respective narrative world. Poems may be situated differently in the same frame, situated in different frames or in more than one frame at the same time. There is disagreement within this basic strategy regarding what frames serve as the best background for interpreting a poem. This strategy has two basic presuppositions which can be traced back to the earliest akam poetics: one, the coherency of the meaning of the poem depends to some extent upon the poem fitting coherently in the narrative frame in which it is situated; and two, the poems can be inherently ambiguous. This strategy and its presuppositions have implications for understanding the characteristics of a text. A "text" is what is interpreted by situating it as an event in a narrative world. Its order and the relation of its parts depend on how the text is understood to be an event in a particular narrative world.

( ullamai porul) of the first eight poems is the cattis of creation awakening one another, then the inner meaning of the remaining twelve poems should be compatible with the creation of the world. He says that such an interpretation for those twelve verses is too forced (272). Even though Arunajaivīṭḷ Mutaliyār believes that the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" should be interpreted according to the Śaiva tradition, this interpretation must present a meaning which is consistent for all twenty poems of "Tiruvempāvai".
Part II: Summary

I have argued in Parts I and II that there is a view of text and interpretation evident in "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" and its interpretations. This view is that the text is a poem (or group of poems) which represents an episodic moment in which there is some ambiguity regarding the identity of the speaker or narrator, usually the addressee, the situation which the poem portrays, and the setting of the poem. The text is understood by situating it in a narrative world which resolves some of these ambiguities. I have suggested that this concept of text and interpretation has precedents in classical akam and puram poetry.

In Part II, I have shown how "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" have been interpreted by situating them in various narrative worlds. I have defined a "narrative world" to be a world in which a particular story takes place. I suggested that "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" tended to be interpreted in one or more of five narrative worlds: the akam world, the puram world, the world of Śaiva Siddhānta theology, the poet's biography and the first person biography. This does not mean that these poems are only interpreted in these five worlds. They may also be interpreted in other worlds. I have described each of these narrative worlds, but this does not mean that these narrative worlds have been rigidly defined, or that all interpreters understand these narrative worlds in exactly the same way.

The poems were situated by identifying especially the speaker as a character of a certain narrative world, and the occasion or theme of the poem as a situation in that world. In determining where in a particular narrative world the poem should be placed, the interpreters tended to emphasize some aspects of the poem over others, and then interpret
other aspects of the poem in line with the situation in the narrative world in which the poem has been placed.

This strategy involves making certain presuppositions about the nature of "text". Firstly, it involves acknowledging that the coherence of the meaning of the text depends to some extent on the poem fitting coherently into a position as an event in a particular narrative world. Secondly, this strategy assumes that there is ambiguity in how the parts of the poem relate to each other, and therefore, that the "text" is not limited to a single view of the relation of parts.

There is a strong continuity between the classical and the devotional milieu in this matter of interpretation. The interpreters of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" assume a concept of text and interpretation already evident in classical poetry and poetics. In Part III we will see that this same model of text and interpretation is at also work in ritual events where "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" are recited.
PART III: MODERN USAGE

You can praise them,
tell them just
what they want to hear,
cleave to them as servants,
but they will still give you nothing,
those fakes-

listen, you poets,
don't sing to them:
sing of our father's Pukalūr.

You will have in this world
rice and clothes,
a celebration,
even an end to sorrow.

and in that other life
without a doubt
you will rule Śiva's world. (1/340)

Uraṇ, the harsh devotee,
son of Caṭaiyaṇ,
father of Vaṇappakai.
from Naḷalūr
with its flowering fields rich in honey,
sang these ten songs
to the wealthy lord who lives in southern Pukalūr
where dense pockets of lotus
rise high in the paddy-fields.

Those who can sing them
will doubtless
reach the feet of dharma's lord (11/350)¹

¹ Translation by David Dean Shulman in Songs of the Harsh Devotee: The Tēvāram of Cuntaramūrttināyanār (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1990), 205, 211.
Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva Tamil poems are sung as part of the daily and yearly worship in temples in Tamil Nadu, as well as part of personal or group worship. In Tamil Nadu, the month of Mārkāḷ is considered especially appropriate for worshipping God. People awaken to the sounds of religious music playing loudly from loudspeakers between four and five AM.² Singing Māṇikkavācakar's "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" are especially significant during this time. Children learn "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci", along with the Vaiṣṇava saint Āntāḷ's "Tiruppāvai", in pāvai schools.³ One poem each from Āntāḷ's "Tiruppāvai" and one each from Māṇikkavācakar's "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" is sung and commented on each morning of Mārkāḷ on All India Radio. Many temples in Tamil Nadu have "Tiruvempāvai" festivals during this month. People recite the poems in a wide variety of worship contexts: at temples, in recitation groups, or at home.

I chose to study the singing of these songs in three separate ritual events. Two of those events take place in the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple in the heart of old Madurai city, and the other in the adjoining Citti Vināyakar and Nākamalai Murukan Temples in Nākamalai Putukkōṭtai, which is about ten kilometers from Madurai. From a Śaiva perspective, Madurai and Nākamalai Putukkōṭtai both fall within a sacred geography defined by Śiva's "sixty-four sacred acts" associated with Madurai. The Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple is very large, ancient, and has a very well established ritual cycle.

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In contrast, the two village temples are small, relatively new and have somewhat fluid ritual cycles.

The two settings provide three quite different examples of the ritual usage of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci". In the Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci" is sung each morning during the year as part of the Tiruvanantai Pūcaci ritual. In the same temple, "Tiruvempāvai" is sung as the central feature in the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival during the month of Mārkaḷi. Both events are highly institutionalized, with participation restricted, and only male participants. In the village context, "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci" and "Tiruvempāvai" are sung together, along with the Vaiṣṇava "Tiruppāvai" in the "Pāvai Singing" which occurs yearly. The singing of the poems in this context is done by an informal group of singers who are almost entirely female.

The view of text and interpretation discussed in Parts I and II provides the basis for understanding the way in which the poems are used in these ritual events. The "text" of each ritual event is not, however, just the canonical text of the ten poems of "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci" and the twenty poems of "Tiruvempāvai", but it is a different "text" for each of the three rituals. I will use the phrase "ritual text" to refer to the text that is actually used in the different ritual events. By this term, I mean to refer to that which is sung as part of the act of worship by those who assume the role of performer of the songs during the ritual event.

A ritual performance of a poem is an interpretation of the poem. In the rituals, the poems are situated as part of a particular event in a particular setting. The poems are situated in three different biographical narrative worlds in these three rituals. "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci" is framed as a puram event of awakening a "king", who is the God, Cuntarēcuvarar, in the Tiruvanantai Pūcaci at Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple.
"Tiruvempāvai" in the same temple is framed as an event in Māṇikkavācakar's biography in the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival. In the Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai temples both "Tiruppalliyēḻucī" and "Tiruvempāvai" are sung as part of individual devotees' worship, and are therefore situated in first person biographical narrative world. The significance of the poems in each ritual is determined by the significance that the particular ritual has in the respective narrative worlds.

In chapter 8, the daily singing of "Tiruppalliyēḻucī" in the Tiruvanantai Pācaī at Miṅṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple will be described and interpreted. In chapter 9, the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival at Miṅṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple will be described and interpreted. The temples in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai and the "Pāvai Singing" will be described in chapter 10, and interpreted in chapter 11. Chapter 12 consists of a discussion of the pattern of behaviour evident in these three rituals, the characteristics of the "ritual text", and the assumptions being made about the coherence of the meaning.
III: Chapter 8: *Tiruvanantat Pūcai*, Miṅaṭṭi-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple:  
"Tiruppalliyēlucci" in the Purām Narrative World

Temples in Tamil Nadu have a calendar of daily and yearly ritual events. In major temples, like the Miṅaṭṭi-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple in Madurai, eight prescribed rituals are conducted for the presiding deities each day. The first of these daily rituals is the *Tiruvanantat Pūcai* in which the deities are awakened. In the Miṅaṭṭi-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, "Tiruppalliyēlucci" is sung during this ritual. The singing of the poem is understood to be part of the act of awakening the presiding deities of this temple, Cuntarēcuvarar and Miṅaṭṭi. The performer singing is an otuvār, a temple employee. The otuvār has no particular identity in this ritual, except that the singing of "Tiruppalliyēlucci" is like the purām theme of the bard awakening the king and the otuvār serves as the bard and Cuntarēcuvarar is the king.

This chapter will begin by providing a description of the setting of the ritual in the Miṅaṭṭi-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple and in the ritual cycle. It will be followed by a description of the characters participating in the event, and then a description of the ritual event. The chapter will close by showing that the singing of "Tiruppalliyēlucci" is framed by the biography of Cuntarēcuvarar, as this is expressed in the structure of the ritual.

**Setting: The Place: Madurai and the Miṅaṭṭi-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple**

Viewed from a Śaiva perspective, both Madurai city and the Miṅaṭṭi-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple have legendary pasts. The *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam* by Paraṅcōti relates sixty-four of Śiva's activities in the Madurai area and in doing so describes a sacred geography of the God's domain. The early stories tell about the discovery of the site of the temple, the building of Madurai city, and stories about how the deities, Miṅaṭṭi and Cuntarēcuvarar,
came to be the presiding deities in the temple. According to the *Tiruvilaiyáṭal Puráṇam*, the God Indra discovered a Linga and a tank in a forest. He set up a shrine there, and began worshipping. He continued to worship this Linga once a year. The shrine was rediscovered for the benefit of earthly beings by a seer who told the Páṇṭiya king, Kulačēkaraṇ where it was. The king cleared the forest, and built a temple and a city there. Brahmins were brought from North India to perform the worship. In due course, the king appointed his son to succeed him and then died.

The king's son was unable to father a son of his own in spite of ten thousand years' effort, so he undertook a sacrifice in order to obtain a son. A young girl three years old with three breasts emerged from the sacrificial fire.¹ Her parents were told to call her Taṭātaṅai (Irresistable Valor), to raise her as a prince, and were promised that when she met her husband she would loose her third breast.²

Taṭātaṅai conquered the whole earth, and even the Gods, including Indra. She then went to Kailācam to fight Śiva. As soon as she saw Śiva her third breast disappeared, and she became modest as she realized that he was to be her husband. Śiva promised to marry her, and so she returned to Madurai to prepare for the wedding.

Śiva came to Madurai and they were married. He was crowned and took the name Cuntara Páṇṭiyaṅ. They ruled Madurai together for some time, during which Śiva as Cuntarēcuvarar (the Beautiful Lord) performed many gracious acts. In time, they turned

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¹ Irāya, Co., *notes*, *Tiruvilaiyáṭal Purāṇam (Maturai kāṇṭam)* (Maturai: Mīnāṭci Cuntarēcuvarar Tirukkōyil, 1973), 126 v. 537.
the kingdom over to their married son, Ukkira Pāṇṭiyan, and retired to the shrines of the
temple as Miṇāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar.3

One of Cuntarēcuvarar's sacred acts, before turning over the kingdom to his son,
was to establish the Vaikai River. A great excess of food remained after Cuntarēcuvarar's
and Miṇāṭci's wedding. In order to dispose of the food, Cuntarēcuvarar caused his
attendent dwarf to experience an insatiable hunger which enabled him to consume all the
food and still want more. The dwarf's cravings were finally satisfied by the Goddess
Aṇṇapūrṇēcuvarī. His hunger then gave way to an insatiable thirst, and so he drank all the
water in the country. In order to alleviate the dwarf's thirst, Cuntarēcuvarar negotiated
with the Goddess, Kāṅkai, to release some water. As a result the Vaikai River was formed
and still flows through the city.4

The founding of Madurai up until the time when Miṇāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar retire
to their shrines in the temple covers only the first twelve of the sixty-four sports of the
Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam. The other stories are about Cuntarēcuvarar's other activities in the
Madurai area, or those of his followers such as Māṇikkavācakar and Tiruṇāṉacampantar.
Story fifty-one tells of the establishment of an academy of poets at Madurai. This story and
stories fifty-two through fifty-five link, Cuntarēcuvarar directly with the poets of the
classical poetry, and specifically attribute to him the composition of Kuruntokai 2. These

3 I have consulted the summaries in J. H. Nelson, The Madura Country: A Manual
(1868; rpt., Madras: Asian Education Services, 1989), III:4-10; and Dennis D. Hudson,
"Two Citra Festivals in Madurai," in Guy R. Welbon and Glenn E. Yocum, ed. Religious
Festivals in South India and Sri Lanka (New Delhi: Manohar, 1982), 108-112. The
marriage of Śiva and Taṭāṭatai is reenacted every year during the main festival of the
temple, the Cittirai Festival, which has been very well described by Hudson.
See also William Harman, The Sacred Marriage of a Hindu Goddess (Bloomington:
University of Indiana Press, 1989).
4 Nelson, The Madura Country, III:9, Stories 7 and 8; K. V. Zvelebil, Tamil
Literature, vol. 10 in A History of Indian Literature (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974),
181.
stories depict Cuntarēcuvarar as being directly involved in the composition of poems, the adjudication of the quality of poems, and in resolving disputes among poets.\(^5\)

There are indirect references to the existence of Madurai city in the early centuries of the common era, but much of the structure of the old part of the present city dates from the sixteenth century.\(^6\) Madurai city today is the capital of Madurai District, and according to the 1991 Census the population of the city was 951,696.\(^7\) The city is divided by the Vaikai River, which is a wide and flat riverbed that for most of the year is reduced to a series of small streams. Sometimes, however, the river floods and causes substantial damage. The Miṅṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple is at the centre of the old city on the south edge of the city.

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\(^5\) See Nelson, *The Madura Country*, Part III, 29-32; and Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature*, (1974), 183-4. According to other traditional accounts, there were three academies of poets. The first two academies lasted thousands of years and both were destroyed when the city was overrun by the sea. The third academy lasted nearly two thousand years. All of the Ėttuttokai are said to have been composed by the poets of the third academy. The Tolkāppiyam is associated with both the second and third academies. See K. V. Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 55-61. The fourth Tamil Čankam was established in Madurai in 1901 by Pāṇṭṭurai Tēvar, the Cētuṭai ruler of Ramanatapuram. Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature* (1975), 13. Navanīṭa Kiruṣpa Pāramiṭā was associated with this Čankam as an examiner of Tamil scholars and as a contributer to their journal, *Centamil*. See chapter 3. Madurai is well represented in the classical literature. "Maturaikkaṇci", one of the ten poems in the Pattrappāṭṭu, is on Madurai city. Zvelebil dates this poem around 215 CE.: Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature* (1975), 79. It is the longest poem in Pattrappāṭṭu with 782 lines; see: J. V. Chelliah, trans., *Pattupattu: Ten Tamil Idylls: Tamil Verses with English Translation* (1946; republished by Thanjavur: Tamil University, 1985) 221-282. Subbiah indicates that all the existing Paripāṭal songs are on the Vaikai river which runs through Madurai, or to forms of Murukan or Viṣṇu at places near Madurai. G. Subbiah, "Patterns in Religious Thought in Early South India: A Study of Classical Tamil Texts" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1988), 72. Kapilar and Paranar, two of the authors of the classical poems cited in chapter 2 (see also chapter 7), are mentioned in the fifty-third story and are therefore linked to Madurai city and the Miṅṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple.


side of the river, and is surrounded by streets in four concentric squares. The traffic on
the square of streets immediately outside the compound wall proceeds one-way in a
clockwise circumambulatory direction around the temple.

The Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple has been the subject of a number of scholarly
studies, and there are therefore a number of descriptions, diagrams and pictures of the
temple available. My description will be selective, emphasising those aspects which
enable one to get a sense of the contrast between the singing of "Tiruvempāvai" and
"Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccī" in the Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple and in the village temples where
the "Pāvai Singing" takes place. The following description is based on my own
observations in areas where I had free access, and on Jeyachandran, Fuller, and priestly
informants for areas to which I had limited access. A diagram of the Miṉāṭci-
Cuntarēcuvarar Temple compound is found in Appendix 1.3 and diagrams of Miṉāṭci's and
Cuntarēcuvarar's Shrines are found in Appendices 1.1 and 1.2 respectively.

The Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple consists of a large compound surrounding the
shrines of the main deities, the Goddess Miṉāṭci and God Cuntarēcuvarar. The temple
compound covers an area of 847 feet on the east-west axis and 792 feet on the north-south
axis. The compound of the complex has entrances on all four sides. One enters through
tall towers called kōpurams at about the middle of the south, west and northern sides.

There are two entrances on the eastern wall opposite the Miṉāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar

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8 There are many temples in Madurai. However, the Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar
Temple has geographical prominence and is the largest temple in the city.
9 See A. V. Jeyechandrun, The Madurai Temple Complex: With Special Reference
to Literature and Legends (Madurai: Madurai Kamaraj University, 1985); C. J. Fuller,
Servants of the Goddess: The Priests of a South Indian Temple (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1984); and Devakunjari, Madurai Through the Ages.
10 Jeyechandrun, Madurai Temple Complex (1985). According to Fuller it is
approximately 850 feet by 720. Fuller, Servants of the Goddess, 2. Reynolds gives the
measurements as 850 by 725 feet: Reynolds, "Madurai: Kōyil Nakar," 22.
shrines respectively. Within the compound walls are the Āṭi Streets which themselves enclose the main shrines of the temple. The two shrines are side by side, and open towards the east. Each shrine is a complex in itself with its own main deity, surrounding subsidiary deities and other significant figures. There is a large tank roughly opposite Miṇāṭci’s shrine, and another large shrine for Ĉeuvantıcuvăr on the southeastern side of the temple inside the Āṭi Streets and main walls of the temple. There are many other structures such as halls (maṇṭapams), rooms of religious organizations, administration offices, kitchens, a shopping area, book stores, and quarters for elephants and cows.¹¹

The main entrance into Miṇāṭci’s shrine is through the Kiliṅkūṭu Maṇṭapam. In the Maṇṭapam opposite the main entrance to Miṇāṭci’s shrine there is an image of Nanti, Śiva’s bull, and a palipītam at which people often worship. On the south side of the outer wall of the Miṇāṭci complex is a small shrine housing Citti Viṇāyakar. On the north side of the entrance to Miṇāṭci’s complex on the same wall is another small shrine housing Kumāraṇ (Murukaṇ) with his two consorts. Also along this wall are the offices of the superintendent and his assistant, the place where personal worship (arṇcanai) tickets are sold, a book stall, a store room, and the Ûṅcal Maṇṭapam (swing hall).

The Miṇāṭci complex within the larger temple complex consists of the shrine of Miṇāṭci and two pirākārams or concentric surrounding walkways. The whole complex is inaccessible to the non-Hindu. The main entrance¹² to the complex is through a door on the east side. One proceeds through this doorway into the second pirākāram and

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¹² The other entrance to the Miṇāṭci complex is on the north side and leads directly into Ĉuntarıcuvăr’s second pirākāram. There is also a gate on the west side but it is closed. See Fuller, *Servants of the Goddess*, p. xxvi, and Jeyechandrun, *Madurai Temple Complex* (1985), attached map.
immediately in front of the door is the flag pole, another palipītam and an image of Nanti. There are some shrines and maṇṭapams in the first and second pirākāram. These shrines are predominantly forms of Siva's consort's divine children, Viṇūyakar and Murukan. The main entrance into the first pirākāram is on the other side of the flagpole through the Six Pillared Hall which is a raised platform in the second pirākāram at the center of the eastern side. The first pirākāram and the central shrine are therefore higher than the second pirākāram.

The main shrine is situated on the western side of the first pirākāram midway between the north and south walls. It is divided into several rooms into which only the priests, their assistants and the Vedic chanters may go. The Goddess Miṉāṭci, represented by an anthropomorphic image, resides in the innermost room. Extending from the outer room of Miṉāṭci's immediate quarters are two long rails with a walkway in the middle. Towards the end of the rails, at the opposite end from the main shrine, there is an image of Nanti facing Miṉāṭci. People worshipping Miṉāṭci stand on the outer side of these rails. Conventionally, men stand on the south side and the women on the north side. The priest attends to the devotees from the middle. At the end of the rails along the north wall facing south is the palliyarai (bedroom). There is a large mirror hanging high up on the wall opposite Miṉāṭci which devotees can look into and see the pūcai if the crowd is so great that they cannot work their way up to the railings.

The complex of Cuntarēcuvavarar's shrine, like Miṉāṭci's, consists of a main shrine and two pirākārams (walkways). However, Cuntarēcuvavarar's complex is significantly larger than Miṉāṭci's and contains many more shrines. Images of the sixty-three saints whose stories are told by Cēkkilār in the twelfth Tirumūrai, The Periya Purāṇam, and

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13 All three of these groups are brahmins. Fuller, Servants of the Goddess, 33-42.
other important saints are found in Cuntarēcuvarar’s complex, but not in Miṅāṭci’s. Also unlike the Miṅāṭci complex, non-Hindus may enter the second pirākāram, but not the first pirākāram or the main shrine area.

The second pirākāram of Cuntarēcuvarar’s shrine is very large and spacious. There is a shrine for the classical poets in the northwest corner. The walkways of the south, west and north sides open into a large area on the eastern side. In approximately the center of this area there is the Kampattati Maṇṭapam, which is an area enclosed by fencing, with a very large image of Nandi facing Cuntarēcuvarar, a large palippūm and a flagpole. At the far northeastern corner is the Hundred Pillared Hall in which there is a large image of Naṭarācar. In the southwest corner of the Hundred Pillared Hall is the shrine for the Navakkirakam (nine planets). Proceeding southward from the Hundred Pillared Hall along the outer wall are two very large images of Akkinivirappattiran and Akōravirappattiran surrounded by an iron fence. On the other side of the eastern entrance there is another set of equally large images, Ürttuvatāṇṭavar and Pattirakāli, also surrounded by an iron fence. At the foot of Ürttuvatāṇṭavar (a dancing form of Śiva) is an image of Kāraikkālammaiyar (one of the Śaiva canonical poets) watching him dance.

In the outer southeastern corner of this large area there is the Tiruṅaṅcacampantar Maṇṭapam containing the images of eight Śaiva saints. The images proceeding from the left to the right side of the maṇṭapam are of: Māṇikkavācakar; Cuntarar; Tirunāvukkaracar; Tiruṅaṅcacampantar; Nēṭumāṟanāyaṇār; Maṅkaiyarkkaraci, Kulacciṟaināyaṇār, and Mūrttināyaṇār. The first four saints are worshipped in many places in Tamil Nadu whereas the remaining four are specifically connected with Madurai.

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14 Devakunjari provides a picture of the outside of the maṇṭapam entitled "Entrance--Sangattār temple". Devakunjari, Madurai Through the Ages, n.p.
15 See the picture entitled "Nandi Shrine--Kambattadi Maṇṭapam". Devakunjari, Madurai Through the Ages. n.p.
The outer wall of the first *pirākāram* also contains a number of shrines. On the north side of the entrance proceeding south are two Lingas and three shrines of different forms of Murukan: Murukan as the Ascetic Taṇṭayutavaṇṭ at Paḷaṇṭi Temple; Murukan as Kumaraṇ at Kaḷukumalai Temple and Murukan as a child, Paḷamurukan. On the south side of the wall proceeding south there is a shrine to Anukkaivinâyakar, the form of Viṇâyakar who grants permission to enter the temple, and two more shrines with Lingas.

On the outer edge of the entrance into the first *pirākāram* are rather large images of the four main Śaiva saints: Tirunâvukkaracar and Tirunâṇacampantar on the south side, and Cuntarar and Mâṇikkavâcakar on the north side. Inset into the south side of the thick entrance is an image of Atikâranânti, chief of the temple.

The first *pirākāram* of Cuntarēcuvâr's complex has many shrines. There are images of human figures such as Cēkkinâr, the sixty-three saints, and the ten collections of Śaiva saints. There are images of the Goddesses Caracuvâti, Turkkai, and Makâlatâumi. There are also images of Śiva's children, Viṇâyakar and Murukan. There are images of various forms of Śiva: Tatĉinâmûrtti (Śiva as guru), Iliṅkâpavâr (Śiva as the column of fire), Kâcivicuvânanâtaṇ (Śiva as lord of Kâci), the processional images of Śiva as the Dancing God, Naṭâracar, Cittar (Śiva as a yogi) as well as various Lingas.

The main shrine of Cuntarēcuvâr consists of the rooms in which he resides and a larger area called the Makâmaṇṭapam. As is the case for Miṇâṭci, Cuntarēcuvâr, represented by a Linga, is in the inner of the rooms to which only the priests, their assistants and Vedic chanters have access. Two rails extend from the outer of the rooms

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16 *The Tamil Lexicon* (Madras: University of Madras, 1982) identifies nine groups. Fuller says there are ten. Fuller, *Servants of the Goddess*, xii. I am following Fuller as he is specifically speaking about the Miṇâṭci-Cuntarēcuvâr Temple.

17 Fuller, *Servants of the Goddess*, 33-42.
towards the Makāmanṭapam, and the worshippers stand on either side of the rails as in Mīnāṭci's shrine.

There are several shrines in the Makāmanṭapam. An image of Naṭarācar is installed in a Silver Hall on the north side of the Makāmanṭapam. On the south side there are the festival images of the four saints (Mānīkkavācacakar, Cuntarar, Tirunāvukkaracar, Tiruṇāṇacampantar), the sixty-three saints and the collection of ten saints, and the festival images of Cittar and of Śiva in his form as Cantiracēkaraṇ.

The Mīnāṭci-Cuntarecuvarar Temple evolved over many centuries. I will briefly mention the stages of evolution suggested by A.V. Jeyechandrun. He proposes that there was a very basic shrine with an enclosing wall for Śiva in the seventh century. By the twelfth century the shrine for Śiva inside the wall had developed into a three-room inner sanctum. In addition, a small shrine for Mīnāṭci had been built outside this complex. He suggests that in the thirteenth century the second pirākāram wall was added for Cuntarecuvarar and a wall was built for Mīnāṭci's shrine which became the second pirākāram wall. The temple complex was partially destroyed by the invading Muslims in the fourteenth century. The palṭīyaṟṟai, the first pirākāram wall for Mīnāṭci’s shrine and a hall for Naṭarācar in Cuntarecuvarar’s Makāmanṭapam were added in the fifteen century. Most of the other structures of the temple were built between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, although additions and repairs continue to the present day.18

18 Jeyechandrun, *Madurai Temple Complex* (1985), 159-201. There is inscriptional evidence from which to reconstruct the evolution of the temple from the twelfth century onwards. Jeyechandrun also uses literary works.
Temporal Setting: The Ritual Cycle of Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple

The Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar temple has a well developed and complex ritual cycle. The rituals of the Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temples are said to follow the Kāmikāgama and Kāranāgama, as well as Akōraćivācāriyar's manual, Śrī Pārāttanittiyapūjāvīti-Uttaram.19

The temple has daily, weekly, monthly and yearly worship cycles.20 During the hours which the temple is open, but not during any piicāi, the priests perform special offerings on behalf of devotees.21 On some auspicious days couples are even married in Miṇāṭci’s shrine.

The formal ritual activity of the temple consists most basically of piicāi and processions. According to the Āgamas, piicāi is a form of worship consisting of a series of offerings (upacāram) to the deity. The number of offerings varies from list to list in the different Āgamas.22 Fuller has provided the following list:23

1. Invocation of the deity
2. Offering a seat to or installation of the deity
3. Offering water for washing the feet
4. Offering water for washing the head and body
5. Offering water for rinsing the mouth
6. Bathing
7. Dressing or offering a garment
8. Putting on the sacred thread
9. Sprinkling perfume

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20 There are also rare ritual events such as the purification of a temple, or the installation of a new image, or the consecration of a part of the temple.
10. Adorning with flowers  
11. Burning incense  
12. Waving an oil lamp  
13. Offering food  
14. Paying homage by prostration, etc.  
15. Circumambulation  
16. Dismissal or taking leave of the deity 

According to Fuller, items one through five, and fourteen through sixteen, are omitted in the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. Items six through thirteen are offerings which are made by the priests to Mīnāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar. These items are normally referred to under four headings: bathing (apiṭekam or abhiṣekam), decorating (alaṅkāram), offering food (naivettiyan) and offering lamps (tipārātanai). Fuller does not include singing or the recitation of texts as part of his list of offerings, but according to the Kāmikāgama, the recitation of texts, singing of songs (in various languages) and dancing should follow the offering of incense to the deity.

The cycle of daily pūcai refers to the pūcai offered to the presiding deities in their immovable forms in the main shrines. Pūcai is conducted eight times a day for the presiding deities in the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, although some of the pūcais are joined together so that there is actually only six separate pūcai times. According to the

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24 Fuller provides a composite description of pūcai as it is conducted at the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. Bathing is item six; decorating includes items seven through ten, offering food is item thirteen, and waving the lamp is item twelve but is sometimes preceded by an offering of incense (item eleven). Camphor Flame, 64-67.

25 Davis cites the Kāmikāgama 4.436-39: "He should have songs consisting of mantras sung, or else vina music may be played. After the offering of incense, there should be Vedic recitations or readings from other sacred texts, and after that songs in the Gauḍa, and other languages. Afterward he should have performed songs composed in the Dravidian language, or in uncorrupt Sanskrit, joined with dance, or songs in the eighteen languages using many tones." Ritual in an Oscillating Universe, 150.
Agamas, eight daily pūcais is the optimal number. The names and times of the pūcai in the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple are posted on a board in the temple:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Worship</th>
<th>Mīnāṭci</th>
<th>Cuntarēcuvarar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>6:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Tiruvanantal</td>
<td>6:30-7:00</td>
<td>6:45-7:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Viḷāpūcai &amp; 3. Kālacanti</td>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>11:00-11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tirikālācanti &amp; 5. Uccikālam PM</td>
<td>4:30-5:15</td>
<td>5:00-5:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cāyaraṭcai</td>
<td>7:30-7:45</td>
<td>7:45-8:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Arttacamam</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>9:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Paḷğiyaṟai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These pūcais usually start earlier in Mīnāṭci's shrine than in Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine. The exception is the last pūcai of the day, which begins in Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine because it is the pūcai in which his image is brought back to her shrine to spend the night.

A procession is the essential element of festival worship, during which movable images (urcavamūrtti) are taken around the precincts of the temple or to areas outside the temple. In the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, the deities are taken in procession within the pirākārams of the temple, along the square of Āṭi Streets within the compound walls, or along the other three concentric squares of streets surrounding the temple compound.

Festivals are conducted throughout the year, and according to Jeyechandrun there are festivals for the various deities or saints on 300 of the 365 days. Fuller lists eight

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28 See Fuller, Servants of the Goddess, 17-21.
festivals for Miñāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar together, and four for Miñāṭci alone.\textsuperscript{30} The most important of these festivals is in Cittirai month in which, among other events, the marriage of Miñāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar is reenacted. There are two festivals for Śiva in his form as Naṭarācar: one in Āni month and one on Tiruvāṭirai day of Mārkalī month. Festivals for Viṇāyakar, Murukan and Nanti are held in Māci month. The saints' birthdays are celebrated by festivals as well.

Certain days of the week and certain days of the month also involve special worship. For example on Fridays the swing festival is conducted for Miñāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar, during which they are swung on a swing in Ūntal Maṇṭapam. On piratōṭam day,\textsuperscript{31} Cantiracēkaraṇ is taken in procession into the second pirākūram of Cuntarēcuvarar 's shrine.

\textit{Tiruvanantal Pūcai}

"Tiruppāṭiyelucc" is sung during \textit{Tiruvanantal Pūcai}, the first pūcai of the daily ritual cycle at the Miñāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. The pūcai takes about an hour to complete and involves quite a number of temple staff.

\textbf{Cast and Audience}

The Miñāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple is huge and therefore requires a very large staff.

Fuller has discussed the staff of the temple as of 1980, and it is only necessary here to consider the staff directly involved in the \textit{Tiruvanantal Pūcai}.\textsuperscript{32} In \textit{Tiruvanantal Pūcai}, a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} Fuller, \textit{Servants of the Goddess}, 18.
\item \textsuperscript{31} According to the Tamil Lexicon, this is the thirteenth lunar day of the dark fortnight, a day which is auspicious for worshipping Śiva.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Fuller, \textit{Servants of the Goddess}, chapter 2, 23-48. Fuller gives a short description of the duties and rights of the various positions, and their relative position in the hierarchy in society and in the temple.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
number of priests, assistant priests, other temple support staff. ötuvārs and musicians have
direct roles. All these roles are filled by men. The many other staff which indirectly have
roles such as the cleaning staff, the kitchen staff and the administrative staff will not be
discussed here.

