Historical sequence of the Vaiṣṇava Divyadeśas.
Sacred venues of Viṣṇuism

R.K.K. Rajarajan
Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Forty years ago Prof. George W. Spender wrote an article on the Śaiva tiruttalams (called divyadeśa in Vaiṣṇava tradition) and suggested a complimenting work could be undertaken on the sacred venues of Viṣṇuism. The present article fulfills the longfelt need of scholars in Indian religious and more relevantly art historical studies. Based on the first-hand materials derived from the Vaiṣṇava canon, Nālāyiratvīvīpyapirapantam, it presents the historical sequence of the evolution of the 108 divyadeśas. The earliest of these had their origin by about the 4th-5th century CE and reached maturation by about the early half of the 9th century CE. The stages of evolution are earmarked. However, what the Vaiṣṇava mystics, the Āḻvārs, saw during the centuries down to the 9th are not the kṣetras (sacred space of the temple) or sthalas (sacred venues) that we find today. The temples had undergone spectacular changes through the centuries as could be proved with case studies of either Vēṅkaṭam or Allikkēṇi. A handful of the sthalas were purely imaginary on part of the mystics. The text is duly illustrated with modern photographic evidences and a map. The parochial views of some American scholars are discussed to point
out their inability to deal with the original sources in Tamil and consequently their views on Viṣṇuism or Śrīviṣṇuism happens to be biased.

Keywords: Vaiṣṇava-divyadeśas, Viṣṇuism, Āḻvārs, Śrīvaiṣṇavism, Bhakti, Nālāyira- divya-prabandham.

Tradition would record the Vaiṣṇava divyadeśas or divyasthalas are 108. The divyadeśa is a base of the cult of Viṣṇu in Viṣṇuism tradition. The list of 108 seems to have reached maturation by about the early 9th century CE as all the deśas are extolled in the hymns of the twelve Āḻvārs. Among these the earliest venues are Māliruṅcōlai (modern Āḻakarkōyil), Arankam (Sanskrit Śrīraṅgam), Vēṅkaṭam (modern Tirupati/Tirumala) and Āṭakamāṭam (modern Aṉantapuram, Anglicized Trivandrum). The 108 are brought under six or seven topographical segments of the Indian subcontinent under Malaināṭu or Cēranāṭu (Hill Country, Kerala, cf. Keralaput[r]a in Aśoka’s Edicts; 3rd century BCE), Paṇḍināṭu (Tamil Lexicon method: Paṇṭināṭu, south of the River Kāviri), Ćōḷanāṭu (the Kāviri delta), Naṭunāṭu (intermediary region that falls in between Ćōḷanāṭu and Toṇṭaināṭu), Toṇṭaināṭu (northern Tamilnāṭu), Vaṭanāṭu (northern country, meaning North India) and those in the heaven (Map 1). Very little work has been done on the divyadeśas based on the primary sources of the Āḻvārs (cf. Ramanujam 1973, Hardy 1983; Kalidos 1993-95, 1996: I 303-308, II 289-94; Meeneshwari 1993-93; Jeyapriya 2003: 612–15; Rajarajan 2012a; Dutta 2007: 22–43) and so the choice of the theme has a justification. George W. Spencer 1970 and Burton Stein

1 I follow Jan Gonda 1970 in deploying the religious denomination, Viṣṇuism. Kṣetra means “soil”, “region”, “repository”, “a sacred spot”, “an enclosed spot of ground” and so on. Its equal sthala means “soil”, “ground”, “a heap of artificially raised earth” (cf. terriyampalam, the core temple that stands on an elevated basement, e.g. Kūṭal Āḻakar in Maturai), “mound”, “tableland” and so on. Deśa means “region” and “country”. Raju Kalidos (2006: 293n) says sthala is the venue, city or village, where the sacred abode of the resident God is situated. Kṣetra is the space occupied by the sacred temple. The kṣetra falls within the space of the sthala.

2 The Sanskritic equivalent is given within parentheses. Of the temples in Tirupati/Tirumala one on the hill-top is likely to have been the earliest. Down the hill at Tirupati a number of temples for Viṣṇu and Devī-Maṅgammā are there. These are likely to have been later emergences.
1977 has done a similar work in respect of the Śaiva venues of worship as gleaned from the Nāyaṇmār works, especially the Tēvāram. The present article compliments the work of G.W. Spencer and B. Stein from the Vaiṣṇava point of view. However, I may note the learned professor Spencer has not presented a list of the 280 Śaiva tiruttalam in a chronological order, which is very difficult to compile since all these are dated during the 5th-8th centuries CE (Kāraikkālammaiyār to Cuntarār). Early in 1940, S. Krishnasvamy Aiyangar, followed by B.V. Ramanujam, both deeprooted Vaiṣṇava scholars, wrote much about the divyadeśas, which is now outdated but Aiyangar’s work is chewed and digested by devoted Vaiṣṇava scholars. Friedhelm Hardy’s 1983 work is a dedicated piece on Tamil Viṣṇuism but has very little to say on the subject under study. A fresh look is felt essential in the light of recent research on Vaiṣṇavism in general; and Śrīvaiṣṇavism in particular with A.K. Ramanujam 1981 leading a team of scholars in the United States who attach more importance to the works of the Ācāryapuruṣās, which is a parochial approach in my view. We must cautiously differentiate between Viṣṇuism/Vaiṣṇavism (Viṣṇu as the foremost of the gods) and Śrīvaiṣṇavism (Viṣṇu looked through his grace, Śrī). Note the following two important works:

B.V. Ramanujam 1973:  
*History of Vaiṣṇavism in South India upto Rāmānuja*

N. Jagsdeesan 1977:  
*History of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism in the Tamil Country (post-Rāmānuja)*

Viṣṇuism takes its root in Vedic lore and reaches a saturation level in the hymns of the Āḻvars. Here Viṣṇu is the focal point of attention. Śrīvaiṣṇavism/Śrīviṣṇuism developed as a codified system of philosophy after the time of Rāmānuja in the 12th century. Here the focal point is Viṣṇu through the mediator Śrī. Viṣṇuism is a religion and Śrīvaiṣṇavism a philosophical way of approach to Viṣṇuism as one may on a comparative line find the differences between Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism and Eastern Orthodox, all coming under the

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3 But Professor Stein (1977: fn. 27) pin-points that Spencer’s map is not the final as much work remains undone. While Spencer 1970 hints 280 tiruttalam, Stein 1977 notes 537 tiruttalam of that 274 of them have versified by the Nāyaṇmārs.
common banner Christianity. In all these three systems, Jesus the Christ is the foremost to a follower and not the colour of the bread or wine whether you consider it the blood and flesh of Jesus based on transubstantiation or treat it merely a bread from a bakery or wine from an ale house. We are not debating the Christian philosophy to say the bread consists only of the flour of wheat or barley and the wine not the blood of a divine person or godman. For all three Christ/Christianity is important though the Catholic will not tread the path of a Lutheran or Anglican in matters ritual and iconographic setting in churches. The tussle between them is so acute in India that a Catholic institution may prefer to appoint a Hindu for a job requirement and definitely not a Protestant. However, this is not the prime theme of our discussion. Let us come to Viṣṇuism and Śrīviṣṇuism.

G.W. Spencer called the venues of Śaiva worship, *tiruttalam* “sacred geography” and Eric Isaac 1960 “the landscape of myth” (cited from Spencer 1970: 233); B. Stein as “historical geography” and David E. Sopher 1968 “circulatory flows to define pilgrimage regions in India”. The learned professor has spent his time on Śaiva centers of worship and suggests “a study of Vaiṣṇavite sacred geography…is obviously feasible” (Spencer 1970: 233). Nobody thought of it during the past forty years. It may note the Śaivite centers of worship around the 9th century were 281 (Kalidos 2006: II, 292) and at the same time those of the Vaiṣṇavas 108. Whether these are the “landscape of myth” (Isaac 1960, cf. Hopkins 2004: 29-55) or “landscape of history” (Gaddis 2002) is a good question (cf. Spencer 1970: Map – Śrīperumbudur; and Stein 1977: Map – Tēvāram Sites of the Kāvēri Basin), which the present article answers. I have not seen the article of Issac and may take liberty of presuming by “landscape of myth” the scholar mean the “geography” of classical authors (such as Megasthenes, Ptolemy [the Āḻvārs and Nāyaṉmār]). This need not be so because many of the unidentifiable places in Pliny, Strabo and Ptolemy have been identified (e.g. Muziris, Comari and Kolchi with Mucirī, Kaṇṭyakumari and Kocci on the Pāṇḍyan and Malabār sea coast [Kalidos 1976: 67] and later Kaḍāram with the Malāya peninsula) and there is no such problem in case of the “sacred geography” of the Āḻvārs and the divyadeśas listed by them.