The role of the priest is the most important role in the overall ritual event in which
"Tiruppalπiyelucci" is sung. It is the priest who attends to the deities and makes the
offerings during pūcai. There are two priestly families at the Mīnāτci-Cuntarēcuvarar
Temple who have hereditary rights to perform priestly functions, but only one of these
families has the right to perform the daily pūcai. Every day there is one priest to attend to
Mīnāτci and one to attend to Cuntarēcuvarar. The two positions are filled by a different
priest each day according to a monthly schedule. The Tiruvavantai Pūcai is conducted
entirely by the priest of Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine, even though the pūcai takes place in both
Mīnāτci's shrine and in Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine. He usually has two brahmin assistants
which accompany him as he goes from shrine to shrine.

The ötuvārs are the professional singers of Tamil songs in general and of the
Tirumurai in particular. They sing the songs primarily in temples during daily ritual and
festival ritual. In the Mīnāτci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, the ötuvārs give a recital of Tamil
songs, accompanied by instrumental musicians, in the morning and evening in Kilikkūtu
Maṇṭapam. It is the ötuvārs who sing "Tiruppalπiyelucci" and "Tiruvempavai" in the
Mīnāτci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple.

33 Fuller discusses these two families and their respective rights at some length:
Fuller, Servants of the Goddess.
34 Mīnāτci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple Priest, interview with the author, Hamilton,
35 I am told that Cuntarēcuvarar's priest does this pūcai because this is the pūcai in
which Cuntarēcuvarar's image is returned to his own shrine.
The actual singing pattern of the ēṭuvārs deserves a separate study, however, a few general comments can be made here. One ēṭuvār summarized the daily singing duty as singing the Paṅcapurāṇam in the daily pūcais. This summary glosses over some interesting points. It seems that the ēṭuvārs sing the Paṅcapurāṇam only during the middle four daily pūcais and only in Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine. In the first and last pūcai times different songs are sung. The Paṅcapurāṇam consists of selections from each of the following groupings of five Tirumurai texts:

1. Tēvāram, the first through seventh Tirumurai, which contains the poems of Tiruṉācampanar, Tirunāvukkaracar, and Cuntarar
2. Tiruvācakam and Tirukkōvaiyār, the eighth Tirumurai, by Māṇikkavācakar
3. Tiruvicaippā, which is a group of poems composed by nine different authors, in the ninth Tirumurai
4. Tiruppallāṇṭu, composed by Čēntanār, also in the ninth Tirumurai
5. Periya Purāṇam, the twelfth Tirumurai, composed by Čēkkilār

The ēṭuvārs probably select one poem from each of the five groups according to their liking, as they do when they sing the Paṅcapurāṇam in the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival.

Another ēṭuvār informed me that during the daily pūcai to Miṅāṭci, rather than the Paṅcapurāṇam, the ēṭuvār sings songs from other works such as Maturai Miṅāṭciyammai Pillai Tamil and Apirāmi Antāti, which are not part of the Tirumurai.36 The singing of the Tirumurai songs in Cuntarēcuvarar's complex but not in Miṅāṭci's complex is an important distinction which corresponds with the fact that the images of the saints who composed those songs are found in Cuntarēcuvarar's complex but not in Miṅāṭci's.

There were six ēṭuvār positions in the Miṅāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple in 1993-94. One is the hereditary position of the Stala ēṭuvār and the other five are non-hereditary salaried positions. While the position of Stala ēṭuvār may be several hundred years old,

the position of non-hereditary salaried ōtvār seems to be a fairly modern development which began around the 1940s.  

The ōtvār has a limited role in the Tiruvaṇṭal Pūcaī. The pūcaī takes about fifty to sixty minutes, and the ōtvār participates for only about ten minutes. The singing

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37 The superintendent, the Stala Ōtvār and a few other ōtvārs verified the number and status of ōtvārs. I was told that the family of the Stala Ōtvār was appointed with an endowment at the time of Tirumalaināyakkar (seventeenth century), and that it is recorded in Telugu on a copper plate. Details about the appointment of the Stala Ōtvār at the time of Tirumalaināyakkar were provided by the Stala Ōtvār and mentioned independently by a friend of the family. An entry in the Government records of 1836 records a late succession dispute over the hereditary position of ōtvār in the Minaṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, because the right to the position had been registered in the names of the heirs of only two of three brothers. The third brother was claiming his share from his nephews. Devakunjari mentions that during the Nayak period and the early British period there were two ōtvārs working in the Minaṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. It is not clear what the source of her information is, and it is possible that the two mentioned by her may be the two brothers recorded in this dispute.

There are at least two factors which suggest that the appointment of non-hereditary ōtvārs began in the 1940's or 1950's. The first is that in the 1940s in the Minaṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple the role of the temple dancers (tēvatāci) was eliminated, and the ōtvār apparently took over some of their duties. Fuller had evidence that the tēvatācis used to sing in the first (Tiruvaṇṭal Pūcaī) and last pūcaī (Paliyvarai Pūcaī), but notes that the tēvatācis stopped working in the Minaṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple in the 1940s and that the dedication of girls as tēvatāci was banned by a law in 1947. Fuller, Servants of the Goddess, 38, 40-1, 188 n. 24.

The second reason for the change in the role of the ōtvār in the 1940s was that The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department developed a deliberate policy of appointing ōtvārs and Vedic reciters in temples in Tamil Nadu. Administration Report of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (Administration) Department for the period from 1 April 1953-54 (Madras: Superintendent, Government Press, 1955), 12-4. This is the earliest report that I saw. The policy could have been in place earlier. See also the reports of 1954-55:16, and 1955-56:17.


during this pūcai is done by one of the non-hereditary ātuvārs who take turns performing this duty.

The instrumental musicians playing during Tiruvāṅantal Pūcai include a nātasvaram (wind instrument with a long pipe) player, a cymbal player and one or two drummers. They are present for most of the pūcai but do not play continuously. They proceed ahead of the priest during any major change of location, such as the procession from Mīnāṭci's temple to Cuntarēcuvarar's. In this segment there are also bearers who carry the palanquin carrying Cuntarēcuvarar's image from Mīnāṭci's shrine.

The audience for the Tiruvāṅantal Pūcai consists primarily of devotees. The size of the crowd varies. In Mārkāli month the crowd is very large, including a significant number of Ayyappa bhaktas on pilgrimage to Sabarimala in Kerala. During Mārkāli month, the coldest and darkest time of the year, getting up very early and going to the temple is considered to be especially meritous. When I was observing this pūcai in 1990-91, I noticed that many of the same people came to the temple on a regular basis. On the occasions when I went into Mīnāṭci's shrine, the atmosphere at this early hour was relaxed, friendly and sociable.

Devotees are entitled to view the images of the deities (tarīcanam) in the main shrines and to receive various piracätam, or substances that transfer the deity's grace to the devotee, but they are not permitted to go close to the deities. In the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, devotees must also satisfy a basic dress code in that men are not permitted to wear a kaili or patterned piece of cloth; nor are they allowed to wear a panīyam or sleeveless undershirt.

Thus during Tiruvāṅantal Pūcai, the priest of the Cuntarēcuvarar shrine conducts the pūcai aided by assistants, the ātuvār sings, the musicians play, the bearers carry Śiva's
image back to his daytime seat in the main shrine, and the devotees may view the deity (ta\'ircan\'am) and receive grace (pirar\'atam).

The Event

The Tiruv\'anthal P\'\u00e0cai is primarily the act of awakening the God and Goddess, and returning them to their respective shrines for the day. Cuntar\'ecuvarar, who is represented by an image of his feet when he joins Mi\'\u00e0\'ci every night, is returned to the Linga in his sanctum. The p\'\u00e0cai thus begins at Mi\'\u00e0\'ci's shrine and concludes in Cuntar\'ecuvarar's.

Only two of the four offerings discussed above are included in this p\'\u00e0cai. In other words, there is no abhi\'\u00e6kam or alang\'\u00e6ram, but there is an offering of naivettiyam and tipar\'ita\'\u00e6. The p\'\u00e0cai starts at 5:00 AM and concludes before 6:00 AM. The ritual movement of the p\'\u00e0cai in both shrines is from the periphery toward the centre and back outside again. The motion inward and outward generally moves about the shrines in a

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38 There are several sources which refer to the Tiruv\'anthal P\'\u00e0cai. Fuller gives a brief description of the main features of the ritual as they occur at the Mi\'\u00e0\'ci-Cuntar\'ecuvarar Temple and a list of deities worshipped during the p\'\u00e0cai. There are some minor differences between his list and mine: Fuller, Servants of the Goddess, 11-2; 168-70.

Diehl provides a fairly long description of the rituals the priest performs in order to prepare himself to undertake the worship, and a brief description of the worship itself based on Ak\'oraciv\'\u00e6riyar's manual on worship, \'S\'ri P\'ar\'atta Nittiyu Pu\'j\'aviti. The description based on the manual seems to have little correspondence with what is actually done in the Mi\'\u00e0\'ci-Cuntar\'ecuvarar Temple: Diehl, Instrument and Purpose, 98-107.


Another short note about this p\'\u00e0cai is found in Cuntararaman, "Maturaik K\'\u0101yil Nittiyu Valip\'\u014du." 271.

My description of the ritual is based on a detailed account from a priest, subsequent verification of that description with the same priest and another priest, clarifications from \'otuv\'\u0101rs and my own observations in 1990-91 and 1993-4. The description relies most heavily on informants for activity which is done inside the restricted area, and most heavily on my own observations for the activity done in areas to which I had access. I did see the Tiruv\'anthal P\'\u00e0cai on two occasions in the restricted area, and was given a fairly detailed tour of the inner areas. Therefore, I have an idea of the layout of the restricted area and some sense of the activity of the p\'\u00e0cai which takes place there.
clockwise circumambulatory direction. Diagrams of the route of the *Tiruvanantam Pūcai* in Mīnāți's and Cuntarēcuvarar's Shrine are found in Appendix I, Diagrams 1 and 2 respectively. The numbers beside the names in the text below correspond to the numbers on the diagrams. The numbers indicate the location and the position in the sequence followed as the images are worshipped during this *pūcai*.

The *pūcai* begins outside Mīnāți's shrine at the Citti Vināyakar shrine (1) which is on the south side of the outer wall of Mīnāți's second *pirākāram* in Kilikkūtu Maṇṭapam. The assistant priest holds out a pot containing the *naiveṭtiyam* and offers the food to the deity with motions of his hand. Then he shows the five flame camphor lamp to that deity while he rings a bell. The priest and assistant priest, followed by a fluid audience, then move to the Kumāraṇ shrine (2) on the opposite side of the door leading into Mīnāți's shrine, and there they repeat the same actions.

Then the priest and his assistant enter Mīnāți's shrine and proceed to the bedroom (*palliṭya[r]ai*) in order to wake up Mīnāți and Cuntarēcuvarar (3). The crowd follows and gathers around the *palliṭya[r]ai*. The *ōtuvār* stands on the west side of the door to the *palliṭya[r]ai*. Usually he sings only one poem of "Tiruppaḷliṭyelucci", and then the door to the *palliṭya[r]ai* is opened. The *naiveṭtiyam* is offered in the same way as at the other shrines by a motion of the priest's hand. Then a series of lamps are shown to the God and Goddess.

The priest and assistant go into Mīnāți's sanctum, and rejoin her with her main image there (4). During the ten days of the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival some *ōtuvārs* say they should sing "Tiruvempāvai" during this segment also. On two days in 1993 they sang the first poem of "Tiruppaḷliṭyelucci" at the *palliṭya[r]ai* and the last poem of "Tiruvempāvai" in Tiruvanacampantar Maṇṭapam.

According to Fuller, the priest puts back Mīnāți's nose ring and thereby restores her powers to her main image: Fuller, *Servants of the Goddess*, 12.
to offer *naivettiyam* to her with the curtain drawn so that the public cannot see. This is followed by the offering of a series of lamps to Miṇāτci. The curtain is opened as the first lamp in the series is offered. The last lamp is then brought to the people who pass their hand over it and then raise their hands to their faces. The priest then distributes *künkumam*, a red saffron powder associated with the Goddess. Passing one's hands through the camphor flame and receiving *künkumam* are two ways of receiving grace from the deity.41

Once Miṇāτci has been restored to her main shrine, the priest then returns the image of Cuntarēcuvarar's feet to his shrine. There are a number of stops on the way. The priest and his assistant return to the *palliyaɪai* (5) and take the image of the feet to a palanquin which is kept opposite the *palliyaɪai* in the second *pirākāram* (6). The palanquin is taken in the non-circumambulatory direction to the Tirumalaināyakkar statue (7) in the southeast corner of the second *pirākāram*.42 A single wick lamp, a five layer lamp and a camphor flame are offered to the image in the palanquin on behalf of Tirumalaināyakkar, the seventeenth century ruler of Madurai. Between the Viṇāyakar shrine and the Six Pillared Hall (8, 9) two more lamps are offered to the image of Cuntarēcuvarar's feet. The palanquin is then taken out of Miṇāτci's shrine and into Kilikkūṭu Maṇṭapam where another lamp is offered to Cuntarēcuvarar beside a large granite stone (10).43 These four offerings of lamps are provided for by *kattalais*, which in this context means provisions for a special

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42 That is, in a non-circumambulatory direction because Śiva should not be thought of as worshipping Miṇāτci. Miṇāτci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple Priest, interview with the author, Hamilton, Canada, December 1991. The list of services offered to a deity includes circumambulation. If Śiva were to be taken in the circumambulatory direction he would be thought of as worshipping Miṇāτci.
43 I have not actually seen this stop, as on the occasions on which I observed this *pūcrai*, the palanquin proceeded straight into the second *pirākāram* of the Cuntarēcuvarar shrine without stopping.
service to be offered to the deity on behalf of, or for the benefit of, some individual. In observing the ritual, it was not possible to identify who had provided for the services, nor on whose behalf they were being offered.\textsuperscript{44}

The image of the God's feet is then taken into Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine on the palanquin, led by the musicians and accompanied by the priest and his assistants. They proceed around the second pirākāram of Śiva's shrine in the clockwise circumambulatory direction. A number of stops are made on the way to the first pirākāram. The palanquin halts briefly at the shrine of the classical poets, the Caṅkattār temple (11) in the second pirākāram. I did not see any offering made there. The palanquin then continues its round of the second pirākāram, going around the large Nanti and stopping just in front of the guard (tuvārapālakar) on the south side of the door to Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine. An offering is made to Aṉukkaivināyakar there (12) because it is he who gives permission to enter the temple. He receives naivētiyam and the five flame camphor plate. The palanquin remains by the guard, and the priest and an assistant go to worship Atikārananti, the chief of the temple who is set into the south side of the main door. They offer him naivētiyam and the five flame camphor plate (13). The priest and his assistant return to the palanquin and offer a single oil lamp, a five layer lamp and then a single camphor flame to the image of God's feet (14). This service is provided for by a kattalai.\textsuperscript{45} and this is one of the favourite places for devotees to line up along the route and wait for the palanquin to come.

The palanquin is then taken inside to the first pirākāram and placed at the bottom of the steps on the south side of the main shrine beside the entrance leading to Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine (15). The priest takes the image of the feet and places it facing east

\textsuperscript{44} The priest did not know who had provided for these services, nor on whose behalf they were being offered.

\textsuperscript{45} There is no obvious beneficiary for this service either, based on an observation of the ritual.
near the Śiva Linga in the inner sanctum (16). *Naivēṭṭiyam* is offered while the curtain is closed. Then, the curtain is opened, and the same series of lamps offered to Miņāṭci is offered to Cuntarēcuvarar. Afterward the priest brings the camphor flame to the devotees and distributes the sacred ash. The sacred ash is associated with Śiva, as the *kuṅkumam* is with Miņāṭci, and to receive the ash is to receive grace from God. At this point, Cuntarēcuvarar has been restored to his main shrine.

The final portion of the *Tiruvāṅtal Piicai* is the worship of many of the inhabitants of the shrines beginning in the Makāmaṇṭapam, proceeding to the first *pirākāram* and finishing in the second *pirākāram*. The priest first offers *naivēṭṭiyam* to images in the Makāmaṇṭapam, starting with the Naṭarācar in the Silver Hall (17). Naṭarācar is offered *naivēṭṭiyam*, a single lamp and a camphor flame. The priest then offers *naivēṭṭiyam* and the camphor to Cantiracēkaraṇ (18), Uṛcavacittar (19) and the Nālvar or four saints (20).

The priest and the assistant then exit the Makāmaṇṭapam and proceed to the southeast corner of the first *pirākāram* where they worship the deities proceeding around the *pirākāram* in the circumambulatory direction. They begin with Cēkkilār (21) and continue in the following order: the sixty-three saints of the *Periya Purāṇam* (22), the Goddess, Caracuvati (23), Śiva in his form as guru, Taṭciṇāmūrtti (24), the festival deities (25), the festival image of Kārttikēyaṇ (26), Śiva in his form of the column of fire, Liṅkōrpavar (27), Śiva as Lord of Kāsi, Kācivinguvanāṭan (28), Cittar (29), the Goddess, Türkκai (30), the festival images of Naṭarācar (31), the Atcara Liṅkam (32), the Goddess, Makālaṭcumi (33), and Irattinacapai Naṭarācar (34). The priest offers all of them

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^46 At some point the image of the feet is then taken to a room and the door is locked.

The festival images of Śiva, his consort, his children, Cantarākaraṇa and Ātikāranaṇa (25) are offered one more lamp between naivēttiyam and the camphor.

The priest and his assistants leave the first pirākāram and proceed to the second pirākāram led by the musicians. They worship the deities in the Kampattāṭi Maṇṭapam proceeding in a clockwise direction. All receive naivēttiyam and are offered the five flame camphor lamp. The priest worships the large Nanti first (35). They then proceed to the three forms of Murukāṇa on the outer first pirākāram wall and offer worship first to Taṇṭayutavaṇ (36) and then to Kaḷukumalai Kumāraṇ (37) and finally to Pālamurukan (38). The priest then goes to the Navakkirakam (nine planets) and worships them as a group (39). The priest offers worship to Naṭarācar, who is in the Hundred Pillared Hall, from the steps leading into the hall (40). Then the priest makes the offerings first to Akkiniṉivirapattiraṇ and Akoṇavirapattiraṇ as a pair (41), and then to Uṛttuvatāṭavar and Pattirakāḷi also as a pair (42).

Finally, the priest and his assistant go to the Tirunāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam. At this stage, the ōtvār rejoins the pūcaṇ. Inside the Maṇṭapam, a single flame is shown to the eight saints. The ōtvār sings a poem which is inaudible from outside the maṇṭapam. On the floor in the maṇṭapam are several pails of milk. A brass pot is placed before the buckets of milk. The priest passes his hand over the brass pot. The brass pot is filled with milk. A ladle of milk from the brass pot is put into each bucket. The five flame camphor plate is shown. The flame is passed to the people inside (i.e., the ōtvār) and then brought to the devotees outside the maṇṭapam.

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48 I was told that worship was offered to Pālamurukan, but I did not actually see him receive it. I did not see the pūcaṇ on the day that the priest who was describing it to me conducted it. Perhaps when he did this pūcaṇ he made an offering to Pālamurukan.
The devotees line up to receive *piracātam* from a platform near the Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam (44). The *naivāṭiyam* for this *pūcaṭ* consists of fried rice (*pori*) and milk. The *Tiruvanṭal Pūcaṭ* ends with the distribution of the *piracātam* (milk only) to devotees. In the month of *Mārkali* the crowd is so large that bamboo rails are erected to direct the line up of devotees for the *piracātam*.

**The "Ritual Text"**

The only poems sung in the *Tiruvanṭal Pūcaṭ* are those sung at the *palliyarai* at the beginning and in the Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam at the end. Therefore the ritual text of *Tiruvanṭal Pūcaṭ* can be said to consist of only one poem selected from "Tiruppaṭṭiyulu" and another poem chosen by the ētuvaṭr which is sung in praise of the saints at Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam. The second poem may be a poem in praise of one saint one day, and another saint on another day. I was told that during ten days in *Mārkali* month "Tiruvempāvai" is sung in place of the *Paṭcapurāṇam* in the temple, but during all ritual events there was some disagreement among the ētuvaṭrs regarding whether or not "Tiruvempāvai" should also be sung instead of "Tiruppaṭṭiyulu" during those ten days. During at least a few of the ten days in *Mārkali* month in 1993-94 the ētuvaṭr on duty sang the twentieth poem of "Tiruvempāvai" in the Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam, but he also sang a poem from "Tiruppaṭṭiyulu" in the *palliyarai*.

The "ritual text" for this ritual is then short and composite, drawing on only two source texts on any one day. The first source text is Maṇikkavācakar's "Tiruppaṭṭiyulu", and the second is any text which is a song in praise of one or more of the saints. The text is stable in that it consists of two poems, one of which is almost always from "Tiruppaṭṭiyulu", yet fluid in that there is flexibility regarding which poem from "Tiruppaṭṭiyulu" is used, and which poem is chosen to be sung in the Tiruṇāṇacampantar
Maṇṭapam. It is not possible to say definitely what the structure of the whole text is because the poem which is sung at the end of the pūcai in the Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam may vary daily and it is the choice of the ētuvār.

Interpretation: The Puṟam Narrative World & Cuntarēcuварar's Biography

The singing of this "ritual text" is part of the Tiruvaṇantal Pūcai, which is one event in the activities of the lives of Cuntarēcuvarar and Miṇāṭci and their entourage at the Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. The Tiruvaṇantal Pūcai is the event of awakening the presiding deities, Cuntarēcuvarar and his wife Miṇāṭci. The singing of these two poems in this event incorporates the utterance of the poems into the act of awakening. The event is understood like the puṟam event of awakening the hero from sleep. In the Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, the "hero" is the deity Cuntarēcuvarar. The voice heard in this narrative frame is not that of the source poet nor that of individual devotees, but rather the voice of a special servant of the hero, who plays the role of the bard in the puṟam frame. Therefore the event of awakening is situated as an event in the life of a specific hero, but not as an event involving a specific poet.

The singing of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēçucci" is unequivocally associated with the awakening of Cuntarēcuvarar and Miṇāṭci. The priest, his assistants, the ētuvār and the audience stand before the bedroom. The ētuvār first sings a poem from "Tiruppaḷḷiyēçucci", then the door to the bedroom is opened. naivēttiyyam is offered and then tipārātçaai. In this context, the poem is sung as a song of awakening. The poem is not sung at any other point during the pūcai.

This particular use of the song evokes the puṟam theme mentioned in the previous section on interpretation, namely the theme of awakening the king from sleep. We see part of Aruṇācalam's puṟam interpretation of the hero being awakened in his castle by the bard
being evoked here. In this ritual setting, the king is the God. Cuntarēcuvarar, and his wife, the Goddess, Miṇāṭci, and the bard is a temple representative who is especially assigned to this task. The puram-like event takes place in the quarters of Miṇāṭci at the bedroom.

This perspective is given some support by the comments of a priest. He explained that there are two ways to enjoy God: absorbing him (akattū/y/mai) or going to him (purattū/y/mai). "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" is the second variety. The priest's comments are suggestive of the classical akam and puram context, although he did not specifically make the connection. The akam (love) frame would be an indicator of the lover-beloved relationship with God or a mystical union; and the puram frame would be an indicator of the public relationship of king-subject with its primary motif of going to the hero and praising him. The priest, then, casts the worship of God in these two modes which seem to correspond to the two narrative worlds of akam and puram, and he seems to situate the singing of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" in the puram narrative world.

The singing of the poems as part of a puram-like event of awakening the hero is situated in the biography of a particular hero and his heroine, rather than in the biography of a particular speaker, such as the poet. Although "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" is sung in the Tiruvaṅgantal Piicai in other Śaiva temples, the singing of it described above is a particular ritual form which takes place in a particular temple, the Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. There is no mistake about which deities are being awakened; they are Cuntarēcuvarar and Miṇāṭci, the particular forms of Śiva and his consort who have manifested themselves in Madurai, who have a history in Madurai and who, as the Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam tells us, have proven to show concern for the inhabitants of Madurai and the surrounding area.

The emphasis in this ritual is on Cuntarēcuvarar. The piicai is conducted by the priest who attends to Cuntarēcuvarar that day, even though part of the event takes place in Miṇāṭci's shrine. The actual proportion of the ritual conducted in Miṇāṭci's shrine is
minimal. There is the necessary preliminary worship of Vināyakar and Murukan at the
beginning, but no other supporting deities are worshipped there. The worship on the route
is directed towards the image of the feet of Cuntarēcuvarar in the palanquin rather than
towards Minā ī or the other images in her shrine. In contrast there is an elaborate worship
which includes many of the subsidiary deities and saints after the procession reaches
Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine. The Tiruvaṇaṇtal Pūcai is particularly associated with
Cuntarēcuvarar, and it is specifically the awakening of him and his household from sleep.

The event of awakening involves not only awakening the presiding deities, but
establishing them in their day-time positions, making them comfortable, honoring them,
and honoring other members of their household. The second poem used in the ritual is
situated as part of the honoring of members of the hero's household, the saints. The event
concludes with a sharing of the deity's beneficience (piraaṭam) among his followers.

The speaker or performer of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēlucci" is not situated in any individual
biography. The voice heard in this frame is not that of Malikkavacakar's, the composer of
the source poem, nor that of the composer of the other poem (especially since this identity
may change from day to day), nor that of individual devotees. Rather it is the voice of an
officially appointed person for whom this is one of his duties. Neither Malikkavacakar
nor any other poet has any particular presence in name or in image within this pūcai. The
pūcai is called Tiruvaṇaṇtal Pūcai, and it would not be called Malikkavacakar's
Tiruvaṇaṇtal Pūcai or any other poet's pūcai. At no time during the pūcai is
Malikkavacakar's image worshipped by itself. It is worshipped as one of the four saints
in Śiva's Maṇāṇtapam (20) and as one of the eight saints in Tiruṇāṇacampantar
Maṇāṇapam (43), but in these contexts, Malikkavacakar has no priority over the other
saints.
The voice of the song cannot belong to the audience. The ātuvar is separated from the audience spatially in that he stands on the east side of the steps before the paḷḷiyarai while the audience is off to the south. In the month of Mārkāḷi when the crowd is bigger, the audience is separated from the immediate ritual space by ropes and at the end of the ritual, the ātuvar goes inside the Tirunāṉaṟacampanṭar Maṇṭapam, while members of the audience may not. Furthermore, devotees in their role as devotees or as particular individuals are not permitted to sing in this pūcai; for it is only the ātuvar who is permitted to sing as one fulfilling a role.

In the formal structure of the temple ritual, the ātuvar does not sing on his own behalf. It is the duty of the salaried ātuvar who sing during this ritual as appointees, not because of who they are as individuals. There is no special association between an individual ātuvar and the Tiruvāṉaṟantal Pūcai, it does not matter which particular ātuvar performs that task on any given day.

The "ritual text" of the Tiruvāṉaṟantal Pūcai, which consists of a poem of "Tirupalḷiyeluccii" and another poem in praise of the saints, is situated and ritually interpreted, as part of the puṟam event of awakening the hero. The event takes place in the hero's house, the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple in Madurai, and consists of awakening a particular hero, Cuntarēcuvarar, his wife, Mīnāṭci, and his household and preparing them for the day. The performer of the ritual text, the ātuvar, has no particular identity and fulfills a role like the puṟam bard. In contrast, as we will now see, in the singing of "Tiruvempāvai" in the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, the speaker is given the particular identity of the poet, Māṇikkavācakar, and the interpretation of the "ritual text" is clearly in terms of the poet's biography.
III: Chapter 9: "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple:
"Tiruvempāvai" in Mānikkavācakar's Biography

In the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, "Tiruvempāvai" is sung only during the ten days up to and including Tiruvāṭirai day in Mārkali month. During these ten days the āṭuvārs will substitute "Tiruvempāvai" for the Paṅcapurāṇam in all ritual events. Also, during these ten days a special festival is celebrated to honor Mānikkavācakar and "Tiruvempāvai" in the temple. The entire festival is situated as an event in Mānikkavācakar's life. He is identified as the singer of the poem and he sings before different deities, although Nāṭarācar, the dancing form of Śiva, has special prominence.

This chapter will begin with a short description of the characters who participate in the festival, and will be followed by a description of the festival itself. The final portion of the chapter will provide a short description of the "ritual text", and a discussion showing how the festival portrays Mānikkavācakar to be the singer of "Tiruvempāvai".

Caste and Audience

1 My observations of this festival were made most extensively in 1993-94, and the description presented below is based primarily on those observations. Technically, the festival took place in December 1993 and did not span into January 1994, however I am referring to it throughout as "1993-94" since it is often the case that the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival does span 2 calendar years.

The data included from the 1990-91 festival will be noted when used. In 1990-91 the festival ran from 22 December to 1 January, and in 1993-94 it ran from 20 December to 29 December. I also conducted interviews with the āṭuvārs and one priest in 1990-91, and had ongoing discussions with some of the āṭuvārs, several priests and the superintendent of the temple in 1993-94. References to their views are taken from these interviews and the ongoing discussions.


There is an inscriptional reference to kōvāṇaars singing "Tiruvempāvai" at Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple dated in the thirteenth century; see. ARE Annual Report (on South
The main figures in the festival are the ētuvārs, the priests and their assistants, the musicians, the bearers and the audience. All participants, except a few members of the audience, are male.

The most important role in the festival belongs to the ētuvārs, and in particular the Stala ētuvār. The Stala ētuvār is distinguished from the other ētuvārs by receiving a special honor (particularly the parivatām (which is a long piece of cloth tied around the head)). The ētuvārs sing "Tiruvempāvai" during the festival. All the ētuvārs of the temple participate in this festival.

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Devakunjari writes that a ten day festival conducted for Māṇikkavācakar in Mārkali month in Miṅāṭci-Cuntarecuvarar Temple was listed in a British record of 1802: D. Devakunjari, Madurai Through the Ages: From the Earliest Times to 1801 A.D. (Madras: Society for Archaeological, Historical and Epigraphical Research, 1979), 307.

There are inscriptive references to the singing of "Tiruvempāvai" in other temples. Four inscriptions refer to the "Tiruvempāvai" rights of the "devaradiyar/dē varaḍiyāl" at Vilvāranyēsvarar Temple at Nallūr in South Arcot District: Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy (New Delhi: Department of Archaeology), ARE 143, 149, 160 and 161 of 1940-41.

There is also an inscription referring to the recitation of "Tiruvempāvai" before Māṇikkavācakar at the Viraṭānēsvara Temple at Valuvur in Tanjavur District: South Indian Epigraphy, ARE 421 of 1912.

Younger provides a description of the singing of "Tiruvempāvai" at Citamparam Temple during Mārkali: Paul Younger, [forthcoming].

2 "Honors" is a system of giving special recognition to people who are important in a particular ritual context. These people may be temple personnel or donors. Breckenridge defines a donor as any devotee who offers services, or supplies, or both, for the purpose of worshipping the deities. Carol Appadurai Breckenridge, "The Śrī Miṅākṣi Sundaresvarar Temple: Worship and Endowments in South India, 1833-1925," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 105. She discusses honors in the Miṅāṭci-Cuntarecuvarar Temple on 105-24.

Recognition is bestowed upon the important person by giving them one or more items such as a headband (parivatām) during the ritual event. The primary significance of the honors is the prestige bestowed represented symbolically by giving the clearly specified
The priest and his assistants are perhaps the next most important individuals as they conduct the *pucai* which accompanies the singing of "Tiruvempavai". I was told that for each day of the festival a different priest had the rights to perform the priestly duties, but I observed that the same priest performed the duties for most of the festival. The priest makes the offerings of *naivettiyam* and *tipārātaṇai* to the deities and to the image of Māṇikkavācakar, distributes honors, and gives *piracātam* to the audience.

There were two groups of musicians in the festival, both of whom have roles in some segments. The first group is associated with the temple worship generally, while the second group only accompanied the *ōtuvaṟs*. The temple group is comprised of a *nātasvaram* player, cymbals player, drummer and accordion player who perform during daily *pucai*, and play in front of the image of the deity when it is being carried in processions. There are three musicians who accompany the *ōtuvaṟs*: a drummer and two accordion players. They walk with the *ōtuvaṟs* behind the image of Śiva in the procession, and they accompany the *ōtuvaṟs* during the daily singing sessions in the Kiḷikkūṭu Maṇṭāpam outside Mīnāṭci’s shrine. The *ōtuvaṟ’s* musicians also receive honors in this festival.

Another visible role in the festival is that of the bearers. The bearers carry the platform with the festival images from place to place. Their level of fatigue dictates the pace of some segments of the festival, and they routinely receive *piracātam*.