Before taking up the problem for an examination it may state at the outset that the twelve Āḻvārs are brought under three groups. The
Āḻvār is a divinity, one immersed or lost in his love for the Lord Viṣṇu (āḻ “immerse”, āḻvār “one immersed [in Viṣṇu-bhakti]”, cf. Spencer 1970: 234 āḻvārs “divers”). The Āḻvārs are believed to have visited the venues where the temple of the Lord was, composed hymns in praise of those sacred centers, the Mūrti, the īrṭha, the flora and fauna, the pūjās and festivals, and spread the cult. Though scho-olars find the rudiments of bhakti in the Paripāṭal, it is in the hymns of the Āḻvārs that we really find the blossoming of the bhāgavata/bhakti tradition that germinated in the north during the early centuries of the Christian era. Few Tamil scholars find the rudiments of bhakti in Caṅkam lore (infra Zvelebil’s view of Paripāṭal) and not the pre-Christian Sanskrit literature (cf. cf. Bhandarkar 1995: 4-11). I do not agree with this view. The Bhāgavata-based bhakti is an import from the north and R.G. Bhandarkar may find the roots of bhakti in the Upaniṣadic concept of upāsana (means “serving” or “worship” Monier-Williams 2005: 215).

The traditional sequence of the Āḻvārs and the hymns composed by them fall as under:

| Early Āḻvārs:⁴ |  |
|----------------|---|
| Poykai         | Tiruvantāṭi I |
| Pūtam          | Tiruvantāṭi II |
| Pēy            | Tiruvantāṭi III |

| Middle Āḻvārs: |  |
|----------------|---|
| Nam            | Tiruvāciriyam, Tiruviruttam, Periya Tiruvantāṭi and Tiruvāymoṭi |
| Maturakavi     | Kanninuciruttāmpu |
| Kulacēkarar    | Perumāl Tirumoṭi |
| Tiruppān       | Amalanātipirān |
| Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi | Tirumālai and Tiruppallielucci |
| Tirumaljcai    | Tiruccantaviruttam and Nāmukkai Tiruvantāṭi |

⁴The Āḻvārs are considered to be the aṇṭās (manifestation) of Vaiṣṇava marks of identification; e.g. Poykai – paṇcajanaya (a demon turned śaṅkha), Pūtam – gadā “mace”, Pēy – nandaka (khaḍga of Viṣṇu), Maljcic – cakra, Maturakavi – Vainateya (Garuda, son of Vinatā), Nam - Šeṣa, Kulacēkarar – kaustubha (celebrated necklace of Viṣṇu), Periyāḻvār - Garuda, Āṇṭāl - Bhūdevi, Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi – vanamālā (garland of holy basil), Pāṇ - śrīvatsa and Maṅkai - sārga (bow of Viṣṇu). According to another concept Nam and Pūtam were the tiara of the Lord, Poykai and Pēy the eyes, Periyāḻvār the face, Maljcic the neck, Kulacēkarar and Pāṇ the hands, Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi the chest, Maṅkai (literally means “maid”) the umbilicus and Maturakavi the sacred feet of the Lord (Devanathan 1971: Annexure p. 85).
Later Āḻvārs:

| Periyāḻvār | Tiruppallāṇṭu and Tirumōli |
| Aṉṭāl | Tiruppāvai and Nācciyār Tirumōli |
| Tirumaṅkai | Periya Tirumōli, Tirukuruntāṇṭakam, Tiruneṭṭuṇ-tāṇṭakam, Tiruvellukāṇṭirukkai, Cīyatiṟumāṭal and Periyatirumāṭal (Kalidos 1999: 223-24) |

The chronology of the Āḻvārs is a vexed question. The Mutal Āḻvārs (early trio) are dated in the 6th-7th century CE. The Middle Group (totally six) is dated in the 7th-8th century CE. The Later Group (totally three) is dated in the 8th-9th century (cf. Kalidos 1999: 223–24). Tirumāḷićai in his Nāṭmukāṉ Tiruvantāti (v. 93) notes a king called Kuṇaparāṇa: Ākkai koṭuttaruliya kōṅṅ kuṇaparanē “Guṇabhara, (the King?)” who gave me this mortal coil and blessed (me)”. This Kuṇaparan (Guṇabhara) is identified with Mahēndravarman I (c. 610-30 CE) and so he is assigned to the early 7th century (Pillai 1985: 186). With due reference to an astronomical clue in the Tiruppāvai of Aṉṭāl (cf. Hudson 1980: 539-66), she is dated in the early half of the 8th century CE. Periyāḻvār and Tirumaṅkai refer to a Pāṇḍya king (Tamil Lexicon method: Pāṇṭiyaṇ) and Pallava in their hymns. These two have been aptly identified with Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha (815-826 CE) and Nandivarman II Pallavamalla (690-729 CE). Kulačekarar (Cēramāṅ Perumāl) is considered to be a contemporary of the Śaiva