I am using "audience" here to refer to those who come to the temple but do not fulfill any of the above roles or any official temple function. During this festival there is a

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items in a ritual setting. Fuller suggests that the *parivattam* is one of the most important item to be given. C. J. Fuller, *Servants of the Goddess: The Priests of a South Indian Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 44-7.
very small crowd which watches the ritual in the various segments, receives the camphor flame and ash in the appropriate places, or goes in procession with the festival image.

Segments and Sequence

The festival may be divided into three segments: I. the activities of the first day; II. the repeated pattern of core activities of the second through the ninth day; and III. the activities of the final day. Segment I takes place in the Makāmaṇṭapam of Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine. Segment II takes place in several places: the east side of the Kampattati Maṇṭapam, the Hundred Pillared Hall, the Āṭi streets, the Kilikkūṭu Maṇṭapam outside Mīnāṭci’s shrine, and the second pirākāram of Cuntarēcuvarar’s shrine. Segment III is conducted at the Tiriṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam. (Diagram 3 of Appendix I shows the locations of the various parts of the festivals.) All activities of the festival, with the exception of Segment I, occur in areas of the temple accessible to non-Hindus.

Segment I: First Day in the Makāmaṇṭapam of Cuntarēcuvarar’s Shrine

The first segment of the festival represents a movement into the festival time. It is a relatively short event which takes place on the evening of the first day. It consists of rekṣāpantaṇaṃ for Māṇikkavācakar, and singing before the Linga and Naṭarācar. The following description of this segment is based on a general description by a priest, my own observations, and a discussion with the Stala Īṭuvār.

According to an official statement about the festival, it was to begin before Arttaçāram pūcai, which on a normal day places the starting time around 7:45 PM. However, this festival runs concurrently with a ten day festival for Mīnāṭci, and the

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3 I have transliterated the term from the temple notice.
opening ritual of this festival starts only after the segment of Mānïkācci’s festival has been completed.

According to one of the priests, Mānïkkavācakar is first given abhiṣekam (bath) and alaṅkāram (decoration) in the cērtti, the place in the first pirākāram where Mānïkkavācakar’s festival image is kept during the ten days of the festival. Part of the saint’s dress is a parivātām (a silk scarf of special honor). The adorned festival image of the poet, Mānïkkavācakar, is then brought into the Makāmaṇṭapam of Cuntarēcuvarar’s shrine, and placed opposite the Naṭārācar in the Silver Hall in a direct line with the Linga in the main shrine. A string is then tied on Mānïkkavācakar’s right wrist (veṭṭapantaṇam) to protect him during the course of the festival. The őtvārs sing the twenty poems of "Tiruvempāvai". After each poem, there is naivētiyam and tipāraṇai. The naivētiyam consists of a banana and betel leaf. The tipāraṇai consists of a single flame oil lamp and the five layered lamp. After the last poem there is a special series of lamps. The priest adds that the Stala Őtvār receives a parivātām, and the other őtvārs are given sacred ash.

My observation of this segment was restricted to what was in immediate line with the main doorway, and it seemed to me that the image was being decorated in the Makāmaṇṭapam itself by the őtvārs at around 8:15 PM. Mānïkkavācakar was placed in direct line with the Linga as the priest described, and the priest stood between Mānïkkavācakar and the Śiva Linga (Cuntarēcuvarar), very near Mānïkkavācakar but south of the direct line between the Linga and Mānïkkavācakar. The priest’s assistant stood in

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4 I observed the event from the doorway of the first pirākāram, the limit to which non-Hindus are allowed to go. Mānïkkavācakar was placed directly in front of the Linga, and therefore directly in front of the door. I could see the activity immediately surrounding Mānïkkavācakar, but could not see the őtvār(s) nor hear the singing.
approximately the same position but to the north of the line. The priest periodically rang a bell and showed a lamp first to the Linga, then to Naṭarācar and finally to Māṇikkavācakar.

The Stala Ūṭuvār in a later explanation of the ritual sequence, said that he was the only Ūṭuvār who sang, and that he stood just east of a line between Naṭarācar and Māṇikkavācakar. First Māṇikkavācakar was given the reksāpantaṇam, then the Stala Ūṭuvār received the parivatītam, and then he sang twenty-five poems. The first five were the Paṅcapurāṇam, and the other twenty were "Tiruvempāvai" poems. After each of the twenty-five poems a lamp was offered. We may recall that the Ūṭuvārs usually sing the Paṅcapurāṇam during the daily puṇai in Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine, but sing only "Tiruvempāvai" during the ten days of the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival. Tying the string on Māṇikkavācakar (reksāpantaṇam) and singing the Paṅcapurāṇam followed by "Tiruvempāvai" on the first day seems to represent the transition into the festival time and its activities.

**Segment II: Days 2 - 9: The Core of the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival**

The activities of the festival follow the same basic pattern for the middle eight of the ten days. All activities except for the daily decoration of Māṇikkavācakar, take place in areas accessible to everyone. It was possible, therefore, to observe in greater detail the activities of these days.5

The events of this portion of the festival take place in the morning. According to an official account they should begin at 6:30 AM, but in my observations they began as early as 6:20 and as late as 6:45. The whole event takes about one hour.

5I observed the events of segment II for seven of the eight days in 1993-94, and on one day of this eight day period in 1990-91.
Segment II can be sub-divided into 6 parts. This six-part segment starts after the daily decoration of MāṇikkavācaKar, which occurs in the cērtti where the festival images of the presiding deities are kept in the first pirākāram of Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine. Each part involves different activities, and, with the exception of 1 and 6, they occur in different locations.

Segment II.1: The Stala Ṣṭuviir Sings before MāṇikkavācaKar

The general pattern of II.1 is: MāṇikkavācaKar's adorned image is brought on a platform to the second pirākāram, preceded by the temple musicians. MāṇikkavācaKar's image is placed on the eastern side of the flagpole in the Kampattaṭi Maṇṭapam, positioned so that he faces the Linga. The platform is very large and is carried with some difficulty by young male temple staff. The Stala Ṣṭuviir and the priest or his assistant stand between the Maṇṭapam and MāṇikkavācaKar, facing the saint. The priest gives the Stala Ṣṭuviir ash.⁶ The Ṣṭuviir sings a poem in praise of MāṇikkavācaKar, and plays cymbals. When the Ṣṭuviir finishes the poem, the image of MāṇikkavācaKar, followed by the Ṣṭuviir, the priest and his assistant, go into the Hundred Pillared hall.

This poem is found among other poems of praise to various deities and saints at the beginning of the Tiruviṭaiyaṭal Purāṇam. The following is a translation of the poem as it was provided by the Stala Ṣṭuviir:

In Praise of MāṇikkavācaKar

without ever ceasing to worship the God who is the clarity of the Vedas
with [our] hands folded in worship on [our] heads
submerged in tears, weeping,
we will serve the devotees of the devotee who reached the feet.⁷

⁶ According to one priest, the Stala Ṣṭuviir when receiving the ash is receiving piracātum from MāṇikkavācaKar.
⁷ MāṇikkavācaKar Tuti
There was some variation from this basic pattern during the course of the festival. On three days this part of segment II was omitted altogether because, either the Stala Ötvär or the priest was not there. On two of the days there was no ötvär so the priest sent the platform to the Hundred Pillared hall for segment II.2. On the third day there was no priest, so the ötvär sent the platform to the Hundred Pillared Hall. On yet another day when the Stala Ötvär was not there, another ötvär was summoned by the priest to take his place.

It is difficult to assess the audience for this part of the ritual as it is conducted in a major thorough-fare of the temple and people are passing by who are unaware of this ritual. Many stopped and looked, but it is difficult to say whether they had come specifically to see this part of the event.

Segment II.2: Mānikkavācakar Sings before Naṭarācar

Segment II.2 consists of the performance of all the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" before Naṭarācar. Mānikkavācakar is placed on a dais facing Naṭarācar. The ötvārs stand in a line on Naṭarācar's right with the Stala Ötvär standing closest to Naṭarācar. The priest stands inside Naṭarācar's sanctum, also on the deity's right side. The assistant priest stands on Naṭarācar's left. Naṭarācar's shrine, the platform on which the ötvārs stand,

elutaṟu maraikal tērā iraivanai
poļutaṟu kālattu yenṟum pučanai viṭātu ceytu
tolutta kai talaimitu yēṟa tuḷumpu kānṉirul mūlka
alūtaṭi atainta anpan atiyavarkku atimai ceyvāṟ

The ötvār cited this as being from the Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam. There is a slight difference from a published version of the poem found in Irāya. Co., Tiruvilaiyāṭar Purāṇam: Maturai Kanṭam (Maturai: Miṅāṭci Cuntarēcuvarar Tirukkōyil, 1973), 8. The published version has "elligkankul" after "iraivanai", "aru" for "aru", "talaimēl" for "talaimitu", "tuḷumpu" for "tuḷumpu", and "mūlki" for "mūlka".

8 On the day which I observed in 1990 this segment was also omitted. The Stala Ötvär came sometime later, and segment II.2 was delayed until he arrived.
and the dais on which Māṇikkavācakar is placed, are all raised several feet above the main
floor. The audience stands on the main floor, usually the men on Naṭarācar’s right side and
the women on his left side. People who inadvertently move into the open space between
Māṇikkavācakar and Naṭarācar, or who climb onto the platform where the ōtvārs stand,
are generally moved away by the ōtvārs or the assistant priests.

The ritual begins with a showing of a series of five oil lamps and a camphor flame,
shown first to Naṭarācar and then to Māṇikkavācakar. Then honors are distributed to the
ōtvārs beginning with the Stala Ōtvār. The Stala Ōtvār receives the parivaṭṭam, which
distinguishes him from the other ōtvārs. Then all the ōtvārs, beginning with the Stala
Ōtvār, receive garlands, the camphor flame, ash and sandal. When this distribution of
honors is completed the singing of "Tiruvempāvai" begins. Each ōtvār sings a poem,
beginning with the Stala Ōtvār, and proceeding down the line of ōtvārs, and then back
to the Stala Ōtvār. After each poem of "Tiruvempāvai" is sung, the priest shows a single
oil lamp and then a camphor flame first to Naṭarācar and then to Māṇikkavācakar. After the
final poem is sung and the oil lamp and camphor flame are shown, naivēttiyam is offered
first to Naṭarācar and then to Māṇikkavācakar. Then a final series of lamps are shown to
Naṭarācar and then Māṇikkavācakar. These are the same set of lamps that initiated the
ritual. The final camphor flame is taken to the ōtvārs first and then to the audience. Then
sacred ash, cunṭal (chick pea snack), bananas and betel (verrilai pākku paṭṭi) are distributed
to the ōtvārs in the order in which they stand, beginning with the Stala Ōtvār. Finally
the sacred ash and cunṭal are distributed to the members of the audience.

This general pattern varied in several ways from day to day. I was told that every
day a different priest had rights to perform in this ritual. Even if that is the traditional
arrangement, on five of the seven days that I observed this segment the same priest
performed the duties. This led to continuity in the performance of the priestly side of the
ritual. On one of the days on which a different priest officiated there were quite a few changes. The naivettiyam, for instance, was offered prior to the initial set of lamps, at the beginning of the ritual rather than at the end. Also, this priest showed the initial set of lamps, as well as the other lamps after each poem. After the final poem he showed the first three lamps to Naṭarācar and not to Māṇikkavaṇacakar, and only the fourth and fifth lamps were shown to Naṭarācar then Māṇikkavaṇacakar.

The number of ātvārs participating in the ritual varied from three to six. For five days the same three ātvārs performed the singing of "Tiruvempāvai": the current Stala Ātvār and two others. On the eighth day of the festival the ritual started with only two ātvārs, neither of whom was the Stala Ātvār, and one of whom had not participated on the other three days. After a few poems another ātvār came, and he stood farthest away from Naṭarācar. During the singing of the next poem the retired Stala Ātvār came and took the position nearest to Naṭarācar. On the final day, five ātvārs participated and the sixth ātvār came in during the final series of lamps. On this day the retired Stala Ātvār took the position nearest to Naṭarācar, and the current Stala Ātvār actually stood last until a sixth ātvār arrived and stood after him.9

Occasionally other people did share the platform with the ātvārs. On two days there was a lay trustee of the temple, and on one of the days an acquaintance of the trustee

9The Stala Ātvār position is hereditary. The retired Stala Ātvār is the father of the current Stala Ātvār. When the father acts as Stala Ātvār he receives all the honors due to the Stala Ātvār such as the parivattam and priority in position and in receiving the other honors. I asked a priest about the switching of roles and which one of the two should receive the parivattam, and was told that it does not matter as both are the same, they together are the Stala Ātvār. So, although the son is now the current Stala Ātvār, when his father participates he defers, usually taking the last position among the salaried ātvārs and receiving honors last.

I did not see a distinction in the type of honors the salaried ātvārs received. However, one of the older salaried ātvārs usually stood beside the Stala Ātvār and therefore was usually second in receiving honors.
as well. On another day some boys were permitted by the ātuvārs to share the platform. These people did not sing, and I did not see any woman on the platform during the ritual. On the final day, the musicians who accompanied the ātuvārs stood on the platform behind the ātuvārs, except for the drummer who stood on Naṭarācar's left, and after poem 2 returned to his usual position.

There were also variations in the distribution of honors. On the day that the two guests shared the platform with the ātuvārs, the guests received the initial honors, even before the ātuvārs. No guest, however, received a parivattam, which is the honor due to the Stala Ātuvār alone. The guests also received the substances distributed at the end of this segment, prior to the ātuvārs. The boys on the platform did not receive any honors as the guests had. On another day the garlands and other substances arrived late. Used garlands were distributed to the ātuvārs at the beginning, but at about poem 5, the fresh garlands arrived, and there was a break in the singing while the fresh garlands were distributed. The Stala Ātuvār also received the parivattam at this point, and the camphor flame was taken to the properly attired ātuvārs before the singing resumed. On the final day, all the ātuvārs and the ātuvār musicians received a new piece of cloth as parivattam. On this day the Stala Ātuvār did not wear the parivattam which he usually wore. On the days that the ātuvārs arrived late, they received honors when they arrived.

There was little variation in the format of the singing of "Tiruvempāvai". The ātuvārs stood turned towards Naṭarācar and sang. The ātuvār closest to Naṭarācar always sang the first poem. The ātuvār standing next to him sang the next and so on. The same ātuvārs, however, did not always stand in the same place, so they did not always sing the same poems. The singing style was not uniform. Each ātuvār would give a personal rendition of the poem he sang, embellishing one phrase or prolonging another.
The audience for this segment was composed of a few regulars, some people who came once and appeared to know what was going on, and people passing by who apparently saw some activity and came to see what it was. Generally the audience for the singing was fluid, composed primarily of people coming and going. During segment II.2 the audience sometimes grew to approximately thirty people. The core group, those who were present for most or all of this segment on a single day usually included between six and eight older women. The core group of men numbered as high as eight, but there were none at all on some days. There were about six regular women and one regular man who came almost every day and stayed. Occasionally members of the audience tried to sing along, but the variation in the ētuvara's personal styles made participation in the singing difficult.

Segment II.3: Māṇikkavācakar's Procession

After the activities at the Hundred Pillared Hall are finished Māṇikkavācakar's image is taken in procession around the Āṭi streets. He is carried on his platform out the main eastern gate of the Cuntarēcuvarar's complex to a cart. Meanwhile the other participants in the procession gather around the intersection of East Āṭi street and the hall leading to Cuntarēcuvarar's Shrine.

The procession has a number of components. The procession is led by a bull covered with an elaborate cloth supporting drums which the attendant beats. Two elephants follow also covered with elaborate cloths accompanied by their attendants. Two umbrella bearers follow the elephants. Next are the temple musicians - a nātaśvaram player, an accordion player and a cymbals player. They are followed by the priest and his assistant who are in turn followed by Māṇikkavācakar's image on the cart. The ētuvara follow behind Māṇikkavācakar in a row singing "Tiruvempāvai" in unison. The
procession is completed by the ōtvār musicians who walk beside and behind the ōtvārs.¹⁰

The procession begins once all the participants have gathered. At the beginning the priest offers incense (cāmpiraṇi) to MāṉikkavācaKar. Then the procession sets out in the clockwise circumambulatory direction, southward on East Āṭi Street. At each of the major and minor compass points the procession stops and the priest offers incense to MāṉikkavācaKar. On the South Āṭi Street the procession stops at the Paṉṭiru Tirumurai Maṇṟam (Twelve Tirumurai Association).¹¹ Pūcai is offered through the priest by representatives of the maṇṟam. A plate with coconut, banana and camphor is handed to the priest. The priest breaks the coconut, and then puts it back on the plate. The torchbearer lights the camphor and the priest offers the whole plate including the camphor flame to MāṉikkavācaKar. The priest then passes the flame on the plate to worshippers and returns the plate to the representative from the maṇṟam. The priest distributes sacred ash. The contents of the offering plate are shared with the torchbearers and cartpullers who distributed their portion of it amongst themselves. The procession then continues. In 1990 the procession made at least two additional stops. One was at one of the shops on East Āṭi Street and the other at the Tiruppukal Maṇṭapam near the Twelve Tirumurai Association.

There was some variation from the general pattern on certain days. On the third day of the festival there was a heavy downpour at the time of the procession. The venue was changed to the covered second pirākāram of Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine. It took some effort to assemble the procession in there. The bull was not in the procession, only the two elephants eventually led the procession. One of the elephants was brought in the eastern

¹⁰ The drummer walked beside the ōtvārs and the accordion players followed behind.
¹¹ According to one priest, arrangements had to be made in advance with the temple administration in order for the procession to stop along the way.
door of Cuntarēcuvarar’s shrine to the south corridor and began the procession, and the
other elephant joined the procession further on. Also on this day the procession did not
stop at the Twelve Tirumūrai Association, which is situated on South Āṭi Street, and I did
not see a similar pūcaī performed along the second pirākāram route. On the first day of
the festival there was a man carrying a long silver staff who followed the temple musicians,
but I did not see him on subsequent days.

Generally the ķūvārs who sang in the earlier singing in the hall participated in the
procession also. The exception to this was the retired Stala ķūvār who walked before
Māṇikkavācacakar in the procession without singing and who on the last day did not go in
the procession at all. The same priest and assistant who officiated in the Hundred Pillared
Hall also officiated in this part. On one day someone at the manṟam gave an offering
directly to Māṇikkavācacakar, but this is generally not permitted as only the priests are
ritually eligible and have rights to offer worship to the festival images of the temple.

Few people follow along in the procession. Sometimes a few of the regulars from
the recitations inside would participate. On at least one occasion a member from the
Twelve Tirumūrai Association joined in and followed the procession.

Segment II.4: Singing at Kilikkūṭu Maṇṭapam and Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam
There are two concurrent ritual activities which take place after the procession. When the
procession concludes at the main eastern gate of Cuntarēcuvarar’s shrine, the image of
Māṇikkavācacakar is taken to the Kilikkūṭu Maṇṭapam and then to Miḷāṭci’s Shrine
accompanied by the priest, his assistant, the Stala ķūvār, and the temple musicians
(II.4a). In the meantime, the other ķūvārs and ķūvār musicians proceed to the
Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam and conclude the singing of ”Tirupempāvai” there (II.4b).
In the Kilikkūṭu Maṅṭapam, Maṅikkavācakar is placed in front of and facing Citti Viṇāyaṇakar. The Stala Īṭuvār sings the second poem of "Tiruvempāvai". Then the priest offers milk, and a plate containing bananas and a camphor flame to Citti Viṇāyaṇakar. Afterwards Maṅikkavācakar is taken to the main doorway of Miṅāṭci's shrine, in the area in front of Nanti facing Miṅāṭci. The priest, assistant and Stala Īṭuvār go inside the second pirākāram of Miṅāṭci's Shrine and stand on the eastern side of the flagpole. Here the Stala Īṭuvār sings the sixteenth poem of "Tiruvempāvai". Again an offering is made, and on the last day I was able to see that the offering was made only to Miṅāṭci, not to Maṅikkavācakar. Maṅikkavācakar's image is then taken to face Kumāraṇ (Murukan) in the Kilikkūṭu Maṅṭapam. Here, the Stala Īṭuvār sings poem 5 of "Tiruvempāvai", and an offering is made to the deity but not to Maṅikkavācakar.¹²

There was not much variation from day to day in this segment. The day that the current Stala Īṭuvār did not come, his father, the retired Stala Īṭuvār sang the poems. The other īṭuvārs never participated in segment II.4a. On one occasion the īṭuvār put his hands over the flame after it had been offered to the deity. Two other times the Stala Īṭuvār received the piracātum, milk and bananas, which had been offered to the three deities after worship was finished at the Kumāraṇ shrine. On one of these days the īṭuvār shared the milk with a couple of female participants,¹³ one of whom was a regular attender at this event. The position of Maṅikkavācakar in front of the Miṅāṭci Shrine was altered in order to prevent people from stepping in the line of Maṅikkavācakar's view of Miṅāṭci. At first he was placed back from the main door, but on subsequent days he was moved closer

¹² Later some priests and the Stala Īṭuvār confirmed that there is no offering made to Maṅikkavācakar's image during segment II.4a. I was also told by the Stala Īṭuvār that it is their "family tradition" to sing these particular poems in front of these particular images during this festival.

¹³ These are the occasions on which these actions were specifically observed. I did not specifically see whether or not they happened on the other days.
to the door, thereby blocking the door in order to prevent people from stepping in front of Māṇikkavācakaṅ.

In the other concurrent component of this segment (II.4b), all the other ētvārs who participated in II.2 and II.3 go to the Tiruṇāṇacampantar Māṇṭapam accompanied by the ētvār musicians. They stand at the bottom of the steps of the māṇṭapam facing west, and complete the singing of "Tiruvempāvai". When this is concluded the ētvārs go to Kilikkūṭu Māṇṭapam, and generally reached there before that component of part four is completed.

Segment II.5: Māṇikkavācakaṅ sings to Cantiracēkaraṅ and Consort in Procession

Segment II.5 consists of a procession around the second pirākāram of Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine in which the images of Śiva as Cantiracēkaraṅ and Māṇikkavācakaṅ are carried. After the worship at the Kumāraṅ shrine has been completed, Māṇikkavācakaṅ is taken to Cuntarēcuvarar's second pirākāram and placed just outside the doorway to Kilikkūṭu Māṇṭapam where he waits with the Stala ētvār.

Meanwhile the priest and his assistant go to bring Cantiracēkaraṅ. First, they sprinkle water and show a single flame lamp to the large palipittam in the Kampattati Māṇṭapam. Then, they go to the eastern side of the Kampattati Māṇṭapam, where the image of Cantiracēkaraṅ is waiting there in a silver palanquin. The priest shows a single oil lamp to the palanquin. The palanquin is then carried to the south-east corner where another lamp is shown to the deities there, and it is then taken to the place where the image of Māṇikkavācakaṅ and the Stala ētvār are waiting. The entire procession then proceeds around the second pirākāram in the circumambulatory direction.

The procession is led by Māṇikkavācakaṅ, proceeding backwards so that he faces the deity. The priest, his assistant, the torchbearer, and the Stala ētvār follow
Māṇikkavācakar (i.e. they are looking at Māṇikkavācakar, while the deity behind them is inside a palanquin). The palanquin comes last with a trident bearer walking nearby. There are no bulls, elephants, umbrella bearers, or musicians (temple or Ītuvar). No other Ītuvars participate in this segment. The Stala Ītuvar sings all the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" in order while proceeding around the pirākāram. At each of the eight compass points the procession stops and a single lamp is offered to the deity in the palanquin.

In this segment I observed little variation from this general description. On one day it seemed that the priest made the motion of sprinkling water on the palipitam rather than actually doing so. Also on one day the trident was absent from the procession. One day in particular I noticed that the Stala Ītuvar was singing particularly loudly and in a more complex way than usual. It happened to be the same day that one of the regular attenders of the festival was walking with the procession trying to sing along. As I said in reference to II.2, if she wanted to sing along with the Ītuvar it would have been difficult for her to anticipate where the changes would come, and I wondered if the Ītuvar was trying to impede this woman's participation by singing in a more complex manner than on other days, because an audience member does not have the right to participate in the festival in this way.

Very few audience members followed along with this procession, and I and my colleague were actually the most regular. On one occasion two family members of the Stala Ītuvar accompanied the procession, and one woman who attended the rest of the festival regularly came on this procession several times.

\[14\text{ I did not notice temple musicians, but one day I did notice the Ītuvar drummer.}\]
Segment II 6: Māṇikkavācakar and Cuntiracēkaraṇī in Front of the Linga

The final part of segment II is a pūcaī conducted at the same place at which segment II begins, the space on the east-side of the flagpole in Kampattāḷi Manṭapam. The procession of II.5 terminates at this spot, and the image of Māṇikkavācakar is held facing Cuntarēcuvarar, as it is at the beginning of this segment. The palanquin is held between Māṇikkavācakar and the flagpole, facing south. The priest and his assistant usually stand between the palanquin and the flagpole on the south side, and the Stula Ōtuvār stands between the palanquin and the flagpole on the north side. If the Ōtuvār has not already completed all the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" during the procession around the second pirākāram, he completes them here, and on two days he sang the twentieth poem of "Tiruvempāvai" at this point, while on other days he had finished singing before he reached this position.

The final pūcaī includes offerings of incense, a single flame oil lamp, a five layer lamp and a single camphor flame. On the last day naivēttiyaṃ preceded the offering of incense. Each of these things is offered to the Linga, the palanquin and then to Māṇikkavācakar. Occasionally the order of the offerings was changed and it was offered to the palanquin first. One day the offerings were made to Māṇikkavācakar first, but this was the day that a non-regular priest officiated. The final camphor flame is passed to the audience.

When this part of the ritual is completed the festival is finished for the day. Māṇikkavācakar's image is taken back to the cērtī where he resides for the duration of the festival. The participants disperse.

There was usually a fairly large audience for II.6. The location is a main thoroughfare and the participants had difficulty keeping people from walking through the
middle of the ritual space while they were getting ready. During the pūcaī, and especially
during tipārātanai, people crowded around and pushed in to see.

Segment III: Finale at the Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam

The last segment of the festival is a performance of "Tiruvempāvai" before Miṅāṭci at the
Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam. This portion takes place in the evening of the final day.
According to Fuller, this segment coincides with the Ponnuṇal festival of Miṅāṭci which is
connected to the Eṇcykkāppu Festival. 15

A festival image of Miṅāṭci is placed on a swing which has been set up temporarily
in the Tiruṇāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam. The image of Māṇikkavācakar is placed at the
bottom of the steps leading up to the Maṇṭapam on the eastern side of the steps facing west.
The ōtuvaṛs line up on the opposite side of the steps. The priest and his assistants stand
between Māṇikkavācakar and the ōtuvaṛs during the singing of "Tiruvempāvai", and
during the rituals which seemed to concern Miṅāṭci only, they stand or sit inside the
Maṇṭapam. The rather large audience sits on the northwest corner of the steps behind
ropes and barriers.

Around 7:00 PM Miṅāṭci is brought into the maṇṭapam and placed on the swing,
after a short pūcaī with five other processional deities placed in the pillared area in front of
the Hundred Pillared Hall. For the next fifteen minutes or so preparations and rituals are
performed for Miṅāṭci. A single flame offered to Miṅāṭci signals the conclusion of these
rituals. Immediately after this, the ōtuvaṛs receive sacred ash and a garland, beginning
with the Stala Ōtuvaṛ. The Stala Ōtuvaṛ also receives the parivattam. The ōtuvaṛs then
sing "Tiruvempāvai". Each sings a poem in turn, beginning with the Stala Ōtuvaṛ singing

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15 See Fuller, The Camphor Flame, 182-203 for a description of these two festivals.
the first poem. After each poem a single flame oil lamp and a single camphor plate are
shown while the priest rings a hand bell. The lamp is shown first in the direction of
Somaskandar in front of the Hundred Pillared Hall, then to Miniçi on the swing, and
finally to Manikkavacakar.\footnote{The Stala Ötvär confirmed that the lamp is shown to Sômãskandar, one of the
five festival images temporarily placed in front of the Hundred Pillared Hall rather than to
Națarăcar inside the Hundred Pillared Hall.}

I observed that in the 1993-94 festival, four Ötvârs participated in this segment.
The retired Stala Ötvär was acting as Stala Ötvär, and therefore received the special
honor of the parivațtam.

The order of showing the lamps varied slightly after the first few poems. One time
the oil lamp was shown to Manikkavacakar first and then to Miniçi, and on another
occasion the camphor flame was shown to Somaskandar, Manikkavacakar, and then
Miniçi. By far the most common pattern was Somaskandar, then Miniçi, then
Manikkavacakar.

When the singing of "Tiruvempavai" is finished, the Ötvârs sing the
Pancapurațam. No lamp is offered to Miniçi between these five poems. When the
singing of the Pancapurațam is completed, a single flame oil lamp is shown and a single
camphor flame. Then the camphor flame and ash are brought to the Ötvârs and other
significant people. In 1993-94, the flame was presented first to a temple administrator who
was present, then to the Ötvârs, and then to some women who participated in the later part
of the ritual. Ash was then distributed to the administrator and Ötvârs. Finally the
Ötvârs were given bananas and betel.
Mäṇikkavācakar had no presence in the ritual after this. According to the Stala Ītuvār, this concluded the festival for Mäṇikkavācakar. As the first segment opened the festival by singing first the Pañcāpurāṇam and then "Tiruvempāvai", this section closed the festival by singing first "Tiruvempāvai" and then the Pañcāpurāṇam. After Mīnāṭci leaves, Mäṇikkavācakar is returned to the Makāmaṇṭapam of Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine, and the festival is finished. Any doubt that it was over for Mäṇikkavācakar was dispelled when I saw the unceremonious way in which the image was hoisted onto an assistant priest's shoulder and carried away.

The "Ritual Text"

The "ritual text" of the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival at Mīnāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple is more complicated than the "ritual text" of the Tiruvanantal Pūcai. It consists of: Pañcāpurāṇam and all twenty poems of "Tiruvempāvai" in segment I; the Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam poem, the twenty poems of "Tiruvempāvai" sung twice, then poems 2, 16 and 5 of "Tiruvempāvai", and another singing of the twenty poems in segment II, all of which is

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17 The remaining portion of this ritual concerns Mīnāṭci, and is part of the Ponṇuṇcal Festival. The retired Stala Ītuvār and the current Stala Ītuvār, the administrator and the priest went inside the maṇṭapam. At 7:35 a bell was rung and the swing began to move. At this point, one by one, several women went into the maṇṭapam, performed some actions, and then each received ash and betel, and then they left. This was followed by a long, seemingly intricate ritual in the maṇṭapam which involved circumambulating around Mīnāṭci. Much of it was not visible from our position on the floor. After some time the Stala Ītuvārs sang four poems from Mäṇikkavācakar's song, "Tirupponṇuṇcal". Mīnāṭci was swung on the swing. The nāṭasvaram was played. There was a final pūcai. The same five lamp series and single camphor flame which concluded the ritual in the Hundred Pillared Hall concluded this ritual also (i.e. the single flame oil lamp; the 5 layer lamp; the cobra headed lamp; the 5 wicks lamp and the pot). Each lamp was shown three times to Śomāskandar first and then three times to Mīnāṭci. The assistant priest then passed the camphor flame to the people and the priest distributed a powder. Two women went and received some substance and a garland. Mīnāṭci was then returned to the other deities on the other side near the Hundred Pillared Hall to be taken in procession. The Ītuvārs did not receive any special items at this point.
repeated on each of the eight days; and a singing of all 20 poems and then the five *Pañcapurāṇam* poems in segment III.

The "ritual text" of "Tiruvempāvai" Festival therefore uses more than three source texts and utilizes them in a variety of ways. As we saw above the festival opened and closed with the *Pañcapurāṇam*. The *Pañcapurāṇam* consists of five different poems drawn from five groupings of the many poems of *Tirumurai*, composed by sixteen different authors. On the middle eight days a poem was sung from the *Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam*, which is the account of Śiva’s activities in Madurai, and which is not one of the twelve *Tirumurai*. The particular selection comes from the praise portion at the beginning of the *Purāṇam*. "Tiruvempāvai" was sung in whole and in part, and the whole was repeated three times on each of the middle eight days of the festival.

This "ritual text" is fairly stable. In 1993-94 the only variation from day to day was whether or not the poem in praise of Māṇikkavācakar was sung, which depended on whether or not segment II.1 was omitted. It is possible that from year to year the specific songs constituting *Pañcapurāṇam* may also vary, thus altering the text from year to year. The requirement for singing the *Pañcapurāṇam* is that the selection be from certain texts, but the particular selection of poems is not specified.

**The Singing of "Tiruvempāvai" as an Event in Māṇikkavācakar's Life**

In the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival the singing of "Tiruvempāvai" is understood as the replication of an event in Māṇikkavācakar's life. The naming of the festival associates it directly with the saint, and his image is present in all segments of the festival. The singing and the activity is understood by ātuvārs and priests to be done by Māṇikkavācakar.

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18 See chapter 8.
19 See chapter 6 and 8.
himself. The spatial arrangements, the ritual forms and the singing of the festival create distance between the ēuvārs, who act on behalf of Māṇikkavācakar, and the audience. Each of these structural characteristics of the festival prevent devotees from participating in the activity associated with Māṇikkavācakar. In the festival Māṇikkavācakar is portrayed as the only devotee worshipping at the temple. The meaning of "Tiruvempāvai" as celebrated in this festival, is that it is Māṇikkavācakar's mode of praise, worship and supplication to God that leads to mutti.

The festival is referred to both as "Tiruvempāvai Vilā (festival)" and as Māṇikkavācakar's Festival. A temple administrative notice referred to the festival as "Tiruvempāvai Uṛcavam" (sic., temple festival), and the blackboard in the temple which notes the current events, referred to the first day of the festival as "Māṇikkavācakar Uṛtsavarampam" (sic., the beginning of the Māṇikkavācakar festival).20 One Tamil calendar of events (paṅcāṅkam), which indicates the starting dates of festivals in various temples in Tamil Nadu, refers to the festival as "The Sri Māṇikkavācakar Tiruvempāvai Festival".21 In name, then, the festival is clearly associated with Māṇikkavācakar.

Māṇikkavācakar's image is also present in all the segments of the festival, and it is the only image that is present in all the segments. Both the specific setting and the addressee (to whom the songs are addressed, or for whom they are performed) change from segment to segment in the festival. In segment I, Māṇikkavācakar is brought before Cuntarēcuvarar and Naṭarācar in the Makāmaṇṭapam. He receives the protective thread and then in the person of the Stala Ŭtuvār performs his song before these images. In segment II.1, he is praised by the Stala Ŭtuvār. In II.2 the full "Tiruvempāvai" is sung as he stands

20 The Tamil spelling of "festival" is copied directly from the temple notice and the blackboard respectively.
before Naṭarācar in the Hundred Pillared Hall. Then in II.3 he is taken in procession around the Āḍi streets. In II.4 he is taken before the images of Citti Viṇāyakar, Miṅāṭci and Kumāraṇ (Murukan). In II.5 he goes with Śiva (Cantiracckaraṇ) in procession around the second pirākāram. In the last portion of this segment, II.6 he is worshipped along with both Cuntarēcuvarar and Cantiracckaraṇ. Finally, in segment III he is stood near Miṅāṭci and the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" are sung. In the festival Māṇikkavācakar is thus brought to six different places, and his "Tiruvempāvai" is sung before six different deities.

Although the location of the activities of the festival change, and the deities present for each event change, Māṇikkavācakar's image is always present. Furthermore, in all portions of the festival, the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" are sung only in the presence of the image of Māṇikkavācakar. This arrangement contrasts sharply with the singing of "Tiruppaḷḷi" in the Tiruvatcantal Piicai where neither Māṇikkavācakar nor any other person has such a presence, in image or in name, because the ritual use of the poems in that case is completely different.

Māṇikkavācakar is especially associated with Naṭarācar in this festival. In segments I he is brought before Naṭarācar in the Makamaṇṭapam, and in segment II he is brought before Naṭarācar in the Hundred Pillared Hall. A priest expressed the idea that there is a special relationship between Māṇikkavācakar and Naṭarācar, and an āṭuvār of the Miṅāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple suggested that Māṇikkavācakar, "Tiruvempāvai", and Naṭarācar are especially linked with one another. These views seem to be supported by tradition, and by the poet's biography. Many of the Tiruvācakam songs are believed to have been sung in Citamparam where Naṭarācar is the main deity, and, as we saw in the summary of his biography provided in chapter 6, Māṇikkavācakar is thought to have finally attained full mutti by actually merging with Naṭarācar at Citamparam. We are suggesting that the festival emphasizes this special relationship by associating
Maṇikkavācakar regularly with Naṭarācar, even though Naṭarācar is not one of the presiding deities of the Miṃāṭci-Cuntarccuvarar Temple.

According to both priests and ķṭuvārs, the singer of "Tiruvempāvai" in this festival is Maṇikkavācakar himself.\textsuperscript{22} One priest made the point in a negative way by explaining that Maṇikkavācakar in the festival is an idol and cannot sing, so the ķṭuvār acts on his behalf. In a slightly different way the point was made by another priest when he referred to the events of the festival as a representation in which the ķṭuvārs act as Maṇikkavācakar. Both Stala ķṭuvārs regard themselves to be singing the poems of "Tiruvempāvai" on Maṇikkavācakar's behalf. One of them actually said at two points during the festival that he was Maṇikkavācakar.\textsuperscript{23} Regardless of whether the ķṭuvār represents Maṇikkavācakar like an actor in a play, or through some stronger ritual identification, it is clear that for both the priests and the ķṭuvārs the singer of "Tiruvempāvai" in this festival is understood to be Maṇikkavācakar himself.

The structure of the festival also suggests that only Maṇikkavācakar's voice (through his representatives) should be heard singing "Tiruvempāvai". Distance is created between the ķṭuvārs who sing on Maṇikkavācakar's behalf and any other devotees who might want to participate. This is accomplished through spatial arrangement, through special ritual procedures and through specialized singing styles. On the first day, the image of Maṇikkavācakar and the Stala ķṭuvār stand in a special formation. The Stala ķṭuvār stands on the north side of Maṇikkavācakar and on the south side of Naṭarācar. On the other hand the audience has to stand on the opposite or the south side of Maṇikkavācakar. Similarly, in segment II.2 of the eight day cycle which takes place in the Hundred Pillared Hall, the images of Maṇikkavācakar and Naṭarācar, and the priests and the ķṭuvārs are all

\textsuperscript{22} Fuller makes this point also: Fuller, \textit{The Camphor Flame}, 195.
\textsuperscript{23} The 1990-91 "Tiruvempāvai" Festival.
raised above the audience on platforms. The only exception to this was when the VIPs and special guests shared the platform with the ōtuvarś, but these men and boys did not sing "Tiruvempāvai". In the two processions (II.3 and II.5), the worship at Mināṭci's Shrine (II.4), and in front of the flagpole (II.6) the spatial distance was not so marked, but at Mināṭci's shrine and at the flagpole there was a real effort to keep people out of the space reserved for the ritual activity. In the final segment of the festival, Māṇikkavācakar's image, the ōtuvarś, and the other devotees are on the same level, but the devotees are behind rails and are moved back from the ōtuvarś.

Māṇikkavācakar and the ōtuvarś are both distinguished ritually from the audience (devotees) by special ritual markers. Māṇikkavācakar always wears a parivaṭṭam. The Stala Ōtuvar also receive the parivaṭṭam in segments I, II, and III. The other ōtuvarś and their musicians receives parivaṭṭams on the last of the eight days. On all the eight middle days of the festival in the Hundred Pillared Hall the ōtuvarś receive special ritual attention prior to the singing of "Tiruvempāvai". They receive the camphor flame (which is not taken to the audience), ash, sandal, and garlands. The special guests also receive these, but they did not join in the singing of the poems of "Tiruvempāvai". In the final segment, the ōtuvarś also receive similar special recognition before they began singing, and at the end of their portion of that event they received bananas and betel. The women who participated later in the ritual also received these honors after their participation, but not at the same time as the ōtuvarś.

The use of distinctive singing styles also creates distance between the audience and ōtuvarś. As noted above, in the Hundred Pillared Hall the ōtuvarś sing with their own personal embellishments, making it difficult to anticipate how the song will proceed and therefore making it difficult to sing along. It was also noted earlier how it seemed that on one occasion the ōtuvar sang in an even more complex style when someone did try to join
in. The easiest place in which a devotee could participate in the singing would be in the Āṭi streets procession, because the spatial arrangement there is less rigid, and during these processions there are no clear ritual distinction marking off the place for the ṍtuvār in the procession. The ṍtuvār are still marked off somewhat because they are walking in direct association with the cart carrying Māṇikkavācakar and are accompanied by their band. Onlookers can certainly identify the ṍtuvār as ritually significant, but no one is physically prevented from joining them.

The different segments of the festival show Māṇikkavācakar in various devotional poses. This is especially prominent in segment II which is repeated for eight days. II.1 and II.6 seem to be the preliminary and concluding segments respectively. Segment II.1 is an exchange between the Stala Ṙtuvar and Māṇikkavācakar in which the Stala Ṙtuvar praises Māṇikkavācakar before beginning to act on his behalf. Segment II.6 is a final pucai to Cuntarēcuvarar, Cantirēcēkaraṇ in the palanquin, and to Māṇikkavācakar. In between, Māṇikkavācakar becomes respectively performer (II.2), important devotee with all temple honors (II.3), a human worshipper (II.4), and a supplicant (II.V). Using language that reflects Māṇikkavācakar as the actor in the festival we can say that in II.2 he goes to Naṭarācar, stands before him and performs the 20 poems of "Tiruvempāvai". In the procession around the Āṭi streets (II.3), he is given all temple honors: the bull, the elephants, parasol, and musicians. According to the Ṙtuvār and priests, taking Māṇikkavācakar in a procession with all the fanfare is showing him respect and acknowledging that he is an important person. He might be considered important because he was, according to his biography, the first minister of the King of Madurai, a great poet, and a saint who attained mutti. Yet the circumambulatory route and the singing of devotional songs picture him in a devotional pose, as one priest said, "worshipping God" in the procession. In II.4, Māṇikkavācakar is presented as a human who sings a song (a
The fact that he is depicted as human here is made clear by the fact that he himself receives no 
naivēṭṭiyam or lamps, as he does in some other parts of the festival.24 Furthermore, like 
other humans he comes with a plate of offerings to be offered to the deity, and then 
receives back the camphor flame and piracātam through the Stala Ĭṭuvār. In the following 
segment (II.5) we see Māṇikkavācakar as a human supplicant.25 He goes to the second 
pirākāram, and waits for Cuntarēcuvarar to come, and when Cuntarēcuvarar arrives 
Māṇikkavācakar proceeds backwards singing his songs. There are no processional 
elements such as bulls, elephants, umbrellas and musicians in this event. Only 
Cuntarēcuvarar receives offerings of lamps. These points underscore the fact that 
Māṇikkavācakar is a human in this segment, and is given no special recognition. In this 
eight day segment, Māṇikkavācakar is a performer, a great person who receives 
recognition, an ordinary worshipper, and one who makes requests of God.

Māṇikkavācakar is, however, no ordinary devotee. He is also depicted as divine at 
some points in the festival because he is offered lamps and the camphor flame. According 
to a priest, tipārātaṇai is offered only to deities, and Māṇikkavācakar receives offerings of 
lamps in segment I, segment II.2, II.3 and II.6, and III. This distinguishes him from 
devotees in the audience, and even from the Ĭṭuvārs who are his representatives during the 
festival. He is a devotee, but he has also attained mutti. This gives him a status beyond

24 This point was made clearly to me when I asked a priest and Ĭṭuvār if 
Māṇikkavācakar received naivēṭṭiyam or tipārātaṇai in this segment. I was told, "No!, 
here he is a human doing worship."

25 The Ĭṭuvār referred to Māṇikkavācakar as viṁnappattār. When saying this the 
Īṭuvār made the motion of going backwards bent over with hands folded. The image is 
standing and cannot bend over with hands folded, but it does explain why Māṇikkavācakar 
proceeds backwards in the second pirākāram. When I asked why the Īṭi streets 
procession had a bull, elephants and so on, but in the later procession in the second 
pirākāram did not, I was told that it was because in the later procession Māṇikkavācakar 
was a supplicant.
human. The ātuvārs and other devotees in attendance at the festival are not recognized through ritual as being divine in this way.

In an interview with one of the ātuvārs, it was asserted that my questions concerning the meaning of the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, and the meaning of "Tiruvempāvai" itself, ultimately come down to the same question. It was agreed that by giving importance to the "Tiruvempāvai" songs, the soul gains pērinpum (mutti), and because the festival gives special recognition to the "Tiruvempāvai" songs, it also enables one to gain mutti. We may suggest that the significance of this festival is that it embodies Māṇikkavācakar's path to final mutti. In this festival Māṇikkavācakar entertains, praises, worships and petitions God through "Tiruvempāvai", and it was through the medium of his poems that he attained final mutti. The devotee, as an audience member in attendance at the festival, witnesses a path that leads to mutti. The devotee may also follow this path. As Civa Aruṇakiri Mutaliyār suggested, the devotee may sing "Tiruvempāvai" in his own worship of God and attain mutti.26

Summary

The poems of "Tiruvempāvai" are sung in a special way in the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival at the Mināḷci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple in Madurai. The performer of these poems, as structured by the ritual and as understood by the ātuvārs and priests, is Māṇikkavācakar. The poems and their significance is understood within the biography of the composer of the poems. The significance of "Tiruvempāvai" as presented in this ritual is that worshipping through these songs, as Māṇikkavācakar did, is a means of attaining the highest goal, final mutti. In chapter 10, we will see how the poems of "Tiruppaḷḷīyculucci" and

26 See chapter 6 above.
"Tiruverpāvai" can be understood quite differently when situated in the biographies of individual devotees rather than in the biographies of the "hero" or the "poet".
In the two preceding chapters I have looked at the singing of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" and "Tiruvempāvai" in a large temple complex where there are people whose job it is to sing these and other Śaiva songs before the deities and saints who reside in the temple.

Now, in this and the following chapter, I will consider the singing of these same songs in a temple setting in which there are no temple officials especially designated for singing. The setting of this and the following chapter is the village of Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai where there are two community temples: Citti Vināyakar Temple and Nākamalai Murukan Temple.

The event is the "Pāvai Singing" (pāvai pāṟuvatu) which occurs once a year throughout Mārkalī month. The performers of the songs are devotees, predominantly woman, and the significance of the songs is the significance those devotees give them in terms of their own life.

This chapter will begin with a description of the village, the two temples, and the ritual cycle of the two temples. This will be followed by a description of the participants and the event. In chapter 11 I will then discuss the "ritual text" of the "Pāvai Singing" and the interpretation of "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" and "Tiruvempāvai".

The Village

Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai is a village about ten kilometers west of Madurai on a main road heading towards the western ghats. A long rocky hill called Nākamalai (Snake Hill) runs along the north side of the road, and the Vaikai River runs north of Nākamalai. The landscape is dotted with hillocks and fields.
The area around the village falls into the sacred geography of Madurai, and the
domain of Cuntarēcuvarar and Miṇāci, as defined by the traditional legends of the
*Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam*. According to the twenty-eighth episode in that text, the Jains
(traditional rivals of the Śaivas) undertook a sacrifice and created a giant snake in order to
destroy a zealous Śaiva King of Madurai. The king appealed to Lord Cuntarēcuvarar, who
assured him that he would destroy the snake. After more appeals to Cuntarēcuvarar, the
king succeeded in destroying the snake, and legend holds that the body of the dead snake
became the long hill known as Nakamalai.¹

A bit further west of the village, on the north side of the Vaikai River is another
sacred site whose story is told in the sixty-third episode of the *Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam*.
According to this story, another King of Madurai was a follower of the Jains, and was
vigorously imposing this religion on his subjects. The Queen, Maṅkaiyarkkaraci, and the
Prime Minister, Kulacciṇaiyār, summoned the Śaiva saint, Tiruṅañacampantar, in the hope
of restoring the king's faith in Śaivism.² Several contests took place between the Śaiva
saints and the Jains, and in the final and decisive contest, both the saint and the Jains
inscribed their respective religious principles on palm-leaves and the leaves were thrown
into the Vaikai River to see which would flow against the current. Only
Tiruṅañacampantar's leaf floated upstream, and all the Jains were converted to Śaivism or
put to death. The saint's leaf floated on until it was found in an area of the river
surrounded by forest. Where the leaf was found the king discovered a Linga and built a

² The images of Maṅkaiyarkkaraci and Kulacciṇaiyār are two of the four images of
saints with a special association to Madurai in the Tiruṅañacampantar Maṇiappam in the
Miṇāci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. See chapter 8.
temple there. This place is known today as Tiruvēṭakam and there is a reasonably sized Śaiva temple there, quite near Nākmalai.³

Rock carvings on a hillock slightly south of Nākmalai Putukkōṭai provide a concrete reminder of a former Jain presence in the immediate area. On this hill there is Jain cave with carvings cut into the rock, and higher up near the top of the hill are Jaina figures and Kirantam (Grantha; ancient script used by Tamils for writing Sanskrit) inscriptions carved into the rockface facing east.

The population of Nākmalai Putukkōṭai was 12,398 according to the 1991 Census.⁴ The village seems to be composed of two different settlements: an older village style settlement to the northeast of the main road, and a newer town-like settlement to southwest of the road. The older area has narrow winding streets, the housing styles are mixed and houses tend to be crowded against each other, and there is a central meeting area called a mantai. In the newer area, by contrast, the streets are wider and organized in a grid pattern, and the houses tend to be large, free-standing structures within compounds, and there is no mantai. The older area is an agricultural settlement. On the other hand, the newer area is comprised of recent settlers with no ancestral ties to the land, who either work in Madurai, or teach or work in administration at Madurai Kamaraj University a few

³The group of poems which the saint is thought to have inscribed on the palm leaf is called "Tiruppācuram" and is highly regarded among Śaivas. The first verse is included in the "Pāvai Singing". Nelson, The Madura Country, III:37; P. S. Somasundaram, Tiruvānasambanadhar: Religion and Philosophy (Madras: Vani Pathippakam, 1986), 27, 39 94-99; Indira Viswanathan Peterson, Poems to Śiva: The Hymns of the Tamil Saints (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 281 n. 232. The temple at Tiruvēṭakam was classified as one of the seven great temples in Madurai along with the Miṅāći-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, Tiruppānēra Murukān Temple, Kaḷḷalakar Temple, and three others in the early reports of the British upon their takeover of Madurai (c.a. 1802). Carol Appadurai Breckenridge, "The Śrī Miṅākṣi Sundarēsvarar Temple: Worship and Endowments in South India, 1833 to 1925" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 152-3. See also Nelson, The Madura Country, IV:135-6.

kilometers to the west. The inhabitants of the older area tend to dress in the style of the Piramalai Kaṭṭar of the area, which for women means they wear their saris and hair in a distinctive manner. Some of the men wear the uniforms of service employees of the university. The women of the newer area wear their saris and hair in the way found in Madurai, and the men tend to dress in the western style of pants and shirt rather than in the more traditional vēṭṭi (dhoti).5

The two areas of the village maintain a kind of distance from each other. This is quite apparent in the following excerpt from the "Nākalamalai Muruṅaṇ Tala Purāṇam":

In our village of Āḻvārṇakar N.G.O Colony, today there are one thousand houses, one college, two high schools, one middle school, a mosque, two churches and three temples. But in April 16, 1962 on Cätacivam Road when Tiru. Amirtaliṅkam first set up his house, there were no other houses. On Feb. 7, 1964, when the first electric connection was installed in his house, there were only fifty houses.

On September 9, 1964 on Vināyakar Caturttī day, when Tiru. S. Tarmalikamutaliyar installed Lord Vināyakar, he made this village in which our houses are, a village with a temple. He and the retired post-master Tiru. Veñkaçāmārav who performed the daily pūcai, obtained some donations and established the Piḷḷaiyar Temple (translation mine).6

Āḻvārṇakar is a sub-division of Nākalamalai Putukkōṭṭai on the west side of the village and south of the main road. The "Tala Purāṇam" attests to the newness of the settlement and to the number of educational and religious institutions in Āḻvārṇakar. The Citti Vināyakar and Nākalamalai Muruṅaṇ Temples are two of the three temples mentioned in the "Tala Purāṇam".

The older, northeast area of the village has at least six temples. There is an older temple north of the main road that was under renovation when I was there. Proceeding north from the main road one also passes temples for Ammaṇ, Piḷḷaiyar (Vināyakar), and

5 At the temple the traditional vēṭṭi is considered appropriate attire for men.
6 S. Cätacivam, "Tala Purāṇam" in Aruṅmiku Nākalamalai Tirumuruṅaṇ Tirukkōyil Kuṭamukku Viḷa Malar (n.p.: Malarkkuḷu, 1993), 3. This "Tala Purāṇam" is one and a half pages long and lacks the legendary quality of those such as Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam.
Alakar (Viṣṇu), all of which are visible along the winding road. Proceeding north past the settlement and towards the eastern end of Nakamalai hill is a fairly large temple for Taṭātakai, the valorous form of Miṅāṭci prior to her marriage to Śiva as Cuntarēcuvarar. The image installed in the temple, according to the priest, has three breasts, and the temple is said to mark the place of her birth. Preliminary inquiries suggest that the temple existed at least as early as 1921, but even it is not included in the enumeration of temples in the "Nakamalai Murukan Tala Purāṇam". It seems clear that the "Nakamalai Murukan Tala Purāṇam" assumes that the northeast area of Nakamalai Putukkōṭai with its own temples is a completely separate area from Āḷvārnakar. The temples of Āḷvārnakar, including the two about to be studied, serve primarily the relatively new settlement of literate, fairly educated middle-class Hindus.

The Citti Viṇāyakar and the Nakamalai Murukan Temples

The "Pāvai Singing", during which "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccā" and "Tiruvempāvai" are sung, is arranged so that it begins at the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple and concludes at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple. These temples are considerably smaller and newer than the Miṅāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple complex in Madurai, and the ritual cycles one finds there are much less complex than the one at the Miṅāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. There are only a few people on staff in each temple. (A Diagram of the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple is found in Appendix 1.4, and that of Nakamalai Murukan Temple is in Appendix 1.5.)

The Citti Viṇāyakar Temple complex is housed in a compound which covers approximately 4500 square feet. The only entrance to the complex is on the eastern side of the temple. There are six shrines in the complex: the shrine of the presiding deity, Citti Viṇāyakar, and the surrounding shrines of the five subsidiary deities. In front of the temple and facing Citti Viṇāyakar is an image of his mount, a rat (mūṅcūr). The subsidiary
deities proceeding clockwise around the temple are: Civappirakācanātār, Ciṅṇa Piḷḷaiyār set into the back of the main shrine, Pālacuppipiramāṇīyar (Murukan as a child), Cuntara Āñcanēya Cuvāmi (Rāma), and Cuntara Āñcanēyar (Haṇumān). All except the Ciṅṇa Piḷḷaiyār face the easterly direction and have their own structures. In addition to these installed images, there are two festival images, one of Viṇāyakar situated on Citti Viṇāyakar's right and one of Murukan on his left. Within this temple compound there is a well, three sacred trees and a kitchen. There is also an organization called the Tiruppukal Capāi associated with the temple, dedicated to the singing of the songs to Murukan which were composed by Aruṇākīrinātār (the Tiruppukal).

According to the "Nākamalai Murukan Tala Purāṇam", the image of the presiding deity in the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple was installed in 1964. The inscriptions in the temple complex provide dates for the other shrines. The picture of Cuntara Āñcanēya Cuvāmi was installed in 1971, the structure housing the presiding deity (ālayam) was consecrated in 1975, and the image of Cuntara Āñcanēyar was installed in 1976; Pālacuppipiramāṇīyar in 1991; and Civappirakācanātār in 1992. There are no dates available for the installation of Ciṅṇa Piḷḷaiyār, but it is attached to the hall of the presiding deity which was built in 1975.

The Nākamalai Murukan Temple is adjacent to and shares a compound wall with the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple. The compound of the Nākamalai Murukan Temple covers an area of approximately 6400 square feet and is therefore slightly larger than the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple compound. It has one entrance which is also on the eastern side. The complex contains ten shrines: the shrine of the presiding deity, Nākamalai Murukan, and the surrounding shrines of the eight subsidiary deities, and an image of Murukan's mount,

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7 The well was closed by July 1994. I was told it was polluted and that the temple now gets water from the adjacent Nākamalai Murukan Temple.
8 Cuntara Āñcanēya Cuvāmi is represented by a colour picture rather than a sculpture as in the other shrines.
a peacock (*mayil vākaṇam*), which faces him. Above the entrance to the main shrine is a relief of the Goddess, Kajalaṭcumi. A small image of Viṇāyakar sits on the top step of the Murukaṇ shrine to his right, facing east. Three of the subsidiary shrines are attached to the main shrine. Proceeding clockwise around the shrine of Murukaṇ are: Taṭcaṇāmūrtti on the south wall facing south; Mahāviṣṇu on the west wall facing west; and Turkai on the north wall facing north. There are five other free standing shrines: Cuntarēcuvarar (a Linga) is behind Murukaṇ in the southwest corner facing east. Mīnāṭci Amman is behind Murukaṇ in the northwest corner, facing east. An image of Śiva's mount, Nanti the bull, is in front, and faces both the Linga and Mīnāṭci. Nākarājar is to the northeast side of Murukaṇ at the compound wall, facing west. The Navakkiraham (nine planets) are situated in a single structure to the northwest of Nākarājar but to Murukaṇ's northeast. Finally, Caṇṭikēsvvarar is situated close to Murukaṇ's shrine at its northeast corner and faces south. The compound has a borewell pump, funded by various branches of the Rotary Club, a kitchen, and a number of shrubs and trees.

The Nakamalai Murukaṇ Temple complex evolved even more quickly than the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple complex. The very first structural features, a *maṇītapam* and a portion of the compound wall, were built in 1985. In July 1989 the temple committee began collecting donations in order to build a Murukaṇ Temple in the *maṇītapam*. In October 1989 the construction was completed and the image of Nakamalai Murukaṇ installed. On 30 August 1991 the ceremony installing the images of Viṇāyakar, Taṭcaṇāmūrtti, Mahāviṣṇu, Turkai, the Navakkiraham, Caṇṭikēsvvarar and Nākarājar was conducted. The construction of the *vimāṇam* (small tower over the image of the main deity) began 26 January 1992. The construction of the Mīnāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar shrines began on 22 August 1992. On 25 January 1993 the *vimāṇam* was sanctified and the images of Mīnāṭci
and Cuntarccuvarar were installed. It took three and a half years to build the complex from the beginning of the collection of funds to its present state.  

R ritual Cycle of the Citti Viñāyakar and the Nākamalai Murukan Temples

Both the temple structures and the ritual calendars of these two village temples are in the process of change. The installation of new deities leads to changes in the ritual pattern in order to provide for their worship. In the Citti Viñāyakar Temple the images of Pālacuppiraṇaṇiṣṭhar and Civappirakācanāṭar were installed after I had completed my fieldwork in 1991 but before I returned in 1993. As a result the rituals had been expanded to include these deities, with Civappirakācanāṭar included in the daily ritual and Pālacuppiraṇaṇiṣṭhar in the daily, monthly and yearly schedule. Two new shrines are planned for the Citti Viñāyakar Temple complex, one for Kācivircvānaṭ collaps and one for Rama, Laksmanan and Sita. The ritual pattern will change again to incorporate them.

When I completed my fieldwork in 1991 only the main Nākamalai Murukan image was installed and receiving worship in the Nākamalai Murukan Temple complex. Since then all the other deities in the temple were installed. Most of the rituals of the current ritual cycle developed since the beginning of my fieldwork. The description of the two ritual cycles here presents what was in place as of mid-1994.

The Citti Viñāyakar and Nākamalai Murukan Temples have daily, monthly and yearly ritual activities, and the Nākamalai Murukan Temple also has some weekly rituals. The daily activity at both temples consists of daily pūcai and the performance of personal worship on behalf of devotees. In contrast to the eight daily pūcais at the Miñāci-

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9 "Tala Purāṇam," 3-4; temple inscriptions.
10 The information about the ritual cycles is based on interviews with the priests of the temples, as well as some input from devotees.
11 For example: Navarāttiri, Āṭi Paumāni for Miñāci.
Cuntarçcuvarar Temple, these two temples have daily worship performed twice for the presiding deities. The times of the daily pūcais are coordinated so that devotees may watch at least the showing of the lamps at both temples. The morning pūcai takes place between 7:30 and 8:45 AM in the Citti Viñāyakar Temple and begins at about 8:00 AM in the Nakamalai Murukana Temple. In the Citti Viñāyakar Temple the evening pūcai occurs at 6:15 and in the Nakamalai Murukana Temple at 6:00.

In both temples the morning pūcai consists of bathing the main deity with various substances (apiṭēkam or abhiśekam), dressing and adorning the deity (alaṅkāram), offering food (naivēttiyan) and then showing lamps which culminates in the showing of a camphor flame (tipārātaṇai). This four-fold structure of worship is the same as a full pūcai in the Miṅajci-Cuntarçcuvarar Temple.¹² The abhiśekam and alaṅkāram is done first to the presiding deity and then to the subsidiary deities. Finally the lamps are offered to the main deity and then to the other deities.¹³ In both temples the evening pūcai consists of naivēttiyan and tipārātaṇai to the main deity and to subsidiary deities. There is neither abhiśekam nor alaṅkāram during normal daily evening pūcai.

In the Citti Viñāyakar Temple complex there are no special weekly pūcais. Every month there are two special days for Citti Viñāyakar, one for Pālacuppiramaniyvar and one for Cuntara Āńcanēyar. Yearly there is a four day festival for Citti Viñāyakar, a six day festival for Pālacuppiramaniyvar, a one day special event for Cuntara Āńcanēya Cuvāmi and a one day event for Cuntara Āńcanēyar. For the whole of Mārkali there is the special early morning pūcai conducted to awaken the God, as Mārkali is the dawn of the gods.

¹² See chapter 8 above. Tiruvanatatal Pūcai is not a full pūcai in the sense that the deity is not bathed nor dressed during this pūcai.
¹³ In the Citti Viñāyakar Temple, Cinna Piḷḷaiyār is not included in the daily worship.
In the Nakamalai Murukan Temple complex there is a special *abhiṣekam* every Thursday morning for Taṭcaṇaṅmūrtti. Tuesdays and Fridays are special for Turkkai and Nakaraja. Saturday is special for the Navakkiraham. Monthly, there are two special days for Nakamalai Murukan, one for Viṇāyakar, two for Cuntarēcuvarar, one for Miṉāṭci Amman and a *vilakkum* (lamp) *pūcāi* which is undertaken by the village ladies each month at the temple.

Yearly there are seven special events for Nakamalai Murukan, six for Cuntarēcuvarar, and three for Miṉāṭci Amman. Five of the special events for Nakamalai Murukan are single day events. The main festival for Nakamalai Murukan, is the *Kantacattī* Festival in the Tamil month, *Aippacci*, which lasts six days. All of the special days for Cuntarēcuvarar are one day events. Two of Miṉāṭci's yearly events are single day events, including her marriage which the reader will remember is the main festival at the Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple. Her third yearly event is Navarattiri which lasts nine days. For the whole of *Mārkaḷi* there is the special early morning *pūcāi* conducted to awaken the God.

"Tiruppalḷiyṛucccī" and "Tiruvmpavai" are sung as part of the "Pāvai Singing" which occurs every year throughout *Mārkaḷi* in the early morning. Three events at Nakamalai coalesce in the "Pāvai Singing", which are conducted as separate events in the Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, one is the regular early morning *pūcāi* which awakens the gods from sleep (*Tiruvyaṇantal Pūcāi*), the second is the singing of "Tiruvmpavai" during *Mārkaḷi* month, and the third is the special awakening *pūcāi* for the gods because *Mārkaḷi* is dawn for the gods and the appropriate time to awaken.

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14 The festival can be nine or ten days depending on the annual calendar.
The Ritual Event: "The Pāvai Singing"

Cast and Audience

The "Pāvai Singing" at the Citti Viṇāyakar and the Nākamalai Murukan Temples consists basically of ordinary worshippers singing before the deities while the priest and his assistant perform the pūcaī. The participants in the event are the priest, his support staff, the singers, the donors and the audience.

Each of the two temples has only one priest. Both are male brahmans who have undergone initiation which qualifies them to perform pūcaī in Śaiva temples. The priest at the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple previously worked in a temple kitchen, as did his father, but he was trained for and then initiated into the priesthood. The priest at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple comes from a priestly family. Both priests receive a salary, and neither position is either hereditary or supported by endowments (kattulai). Normally, the priest of the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple collects the items for pūcaī, prepares and conducts the pūcaī, prepares the piracātum (food offering) and makes the personal offerings to the deities for individuals who come to worship. The Nākamalai Murukan priest performs the same duties as the Citti Viṇāyakar priest except that he does not prepare the food offerings.

Both temples have other staff which participate in the Mārkalī month pūcaī. At the Viṇāyakar Temple there is only one other person on staff, the woman who cleans. The cleaning lady cleans the temple precincts, sweeps and sprinkles water, draws the kōlams or rice flour designs on the floor, washes the piracātum vessels, and also rings the large temple bell during tipārātaṇai. During Mārkalī, one of the female singers also swept, sprinkled water and drew the kōlams in both temples. The priest arranged to have another priest assist him with this pūcaī during Mārkalī.

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15 She dressed as a Piramalai Kaljar lady and identified Putukkōṭṭai, i.e. the northeast side of the village, as the place where she lived.
The Nakamalai Murukan Temple has two other staff members: the assistant priest and the watchman. The assistant priest cooks as well as assists the priest in pucai, and he also makes private offerings to the deities on behalf of individuals. In the Markali month ritual the assistant priest assisted the priest during the pucai. On some days a brahmin member of the community also assisted these two priests. To my knowledge, the watchman had no special duties during Markali.

There are two groups of singers, one at the Citti Vinayakar Temple and one at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple. I focused on the Citti Vinayakar Temple group primarily because my contacts were with this group during my first field trip, and therefore it was convenient to continue with this group during my more extensive study of the singing in my second field trip. Also, the singing by a separate group at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple began in the years between the my two fieldtrips.

The lay singers in the Citti Vinayakar Temple are from the immediate surrounding community. They are predominantly female, with about two-thirds of the women being married and about one third unmarried and young girls. The female singers sit in front of Citti Vinayakar in a semi-circle. When they move to the Nakamalai Murukan Temple they also sit right in the middle, facing the deity, in contrast to the Nakamalai Murukan Temple "Pava Singing" group who sit in two rows at the sides in front of the main deity (see Plates No.s 4 and 5, photos 6, 7 and 8). There were occasionally some male singers, but they usually stood to the side or sat apart. The group of singers was smallest at the beginning of the event and grew as time passed.

The donors are those who pay for the special Markali pucai for that day. As each temple has its own special pucai, each has its own donors. The name of the donors for the

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This is based on my observation and on the fact that I knew the marital status of quite a few of the women.
day are written on a blackboard at each temple. Some of the donors are also singers. The donor has a special role in the pūcais at these temples, in contrast to the situation in the Miṇāḷci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple where the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival and the Tiruvānantal Pūcai are largely supported by kattālais or endowments, and only the seventeenth century ruler Tirumalaināyakkar (qua donor) has any presence in the ritual.

I am using "audience" here to refer to those who come to the temple, but do not fulfill any of the above roles. They represent the normal role of the devotee who goes to worship at a temple. They go to the temple, watch the pūcai, and when the camphor flame comes around they usually touch their hands to it and then to their eyes. Sometimes they will put money on the plate and receive sacred ash and kuṅkumam from the priest, and piracātām from the priest or devotees assisting the priest in the distribution. There was usually no audience for the early stage of the singing. The audience builds throughout the event at peaks at both temple during tipārātātai.

**The Segments and Sequence**

The "Pāvai Singing" of the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple group may be divided into five segments: 1. preliminary personal worship at one or both temples; 2. the singing and pūcai at Citti Viṇāyakar Temple (the core of the event); 3. singing and pūcai to the subsidiary

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17 This will be described below in the discussion of the segments of the event.
18 See chapter 8.
19 At the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple the distributor seemed to be one of the regular singers. At the Nākamalai Murukan Temple the two distributors were usually a member of the temple committee and another man.
20 The data for the description of the sequence of the events itself was collected in Mārkali month of 1990-91 and 1993-94. In both years Mārkali month began on December 16 and concluded on January 13 making the month 29 days long. The data is based primarily on my observations in 1993-94.
deities at the Citti Vināyakar Temple; 4. singing and pūcai at Nākamalai Murukan Temple;
5. the concluding worship activities.

**Segment 1: Preliminary Personal Worship**

The full preliminary personal worship pattern begins with worship first at the Citti
Vināyakar Temple and then at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple. This involves
worshipping the main deity and circumambulation, and stopping at the subsidiary deities of
one's choice. This pattern may be abbreviated or eliminated altogether. On two occasions
I saw several people circumambulate at the Citti Vināyakar Temple only, because they had
arrived after the singing had already begun, or after the singing should have begun. On
two other occasions this segment seemed to be eliminated as it was late for the singing to
begin. The people involved were leaders among the singers and had to immediately initiate
the singing. On another occasion individuals arrived after the singing had started and
immediately joined in without performing any preliminary worship. The members of the
audience as well as the singers usually perform personal worship, and it is not uncommon
to see people worship and circumambulate while the pūcai and singing are going on.

**Segment 2: Singing and Pūcai at Citti Vināyakar Temple (the Core)**

This segment, which is the core of the event, has two major components: the pūcai
performed by the priest and his assistant; and the singing of the essential songs:
"Tiruppalliyclucci", "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppāvai". Ideally, at the Citti Vināyakar
Temple, the two components are synchronized. The general expectation is that the singing
and the pūcai begin at about the same time and the singing of the essential songs should be

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21 The information concerning this segment is based upon my observation of
individuals who sang regularly during the month of Mārkali at these temples.
completed before the final portion of the pūcai (the showing of the camphor flame). The whole segment should be finished shortly after 6:00 AM, but definitely before 6:15.\textsuperscript{22}

During the days on which I observed, the singing and the pūcai usually began between 5:10 and 5:15, although on a few occasions they started as late as 5:20. They did not necessarily start at the same time, and on some days the singing would begin before the pūcai and on other days the pūcai would begin before the singing.\textsuperscript{23}

The Mārkali pūcai consists of abhiṣekam, alankaṣaṇam, naivēttiyam and tīpāṟātayai for Citti Viṇāyakar. The priest begins the abhiṣekam by ringing a hand-bell and showing a single camphor flame. The abhiṣekam consists of the priest rinsing the image with water.

\textsuperscript{22} This general expectation was expressed to me several times by one regular singer. It was graphically expressed on the first day of Mārkali, 1993-94 when the expectation was not met at all. The priest at the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple was new and this Mārkali was his first at this temple. The previous priest had been there since about 1975 and was replaced by the new priest when he retired. Therefore in this particular temple there had been a well established pattern for the Mārkali singing and the special pūcai. On 1 Mārkali 1993-94 the singing started at 5:10. The pūcai started at 5:30 and was completed by 6:30. The third segment was omitted all together and the people at the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple missed segment 4, the final stages of pūcai at the Nakamalai Murukāṉ Temple. At about 6:00 AM when it was clear that the priest was way behind schedule there was murmuring in the crowd and calls that the time was over ("neram aiyicchu"). One person at least was actually telling people to go to the Nakamalai Murukāṉ Temple. Afterwards steps were taken to inform the priest of the correct time frame during which he should complete the pūcai. For the rest of the days that I observed, the priest conformed to the expected time frame.

Part of the reason for the late start of the pūcai was that the priest conducted personal arccaḻai from 5:00 to 5:30. A number of these pūcais were for the Ayyappa bhaktas marking the commencement of their eventual pilgrimage to Sabarimalai. I did not notice any such personal pūcais for the Sabarimala pilgrims nor others on the first day of Mārkali in 1990-91, nor during the remaining days of 1993-94 did I see other personal pūcais conducted during segment 2 of this event. When I pressed a long-time regular singer regarding whether or not it was the custom for personal pūcais to be conducted during this event or any event, the response was that normally people will wait until after the pūcai is over. The person phrased their answer in such a way that no criticism was made of either the priest or the pilgrims for the events on the first day of Mārkali or that anything inappropriate had happened. These events just did not happen again during the days I participated in the singing.

\textsuperscript{23} In 1990-91 on the 3 days I participated, the singing and the pūcai started at the same time.
pouring on or applying a substance to the image, and then ringing the hand bell and showing a single camphor flame. There are usually five items including milk and the final item, sacred ash. The final camphor flame is shown to the deity, and then taken to the singers and audience by one of the priests.24 Then a vessel of milk and the plate of ash which had been collected during the abhisekam are passed to the singing women for distribution amongst themselves, the audience, and those who come later. The curtain in front of Citti Vināyakar's shrine is then closed.

Behind the closed curtain the priest decorates the image of Citti Vināyakar while the singing continues outside. When the alaṅkāram is complete, the priest offers naivettiyam to the deity behind the closed curtain. The priest then emerges from behind the curtain and goes to the other deities of the complex with a vessel of water and the food offering. Upon completion of the offering of naivettiyam to all the deities in the complex the curtain is opened revealing the decorated deity.

The remaining activities of this segment are: the offering of a series of lamps, the donors' personal worship, doing arccanai (placing flowers on the deity and chanting his names) and the offering of a final set of lamps. The sequence varied somewhat. Sometimes no donors came forward, or the curtain would be opened after the donors' personal worship. During the personal worship of the donors, the priest asks the name and birth star for all the members of the family. The priest repeats the names to God and makes the offering on their behalf so that God will bless the whole family.25 The priest also performs arccanai.

24 On one occasion at least the camphor flame was handed to one of the women singers who then took it around to all the people present including the singers and the audience.

The final item of the pūcai always is the showing of a single camphor flame and a plate with five flames. This seems to be the highpoint of the pūcai. When these lamps are shown the singers and the audience press forward pushing in on one another to see the God. At this point the singers and audience become indistinguishable. After the five flame lamp is shown to the deity it is brought to the singers and the other worshippers. They put their hands over the flame, touch their hands to their faces, and then receive kwikumam and sacred ash from the priest.

The singing follows a regular pattern. It begins with two poems to Vināyakar and then two poems to Murukan. Then all 10 poems of "Tiruppalliyeucci", all 20 poems of "Tiruvempavai" and all 30 poems of "Tiruppavai" are sung. The singing of "Tiruppalliyeucci", "Tiruvempavai", and "Tiruppavai" is considered essential for this ritual event. A poem in praise of the Vaisnava saint, Ānțāl, is sung after her poem, "Tiruppavai". These sixty-five verses were completed on all the days on which I participated. If there is time before the pūcai is completed other songs are sung. These additional songs are selected according to personal preference. On most days the Paṅcapurāṇam was sung after the poem in praise of Ānțāl. A number of additional songs were frequently sung, not all of which were familiar to me. One of the regular singers wrote these songs out for me on her own initiative, which I have translated and included as Appendix II.

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27 On 10 January 1994 the singing of the verse in praise of Ānțāl was completed as the final lamp was being shown.

28 Of the sixteen days on which I was at the Citti Vināyakar Temple for all of segment 2, I know definitely that the Paṅcapurāṇam was sung on eleven days: 16 December 1990; 12, 13 January 1991; 18, 30, 31 December 1993; and 1-4, 11 January 1994. I am fairly certain that it was sung on at least one other day (17 December 1993). The particular selections constituting the Paṅcapurāṇam that were sung came from the pamphlet: Tirucciyampalam Paṅcapurāṇam (Tirunakar: Tirumurai Maṇṇam, 1990).
Segment 3: Singing and Pucai to the Subsidiary Deities at Citti Vināyakar Temple

Segment three also consists of both worship and singing. After the five flame camphor is shown to Citti Vināyakar, the assistant priest takes it to the singers and the audience. Meanwhile the main priest takes a single camphor flame to the other deities in the complex: Civappirakācanātar (sometimes), Pālacuppiramaṇiyar, Cuntara Āṇcanēya Cuvāmi and Cuntara Āṇcanēyar. He shows it to each deity in turn and finally it is held for people to touch. Then the worshippers proceed to the Nākamalai Murukan Temple.

The worship during this segment to some extent goes according to personal preference rather than the group consensus evident in segment 2. After receiving the five flame camphor plate, people go to the other deities in the complex and worship as the priest shows the lamp. However, the priest moves quickly from shrine to shrine, and when the crowd is large at the main shrine not all the people can both receive the five flame lamp and reach the other shrines at the same time as the main priest. The singers have the advantage in this because they are closest to Citti Vināyakar and the priest comes to those closest to him first. Not all people go to the individual shrines and not all go to all the shrines. People often go from shrine to shrine circumambulating at their own speed.

Some of the regular singers sing at the Pālacuppiramaṇiyar shrine and some singers (and perhaps others) also sing at the Cuntara Āṇcanēyar shrine. Not all of the people at these two shrines sing. Neither of these songs is from those sung during segment 2.

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29 This is perhaps in part because the song sung at Pālacuppiramaṇiyar shrine was sung very quickly and one would have to know the song in order to participate whereas the song sung at the Cuntara Āṇcanēyar shrine consists of epithets and a regularly repeated phrase. See Appendix II, songs 15 and 16.
Segment 4: Singing and Pucai at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple

A special pucai is conducted at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple on all the days of Markaž month. Ideally this pucai starts around 5:30 and concludes shortly after 6:15 AM. It also consists of abhisekam, alankāram, naivēttiyam and tipūraṭanai. The personal pucai for the donors, arcvaṇai and the tipūraṭanai to the subsidiary deities are incorporated into the sequence of the pucai generally after the alankāram and before the tipūraṭanai. The general expectation is that the worshippers from the Citti Vināyakar Temple will join those at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple at least for the final tipūraṭanai. Segment 4 consists

30 There are some differences in the pucai, such as at Citti Vināyakar Temple the priest tends to do the personal pucai for the donors after naivēttiyam has been offered to the deities, whereas I observed it being done prior to naivēttiyam in the Nakamalai Murukan Temple. Also the tipūraṭanai to the subsidiary deities is done after it has been concluded to Citti Vināyakar, whereas at the Nakamalai Murukan it is incorporated into the main pucai, and is done before the final camphor tipama to Murukan, the climax of the pucai. Generally the personal pucai for the donor and the naivēttiyam were completed before the curtain was opened. The curtain is opened to reveal the adorned God, Nakamalai Murukan and is immediately followed by the showing of the five layered lamp and a single camphor flame, arcvaṇai, another single camphor to Murukan, which is taken to the Parivaram or subsidiary deities then back to Murukan, the priest chants, and finally shows the five flame camphor lamp. The showing of this lamp, as at the Citti Vināyakar Temple, is the climax of the pucai. The people press and lean in to see the God. After the priest takes the five flame camphor lamp to the people, and the assistant and a second assistant brings kunkumam and ash respectively. This description is based on the 1993-94 Markaž season, as in the 1990-91 season the Parivaram deities had not yet been installed.

31 This statement is based on a number of observations, including: the fact that a regular singer and one committee member of the Nakamalai Murukan Temple told me that the pucai at Citti Vināyakar Temple should finish by 6:00 AM so that the people can come to the Nakamalai Murukan Temple for the 6:15 pucai (16 December 1993); the fact that the pucai begins approximately half an hour later than the Citti Vināyakar Temple pucai; that there is a time when the priest at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple is standing and talking to people and apparently not doing anything specifically related to pucai as though he is waiting for the time to pass (12, 13 January 1994); and the general flow of the crowd after the Citti Vināyakar Temple pucai is in fact to the Nakamalai Murukan Temple. However, the pucai at Nakamalai Murukan Temple will not wait indefinitely for the pucai to finish at the Citti Vināyakar Temple, as on 16 December 1993 when the pucai at Citti Vināyakar Temple finished at 6:30, after it had already been completed at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple.
of the portion of the Nākamalai Murukan Temple pūcai for which the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple singers are present.

The stage in the pūcai of the Nākamalai Murukan Temple at which the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple singers arrive varied because of the day to day variations in the pūcais. Generally the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple worshippers arrived after the abhiṣekam, alaṅkāram and naivēttiyan, but before arccaṇai and tipārātaṇai.

The Nākamalai Murukan Temple also has its own group of Mārkafi singers, and therefore when the two groups join in the final stages of the pūcai at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple a consensus has to be reached about what will be sung. I did not record all the songs that were sung during this segment, but I noticed that leaders from the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple singers often initiated the singing of the same songs that had been written down for me. The core songs, "Tiruppaṭṭiyelucci", "Tiruvempāvai" or "Tiruppāvai" are never sung during this segment, for they have already been completed separately by each group in their respective temples.

This segment is finished when the priest passes around the five flame camphor plate which completes the pūcai to Nākamalai Murukan, and his assistants distribute kunkuman and sacred ash.

Segment 5: Concluding Worship Activities

The final segment consists of a final personal worship at the temple, collecting piracāṭum, and social activity. The personal worship consists of circumambulation and stopping at the various deities of one's choice for worship after receiving the five flame plate, the

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32 The sequence of this last segment is based on what I observed of the routine of some regular singers at the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple.
kutikumam and sacred ash.\textsuperscript{33} Most people did this, although like the preliminary worship, it is optional, and the feeling seems to be that one should do at least one or the other.\textsuperscript{34}

After the final personal worship, food piracātam is collected at both temples. The piracātam, in this case, is food that has been prepared at the temple. It is first offered to the deity and then passed out to the worshippers after the pūcai has been completed. I was told that eating piracātam, and sharing it with others, brings benefit to the individual.\textsuperscript{35} Collecting piracātam then is an important part of the event. The donors receive a large share of the temple's piracātam which they then distribute to others. The piracātam is often collected in a small containers and then shared with those at home.\textsuperscript{36}

This final segment is very sociable. I did not generally notice people socializing while they were actually completing the personal worship, but people would stand around and socialize while others would worship. The collection of piracātam at the Citti Vināyakar Temple was especially sociable. It was often distributed by one of the singers and so the ladies would tend to collect together briefly and chat.\textsuperscript{37} This social period, however, was never very long.

\textsuperscript{33} This also was different in the Mārkalī of 1990-91 as there were no Parivaram deities. Circumambulation still was done at that time (12 January 1991)

\textsuperscript{34} This point was made to me once when one person had to leave quickly. They happened to say that they would not circumambulate that day but it was okay because they had done it at the beginning (3 January 1994).

\textsuperscript{35} Pāvai Group Singer, conversation with the author, Nakamalai Putukkōṭai, Madurai, 22 February 1994.

\textsuperscript{36} In 1990-91 I declined piracātam as I had been extremely ill since day two of the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival and was reluctant to eat anything I had not cooked myself. This was simply incomprehensible and unacceptable. Every day that I went to the temple in the 1993-94 season I took piracātam. Sometimes when I was delayed for whatever reason someone made sure that I got piracātam from both of the temples. Frequently I was given an extra portion of piracātam from the donor's portion.

\textsuperscript{37} In contrast the piracātam was distributed by two men at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple, and the singers, who are mostly ladies, do not gather there even briefly to chat.
This basic pattern was altered somewhat on certain days. Three of these occasions were Tiruvāṭirai day, days when a Citti Vināyakar Temple singer was a donor at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple, and the final day of Mārkāli.

On Tiruvāṭirai day the two groups of singers joined together and sang at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple in front of Cuntarēcuvarar. Tiruvāṭirai day of Mārkāli 1993 was the first time that this special day was celebrated in this temple, as no form of Śiva was in this temple prior to the installation of the Linga (Cuntarēcuvarar) less than a year before. On this day there was a special pūcai for the Linga which included a nine item abhiṣekam, a pūcai for a cow, and a special tipārātaṇai for Miṇāṭci, as well as the early morning Mārkāli pūcai to all the deities of the temple. The worship began with the abhiṣekam for the Linga at about 5:20 AM, and ended with the special pūcai for Miṇāṭci 6:50 AM. Woven in between was the early morning Mārkāli month pūcai and the special abhiṣekam for the cow.

The singing of the core songs of "Tiruppaṭṭiyēḷuccoli", "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppavai" was not correlated with the pūcai on Tiruvāṭirai day as the singers had completed all of "Tiruppaṭṭiyēḷuccoli", "Tiruvempāvai" and up to verse 12 of "Tiruppavai" before the abhiṣekam of the Linga had begun. After completing "Tiruppavai" the leaders of the two different groups initiated the singing of the songs, and it was possible to see differences between the group that sings at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple and those who usually sing at the Citti Vināyakar Temple. While the Citti Vināyakar Temple group wanted to sing Tirumūṟai songs, particularly in the order of the Paṅcapurāṇam, the leader of the other group tended to initiate more informal songs such as response songs composed primarily of epithets. For the most part the people sang throughout the pūcai. The singers were predominantly women.
The crowd was very large for this special day. For the most part it was gathered around the Linga, but it was so large that it actually spread out all through the temple complex. The crowd later shifted and centered around Miñāci for her tiṟpāṟaṇuḷai at the end of the ritual. In summary, one might say that on Tiruvāṭirai day, the usual sequence of the singing of the Citti Viñāyakar Temple group was suspended. Segments 2, 3 and 4 were replaced by the singing in front of the Linga.

Another occasion on which there was a variation from the basic pattern of singing at the Citti Viñāyakar Temple was when a member of the Citti Viñāyakar Temple group was a donor for the puṇcai at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple. The abhiṣekam at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple begins at about 5:30 so that the donor would leave the Citti Viñāyakar Temple (the abhiṣekam for Citti Viñāyakar would normally be finished by this time) and go to the Nākamalai Murukan Temple. Other family members and friends also went to the Nākamalai Murukan Temple, and there they joined in the singing of that group at that temple. The ladies who stayed at the Citti Viñāyakar Temple continued with their usual pattern of worship.

On the final day of Mārkāḷi, the Citti Viñāyakar Temple singers hold a closing function. In 1993-94 this was conducted when the curtain was closed after the abhiṣekam which coincided with the conclusion of "Tiruempāvai" and it was completed prior to the offering of naivēṭtiyam and the reopening of the curtain. When the ceremony was finished, the singing of "Tiruppāvai" began.

The first item in the closing ceremony was the handing out of piracātam to those who came regularly. The piracātam consisted of a package containing a comb, mirror.

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38 The singing of "TiruppulḷiyCLUCCI", "Tiruempāvai" and "Tiruppāvai" at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple starts at about 5:00 or a little bit later. Since the puṇcai starts at about 5:30 the singing is not correlated to the puṇcai as closely as it is in the Citti Viñāyakar Temple singing.
green pan leaves, banana, jasmine flowers, a few turmeric lumps and a pot of kunkumam. The same lady provides this piracātam gift every year. This was followed by the distribution of prizes to those who had participated in the "Tiruppaljyeluccii"- "Tiruvempāvai" competition, and the "Tiruppāvai" competition held at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple. The lady who provides the piracātam packages was then given a presentation in appreciation for her providing the piracātam. This was followed by a statement of the money collected in connection with the Mārkali singing at Citti Viņayakar Temple and its distribution. Then the same lady who provided piracātam for the ladies presented some books to a few men. The concluding activities finished with the reading of a "Vote of Thanks" which expressed appreciation to those who participated in the month's singing, and to those who performed various functions on behalf of the singers, as well as to the priests and other temple employees.

Inspite of these twenty minutes of closing activities, the core songs, the verse in praise of Ántāl, and the Paṅcapurāṇam were all completed by the time of the final five flame camphor, but there was no time for other songs. This special event did not substantially alter the basic pattern of singing at all.

Summary

The Citti Viņayakar Temple and Nākamalai Murukan Temple of Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai are similar in structure and ritual pattern to the Miṇāci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple in Madurai, but

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39 In 1993-94 two competitions were held at the temple. One was for singing "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppaljyeluccii" (sponsored by the Tirunakar Tirumurai Manram), and the other was for singing "Tiruppāvai" (sponsored by one of the lady singers). The competition was announced at the beginning of Mārkali and was held a few days before the end of the month. Young boys and unmarried girls and ladies were eligible to participate.

40 After this one of the men made an announcement about another matter which was not part of the scheduled events and was not, in my opinion, particularly well received.
they are much smaller in size and have a simpler ritual cycle. The simpler style of ritual is evident in the way in which "Tiruppaḻiyelucci" and "Tiruvempāvai" are sung. In the Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, the awakening of the deity with "Tiruppaḻiyelucci", the singing of "Tiruvempāvai" and the special awakening of the gods in Mārkaḷi are separate events. In Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai they are one event, and the songs are all sung together in that one event. Furthermore, there are no temple employees to sing "Tiruppaḻiyelucci" and "Tiruvempāvai" in the Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai temples, and the singing is part of the people's worship. The Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple was built by kings and other wealthy people over a long period of time, and its rituals are to a large extent financed by endowments. The two temples in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai are primarily community temples. Although the Citti Vināyakar Temple is run by the state government, and even administered through the Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Devasthanam office, it receives only the most basic funds from the Devasthanam, and relies on donors from the community for any special events, and the Mārkaḷi pūcāi is paid for by local donors. The Nākamalai Murukan Temple is run entirely by a committee elected by a body of people who have donated a required sum to the temple and continue to make a monthly donation. The rapid growth and expansion of this temple attests to a certain amount of wealth in the community, but it does not match that available to the Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple.

The initial differences between the Miṉāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple and the two Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai temples provide quite different religious opportunities for the worshippers. In Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai, the devotees can go before the presiding deities

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41 The Devasthanam pays the salaries, electricity, and provides the piracētam for daily pūcāi. The Devasthanam counts and controls the funds from the uṇṭiyal (collection box): Priest, interview with the author, Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai, December 1993.
42 Secretary of the Committee, Nākamalai Murukan Temple, interview with the author, Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai, Madurai, August 1994.
and perform their song before the deity in conjunction with the *pūcaî*. In the Mīnāṭci-Cuntarōcuvarar Temple, that right and duty is assigned to a special individual, the *ōtuvâr*. This leads to different types of "ritual texts", and different interpretations of those texts, as we shall see more clearly in the next chapter.
III: Chapter 11:
"Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" and "Tiruvempāvai" in First Person Biography

In contrast to the singing of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" and "Tiruvempāvai" at Miṉāṭcī-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, the performers of the songs at the Citti Viṇāyakar and the Nākamalai Murukāṉ Temples are individual devotees. The "Pāvai Singing" is situated as an event in the first person biography of the singers themselves. The singers' perception about what they are doing and about the significance of the songs, indicate that they understand themselves to be singing in their own voice, and that this has benefit for themselves and for others. The significance of the event is stated in four ways: obtaining good husbands for girls; ensuring good rain for crops; obtaining blessings in general for oneself and others; and making requests for God's help to resolve specific problems or achieve specific goals. The structure of the ritual event reinforces the view that the voices heard singing the songs are those of individual devotees rather than a temple bard or an original poet.

This chapter will begin with a description of the "ritual text" of the event, providing a short description of the additional songs and a discussion of some of the characteristics of the text as a whole. It will then show how the singing of this "ritual text" is situated as an event in the lives of the singers by indicating how the singing is understood by some of the singers, and by considering the structure of the event spatially, ritually and in terms of singing styles.

The "Ritual Text"

The "ritual text" of the "Pāvai Singing" is considerably more complex than either of the "ritual texts" of the Tiruvanantal Pūcaī or the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival. It draws on more
source texts composed over a longer period of time. Like the other two "ritual texts" it has a stable component and a variable component.

The "ritual text" of the "Pāvai Singing" has a well defined structure. In segment 2, the group sang four invocatory songs, followed by the three essential groups of poems in a specific order ("Tiruppalīyelucci", "Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppavai"), the song in praise of Āntāl, the Pañcapurāṇam, and finally the songs of choice. In segment 3 in the Citti Vināyakar complex "Centippatipurakkum" was sung at the Pālacuppiramaniyar Shrine, and then a poem in praise of Cuntara Ānchanīyar (called "Jeya Haṇumān") was sung at the Cuntara Ānchanīyar complex. The additional songs, sung in segment 2, if there was time, and in segment 4 at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple, were: "Nātavintu Kalāti", three poems provided to me under the title "Vālttu", "Song for Camphor Flame" (Karpūra Ārattip Pāṭal), "Nīlaṅkoḷ Mēkattin", and "Vīṭal Māraṇaintu".

This presentation of the "ritual text" is necessarily composite, as the choice of additional songs varied somewhat from day to day. All the songs of this composite "ritual text", with the exception of the three essential songs, "Tiruppalīyelucci", "Tiruvempavai", "Tiruppavai", and the Pañcapurāṇam selections, are translated in Appendix II. The additional songs cited here were the ones most frequently sung. The four invocatory songs and the additional songs, with the exception of the two songs sung in segment 3 (15 and 16), were handwritten especially for me by one of singers, without my asking. I refer to the songs by title if it was provided, and if not then by the traditional way of referring to the song, that is, by the first few words of the first line.

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The first verse sung in praise of Viṇāyakar, "Maṇṇulakam Taṇil" (1), explains that the speaker worships Viṇāyakar in order to remove the suffering of this birth, and so that all desires will be fulfilled. The speaker is indicated by the first person plural verbal form (paṇīntu pāyruvōm). The addressee is not indicated in the poem. The poem is found in the praise portion at the beginning of the Kantapurāṇam by Kacciyappacivacāriyar, who is tentatively dated by Zvelebil in the later half of the fourteenth century.²

The next poem, sung in praise of Viṇāyakar, "Piṭiyataṇ Urumai" (2), refers to Śiva and his consort who took the form of elephants, which resulted in the birth of Kaṇapati. There are no markers to indicate the speaker or the addressee. Both Śiva, as manifested in a particular place, and Viṇāyakar, referred to as Kaṇapati are talked about in the third person. The poem is the fifth verse of the 123rd Patikam of the first Tirumūurai,³ composed by Tiruṇāṇacampantar who is generally dated in the seventh century.

The third and fourth invocatory poems, which are used to praise Murukan are verses about Śiva which refer to his relationship to Murukan. The third poem, "Naṅkaṭampaṇai" (3), indicates that Śiva's consort gave birth to Skanda (Murukan). The content of this poem is that it is the duty of Śiva to support and protect the speaker, who is a devotee, and that it is the duty of the devotee to serve. The speaker is indicated by first person pronouns and markers (nam, atiyēnai, en) and the addressee is not indicated by markers. The fourth poem, "Cāmara Cūraṇaṃmā" (4), refers to Śiva, the father of Kumāraṇ (Murukan) who killed the demon, Cūraṇaṃmā. The poem indicates that servants who love Śiva will rule in the world of the immortals. Neither the speaker nor the addressee are indicated in the poem by any explicit markers. Poem 3 is the ninth verse of

the 132nd Patikam and the fourth poem is the tenth verse of the 177th Patikam of the fifth Tirumurai, composed by Tirunāvukkaracar who is also dated in the seventh century.

The third essential song, "Tiruppāvai" (7), if all the poems are taken as a sequence, tells about girls undertaking the pāvai vow in order to obtain prosperity, abundant rain, a land free from harm, and the removal of past and future karma. The poem begins with a description of the vow and the benefits which will be obtained. It then moves through a sequence of verses which awaken and summon girls to join them. After awakening the other girls, they proceed to Kṛṣṇa's house and proceed to awaken members of his household, including his wife. Then they awaken Kṛṣṇa and request the items they need to finish their vow. In the penultimate verse they say that what they really want is to serve only Kṛṣṇa forever. The final verse of "Tiruppāvai" is a signature verse which identifies the author and indicates that those who sing these songs will receive the grace of Tirumāl (Viṣṇu) and will live in joy forever. This is the only verse in the poem which provides any identity for a speaker. There are a number of different addressees in the thirty poems. As in "Tiruvempāvai", there is at least one dialogue poem. The poem is by Āntāl, a Vaiṣṇava saint, who is dated in the ninth century.

The eighth song of the "ritual text", "Tiru Āṭippūrati", is the poem in praise of Āntāl. The verse is twelve lines long, eight of which wish her long life. The remaining lines wish long life to other devotees, to the form of Viṣṇu at Śrīraṅkām Temple, to another

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4 Tēvāram, ed. Gopal Iyer and Gros, II:130, 176.
5 Poems 3 and 5.
6 Poems 6 through 15.
7 Poems 16 through 20.
8 Poems 21 through 28.
9 See Dehejia's summary: Dehejia, Āntāl and Her Path of Love, 62-4.
10 As is apparent in the interpretations of "Tiruvempāvai" given above, whether a verse is a dialogue or not is to some extent a matter of interpretation. In this case I am relying on Cutler's and Dehejia's interpretations of the verses.
11 Dehejia, Āntāl and Her Path of Love, 3.
great Ālvār poet, Nammālvār, to the world, and to Maṉavaḷa Māmunī, a fourteenth century scholar of one of the Śrīvaiṣṇava sects. The portion that wishes well-being contains no first or second person markers, and it is not addressed to anyone in particular. The portion addressed to Maṉavaḷa Māmunī also does not contain any first person markers. I was unable to obtain the identity of the author or source for this poem, either from the singers or from any other source. The poem mentions a fourteenth century Vaiṣṇava scholar, so its composition is no earlier than that.

Frequently the Pañcapurāṇam (9) was sung following the poem to Āntāl (8). The same pamphlet was used each time, except on Tiruvātrai day. It generally seemed that the only people who knew these songs were the people with the booklet. Most people did not sing along, and consequently the singing usually lagged at this point. This particular pamphlet has a selection for each of the seven days of the week. The booklet was published in 1990 and this particular selection was first used in the Mārkaḷi of 1990-91. This particular Pañcapurāṇam selection in the "Pāvai Singing" is therefore relatively new in this "ritual text". These poems are taken from the Tirumūṟai, and are therefore composed by sixteen different authors whose dates range between the seventh century and the thirteenth century.¹²

"Nātavintu Kalāti" (10) frequently followed the Pañcapurāṇam in segment 2 if there was time, and was also sung in segment 4, and sometimes in both segments on the same day. This was a popular song with a very pleasing melody. The poem consists primarily of various descriptions of the deity. The speaker is not indicated in the poem.

¹² I have chosen not to include a discussion of all the thirty-five songs because, as we will see below, while it is significant that the Pañcapurāṇam is sung, which particular verses are chosen to constitute the Pañcapurāṇam each day is not significant. The occurrence of any one selection of songs was at most four times in a month, and since the Pañcapurāṇam was not sung every day these songs would not have been sung even that often. The rest of the songs of the text were usually sung at least once a day.
The poem is addressed to Murukāṉ in his form at the temple in Paḷāṇi. This song is found in a collection of poems called Tiruppukāḷ composed by Aruṇākiriṇāṭar, dated by Zvelebil at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century.13 The Tiruppukāḷ has six major divisions, each of which is comprised of songs about Murukāṉ at one of his six abodes: Tirupparankunram, Tiruccentūr, Paḷāṇi, Cuvāṇimalsai, Tiruttagikai, and Palamutircōlai.

A group of three verses given to me under the title of "Vāḷṭṭu" (11, 12, 13) were frequently sung as a unit following "Nāṭavintu Kalāṭi". All three are benedictions. The first (11) wishes long life to Murukāṉ, his emblem, his mount, his two consorts and his devotees. The second poem (12) asks for rain, for prosperity, good government, for a sufficient life for souls, and for religion to flourish, particularly the Vedic and Śaiva religion. The third verse (13) requests the well-being of brahmins, the celestials and cows, rain, the well-being of the king, that evil and misery in the world should perish and that all the world should know about Śiva. When the singers sing the three poems under the heading of "vāḷṭṭu", they repeat three times the line "Let the excellent Śaiva way flourish throughout the world". This is the only line of the three songs which they repeat. All three poems have a similar structure in that all three are not addressed to anyone in particular, nor is the speaker explicitly indicated in the verses.14 Poems 11 and 12 are from the Kantapuraṇam by Kacciyappacivāriyar who, as we have already mentioned, is dated in the fourteenth century. Poem 11 is from the chapter on the marriage of Vallī (Murukāṉ’s consort)in the sixth book, Taksakāṇṭa. Poem 12 is from the praise portion at the beginning of the Kantapuraṇam, as is the first invocatory verse. Poem 13 is the first verse of

14 The verse which wishes long life to Murukāṉ and so on, is not specifically addressed to him as would be indicated by vocatives or second person markers.
"Tiruppācuram", the 54th Patikam of the third Tirumu'rai composed by Tiruñāgacampantar.15 "Tiruppācuram", according to tradition, is the collection of poems inscribed on a palm leaf which floated up the Vaikai River from Madurai to nearby Tiruvēṭakam and thereby signalled the defeat of the Jains.16

The "Song for the Camphor Flame" was often sung by some members of the group during the offering of the camphor flame to the deity, the ritual act which concludes the worship in segments 2 and 4. It is a single verse which says that the addressee is the unlimited light in the moon, the sun, the fire, in "us", in Īvara, as well as in the camphor. There is a first person marker (vīkaḷ) in the poem, and the addressee is indicated by a series of second person pronouns (ni). I asked several singers about the composer of "The Song for the Camphor Flame" and the song in praise of Hanumāṇ, which will be discussed below, but was unable to get the author's name and thereby find the source for these songs. One lady told me that her aunt had instructed her to sing "The Song for the Camphor Flame", so she did.

In segment 3, two songs were frequently sung. The first (15), "Centippatipurakkum" was frequently sung by some of the regulars at the Pālacuppipiramaṇiyar shrine in the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple complex. This song makes a number of requests to Murukan. The following is my paraphrase of the summary given to me by one of the singers of this song:

God is asked to protect the devotee from trouble, to shower blessings on the devotee, to make the devotee become a great poet, to make the devotee a great scholar in Tamil, to remove the devotee's bondage, to help the devotee curb pride of "I and mine", and to let the devotee keep company with other devotees.

16 See chapter 10 above.
The speaker is indicated in the poem by first person markers (emmai, ăttiṿerykum) and the God, Murukaṅ, is addressed with a vocative (Centippetipurakkuñecevvelē). This selection is an excerpt from Kantar Kalivenpā, composed by Kumarakuruparar who is dated by Zvelebil in the seventeenth century. The work has 122 stanzas. The first 110 are a long description of Murukaṅ addressed to him. The remaining 12 are a variety of requests also addressed to Murukaṅ. The portion sung at the shrine consists of the last 13 stanzas and it actually begins in the middle of the one hundred and tenth stanza in order to include part of the vocative. Thus the selection consists of the request part of the work, retaining only one line of the address and description.

The second song usually sung in segment three, "Jeya Haṇumān" (16), consists primarily of the phrase "Victory Haṇumān" (jeya haṇumān) with a few other descriptive epithets addressed directly to the deity. There are no first person markers. It appears in a small pamphlet of songs printed by a now disbanded organization of these village women. The source of the song is not provided in the publication.

The remaining two songs of this composite 'ritual text', "Nilaṅkoḷ Mēkattĩñ", and "Virāḷ Maṇaṇaintu", are addressed to Murukaṅ. They were frequently sung in segment 4 at the Nākamalai Murukaṅ Temple. "Nilaṅkoḷ Mēkattĩñ" (17) is a short poem which consists of several descriptive addresses to Murukaṅ and a request that he please give the garland to the girl who has fallen in love with him. "Virāḷ Maṇaṇaintu" (18) is a slightly longer poem.

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17 Kumarakuruparar is the founder of the Kāci maṭam (mentioned in Part II). He composed a song about the Goddess Miṇāḷī at Madurai which he is said to have performed before Tirumalainayakkar. He was from a vellāḷa family at Śrīvaikuntam in the extreme south of India. He was born as the result of a boon bestowed upon his parents in response to a prayer to Murukaṅ of Tiruccentūr. The boy was apparently unable to speak, so his parents took him to the shrine of Tiruccentūr and prayed to Murukaṅ. The boy had a vision of Murukaṅ, and his response to this vision was to sing Kantar Kalivenpā. K. V. Zvelebil, Tamil Literature (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 229-30; and K. Sivaraman, trans. Tiruchendur Kandar Kalivenba of Śri Athi Kumaraṇurupara Swamiṭal (Tirupananadal: Kasi Mutt, 1968), 2-3.
which asks Murukan to remove the want of a girl who is afflicted by love by giving the flower garland to her. It also contains several descriptive addresses to Murukan. The speaker is not indicated in either poem, however in both poems the addressee is God who is indicated by several vocatives. Both poems are from *Tiruppukal*, composed by Arunakirintar. "Nilaṅkoj Mēkattin" is from a collection of songs which are not associated with a particular place, whereas "Vīḷal Māraṅaintu" is from the section on Tirucccentū.

**Summary of the "Ritual Text"**

The "ritual text" of the "Pāvai Singing" has a minimal component which is fairly stable, and another component which may vary. The minimal text consists of four invocatory poems, all ten poems of "Tiruppaḷiyēucci", all twenty poems of "Tiruvempavai" and all thirty poems of "Tiruppavai". As far as I have been able to discern, this minimal "ritual text" has been stable from year to year, for a number of years. The song in praise of Āṇṭāl and the Paṅcapurāṇam songs are almost, but not quite, part of the minimal ritual text. The song in praise of Āṇṭāl was sung on every day that I was present, and it was added to the "ritual text" some years back, but only after the essential songs were already in place. The Paṅcapurāṇam was sung on most days prior to the additional songs, but it seems that the singing of the Paṅcapurāṇam depends on whether or not there is time in segment 2.

The variety in the "ritual text" lies with the "other" songs which are sung and their inclusion is determined by factors such as time, personal preference of group members and who is leading the singing. The songs which follow Paṅcapurāṇam in Appendix II

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18 Occasionally a man came and sang by himself after the essential songs had been sung. He usually sang one or two songs, and these changed from visit to visit. People did not join him, but his singing was appreciated by the singers and the leaders encouraged him to participate.
were almost always sung if any additional songs were sung in segment 2 or initiated in
segment 4 by the ladies of the Citti Vināyakar Temple group.

The "ritual text" of the "Pāvai Singing" draws on a variety of source texts,
composed over a long period of time by a variety of authors. If we omit the selections
from the Pañcapurāṇam, the remaining songs of the composite "ritual text" including the
essential songs were composed by ten different poets. If we include the Pañcapurāṇam
selections, another thirteen possible poets are added to the list. The songs of this "ritual
text" were composed over a period of approximately one thousand years, from the time of
Tirunāvukkaracar (seventh century) until the time of Kumarakuruparar (seventeenth
century). The selection of songs is not restricted to Tirumurai songs, because the
Kantapurāṇam, "Tiruppāvai", the song in praise of Āṇṭāḷ, Tiruppukal, quite possibly the
"Song for the Camphor Flame", Kantar Kalivenpā, and the song in praise of Hanumāṇ are
not Tirumurai songs. "Tiruppāvai", the song in praise of Āṇṭāḷ, and song in praise of
Hanumāṇ are associated with Vaiṣṇavism.

Interpretation: First Person Biography

In Nakamalai Putukkōṭai the singing of the songs is an event in the lives of those who sing
them, primarily local women. The singers sing in their own voices. The event in general
is worshipping God with the expectation of receiving benefits. More specifically, the event
is worshipping God through the singing of the pāvai songs, and this event is associated
with specific benefits such as obtaining good husbands for girls, good rain, prosperity, and
blessings for oneself and others. This understanding of the event is evident from the

19 Kacciyappacivācāriyar, Tirunāṉacampantar, Tirunāvukkaracar, Māṇikkavācakar,
Āṇṭāḷ, an unknown author, Aruṇakirināṭar, another unknown author, Kumarakuruparar,
and another unknown author.
singers' own perceptions of what they are doing, and from their understanding of the significance of the essential songs and the additional songs. This perception is reinforced by features of the ritual context such as the spatial arrangement, the ritual activity and the singing style.

One singer explained the "Pāvai Singing" by referring to the following poem by the Tirumurai poet, Cuntarar, and emphasized particularly verse 1:

You can praise them, 
tell them just 
what they want to hear, 
cleave to them as servants, 
but they will still give you nothing, 
those fakes-

listen, you poets, 
don't sing to them: 
sing of our father's Pukalūr.

You will have in this world 
rice and clothes, 
a celebration, 
even an end to sorrow, 

and in that other life 
without a doubt 
you will rule Śiva's world. (1/340)

Even if you call some weakling 
'Bhīma' 
or 'a mighty Vijaya with his bow,' 
or praise a miser as a latter-day Pāri, 
they will still give you nothing!

Sing, you poets, 
about Pukalūr 
of our auspicious lord, 
his body covered in ash:

without doubt 
you will rule the kingdom of the gods 
which towers over other worlds 
piled upon worlds. (2/341)

'He owns great tracts of land:
he is learned,
supports his kinfolk.
He holds lavish feasts'--

you can describe them in these terms,
but they will still give you nothing!

Sing, you poets,
of cool PukaHir
  where peasants plough with their bullocks
  while birds cry in song:

without a doubt
you will be the linch-pin
of the gods' own world. (3/342)

Even if you celebrate that old man,
  his body wrinkled, white,
  gone slack,
  all atremble when he stands.
as a hero whose shoulders are firm as the hills--

he will still give you nothing.

Sing, you poets,
about PukaHir
  of the auspicious lord
  who rides the fine white bull:

without doubt
you will reign like kings
over the world of the gods. (4/343)

You can call him a saint--
that deceitful liar.
that fraud,
that foul and faithless criminal--
but he will still give you nothing.

Sing, you poets.
about PukaHir
  of the auspicious god
  with the matted hair red as gold:

without doubt
you will cut away
  the anguish of the heart
and be redeemed. (5/344)

Call a worthless man good,
a gray-beard youthful--
give a man without family a fine lineage--

they will still give you nothing.

Sing, you poets,
of lovely Pukalūr,
    its fields intoxicating
    with their sweet fragrance:

without doubt
without confusion,
you will rule the gods' world. (6/345)

You can proclaim that invalid
    a hero with mighty arms,
or that vile man
    a mother munificent to all poets--

and they will still give you nothing.

don't wander this world, starving,
with eyes sunk deep into their sockets:

sing, you poets,
of our father's Pukalūr--

without doubt,
without paying for it,
you will rule the whole world. (7/346)

If a sesame seed falls to the ground,
they will search for it everywhere
but they wouldn't give anything even to a fly.

Even if you praise such people
    as great patrons and protectors,
they will still give you nothing!

Sing, you poets,
of lovely Pukalūr,
    where the birds take refuge:

without doubt,
without sinking into the mire.
you will go free. (8/347)

You may speak of some ignoramus
    as a fine, learned man,
say he resembles the lord of love,
make someone wholly immature
   into a paragon of wholeness--

and they will still give you nothing.

Sing, you poets,
of Pukalūr,
   where the owls in the tree-hollows
   never stop hooting:

without doubt,
as masters
you will rule the gods' world. (9/348)

'He is a veritable Kāma to women,
that handsome Lord.
He brandishes a spear in his hand'--

you may chatter on like this,
but they will still give you nothing!

Sing, you poets,
of Pukalūr,
where buffaloes plunge through the ponds and pools:

without doubt,
as lords
you will rule the gods' world. (10/349)

Úraṇ, the harsh devotee,
son of Cātāiyan,
father of Vāṇappacakai,
from Nāvalūr
   with its flowering fields rich in honey,
sang these ten songs
to the wealthy lord who lives in southern Pukalūr
   where dense pockets of lotus
   rise high in the paddy-fields.

Those who can sing them
will doubtless
reach the feet of dharma's lord (11/350)20

20 From David Dean Shulman, trans. and comm., Songs of the Harsh Devotee: The Tēvāram of Cuntaramūrtināyanār (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1990), 205-211. The numbers 1-11 are the Patikam numbers. The numbers 340-350 represent the position of these verses within the seventh Tirumūṟai.
The significance of Cuntarar's poem as explained to me was: why praise others, praise this God who will give benefits and release also. This is what the "Pāvai Singing" is: individual devotees praising God so that they will receive benefits.

The references that the women use with respect to themselves indicate that they regard the "Pāvai Singing" as an event in their lives. The following quote is a translation of part of the opening paragraph of the "Vote of Thanks" read out to the singers on the final day of Mārkali:

I give thanks, on behalf of you, to the Lord who gives to us the greatest pleasure of gathering here to worship his foot, by bowing [our] heads, seeing [him] with [our] eyes, spreading his fame, extolling his names and beauty with [our] tongues while [our] hearts soften and melt; I place my head at his foot and worship.21

This excerpt indicates that the activity which the singers have been doing for the month of Mārkali is praising and worshipping God. The use of inclusive first person plural (nammai, namakku) indicates that the praising and worshipping of God has been done by all who are gathered.

Other references in the "Vote of Thanks" indicate that the specific act of worship is singing the pāvai songs. The speaker thanked one member of the group for leading the singing of the pāvai songs (namakku ellām pāvaipāta atiyēttu koṭuttu). Then she thanked those who came early to sing the pāvai songs (pāvaipāta parāntōṭi varum tāymārkalukkum). Next she thanked the member of the group who collected and managed the money for the pūcais and gifts "under the auspices of those who sing the pāvai each year" (āṇṭutōrum pāvaipātuvaṛ ċārpil). Afterwords she thanked the lady who gives the auspicious items to those who sing the pāvai songs each year (āṇṭutōrum maṅkaluc

21 "avaṅ tāl vaṇaṅka nammai ellām inku kūṭuvittu avan pukalaiyum - namattaiyum alakaiyum talaiyāl vaṇaṅki kaṅkaḷal kaṇṭu, nāvāl ċṭtip paravi, nekkuntu ullam nekkuruki nirkum paramāṇantattai namakku alitta ċpperumāṇukku inkaḷ aṇaịvarin cārpāka naṇriyait terivittu avan tāl mītu cē cenniyai vaittu vaṇaṅkukirēn".
Although other songs were also sung, the activity for which these ladies are thanked is only connected with singing the \textit{pāvai} songs. The perception conveyed by the "Vote of Thanks" is that the ladies have been singing the \textit{pāvai} songs as an act of worship.

The meaning of the \textit{pāvai} songs as situated as the event of "singing the \textit{pāvai}" in the lives of these individual women is that benefits can be gained by singing these songs during \textit{Mārkalī}. Several explanations were given by singers and by other members of the community for what is special about singing \textit{pāvai} songs at this time: to gain worldly benefits, specific and general, and to attain mutti.

In my preliminary investigations in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai, I asked what the significance of "Tiruvempāvai" and the \textit{Mārkalī} festival were. I had thirteen respondents\textsuperscript{22}: four men and nine women. Some gave more than one answer. One man and five women (one of whom was his wife) said that the significance was so that young girls could get good husbands and so that there would be good rain. One of the same women and another responded that the meaning of "Tiruvempāvai" is the individual imagining themselves as the woman and God as the hero or lover. Another man said that singing these songs was something that women did and was for the benefit of themselves. Another man said that it was something that women and children do in order to obtain well-being. A gentleman who sang occasionally in 1993-94, provided this answer: "Because of our singing "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyelucci" blessings are available to us so that we

\textsuperscript{22} This is not a random sample. Six of the nine women sang both years and are leaders of the Citti Viṇāyakar Temple group. One of the remaining three was not able to come and sing in the early morning. The remaining woman frequently stays in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai, and when there she conducts classes on \textit{Tiruvācakam}. She was there in 1990-91 but did not sing due to old age. The last of the ladies was unmarried; I only really got to know her in 1993-94. Of the four men, one was one of the priests, another a husband of one of the woman respondents who I did not see singing, another I could not identify, and another came periodically throughout the month and sang some of the time.
may obtain release".23 The other responses of the women were: for blessings in general (3 responses); it is a devotional song (1 response); by observing the Mārkali activities at daybreak, the rest of life will go in an orderly manner (1 response); and it is a time for making particular requests to God (2 responses). These remaining reasons are really aspects of the same thing: it is a good time to worship God; for worshipping; for blessings in general; and for making requests to Him. This enumeration of benefits is similar to those listed in chapter 6 by authors who had placed "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppāḷḷiyēḷucci" in the first person biography, with the exception that these authors mentioned in chapter 6 did not mention the purpose of getting good husbands for girls.

These benefits are actually mentioned in the two pāvai songs: "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppāvai". Poems 9 and 19 of "Tiruvempāvai" are regularly construed as the request by girls for Śaiva husbands. Poem 16 is addressed to the cloud requesting it to rain just like the Goddess bestows her grace. Poem 17 can be understood as a request for general well-being: "play, springing into the waters so that well-being will flourish". Poems 11, 12, 13 and 20 suggest that the cleansing activity and the life-style of devotees leads to mutti.24 It has already been mentioned above that in "Tiruppāvai" the benefits to be obtained from the vow are prosperity, rain, a land free from harm and the removal of past and future karma which leads to mutti.

The significance of singing most of the "other" songs echoes the reasons for singing the pāvai songs. Generally the respondents to my questionnaires were the ones

23 "nām tiruvempāvai, tiruppāḷḷiyēḷuccipāṭalkal pāṭuvatānaī mūlamākā nām viṭṭu peṟṟu aṭṭaiyā namakkur āci kiṭaikkum".

24 See the whole of poem 11. Poem 12: "He who is the holy water in whom we joyfully bathe to remove the suffering of binding birth". In poem 13 the pond is compared to Śiva and his consort, and the blemishes that are washed off are often understood to be physical and spiritual. Poem 20: "[Your] golden flowers graciously accept [us] so that we are redeemed".
who determined which additional songs were sung in the Citti Vinayakar Temple singing group. They shaped the ritual to some extent by their choice of song. I have relied for the most part on one of the leaders' interpretation in trying to understand the significance of these songs. The reasons for singing the additional songs reinforce the reasons given for singing the three essential songs: for good husbands for girls, and for well-being in general, including rain and prosperity for oneself and for others.

The singing of the Pañcapurāṇam, the "Nātavintu Kalātī" song, "Centippatipurakkum", and the three "Vālūtu" poems can be understood as songs sung for general benefits, including rain and prosperity, either personally for the devotee who sings or on behalf of others.

The pamphlet of Pañcapurāṇam songs used in the "Pāvai Singing", says that if one sings them once a day there will be benefit. In response to my query to one of the singers about what benefit would be gained, I was told that one's wishes would be fulfilled, God would give His blessing, and God would give one the energy to face any difficulty. She then said that this list was only an humble attempt to articulate the benefit, and in order to really understand, one would have to sing every day and realize the benefit for themself. "Nātavintu Kalātī" (9) is interpreted as a general request for grace (arul tūrāy). The fourth verse which specifically asks for grace is repeated at the end of the song when it was sung by the group. "Centippatipurakkum", as we saw in the earlier summary, is a request to God to give the speaker, who is a devotee, a life free from hardship, an education, and spiritual maturity. In the second and third of the three verses under the title

25 The pamphlet says that the Pañcapurāṇam should be sung in the home as well as in temples. See the Introductory comments: Tiruccirippalam Pañcapurāṇam (Tirunakar: Tirumurai Maṇangam, 1990).
of "Valattu" (Benedictions) we see a specific request for rain, a wish for a world which is prosperous and orderly, in which people, good government and religion flourish.

The last two poems of the composite "ritual text", "Nila'kolith Mokattith" and "Viral Maraainantu" were frequently sung in segment 4 at the Nakamalai Murukan Temple in 1993-94 because one lady, who wanted to complete her daughter's marriage soon, had asked that it be sung at this time with this purpose in mind. I was told that previously,

27 The idea that mothers sing the pavai songs so that their daughters will get married is a variation on the widespread idea that the pavai songs are sung by unmarried girls to get good husbands. See Dehejia, Antul and Her Path of Love, 4; C. J. Fuller, The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India (New Delhi: Viking, Penguin Books, 1992), 182, 197-8; Holly Baker Reynolds, "The Changing Nature of a Tamil Vow: The Challenge of Trans-Sectarian Bhakti in Contemporary South India" in Boeings and Bullock-Carts: Studies in Change and Continuity in Indian Civilization, vol. 4, ed. Bardwell L. Smith (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1990), 64; and Cutler, Consider Our Vow, 1.

Yet in the two ritual events studied here in which "Tiruvempavai" is sung (i.e. the "Tiruvempavai" Festival in Miinjci-Cuntarcevarar Temple, and the "Pavai Singing" in Nakamalai Putukkottai) unmarried girls have a low profile. In Miinjci-Cuntarcevarar Temple, where this festival is framed as an event in the life of the poet-saint Manikavacakar, no young girls at all participated in the singing, and they had virtually no presence in the audience.

I have already noted that the group of singers in Nakamalai Putukkottai was usually at least two-thirds married women. Prior to Markali in 1993-94, I obtained a list of names of the core group of singers in Nakamalai Putukkottai; and every woman on the list was married. During the Markali of 1993-94 all of the core group were married women, and the women who included "getting good husbands" as one of the reasons for singing these songs in Markali were married women. Clearly they were not singing in order to get good husbands for themselves. One of these women did say that before she was married she sang verses 9 and 19 of "Tiruvempavai" for the purpose of getting a good husband, and she feels that her request was granted. Some of them may have sung these songs for good husbands, because many have been singing since childhood. The majority of the participants, and especially the leaders of the singing, are not doing what is commonly perceived that is done, singing for good husbands for themselves. One of the men said he sang specifically to get blessings and in order to attain mutti.

Some of those who came and joined the "Pavai Singing" were unmarried. One of the singers who I interviewed was unmarried, and among the five things she was singing for in the 1993-94 Markali, marriage was the last on the list. She mentioned that if she had been singing in particular for a good husband this year, she would have followed some of the restrictions practiced by those singing for marriage. In 1993-94 she did not follow those restrictions. This was not because she thought marriage was unimportant, rather it was because this year marriage was not a priority.
these songs had been sung so that the daughters of the women in the group would be married quickly, and both of the daughters in question are now married. The women believe these marriages were the result of their singing of the songs.\textsuperscript{28}

I asked what it was about "\textit{Nilañkoñ Mēkattin}" and "\textit{Viral Māranañtu}" that made them suitable to sing in order to complete the daughter's marriage. The response, in summary, is that the poems are understood to request the marriage of a girl. Both songs, in addition to praising Murukan in various ways, request Murukan to give a garland to a girl. To one singer, the garland in the poem represents both Murukan's grace and the garlands exchanged by the couple in the marriage ceremony. The garland that Murukan wears is a symbol of his grace. God should show his grace by giving the garland. If God

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\textsuperscript{28} Piivai Group Singer, interviews with the author, Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai, Madurai 25, 28 February and 17 March 1994.
gives the garland it means that the girl also will receive the garland from the husband, i.e., her marriage will be completed. The reference to "deficiency" in "Viral Māraṇaṁtu" is explained as the deficiency of not being married. Therefore the request to remove the deficiency of the girl is a request that she should be married soon. The line which expresses the desire that the deficiency of the girl should be removed is repeated by the ladies when they sing the poem. When concluding this explanation, I was told that the famous commentator on Tiruppukal, Kirupāṇantavāriyār, said that a girl should sing "Viral Māraṇaṁtu" in particular if she wanted to get married.

In Part II, we saw that the giving of the garland is a theme in akam poetry. Navanīṭa Kīrusṇa Pāratiyār invokes this theme when situating "Tiruvempāvai" in the akam narrative world. The hero came to the virgin girl and gave the garland making known to her his love for her. The heroine then undertook the Tai bath so that she would obtain him as her husband. Two interpretations of "Nilankol Mēkattin" and "Viral Māraṇaṁtu" understand them also in terms of the akam narrative world. In one interpretation the poems are a request to the hero on behalf of the heroine to accept the heroine's love. In the other interpretation, "Viral Māraṇaṁtu" is understood to be about the suffering of the heroine who is in love with the hero, and "Nilankol Mēkattin" is about the heroine wanting the


30 In a discussion about these two poems, Ā. Ānantarācan also situated the poems in the akam narrative frame. According to him, the poems are addressed to Lord Murukana by the stepmother or a friend. The girl is lovesick and so the stepmother asks Murukan to give the garland to her as acceptance of her love. Interview with the author, Palkalainakar, Madurai, July 1994.

In Navanīṭa Kīrusṇa Pāratiyār's use of the theme of the hero giving the garland when interpreting "Tiruvempāvai", the giving of the garland is the hero's revelation of his love to the heroine. In Ā. Ānantarācan's interpretation of these two songs, the same theme is used to indicate that the heroine has not yet received the hero's love and is therefore suffering.
flower garland in order to consummate her desire. In this second interpretation, the heroine represents the soul, and the hero represents God.\footnote{\textit{Kirupānantavāriyār} in his commentary on "Virāl Māraṇaientu", which includes a reference to "Nilaṅko Mēkattin", casts the relationship portrayed in the poems in terms of the beloved-lover relationship (nāyaki nāyaka pāvam). He says about "Virāl Māraṇaientu": For the heroine (talaivi) who has love for the hero (talaivan), the cool light of the moon is hot and the Tenral wind burns like fire. Here, putting the soul (jīvāṁmā) as the beloved (nāyaki) and the God (paramāṁmā) as the lover (nāyakan), the soul, who is the beloved has love for the hero who is God, becomes increasingly anguished and becomes emaciated. In this way, there are many songs in the beloved-lover mode (nāyaki nāyaka pāvam). The commentator cites two other examples and then makes the following comment regarding "Nilaṅko Mēkattin": "In this way, the soul (jīvāṁmā), who desires God (paramāṁmā), desires the flower garland in order to consummate that desire." Kirupānantavāriyār, 	extit{Tiruppukal Virivurai Tiruppanaṅkuparam Tirucccentür (mutarpaṭaiṉitum, irāntām paṭaiṉitum)} (Cenai: Vāṉṭi Patippakam, n.d.), 186.}
The Structure of the Ritual and First Person Biography

Aspects of the ritual reinforce the view that the singing of the songs in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai is an activity of individual devotees, an event in their own lives. During the ritual, there is no absolute distinction between the singers and the audience. The audience and singers share the same space. The audience can receive any ritual honor that the singers receive, and anybody can participate in the singing. There are also no images or other legendary personalities whose voice is heard singing the songs.

In the ritual event of "Pāvai Singing" there is no spatial distance maintained between female singers and female audience members or between male singers and male audience members. During the "Pāvai Singing" the women who sing at the Citti Vināyakar Temple sit both in the center of and at the sides of the railings. Any woman or child could come and join the singers, to sing or to just sit there. The men generally sat or stood apart at the side usually occupied by men during worship, and any man could join in and sing.\textsuperscript{32} This is in sharp contrast the Tiruvāntal Pūcai and the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival of the Miṅāṭci-Cuntarćcuvar Temple in which the singers, the ṛtuvaṛs, have a special space in the ritual where audience members are not permitted.

There were also no ritual distinctions between audience and singers in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai. The special honor (piraćātam) bestowed on the last day was given to anyone who participated regularly. The bestowing of the special honor happens yearly. If one wants to, one could come regularly and then receive that honor also. The abhiṣekam items (milk and ash) passed out at the end of the abhiṣekam were also shared with the audience. The lack of ritual distinction is emphasised during the final teparātaṇai when the whole crowd merges in an effort to see the showing of the camphor flame to the deity and to

\textsuperscript{32} The spatial distance between women and men reflects the cultural custom that women generally should share space only with men from their own immediate families.
receive the flame, ash and kuṇkumam. The singers and the audience are indistinguishable at this point, and the priest made no special distinction between the singers and the audience when giving the camphor flame, kuṇkumam and ash at the end of the pūcaī. This is unlike the "Tiruvempavai" Festival in which the singers of the songs, the ātuvaṛs, receive special ritual distinction in the form of temple honors.

The style of singing at the temples in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai was also uniform. All three songs, "Tiruppaḷḷiyēccoli", "Tiruvempavai" and "Tiruppavai" (and also the song in praise of Āṇṭāl) were sung in the same tune without any variation so that one could join in easily. Thus any devotee could become a singer by simply singing, thereby making the event one's own. This contrasts with the "Tiruvempavai" Festival in which the singing style was generally individualized by the ātuvaṛs, making it difficult to sing along.

In the Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai singing, there are also no images of saints or poets, and generally no special personalities who take over the voice of the poems. The ritual does not include any images of saints, poets or other personalities, unlike the continual presence of Māṇikkavaṇcakar's image in the "Tiruvempavai" Festival. Furthermore, the selections used in the Mārkali month singing in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai are removed from their original context, as a part of a particular text composed by a particular author with a specific life story.33 No information concerning the text, source or the author was made known during the singing of the hymns. Even when songs 1 to 5, 10 to 14 and 17 and 18 were hand copied by one of the ladies singing and given to me on the first few days of Mārkali month, the selections contained no information about either the author or the title of the work. Only two of the selections had any headings: "The Song for the Camphor Flame"; and the songs thus collected under the heading "Vālṭtu". Whether or not the

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33 The exception to this is "Tiruppavai" in which the author's identity is given. This situation is addressed in the following paragraph.
person who provided me with copies of the songs knew the sources and author I do not
know. But it would seem that she did not think it was important for me to know such
matters in order to participate in the singing. For her it was important that I have a copy of
the songs and that I know certain details about how to sing them.

I have argued that the historical poet is absent for the most part in the Nākamalai
Putukkōṭṭai singing, but, in one case the historical author was present. That was in the
singing of "Tiruppāvai" in which the last verse is a signature verse which identifies the
author. The singing of this verse was immediately followed every day that I was there by
the verse in praise of this poet. I was told that the reason for singing this song was to
honor Āṇṭāl, who originally sang "Tiruppāvai", thereby setting her apart from them. I then
asked why no song was sung in praise of Māṇikkavācakar who sang "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccī"
and "Tiruvempāvai", and the answer seemed to be that until that moment nobody had
thought to sing a song of praise of him.³⁴ I think the reason that Āṇṭāl is praised and not
Māṇikkavācakar is because "Tiruppāvai" ends with a signature verse which brings her into
the ritual, whereas "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccī" and "Tiruvempāvai" can be sung without ever
knowing who composed them. The response to Āṇṭāl's presence in the ritual is to honor
her, and then to continue with what they are doing, i.e. worshipping God through song in
order to obtain benefits.

Summary
The singing of "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccī" and "Tiruvempāvai" at the Citti Viṇāyakar and the
Nākamalai Murukaṇ Temples in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai is set in first person biography.

³⁴ This question was posed to one singer who then posed it to some of the other
singers. The answers were much the same. Pāvai Group Singer, interview with the
The specific event is the "Pāvai Singing" in which the individuals sing songs as worship in order gain benefits. The "Pāvai Singing" like the singing in the Tiruvanantath Pūcai and the "Tiruvampāvai" Festival, is understood in a biographical narrative world which is a pūram style of interpretation. In chapter 12, I will suggest that the pattern of behaviour exhibited by the singers in these three ritual events is also a pūram style of behaviour.
III: Chapter 12: Pattern of Usage

In Part III we have considered the singing of "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" in the *Tiruvantantal Pūcai* and "Tiruvempāvai" in the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, at the Miṇṭṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple in Madurai, as well as the singing of both of these collections in the "Pāvai Singing" at the Citti Viṇāyakar and the Nākamalai Murukan Temples in nearby Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai. In each of these ritual events the significance of the poems is different because they are situated in different narrative worlds. In the *Tiruvantantal Pūcai*, "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" is part of an event of awakening the presiding deity of the temple by the deity's especially designated servant. The voice of the poem is that of a bard and the poem is situated as an event in the life of a specific hero and his wife, Cuntarēcuvarar and Miṇṭṭci. In the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival at the Miṇṭṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple, the singing of "Tiruvempāvai" is situated as an event in the life of the poet, Māṇikkavācakar. The significance of "Tiruvempāvai" in this narrative world is that singing "Tiruvempāvai" is Māṇikkavācakar's act of worship through which he attains the spiritual goal, *mutti*. In the Citti Viṇāyakar and the Nākamalai Murukan Temples, both "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" and "Tiruvempāvai" are sung as part of the "Pāvai Singing", and are understood as an event in the first person biography. In this narrative world the songs are sung by individual devotees in order to obtain benefits.

These poems are, therefore, understood in three different biographical worlds in these three ritual events. I have argued in chapter 4 that understanding a text in a biography is a *puṟam* style of interpretation. I shall now suggest that the singers' pattern of behaviour in each ritual event is a pattern of behaviour implied in the classical *puṟam* poetry: going to the hero, singing praises, making petitions and receiving benefits. I will argue that this
behaviour pattern is noted specifically in the puram guide poems (āṟṟuppaṭai) of the classical era.

"Tiruppaḻiyṛucci" and "Tiruvempāvai" are not the only poems that are sung in these rituals, although they have strong associations with the central meaning of the ritual events in which they are sung. Each event has its own distinctive "ritual text". I will try to show how both the composition of the "ritual text" and the coherence underlying the significance of the "ritual text" depends upon the narrative world in which it is situated.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the pattern of behaviour evident in the three ritual events. That will be followed by showing why this is a basic puram pattern of behaviour, and the chapter will close with a discussion of the concepts of "ritual text" and "coherence" as manifest in the way in which the poems are used in the three ritual events.

Model of Behaviour Evident in the Three Ritual Events

The singing in the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, the "Pāvai Singing", and, less clearly, the Tiruvanantatal Pūcai exhibit a similar pattern of behaviour, namely a going to the hero, singing his praises and receiving benefits. In each event, the singer receives back some of the deity's beneficence.

In the Tiruvanantatal Pūcai, the ōṭuvār goes to the pāḷiṭarai and sings to the deity. Later on he also sings to the followers of the hero, the saints. So also in the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, Māṇikkavācakar is depicted as going before Naṭṭarācar, the most important form of Śiva for Māṇikkavācakar, to sing "Tiruvempāvai". He also sings before Miṇāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar, the presiding deities. In a similar way the ladies in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai go before Citti Viṇāya kar and Nākamalai Murukān, the presiding deities in their respective temples, and sing songs. In segment II.4 of the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, Māṇikkavācakar is depicted as performing various acts of worship before Viṇāya kar,
Minätçi and Murukan. As part of his worship, he sings a poem from "Tiruvempāvai" for each of them. In a similar way, the ladies at Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai go before Pālaccupperamaniyar and Hanumān, and worship and sing a song before these deities as well.

In both the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival and in the "Pāvai Singing" the singers make requests to God through their songs. In segment II.5 of the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, Māṇikkavācakar is depicted as a supplicant, and the medium of this request is the song, "Tiruvempāvai". In a similar way, the ladies in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai also use songs to present their requests to God, with the clearest example of a request being for husbands for daughters through the singing of "Nīḷāṅkōḷ Mēkattin" and "Virāḷ Māranāintu" to Nākamalai Murukan.

The singers in each of these events receive in return some of the deity's favour, piracātam. To receive piracātam is to receive God's grace. We have already noted in chapter 8 that the camphor flame, ash, kuṅkumam, and food distributed after tipārātaṇai transfers grace to the worshipper. Davis notes that many Hindu sects, including some Śaivas, view the distribution of the food after worship as a "form of divine 'favour'". This food is said to have great powers such as purifying, and destroying sin.¹ The various substances the devotee receives at the end of worship are one of the ways in which the deity gives to the devotee.

¹ Richard H. Davis, Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 155, 160. Davis goes on to quote the Kāmikāgama, one of texts which are said to be the basis of ritual at the Minätçi-Cuntarccuvārar Temple, in order to say that in a Śaiva Siddhānta temple food as piracātam is not distributed because humans cannot bear it. At the Minätçi-Cuntarccuvārar Temple today, however, food is distributed as piracātam. In Mārkāḷī month the line-ups for the milk at the end of Tiruvagantai Pāvai are very long, and one can purchase food piracātam at piracātam stalls. Also, clearly the ladies in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai place importance on receiving piracātam.
At the end of the Tiruvanantat Pūcaī, the ētvār receives pirācātam: the camphor flame, ash and milk, just before the other devotees. In the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, Māṇikkavācakar is depicted as receiving pirācātam (camphor, milk and bananas) in segment II.4 when he is worshipping Viṇāyakar, Miṇāṭci and Murukana. The ladies receive pirācātam several times during the "Pāvai Singing". They receive ash and milk that had been used in the abhiṣekam. At the end of the pūcaī at both temples, they receive the camphor flame, kuṇkumam and ash. At the end of all segments they receive the naivēṭṭiyam as pirācātam.

Even though the pattern of behaviour is the same in these three rituals, there is an important difference in the status of Māṇikkavācakar in the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, the ētvār in the Tiruvanantat Pūcaī, and the ladies in the "Pāvai Singing". The ētvār in the Tiruvanantat Pūcaī and the ladies in Nākamalai Putukkottai are always treated as human. Māṇikkavācakar is treated as both human and divine. His human aspect is manifested ritually by the fact that he receives the parivatām or headscarf and is depicted in various human postures. Over and over again, however, Māṇikkavācakar is treated as divine, and this is ritually expressed by offering him tipārātaṇai.

The difference is significant because the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival confirms ritually a pattern of behaviour that leads to mutti, and this is reinforced by Māṇikkavācakar's biography. In the Miṇāṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple festival, Māṇikkavācakar goes to Nāṭarācar, sings his songs and then he is offered tipārātaṇai - a recognition of his divine nature. His human postures show how a human should behave, going to the deity and

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2 Māṇikkavācakar wears the parivatām throughout the festival (segment I, II, III). I was told that this is an honor given to humans, not to gods. Further, his pose as worshipper in segment II.4, and as supplicant in segment II.5, as interpreted by the priests and ētvārs, also stress his human aspect.
worshipping through song, and being offered tipārātanai indicates the result of behaving as Māṇikkavācakar did, and attaining mutti.

According to the biography, Śiva himself records Māṇikkavācakar's songs and thereby legitimizes them. The biography associates Māṇikkavācakar's attainment of mutti with the Naṭarācar form of Śiva and indicates that the occasion on which he attained mutti is directly related to the songs. The songs are recorded and Māṇikkavācakar has an opportunity to explain that Naṭarācar is the meaning, and then immediately he merges with Naṭarācar. The sequence of events suggests that through these songs one understands Naṭarācar and unites with him, attaining mutti.

The Tirumurāi texts also construe the deity-devotee relationship in this way. The third invocatory poem, "Naṅkaṭampaṅai", sung by the ladies, composed by the Tirumurāi poet Tirunāvukkarācar, describes the relationship between the God and devotee:

The duty of the Lord of Tirukkara temple of Southern Kaṭampai,
whose consort bore our Śkanda,
is to support even me, a devotee;
my duty is to serve.3

God's duty is to support and protect the devotee,4 and the devotee's duty is to serve (pañī ceytu). The Tamil Lexicon cites the last line of this poem when it gives the meaning for pañī as "bowing, reverencing". Therefore, we may understand that service means also worshipping. Cēkkilār, the author of the twelfth Tirumurāi, the Periya Purāṇam, while relating Cuntarar's biography indicates that Śiva prefers the offering of song to all other forms of worship. After Cuntarar had been claimed by Śiva and had been made to realize who the claimant was, Śiva said to him:  "because singing in love is for us the finest form

3 My translation of "Naṅkaṭampaṅai" by Tirunāvukkarācar, fifth Tirumurāi, 132:9.
4 The verb used to describe God's action with respect to the devotee is tāṅkutal. The Tamil Lexicon gives as the primary meaning for this verb "uphold, bear up, support"; the secondary meaning "to protect, guard"; and as the third meaning "to give shelter, rest".
of worship, sing about us in Tamil words on earth."5 The devotee, then, should serve Śiva through song. Cuntarar's song, cited in full in chapter 11, indicates that by praising Śiva through song, one will receive worldly and other worldly benefits. According to this song, if one sings about Śiva, one will receive rice, clothes, the removal of suffering in this life (poem 1, 8), the attainment of a high status in another life (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10), and mutti (5, 11). These three Tirumurai references depict the relationship between Śiva and the devotee as one in which the devotee serves Śiva through song and in turn Śiva supports and protects the devotee in this world by providing concrete benefits, and eternally by enabling the devotee to attain mutti.

Just as the structure of devotional text and interpretation described in Parts I and II has a counterpart in the classical context, so also the pattern of behaviour evident, particularly in the "Tiruvenpāvai" Festival and the "Pāvai Singing", has its counterpart in the classical context. The pattern of behaviour of going to God, praising him, making requests and receiving benefits is implicit in the situation envisaged behind purām poetry.

The Puram Pattern

G. Subbiah has identified three interrelated concepts which he argues identify the worldview evident in the classical poetry and poetics. These are the "hero", "space" and "giving". Subbiah suggests that the Tamil concept of hero included both a human hero and a deity, and it is not necessary to see one concept evolving out of the other. According to

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5 Excerpted from verse 70 of the "Tatuttātkoṇṭa Purāṇam" in Cēkkilār Perumān Periya Purāṇam ena Valankkum Tiruttōntar Purāṇam (Tiruvāvātutūraga: Tirukkayilāya Paramparait Tiruvāvātutūraga Aṭīṇam, 1988), 27. I am thankful to Dr. Gomathi for this reference.

I am indebted to Dr. Gomathi for her guidance as a scholar and as a singer. Many of her insights were expressed as a singer. As I had originally conducted interviews under the condition of anonymity, I have not been able to specifically acknowledge all her valuable contributions.
Subbiah, the distinguishing characteristic of a hero is giving. Valour is necessary to be a
hero, but a hero attains that most coveted achievement, fame, through giving.\(^6\) The ideal
hero gives out of compassion, spontaneously, without distinction and without expectation
of return. Two of the most famous donors in Tamil history are the classical heroes, Pāri and
Pēkaṇ. Pāri is particularly remembered for spontaneously giving a chariot to a vine which
had no support on which to grow. Pēkaṇ is remembered for giving a robe to a peacock
which he thought was shivering in cold, because he was overwhelmed with compassion.
Furthermore, the classical hero is accessible. He has a particular place on this earth where
supplicants can approach him. According to Subbiah's argument, the classical Tamil world
had heroes who were able and willing to help others. In the classical Tamil world view the
ideal hero (human or divine) is found in this world, and all one has to do is go to his place
and receive gifts from him.\(^7\)

In the classical context, the heros are primarily kings and chieftans, and the
recipients are primarily poets, bards and other performers. The classical \(puṟam \; āṟṟuppatāi\)
poem in a sense encapsulates the relationship between hero and bard. In \(āṟṟuppatāi\) poems
one bard, performer or poet directs another to a benefactor. The following example is
Ramanujan's translation of \(Puṟanāṇūṟu\) 69 by Ālattūr Kīḷār about Kīḻai Vaḷavaṇ.

Dear singer:

here you are,
a lute in your hand
that knows its grammar,


\(^7\) G. Subbiah, "Patterns in Religious Thought in Early South India: A Study of Classical Tamil Texts" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1988). Subbiah develops this argument in chapters III (89-183), IV (183-224) and V (225-268). He summarizes it in the conclusion. This study has been published under the title, *Roots of Tamil Religious Thought* (Pondicherry: Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture, 1991).
a hunger in your belly
that no one heeds,
clutching at your waist
a cloth of patches
with strange threads,
damp with sweat,
on a body aimless as a ruined man's,
and your large family
dulled by poverty.

You round the whole earth
and you're here
to ask
in a small voice
for help.
          So listen.

In banne red camps,  
his army slaughters
the murderous elephants of enemy kings,
leaves them wounded in pools of blood,
makes a slaughterhouse of the battlefield.

He is at Urai yür.  
city of tall towers;  
he takes up spears only against enemies
and he moves right into the heart of their country.

He is Ki lai Va l aν,  
he wears perfect garlands, 
    his ornaments are flames 
    of yellow gold.

Go to him,

and you don't even have to stand
at his great door.

Go, fill your eyes
with the chariots he gives away
in broad daylight.

Once you've seen him
you'll wear lotuses of gold, flowers
no bee will touch,

and you don't even have to stand
there, at that door.\textsuperscript{8}

The speaker recognises the pitiable state of the singer and urges the singer to go to this hero who is mighty, generous and accessible.\textsuperscript{9} The speaker is a living example of the hero's generosity and by telling the pitiable singer to go to the same hero, he praises that hero also. The key elements of this poem are going to the hero, receiving benefits from the hero and then praising the hero.\textsuperscript{10}

The basic elements of going to the hero, praising the hero, making requests, receiving benefits and then continuing to praise the hero occur as themes under the \textit{puram} situation of praise (\textit{pāṭaṁṭiṇai}) in the \textit{Tolkāppiyam Porul Atikāram}:\textsuperscript{11}

- "eulogising the giver and reviling the non-giver";
- "the kīttar, pānar, porunar and viraliyar who have received presents directing those who have not received them and telling what they have received";
- "poets etc. mentioning their wants and getting rewards";
- "eulogising the prosperous condition of the king after receiving the reward and taking leave of the king either on his own initiative or on the initiative of the king."

In addition, a number of poems in the two \textit{puram} anthologies, \textit{Puranānūru} and \textit{Patiruppattu}, have been assigned themes which indicate they are understood to be about

\textsuperscript{9} See Cuntarar's poem verse 7/346, in chapter 11 above.
\textsuperscript{11} According to traditional accounts, Cuntarar needed money so that his wife Paravaiyāi could give charity on Paṅkuṇi Uttiram day. So Cuntarar went to Pukalūr, worshipped the form of Śiva there, and then lay down to sleep. When he awoke, the bricks that he had used as pillows had turned to gold. He then sang these poems to Śiva as the God of Pukalūr. See Ti. Cu. Cokkaliṅkam Ceṭṭiyār, \textit{Palaṉ Ṭarum Tirumūraip Patikāṅkalum Tuṭippāṭalkalum} (Varalāru-Palaṉ-Uraiṉaṉ) (Maturai Valamapuri Accakam, 1977), 145.
requests for gifts or presentations of needs to the hero. Subbiah identifies thirty-seven such poems, as well as fourteen guide poems.  

There is then implicit in the puqam poetry and poetics the pattern of behaviour of going to the hero, making requests, receiving benefits and then praising the hero. It is an appropriate way to interact with the hero. If he is a true hero he responds generously. In a similar way, the three ritual events under study here show that the appropriate way to relate to Śiva is to go to him and sing his praise. He will bestow benefits immediately in the form of piravātam, and he will respond to requests, provide a good life and finally will give mutti, all because he is a true hero.

The presupposition that God is "other" is implicit in the puqam pattern. In this pattern, God is encountered in a place, in time and space, rather than in mystical experience. One can go to that place, worship that manifestation of God, make requests to that God, and receive concrete evidence of God's beneficience in the form of piravātam. The very presupposition of making a request is that there is a distinction between the one who makes the request and the one who has the ability to fulfill that request. I am suggesting that in the three rituals studied here, that the bard, poet or any individual devotee enjoys and interacts with God as "other".  

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12 Subbiah, "Patterns in Religious Thought in Early South India," 247.
13 I am differing from Cutler by suggesting that God remains as "other" in these three ritual uses of "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppalliyēcucī". Cutler seems to suggest that the distinction between God, author-poet, professional singer and audience diminishes and is removed in the ritual use of Śrīvaiṣṇava and Śaiva poems. See Cutler, Songs of Experience, all of chapter 2, and also in particular 35, 37, 46-7, 52, 73, and 113.

In the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival only some of the identifications suggested by Cutler are plausible. The structure of the ritual suggests that the ātuvar, particularly the Stala Ītuvar, may identify with the poet. For the Stala Ītuvar sings as though he is Mānīkkavācakar. Secondly, the act of showing Mānīkkavācakar tipārātaṇai indicates that he is divine, which suggests that the poet is identified with God. Tipārātaṇai, however, is not offered to the ātuvars, which suggests that some kind of distinction between ātuvars and the poet is maintained. The depiction of Mānīkkavācakar as a human supplicant in segment II.5, and also possibly in segment II.4, suggests that for part of the festival a
A distinction is perceived between the one who requests and the one who is able to give. Certainly in the ritual performance there is no identification implied between the audience and the ētuvar, for there is a very sharp distinction made between the ētuvar who sing on the poet's behalf and the members of the audience, who are kept at a distance spatially, ritually and through singing styles (see chapter 9 above).

In the Tiruvanantal Pūcai, the series of identifications also breaks down because the original poet has no specific presence at all in the ritual, and because the premise of the ritual maintains a distinction between the reciter and the deity. The presence of the poet as the important personality in the ritual reenactment of the poem would seem to be a necessity in Cutler's model, as it is the poet's experience which it seems is reenacted in the ritual recitation of the poem (see Cutler, Songs of Experience, 73, 113). I have argued earlier that Maṇikkavācakar is at no point specifically associated with his song throughout the ritual singing of the poem, and the fact that he is worshipped in a group with other saints at one point, almost confirms the fact that he is not the ritual speaker of the poem. Furthermore, the purpose of the ritual is to wake up God and return him to his daytime location. This assumes a distinction between the one who awakens and the one awakened, and one sees no indication that this distinction is negated in the ritual itself. What the ritual does underline is the respectful distance of the bard who calls on God as "other" in the particular manifestation as Cuntarecuvarar, with ties to the particular locale of Madurai.

In the "Pāval Singing", it is doubtful that identification takes place because here identification with the poet is problematic for several reasons, and here the premise of the whole activity is very clearly based on a sharp distinction between God and the worshipper. There are three factors in the Nakamalai Putukkōtai singing which suggest that the poet's identity is not an essential part of the singing. One is that people sometimes do not know who the composer is. A second is that a large number of source texts are used to make up the "ritual text", and these are composed by many different authors. The third is factor that the poets have no presence in the ritual, except in "Tiruppāvai" which has a signature verse. The singing of this verse is immediately followed by a verse in praise of this poet, Āṉṭāl. This verse of praise, rather than enabling the singers to identify with Āṉṭāl, distances her from them by exalting her through song. (This potential irrelevence of the poet to the usage of the songs was highlighted to me in an interview. The individual was telling me about her favourite devotional song. I asked who the author was. She did not know. Some time later, when we were at another person's house, she asked someone there who the author was and was told that the author's name is in the song itself. If the name made no sense to her, it is doubtful that the historicity of the author is relevant to the use of that song to that individual.)

Furthermore the ladies' own emphasis on making their own requests through the songs also undermines the notion that identity with the deity occurs in this ritual performance of the poems. There is the strong sense both among the singers and also among community members that the "Pāval Singing" is done in order to obtain benefits. The most specific of these benefits is the ladies' request for husbands for their daughters. As we have already said, the act of making a request to someone, for something like the marriage of someone's daughter, implicitly maintains the distinction between the supplicator and the one to whom the request is made. Even if one sings for the purpose of obtaining mutti the implication is that mutti, and therefore identity, has not been obtained. The distinction between God and devotee is intact.
"Ritual text" and Coherence of Meaning

The definition of text given at the outset of this study was that the text is that which is interpreted by situating it in a narrative world which provides an identity for at least one of the speaker, addressee, or the hero, and which identifies the utterance of the text as an event in that narrative world. In Part I and Part II, we looked at two texts, the ten poems of "Tiruppalliyelucci" and the twenty poems of "Tiruvempavai". In Part III, however, the text is neither the ten poems of "Tiruppalliyelucci" nor the twenty poems of "Tiruvempavai", but another text which I have called the "ritual text". The reason for utilising a special term, "ritual text", to refer to the text used in a ritual event is to shift the emphasis away from the variety of source texts, which may potentially be used, to a text that is actually used. In the three ritual events studied, it is the utterances which constitute the "ritual text" that is situated in the narrative world. The boundaries of the "ritual text" and the coherence of its meaning are determined by the narrative world in which it is situated and the particularities of the setting of the ritual event.

In Part I, we considered "Tiruppalliyelucci" and "Tiruvempavai" as they lie in their canonical state. In that state ten poems are marked off as a unit and given the title, "Tiruppalliyelucci". Likewise, twenty poems are marked off as a unit and given the title, "Tiruvempavai". They are associated with other units and all collectively are identified as being by one author, in this case, Māṇikkavacakar. Organization by author lends itself to interpretations such as Navaratnam's or Vanmikanathan's which accept the poems in their canonical order as the markers of steps of spiritual development.

In Part II, we considered "Tiruppalliyelucci" and "Tiruvempavai" as they are understood by various people who interpreted the poems by situating them in various narrative worlds, one of which was the poet's biography. The boundaries of the texts in these interpretations are still the ten poems of "Tiruppalliyelucci" and the twenty poems of
"Tiruvempāvai", but in Part II we saw great variation in how these texts are understood. In the interpretation presented in Part II, the internal relationship of the parts of the poems was perceived in various ways. Some parts were given priority over other parts when situating the poems, and there was no agreement on whether the poems constitute a sequence or a collection of poems.

In the ritual events described in Part III, the ten poems of "Tiruppalīyēlūcci" and the twenty poems of "Tiruvempāvai" are no longer the text. A new text is constructed whose composition, boundaries and coherence are all determined by the narrative world in which the poems are understood, and by the particularities of the ritual event itself. The selection of texts which make up the "ritual text" are connected to the particular biography in which the "ritual text" is interpreted. The length and shape of the "ritual text" are affected by the parameters of the ritual.

As we have already seen, "Tiruppalīyēlūcci" and "Tiruvempāvai" are treated differently in these three different "ritual texts". In the Tiruvaṇāntal Pūcaī, only one poem of "Tiruppalīyēlūcci" is used. In the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival, all the twenty poems of "Tiruvempāvai" were used. They are repeated as a whole several times, and at other times specific poems from the collection were selected and sung. In the "Pāvai Singing", the ten poems of "Tiruppalīyēlūcci" and the twenty poems of "Tiruvempāvai" are sung in order once each day.

"Tiruppalīyēlūcci" and "Tiruvempāvai" were only a portion of the texts in each of these ritual events; other poems also become part of the text. The "ritual texts" of these events are constructed out of parts and wholes of other texts.

I argued in chapter 8, that the "ritual text" of the Tiruvaṇāntal Pūcaī is part of the event of awakening the presiding deity of the temple, Cunṭarēcuvārar and honoring him and other members of his household. The selection of poems which comprise the "ritual text"
correspond to these awakening and honoring activities and are appropriate to the particular hero, Cuntarēcuvārā. "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci", which is often understood to be a song of awakening, is sung in order to awaken Cuntarēcuvārār and his wife. The "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci" chosen is one in praise of Śiva, even though there are other "Tiruppaḷḷiyēḻucci"s addressed to other (human and divine) figures available. In the world of Tamil Śaivism, honoring the devotees of Śiva is as important as honoring Śiva, and the second poem of the "ritual text" sung in the Tirunācāmpantar Maṅṭapam is sung in honor of devotees of Śiva who resides in this particular shrine. Only one poem is sung in each place because of time constraints; the portions of the ritual in which the poems are sung are only small parts of a very long ritual which moves quickly from location to location.

I argued in chapter 9 that the "Tiruvēmṉāvai" Festival is an event in the life of Māṇikkavācakar and have said that the festival corresponds to the time frame in which "Tiruvēmṉāvai" is given special attention in all rituals. The composition of the "ritual text", and its coherence, reflects the emphasis on "Tiruvēmṉāvai" during a special time-frame and that the singing is portrayed as an event in Māṇikkavācakar life.

The "ritual text" begins and closes with the Paṅcapurāṇam, the special selection of Tirumurai songs normally sung during the temple rituals. Māṇikkavācakar sings "Tiruvēmṉāvai" (through the ṇūvārs) after the first singing of the Paṅcapurāṇam and before the final singing of the Paṅcapurāṇam. This selection and organization, and the fact that Māṇikkavācakar is depicted as singing the songs, reflects the shift from the normal

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14 See chapter 2 above.
15 Some of the stories of the Periya Purāṇam provide some extreme examples of devotees who honor Śaiva devotees.
pattern of singing Tirumugai songs by the ōtuvārs (as bards), to the special time of singing "Tiruvempāvai" by MāṇikkavācaKar.

The portion of the "ritual text" sung on the middle eight days of the festival focuses on the poem and its poet. The repeated singing of "Tiruvempāvai" by MāṇikkavācaKar through the ōtuvārs as a whole and in selected verses, to the exclusion of any other poems by any other authors, except the poem in praise of MāṇikkavācaKar, emphasises the poem, "Tiruvempāvai" and the singer, MāṇikkavācaKar. The poem of praise sung to MāṇikkavācaKar acknowledges and honors him as the author of the poem.

The boundaries of the "ritual text" reflect the time-frame of the festival. Days one and ten are the opening and closing of the festival. The Paṇcapurāṇam and "Tiruvempāvai" are each sung once on those two days to open and close the festival. On the middle eight days the text, in its general pattern, is the same. The main full performance of "Tiruvempāvai" during these eight days is before Naṭarācar, a form of Śiva with whom MāṇikkavācaKar has a special association. The worship in segment II.4a involves three short stops at Viṇāyakar's shrine, Mīnāci's shrine and Murukan's shrine. Only one verse of "Tiruvempāvai" is sung at each shrine, not the full text as is sung in front of Naṭarācar.

I have argued that the singing of "Tiruppaḷiyērucci" and "Tiruvempāvai" at the Citti Viṇāyakar and Nākamalai Murukan Temples in Nākamalai Putukkōttai is part of the event of "Pāvai Singing" as framed by the lives of individual devotees. The selection of songs which make up the "ritual text" and its coherence reflect both the particularities of this event and the interests of the leaders of the singing.

The "Pāvai Singing", based on the accounts of these women, is undertaken in the month of Mārkali in order to gain benefits. The essential songs of the "Pāvai Singing" are
"Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" and the pāvai songs, "Tiruvempāvai" and "Tiruppāvai". 16 "Tiruvempāvai" is a Śaiva poem and "Tiruppāvai" is a Vaiṣṇava poem. As we have seen in chapter 11, the pāvai poems make requests or mention benefits which are understood by the singers to be attained by those who sing the songs. The event is singing the pāvai, and therefore these two pāvai songs must be sung, regardless of the sectarian associations of the songs.

Most of the remaining poems which constitute this "ritual text" reflect the interests of the leaders of the singers: their preference for Śaivism, the concern for obtaining benefits in general for themselves and others, and the concern that (at least) one women's daughter should be married soon.

The formal singing which begins in segment 2 starts with invocatory songs, moves to the essential songs and concludes with a variety of additional songs. The first four invocatory songs are sung because it is customary, I was told, for Śaivas to begin devotional singing with songs to Viṇāyakar and to Murukan. These leaders reportedly sing these same four songs to begin all singing events. Three of the four songs are selected from the Tirumūṟai. 17 Three of the four selections depict Viṇāyakar and Murukan as the children of Śiva and his consort, and therefore situate the worship of Viṇāyakar and Murukan within the larger framework of Śaiva worship. After the essential songs and the song to Ānṭāl were sung, the singers invariably sang the Pāṅcapurāṇam if there was time prior to the singing of the other songs. Śaivas should sing the Pāṅcapurāṇam every day. When the singers sing the three poems under the heading of "vāḷṭṭu", they repeat three

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16 "Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci" is usually grouped with "Tiruvempāvai" in this context, thus giving the Śaiva component thirty verses to match the thirty Vaiṣṇava poems.
17 Pāvai Group Singer, interview with the author, Nakamalai Putukkōṭṭai, Madurai, 22 February 1994. The leaders indicated that they prefer to sing songs from the Tirumūṟai or songs to Murukan in their personal devotions.
times the line: "Let the excellent Saiva way flourish throughout the world". This is the only line of the three songs which they repeat.

The selections of the additional songs also reflect the concern for obtaining benefits. Singing the Pañcapurāṇam will bring the singer general benefits. As we have seen in chapter 11, "Nātavintu Kalāṭī" and the three "Vāḷṭtu" songs are concerned with blessings in general. The song sung to Pālaccupiramaṇiyar also contains a request for a series of benefits the singer would like to receive. Finally, the last two songs, "Nīlāṅkoḷ Mēktīṭ" and "Vīrāl Māraṇaṅitu" which were invariably sung at the Nākamalai Murukāṇ shrine, if the leaders of the group had a chance to sing, were specifically sung by the leaders so that one of the leader's daughter would get married.

The boundaries of the text are to some extent determined by the particularities of the ritual context. The invocatory and essential songs were always sung in the normal course of events. The singing of the additional songs varied according to the constraints of time and the presence of other devotees. If for example the singing started late, or as on the last day when there were the closing remarks and honors, there would not be so much time for singing additional songs. Also, sometimes in segment 2, a man would sing a song solo. This reduced time for the ladies to sing songs of their choice. When the ladies joined with the other group at the Nākamalai Murukāṇ Temple, they had to adjust to the singing of that group, singing what the other group initiated. If they could initiate the singing, they would sing the songs of their choice, particularly "Nīlāṅkoḷ Mēktīṭ", and "Vīrāl Māraṇaṅitu", but also "Nātavintu Kalāṭī", "Vāḷṭtu" and the "Song for Camphor Flame".
PART III: Summary

Part III began by examining two source texts, "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci" and "Tiruvempāvai", in three ritual contexts. The study shows that the source texts do not appear alone in their canonical state in these rituals, rather they become part of different texts, and in the process they are truncated, elongated, or incorporated in their canonical form. They are used in different rituals in different ways. The circumstances of the ritual, particularly whose voice is heard singing the songs and the particular ritual event in which poems are incorporated, determine the specific composition, boundaries and the meaning of the "ritual text".

The study of the use of "Tiruppaḷḷiyeluccci" and "Tiruvempāvai" in these three ritual events suggests that in each ritual the poems were interpreted within a particular narrative world, and that in each case the narrative world was a biography: the biography of the hero, the poet or first person respectively. The use of biographies to interpret the poems, I have argued in Part II, is a puram style of interpretation. Furthermore, I have suggested that in the three rituals presented in Part III, the pattern of behaviour exhibited by those who assume the role of performer or speaker of the poems is a puram pattern of behaviour.

Just as the interpretations in Part II assume that the principle of coherence of the meaning of the poem is determined by the narrative world in which it is interpreted, so also in the ritual usage of the poems the principle of coherence of the "ritual text" lies in the narrative world in which it is interpreted and the particularities of the specific context in which the text is used. This principle of coherence, however, has a more radical effect in the context of ritual usage, than in the interpretations in Part II. It affects the composition or the boundary of the text in the ritual event, whereas in the interpretations in Part II it affects only the relations of the parts of the poems and their relative emphasis. In each of
the three ritual events, the selection of songs which make up the individual "ritual texts" reflects the interests of the particular biography in which the "ritual text" is interpreted, and the opportunities and constraints of the particular ritual context in which the "ritual text" is sung.
CONCLUSION

This study has been about the nature of two Tamil Śaiva poems, "Tiruppaḷḷiycloak" and "Tiruvempāvai", their structure as text, the style in which they are interpreted, and the way in which they are used in ritual events. There is a strong connection between the structure and interpretation of the classical Tamil poems, and the pattern of behaviour evident in the classical puram poems on the one hand, and the structure, interpretation and the pattern of behaviour exhibited in the ritual usage of these two devotional poems on the other.

"Tiruppaḷḷiycloak" and "Tiruvempāvai" are collections of poems which are single episodic utterances in which neither the narrator nor the speaker is ever given a particular identity in the poem, and in which the addressee or hero is only sometimes given an identity. These poems are understood in commentarial literature by situating the utterance of them as events in different narrative worlds. The poems represent discrete moments rather than longer narrative sequences. This means that they can easily become incorporated into a narrative as a moment of that narrative. The speaker and the addressee or hero are given identities of characters in the narrative world in which the poems are situated. The poems considered in Part II were generally situated into one or more of five narrative worlds: the akam world of love, the puram world of heroism, the theological world of Śaiva Siddhānta, the world of the poet-saint's life, and the world viewed from the perspective of one's own life. In the three ritual events presented in Part III, three different biographical narrative worlds were used as frames of interpretation: the biography of Cuntarēcuvarar (the hero), the biography of Māṇikkavācakar (the source poet) and the biography of individual devotees (the first person biography).
The significance of a poem interpreted in this style is the significance of the poem when situated as an event in a particular narrative world. The meaning therefore changes from narrative world to narrative world, and even within the same narrative world, if the poem is situated as a number of different events. The coherence of the meaning of these poems depends upon the poems fitting coherently as an event in the narrative world in which they are situated. In commentarial interpretations, the assumption that the relationship between the internal parts of the poem is ambiguous allows flexibility for fitting a poem coherently into a narrative world. In the three examples of rituals provided here, I have suggested that the assumptions about coherence and textual ambiguity affect even the boundary and composition of the "ritual text". The process of constructing a "ritual text" involves combining, truncating, and elongating source texts. The composition and length of the "ritual texts" presented in this study reflect the particularities of the narrative worlds and the specific events in those worlds in which those "ritual texts" have been uttered.

The understanding of text and interpretation proposed here, and the pattern of usage evident in the use of these Śaiva poems in ritual, have precedents in the earliest Tamil literature, the classical akam and puram poetry. The structure of the devotional poems is the same as that of the classical poems. The strategies of interpretation have antecedents in those implicit in the colophons of the classical poems. The pattern of behaviour evident in the use of the poems in the three rituals studied here follows a pattern of behaviour implicit in puram poems and poetics.

Tamil Śaivas stress that it is important to sing the Tirumurai songs. In other words, in the terminology of this thesis, Tamil Śaivas believe that it is important to situate the poems in the first person narrative world. These poems can be combined or recombined to make different moments in different narrative worlds, as we saw in the ritual
usage of "Tiruppalliyelucci" and "Tiruvempāvai". Furthermore, the duration of the moment of the poem is the same as the duration of the event when the poem is sung or recited, which means one can live the moment of the poem by simply singing it. As neither the narrators nor the speakers in the poems are given specific identities, one can easily step into the role of narrator or speaker. The style of interpretation, specifically assuming the coherence of meaning is dependent upon the narrative world rather than in the poem itself, emphasises the importance of the poem as part of a narrative world. These factors lead me to reiterate a suggestion proposed to me, that the absence of a long tradition of written commentary on the Tirumurai poems is understandable precisely because the devotees' individual lives are the proper commentary.

I have suggested that the use of the poems in the three rituals studied here reflects a distinctive pattern of behaviour which is rooted in the classical puram poetry. Implicit in this pattern of behaviour is an assumption of and maintenance of God as different from the devotee. According to Śaiva Siddhānta theology, one can enjoy God also intimately, as inseparable from oneself. The intimate experience of God, I am suggesting, is the religious version of the Tamil concept of akam. The religious lives of the saints, particularly Tiruṇāṇacampantar, Tirunāvvukkaracar and Cuntarar, suggest that the enlightened soul has the option of experiencing God intimately, or, as enjoying him as "other". It is believed by the tradition that these saints were enlightened, yet their biographies also portray them as following the puram pattern of religious behaviour described in this thesis. It may be fruitful to explore this two-fold experience of God as complementary rather than hierarchical in the Tamil Śaiva devotional poetry. That is, rather than beginning with the assumption that the experience of God begins with God as "other", and evolves to an experience of God as immediate, it may be illuminating to explore the possibility that the
devotee has two modes in which he or she can experience God as "other" and as immediate.
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APPENDIX I: Temple Diagrams

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Mināci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple  
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Key for Diagram 4  
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Key for Diagram 5

APPENDIX II: Composite "Ritual Text" for the "Pāvai Singing" at Citti Vināyakar and Nākamalai Murukan Temples, Nākamalai Putukkōṭai

Common Title of Poem  
1. "Maṇṇulakam taṇīl"  
2. "Pīṭiyata urumai"  
3. "Naṅkaṭamaṇḍai"  
4. "Camaracūrapanmā"  
5. "Tiruppaḷiyeluccē"  
6. "Tiruvempāvai"  
7. "Tiruppāvai"  
8. "Tiru āṭip pūrattu"  
9. "Paṅcapuruṇam"  
10. "Nāṭavintu kalāṭi"  
11. "Vāḷṭtu"  
12. "Vāḷṭtu"  
13. "Vāḷṭtu"  
14. "Song for Camphor Ārattī"  
15. "Cenṭippatipurakkum"  
16. "Jeyā Haṅnumāṇ"  
17. "Nilaiṅkol Mēkkattīṇ"  
18. "Viṟal Māraṇaṁuṇtu"  

1 See chapter 11, note 1, p. 266 for sources for the translation of "Tiruppāvai".  
2 Text of Paṅcapuruṇam varies.
Diagram 1: *Tiruvaṉantal Pūcaī: Miṉāṭci Shrine*

Second pirākāram

First pirākāram

N

3, 5

palliya āgai

Second pirākāram

N

6

8, 9

7

Arccuet Office

Kilikkūtu Maṇṭapam

to Cuntarēcuvarar's second pirākāram

Pṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟ所所
Key for Diagram 1: *Tiruvananttal Pūcai*: Miṇḍṭci's Shrine
Miṇḍṭci-Cuntarēcuvarar Temple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Deity Worshipped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Kilikkūṭu Maṇṭapam | 1. Citti Viṇṭayakar  
2. Kumāraṇ (Murukan) |
| Miṇḍṭci's 1st pīrākāram *palliyāṟai* | 3. Miṇḍṭci & Cuntarēcuvarar's feet |
| Miṇḍṭci's sanctum | 4. Miṇḍṭci |
| Miṇḍṭci's 1st pīrākāram *palliyāṟai* | 5. (take feet from *palliyāṟai*) |
| Miṇḍṭci's 2nd pīrākāram: | 6. (take feet to palanquin)  
7. feet of Cuntarēcuvarar (*kattalai*)  
8. feet of Cuntarēcuvarar (*kattalai*)  
9. feet of Cuntarēcuvarar (*kattalai*) |
| near Tirumalaināyakkar statue  
between Viṇṭayakar & Six-pillared hall  
between Viṇṭayakar & Six-pillared hall | 10. feet of Cuntarēcuvarar (*kattalai*) |
| Kilikkūṭu Maṇṭapam- huge granite slab | |
| N. Nanti  
F. Flagpole | |

1 See C. J. Fuller, *Servants of the Goddess: The Priests of a South Indian Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 168-70. See also Diagram 2 below. Fuller provides a list of deities worshipped in both Miṇḍṭci's and Cuntarēcuvarar's shrines during this *piyai*. My list differs from his in that his list does not include the offerings provided for by the five individual *kattalais* in either shrine, nor the offering to Cēkkilār in Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine. Fuller includes Bhikṣāṭana in Cuntarēcuvarar's shrine whereas I have not.
Diagram 2: Tiruvanantal Pūcai: Cuntarecuvarar Shrine
Key for Diagram 2: *Tiruvañantal Pācai*: Cunterēcuvarar's Shrine
Miñāṭei-Cunterēcuvarar Temple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Deity Worshipped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cunterēcuvarar's second <em>pirākāram</em> near Čalikattār Shrine</td>
<td>11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between doorway of 1st &amp; 2nd <em>pirākāram</em></td>
<td>12. Ānukkai Viṇāyakar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunterēcuvarar's second <em>pirākāram</em> temple guard</td>
<td>13. Atikārananti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunterēcuvarar's sanctum</td>
<td>14. feet of Cunterēcuvarar's (<em>kaṭṭalai</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunterēcuvarar's Makāmaṇṭapam</td>
<td>15. (remove feet from palanquin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunterēcuvarar's first <em>pirākāram</em></td>
<td>16. Linga &amp; Cunterēcuvarar's feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deity Worshipped**

11. 
12. Ānukkai Viṇāyakar 
13. Atikārananti 
14. feet of Cunterēcuvarar's (*kaṭṭalai*) 
15. (remove feet from palanquin) 
16. Linga & Cunterēcuvarar's feet 
17. Naṭārācara in the Veḷḷiyampalam 
18. Cunterēcuvarar 
19. Uṛcavacättār 
20. Nāḻvar 
21. Ĉekkiḷār 
22. 63 Nāyaṇmēr 
23. Carentēcuvar 
24. Tameṇāmūrtti 
25. Processional deities 
26. Kārttiṇēyaṇ 
27. Ģāṅkōrpaṇav 
28. Kācivicuvaṇāṇaṇ 
29. Cittar 
30. Turkkai 
31. (processional) Paṇcacapai Naṭārācarkaḷ 
32. Aĉara Liṅkam 
33. Makāḷatcumi 
34. Ġrattinacapai Naṭārācara 
35. Nanti 
36. Taṇṭayutavan 
37. Kāḷukumalai Kumāraṇ 
38. Pālamuruṇaṇ 
39. Navakkirakam 
40. Naṭārācara in Hundred Pillared Hall 
41. Akknīvīrapattiraṇ & Akōravirapattiraṇ 
42. Uṛttuvatāṇṭavar & Pattirakāḷi 
43. Tirunāṇacampantar Maṇṭapam 
44. Distribution of *piracātam* (milk)

N. Nanti 
F. Flagpole
Diagram 3: Minâțci-Cuntarâcuvar Temple:
Segments of "Tiruvempâvai" Festival

West Aṭi Street

South Aṭi Street

Cevvântisvara's Shrine

Second pirâkâram

North Aṭi Street

II.4a

II.5

II.4b

II.3

II.1

II.6

Pogrâmarai Tank

Other Structures

East Aṭi Street

Other Structures

East Aṭi Street
Diagram 4: Cittti Vinayakar Temple, Nácamalai Putukkőṭṭai

- Vilppai tree
- Proposed sites for Kasvi
- Ramathar
- Rama Laksman
- Sri
- Aracany tree & Veniy tree
- this corner is curved
- rased cement floor
- closed well
- rased cement platform
- kitchen & supplies
- Tiruppukal Capai
- pillar
- 1.4 below blackboard above
- 17-12-1976
Key for Diagram 4: Citti Viñāyakar Temple,
Nākamalai Putukkōttai

1. Citti Viñāyakar
2. Mūṅcūr (rat)
3. Civappirakācanātar
4. Čina Piḷḷaiyar
5. Palacuppiramāniyar
6. Cuntara Āñcanēya Cuvāmi
7. Cuntara Āñcanēyar
8. The festival image of Viñāyakar
9. The festival image of Murukāṅ
H. Uṇṭiyal (locked box for cash offerings)

Inscriptions
1.1 Re: Palacuppiramaṇiyar
1.2 Re: Civappirakācanātar
1.3 Re: Cuntara Āñcanēya Cuvāmi
1.4 Re: Cuntara Āñcanēyar
1.5 Re: Citti Viñāyakar Ālayam

¹The name of the god Viñāyakar, is spelled in two ways: Viñāyakar or Viṇāyakar. I have spelled the name here to correspond with the spelling on the inscriptions.
Diagram 5: Nakamalai Murukān Temple, Nakamalai Putukkottai
Key for Diagram 5: Nākamalai Murukan Temple, Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai

1. Vināyakar
2. Taṭcanamūrtti
3. Cuntarēcuvarar
4. Mahāviṣṇu
5. Mīnāṭci Amman
6. Turkkai
7. Nākarājar
8. Navakkiraham
9. Caṇṭikēsvarar
10. Kajalāṭcumi
H. Uṇṭiyal (locked box for cash offerings)
M. Mayil Vākaṇam
N. Nanti

Inscriptions
1.1 Re: Nākamalai Murukan
1.2 Re: Nākamalai Murukan
1.3 Re: Donors of the images of Vināyakar, Taṭcanamūrtti, Mahāviṣṇu, Turkkai, Caṇṭikēsvarar, Mayil vākaṇam, Navakkiraham
1.4 Re: Donors for the installation ceremonies of the subsidiary images and Navakkiraham
1.5 Re: Donors for the installation ceremonies of the subsidiary images and Navakkiraham
1.6 Re: Donors for the sanctification of the vimāṇam
1.7 Re: Donors for bore well
1.8 Re: Donors for installation of Mīnāṭci and Cuntarēcuvarar
1.9 Re: Donors for sanctification of vimāṇam
1.10 Re: Donors to temple in general - no date
1.11 Re: Donors of Mahāmaṇṭapam
1.12 Re: Donors for Navakkiraha Maṇṭapam
APPENDIX II

Composite "Ritual Text" for the "Pāvai Singing"
Citti Vināyakar and Nākamalai Murukan Temples,
Nākamalai Putukkottai

1. "Mānułakam tañil"
manułakam tañil pίravi mācara
cēṇiya porulėlām eljił murura
kaṇṇutal utaiyatôr kaliru māmukap
paññaṉavăn malarati pañintu pōṟuvōm

So that the stains of [this] birth on earth will cease
so that all things which are thought about will be easily fulfilled
We serve and praise the flower-feet of the great elephant faced God
with the eye on the forehead.

2. "Pitiyataṉ urumai"
pitiyataṉ uru umai koļa miku kariyatu
vaṭi koṭu tanataṭi valjiṭum avarjiṭar
kaṭi kaṇapati vara arulinan miku koṭai
vaṭijinvar payil vali valamurai iraiyē

The Lord who gave grace
with Umai as a female elephant
[and he] as a male elephant
so that Kaṇapati, who removes the affliction of those who worship his feet,
would appear,
is, indeed, the God of Valivalam, where generous people dwell!

3. "Nānkatampaṉai"
nānkatampaṉaip pṛrvala paṅkinaṉ
teṇ kaṭampait tirukkarak köyilaṉ
tankaṭaṉ aṭiyēṇaivyum tāṅkutal
cēṇkaṭaṉ paṉi ceytu kitappaṭē

The songs are arranged according to the order in which I recorded them as being sung. Songs 1 through 8 were always sung in this order. 9 usually followed 8. The order of 10 through 18 is approximate, as the order could change from day to day and some songs could be sung more than once. Songs 1 to 4, 10 to 14 and 17 to 18 were written and given to me by one of the singers. I have deliberately included only the information which she provided in the Tamil portion. Other information on the songs is provided in chapter 11 above. She did not provide translations. These poems have been transliterated from the hand written copy. Published versions of the songs are available for those songs whose source text has been identified in chapter 11 above. Songs 15 and 16 were given to me by another singer upon my request. Dr. Gomathi Sooriamoorthi and Dr. A. Anantarācaṉ helped me in these translations except where otherwise noted. However, any errors or omissions are my responsibility alone.
The duty of the Lord of Tirukkara Temple of Southern Kaṭampai
whose consort bore our Skanda
is to support even me, a devotee;
my duty is to serve.

4. "Camaraćūrapaṇmā"
camara cūra paṇmāvait taṭīnta vēl
kumaraṇ tātai narkōlampam méviya
amarar kōviṅukkē anputait toṇṭarkaḷ
amaralōkamataḷuṭai yārkaḷē

The servants who love the King of the immortals
who dwells in good Kōlampam,
the father of Kumaraṇ
with the spear that killed Cūrapaṇmā in battle
indeed will be born in the world of the immortals.

5. "Tiruppaḷiyeluḷcē"

6. "Tiruvempāvai"

7. "Tiruppāvai"

8. "Tiru āṭip pūrattu" (Song in Praise of Āṇṭāḷ)

tiru āṭippūrattu cekattutīṭāḷ vāḷiyē
tiruppāvai muppatum cēppināḷ vāḷiyē
periyāḷvār perrēṭutta peṇpīḷḷai vāḷiyē
perumpūṭūr māṇuṇikkū piṇṭāṇāḷ vāḷiyē
orunūṛru nāṟpatu mūṛu uraitṭāḷ vāḷiyē
uyararaṅkākkē kaṇṇi ukanta aḷḷṭāḷ vāḷiyē
maruvaṟṟum tirumalli vaḷanatī vāḷiyē
vaṇ putuvai nakar kōṭai malarp pataṅkaḷ vāḷiyē
aṭḷyāṛkaḷ vāḷa araṅka natar vāḷa
cāṭakōpaṇ taṇ tamil nūḷ vāḷa - kaṭacūḷnta
māṇmulaṃḷa vāḷa maṇavaḷa māmuṇiyē
inṉum oru nūṟāṇṭu irum
āṇṭāḷ tiruvatikāḷē caṇaṟam

Prosperity to the foot praised by the world during the Āṭipūṟam Festival!
Prosperity to She who spoke the 30 pāvai [poems]!
Prosperity to the girl child taken and raised by Periyāḷvār!
Prosperity to She who wove flowers in the great Pūṭūr
Prosperity to she who said the 143 [poems]!
Prosperity to She who delighted the lofty Lord of Arankam with the flower garland!
Prosperity to the woman of the fertile country with the strongly fragrant jasmine!
Prosperity to the flower-like feet of Kōṭai of bountiful Śrīvilliputtūr!
Long live the devotees! Long live Lord of Araṅkam!
Long live the cool Tamil works of Caṭakōpaṇ! 
Long live the earth surrounded by ocean! O Maṅavālamāmuṇi
Live yet another century! Refuge at the sacred feet of Āntāl

9. Paṅcapurāṇam

10. "Nātavintu kalāti"²

nāta vintuka lāti namōnama
vēta mantracorūpā namōnama
nāṇa paṭṭita cvāmi namōnama
vekkōṭi

nāma campuku mārā namōnama
pōka antari pālā namōnama
nāka pantama yūrā namōnama
paracūrā

cēta taṇṭavi nōtā namōnama
kīta kīn̄kīni pāṭā namōnama
tīra camprama vīra namōnama
kirirāja

tīpa maṅkāla jōti namōnama
tūya ampala līlā namōnama
tēva kuṅcarī pākā namōnama
aruṭtāray

ītalum pāla kōlala pūjaiyum
ōtalum kuṇa acāra nītiyum
ira munkuru cēpāla cēvaiyum
maṇavāta

cētalum pukaḷ kāvēriyāl vilai
cōla maṇḍala mītē maṇokara
rāja kempīra nāṭāḷu nāyaka vayalūrā

ātarampayi lārūrār tōlāmāi

cērtal koṇṭavarōṭe muṇālinīl
ātal vempari mitērīmākayi
laiyilēki

āti yantavu lāvācu pāṭiya

cēra koṇkuvaī kāvūr nāṭāṭataī
āvīnāṅkuṭi vàlvāna tēvarkaḷ
perumāḷē

Repeat the three lines "tīpa maṅkāla...aruṭtāray".

Obeisance O Source of nāta, vintu and kalā!
Obeisance O Form of the Vedic mantras!
Obeisance O Expert in Āṇam!

Obeisance O Kumārar of Lord Campu, possessor of innumerable names!
Obeisance O Son of Umā Tēvi, [the Catti] of experience!
Obeisance O Lord of the peacock whose legs are entwined with snakes!

²This translation is based on the Patavurai and Polippurai of Kirupānantavāri in Tiruppukal (Virivuraiyūtan). Muṇḍram Tokuti, Paḷani (Cennai: Tiruppukalamirtam Kāriyālayam, 1967), 2-4.
Obeisance O Sporter who punished and destroyed the demon!
" O One whose [ankleted] feet tinkle [like a] song!
" O Bold One! O Excellent One! O Hero!
O Lord of the Mountain!

Obeisance O auspicious Light of the lamp!
" O Sporter in the pure space!
" Lord with divine Kuñcari at [your] side! Give grace!

O Ruler of pleasant Rājakempīra land!
in the Cōla region
abundant because of the Kāvēri [river]
praised [by the people of] the seven continents
in which [people dwell who] do not forget
service of the illustrious [lotus] feet of the guru
compassion
good qualities and conduct
recitation
many kinds of splendid pūjai
and charity.

O Lord of Vayalūr!

O Lord of the gods who lives in Tiruvāṉaṉkuṭi!
in the good area of Kāvūr in Koñku of the Cērār
who previously mounted a dancing fiesty horse
and went to Kayilai with his close friend Ārūr (Cuntarar),
and who extemporaneously sang the Kayilai Procession Poem.

11. "Vāḷṭṭu"

ārūr taṭṭaṇ tōḷ vāḷkā
arumukam vāḷkā ṭeṟpāiķ
kūṟu cey taṇi vēḷ vāḷkā
 kukkanṭam vāḷkā ce[vē]j
ēriya maṇhai vāḷkā
 yānai taṇ āṇaṅku vāḷkā
mārīḷā vāḷḷi vāḷkā
 vāḷkā cīr āṭiyār ellām

Long live the Twelwe wide shouldered One;
Long live the Six faced One;
Long live the Matchless spear which split [the mountain];
Long live the [peacock] flag;
Long live the peacock which [He with] the red spear mounted;
Long live [Teyva]ṭyāṅṇai;
Long live the unchanging Vallī;
Long live all the illustrious devotees.
12. "Vālțtu"

vān mukil valātu pcyka malivalaŋ curaka maṇṇaŋ
kōŋ muraŋ yaraŋu ccyka kuṟaivilātyirkaŋ vālka
nāṇmarai yaraŋka jōṅka narravam vēḷvi malka
mēṁmaį koɺ caivaniti vīlaŋkuca ulakamellam

(Repeat the last line three times)

Let the cloud in the sky rain without fail; Let the abundant fertility increase;
Let the king rule in the approved way; let the souls live without want;
Let the virtues of the Four Vedas grow; let good religious practice and sacrifice increase;
Let the excellent Caiva Way flourish throughout the world.

13. "Vālțtu"

vālka antaŋar vāṅvāra rāṅinaŋ
viɺka tampaŋal vēntaŋu mōŋkuka
ālka tiyatu ellam aruṇ nāmarē
cūlka vaiyakarnum tuyar tīrkaṅē

Let brahmins, celestials and cows flourish;
Let cool water fall; Let the king flourish;
Let evil deeds drown; Let all know the names of Aruṇ;
Let the affliction of the world perish!

14. Karpūra ārattippal - Song for Camphor Āratti

tiṅkalaj jōṭi ni tiṅakara jōṭi ni
aukiyil jōṭi ni amaṅtīlaṁ jōṭi ni
enkalaj jōṭi ni āsvara jōṭi ni
kaṅkalaj jōṭi ni karpūra jōṭi ni

(Repeat the last line three times)

You are the light in the moon; You are the light in the sun;
You are the light in the fire; You are the light in other such things;
You are the light in us; You are the light in Īsvara;
You are the light without limit; You are the light in the camphor.
15. "Centippatipurakkum"\textsuperscript{3}

centippatipurakkuni cevvēḷē—cantiatumum
palkōṭi caṭmap pakaityu navamiruttum
palkōṭi vikkaṇumum palpīṇiyum—palkōṭi
pātakamuṇi cevvēlaiyum pāṃpum pacakumāṭar
pūtamunți nīruṃ porupaṭaiyum—filakalā
evviṭamvan tuṭa mirukamata lāmevaiyum
evviṭamvan temmaī yetintālum avviṭṭṭir
paccamautyil vākaṇumum pannirāṇṭu tintōḷum
accamakaru mayīvēḷum—kaccaīt
tiruvāraiyun cīraṭiyun cēṇkaiyun mīrā
ruḷvīḷiyu māmuṇakka lārum—virikiraṇam
cintap punānta tirumutika lōrārum
centat ticaiyu metirtnā—vantīṭkkan
eḷḷām poṭipatutti yevvaramun tāntupukun
tullācā māka vuḷṭtirntu—palvītammān
ācumuta nārkavīyyu maṭṭāva tāṇamuṇśīrīp
pećumiyal palkāp piyattokaiyum—ōcāi
clutumumāt lámain tilakaṇumum tōyntu
palutta tamilpulamam pālīt—tolukkumatān
immaip pirppi liruvatāniyakāri
mummaip perumalanāṅkan mōcittū—tammāi viṭut
tāyum palaiya vaṭiyā ruṭāṇkūṭṭit
tōyum parapokan tuypittuc—cēya
kaṭiyēkkum pūṅkamalak kālkkāṭi yāṭkon
ṭāṭiēkkum mūṇhiṇ naruḷ.

O Lord Murukan who protects Tiruccentur!
If

many crores of hated births
untimely death
many crores of obstacles
many diseases
many crore heinous crimes
karma
snakes, devils, killing demons
fire and water

\textsuperscript{3} Translated with the aid of the following publications: Ku. Cuntaramūrtti, \textit{Kantar Kalivenpā (Mūlamum - uraiyum)} (Tiruppaṇantāḷ: Kāci Māṭam, n.d.); A. Mahāṭēva Ceṭṭiyār and Kō. Vaṭīvēḷu Ceṭṭiyār, \textit{Kantar Kalivaṇpā Mūlamum, Uraiyum} (Ceṇṇai Śrī Cātu Iraṭṭīna Ĉarkuru Puttakacāḷai), 1926; and K. Sivaraman, trans. \textit{Tiruchendur Kandar Kalivenba of sri Athi Kumaraṇurupara Swamigal} (Tirupanandal: Kasi Mutt, 1968). This English translation is preceeded by a version of the Tamil text, however the page with the publication details was missing. I have used the Tamil text of this edition because it was the edition provided to me by the singer. There are some variations, as for example, in the first words: The Kasi Mutt Tamil version and the version by Ku. Cuntaramūrtti has \textit{centippati} where as the version by A. Mahāṭēva Ceṭṭiyār and Kō. Vaṭīvēḷu Ceṭṭiyār has \textit{centiẓppati}. 
. weapons of war
enduring sufferings
severe poison
ferocious animals
come and appear before me,
in that place wherever it may be
on your green peacock
with twelve strong shoulders
the sharp spear which removes fear,
the sacred waist with the belt
little feet
red hands
twelve gracious eyes
six beautiful faces
and six crowns spreading light in all directions
come and appear before [me]
make all my extreme sufferings into dust,
give all boons
and gaily enter and be in my mind
give me knowledge of Tamil in which [I] am trained and soaked in
the many [poems] of four kinds of verse
the art of doing eight things at one time
the many beautifully spoken epic poems
the five aspects of grammar beginning with the letter sounds
remove the two kinds of dispositions in this birth through good behaviour
remove the three great malas
remove the ego
join [me] with ancient devotees who investigate [you]
make [me] experience the highest bliss in which [I] become soaked
show me the feet like red scented lotuses,
enslave [me],
stand before me a devotee, and give grace.

16. "Jeya Hanumān"

jeYA haNUmaN  jeYA haNUmaN
maRutirāya jeYA haNUmaN
jeYA haNUmaN  jeYA haNUmaN
vāyuκumārā jeYA haNUmaN
jeYA haNUmaN  jeYA haNUmaN
aṇcaVIPutra jeYA haNUmaN
jeYA haNUmaN  jeYA haNUmaN
sri rāma tuṭā jeYA haNUmaN
jeYA haNUmaN  jeYA haNUmaN
mākānuPāva jeYA haNUmaN

Victory Hanuman  Victory Hanuman
O King Maruti  Victory Hanuman
Victory Hanuman  Victory Hanuman
O Son of Vayu  Victory Hanuman
17. "Nilaṅko Mēkattin"

nīlaṅko mēkattin mayil mīcē -
   nī vanta vāḻvaikkan tataṉālē;
mālkoṭa pētaikkun maṉanārum -
   mār tāṅku tāṟaṭṭan taruḷvāyē;
vēlkoṭu vēḷaippaṇ teṟivōṇē -
   vīrāṅkoḻ cūṟarkkuṇ kulakalā;
nālanta vēṭattin porulōṇē -
   nāṉeṅṟu māṟtaṭṭum perumāḷē.

When [she] saw [your] majestic appearance
when you came on the peacock like a blue cloud
she fell in love,
graciously give your scented breast garland to her.
O Ancient One who throws the spear into the sea!
O God of death to all demons!
O He who is the essence of the Four Vedas!
O Lord who proudly says "I [will help]!"

18. "Virāl Māraṇaṅantu"

virālmāra ńaintu malarvāḷi cuntā
   mīkavāṇi lintu veyilkāyā;
mitāvāṭai vantu taḻalpōḷa vontā
   viṇaṟmāṭar tattam vacai kuṛa;
kuravāṅar kuṇṟiy paṟai pēta koṇṭa
   koṭi tāṇa tuṇṇa mayal tiṟa;
kulirumalai yiṅka naṉimālai tantu
   kuṟai tiṟa vantu kuṟukkōyō;
maṟimā ńukanta iṟaiyōṉ makiṅtu
   valipāṭu tantu matiyāḷā -
maḷai māṉu cuntā alaivēḷai yaṅca
   vaṭiṭe leṟinta atiṭrā;
arivāḷa rintu nirutā liṟaiṅcu
   maṭiyā riṭaiṅcal kaḷaivōṇē -
alakāṉa cempoṅ mayil mē laṃamantu
   alaiṅvā yuṅkanta perumāḷē.

Repeat "kuravāṅar...kurukkōyō".

When the heroic God of Love strews the five kinds of flowers,
when the cool breeze touches [her] like a fire,
[and] the moon in the great sky becomes hot,
when the gossipping women speak harsh words amongst themselves,
in order to remove the unbearable afflicting infatuation
of the girl living on the mountain among the Kuravars,
come and draw near giving the cool evening flower garland which removes the want.

O Knowledgeable One whom the God holding the young deer rejoicingly worshipped.
O Great warrior who threw the spear in order to split the mountain
while the wavy ocean was afraid!
O Remover of the trouble of knowledgeable devotees who worship your two feet!
O Lord who was pleased in Alaivay reposing on the beautiful red golden peacock!
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Note: Location of Segment II.2 of the "Tiruvempāvai" Festival:

During the festival, Māṇikkavācakar is placed on the raised stage in the foreground facing Nāṭarācar. An image of Nāṭarācar is visible in the background (centre, behind the tube light). The dūtvārs stand on the raised platform extending out from the image of Nāṭarācar. This photo was taken from the basic position of the female audience members (bottom right). Male audience members stand on the opposite side of this platform (far left). Audience members are not allowed to stand between the two platforms.
PLATE 2

Photo 2: View of Citti Vināyakar Temple, Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai

Photo 3: Main Deity, Citti Vināyakar Temple, Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai
PLATE 3

Photo 4: View of Nākamalai Murukan Temple, Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai

Photo 5: Main Deity, Nākamalai Murukan Temple, Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai
Note: This picture was taken during the abhiṣekam on the last day of Mārkāḷi. The sun has not yet arisen. The lady singers are sitting directly in front of Citti Viṇāyakar. The men, as usual, have positioned themselves apart from the female singers. The audience has not yet arrived in significant numbers, however the group of singers is a bit larger today because it is the last day of Mārkāḷi. By the time of the final ṛpārātanai the audience will extend along the specially installed bamboo railings far into the street. In photo 7, the priest can be seen performing the abhiṣekam in the background. Photo 8 of the Nākamalai Murukan Temple was taken at approximately the same time as photos 6 and 7. The abhiṣekam has not yet started at the Nākamalai Murukan Temple, however, the singers have begun singing. (The pictures show January 12 rather than 13 because the camera clock was set to North American time rather than Indian time).
PLATE 5

Photo 7: Close up of "Pāvai Singing", Citti Viṇāyakar Temple

Photo 8: Close up of "Pāvai Singing", Nākamalai Murukan Temple
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