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5 The title, Guṇabhara, appears in the inscription of the upper Pallava cave at Tiruvărppalai (Srinivasan 1964: 54).
6 The reference is: Velliyēḷuntu viyālāṉganṅkigru (the rise of Vellil-Venus and the fall of Viyalāṉ/Jupiter that astronomically gives the date CE 731 (Kalidos 1976: 104).
7 Periyāḻvār notes kaval poṟṟa pāṇṭiyar kulapati (Tirumōli 5.4.7) “The Lord of the family of Pāṇḍyas (who bears the banner) of the Fish”. Aṉṭāl calls Periyāḻvār the king of Putu vai (Villiputtūr): Puttuvaiyarkōṅ Viṭṭućiṭṭaṅ “Viṅgasiddha, the King of Putu vai” (Nacciyār Tirumōli 12.10). Periyāḻvār is supposed to have been a minister to Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha and so called a king. Tirumaṅkai acknowledges the gifts of the Pallava king to the Ĉittirakūṭṭam (temple of Viṅga) at Citampar: Pallavar kōṅ paṇṭinta/cempoṅ manimāṅkai cūnta tillai/tiruvćiṭṭirakūṭṭam (Periya Tirumōli 3.2.3) “The Ĉittirakūṭṭam of Talai that is fitted with towered gem-like edifices, which the Pallava king worshipped”. Another decade (Periya Tirumōli 2.9.1-10) in all its ten verses notes the Paramēcçuraviṅṅkaram (Vaṅkuṇṭha Perumāl temple) at Kāncci that was worshipped by the Pallava king. The Pallava is called Villavan (an expert in archery) and Mallaiyarkōṅ (King of wrestlers) whose feet was worshipped by several kings”. The Pallava noted in these hymns is Nandivarman Pallavamalla. To quotes: Pallavaṅ villavaṅgṛulakil palarāyppalalavēnta varanṅkukaṭal / Pallavaṅ mallaiyarkōṅ paṇṭintara para/mēccuraviṅṅkaramatuṅ (Periya Tirumōli 2.9.1).
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saint Cuntarar and may be dated in the early 8th century (Zvelebil 1974: 106). The Later Group could be conveniently dated during the 8th-9th century CE. The sequence on the basis of historical evidences will have to be Tirumalāji, Kulačēkarar, Tirumaṅkai, Periyāḻvār and Āṇṭāḷ. There is no clue either epigraphical or literary to date the other Āḻvārs.

It is traditionally believed that the saga of Vaiṣṇava lyrical composition began with the Early Group and Lord Viṣṇu himself is said to have given them the first phrase of the Tiruvantāti composed by them for the first hymn.⁸ Therefore, they are assigned to the 6th-7th century CE or even the 5th century. The other six are supposed to fall in between the two dates 6th century and early 9th century. In any case all the twelve Āḻvārs have crossed the historical meridian by about the middle of the 9th century CE (Rajarajan 2012a). Saint Nāṭhamuṇi is said to have compiled the Nāḷāyiram into the divya-prabandham (divya “divine” or “heavenly”, prā- “excessively” or “great”, bandham “tie” or “chain”), Tamil tīva(should be tīvviya)-pira-pantam. He is assigned to the 10th century CE (Zvelebil 1974: 91). Nāṭhamuṇi’s birth-place is considered to be Kāṭṭumaṅgṛuḍi, near Citamparam. A spurious inscription in that temple assigns his date of birth to Kaliyuga 3,624 (522 CE),⁹ which could not have been the case because at that time the Middle and Later Āḻvārs did not exist and maybe the First Group was busy composing the Tiruvantāti (cf. Aiyangar 1940: 260, Jagadeesan 1977: 10–11).

Zvelebil’s (1974: 91-107) date for the Early Āḻvārs is 650-700 CE, which is unfair (cf. Rajarajan 2012a). The other Āḻvārs are dated as follows: Toṇṭarāṭipprōṭi (first quarter of the 9th century), Kulacēkarar (c. 800 CE), Periyāḻvār and Āṇṭāḷ (9th century CE), Tirumaṅkai (c. 800-870 CE) and Nammāḻvār (c. 880-930 CE – the time of Parāntaka I). That means Toṇṭarāṭipprōṭi, Kulacēkarar, Periyāḻvār, Āṇṭāḷ, Tirumaṅkai and Nammāḻvār are supposed to have lived in the 9th-10th century CE, which was a troublesome period in the history of Tamilnadu since the Pallavas and Pāṇḍyas were engaged in a deadly conflict for survival. The Imperial Cōḷaś and Rāṣṭrākūṭas as renascent powers were peeping into the historical arena around 850

⁸ The first phrase in Tiruvantāti is Vaiyamtakaḷiyā (the world is the wick), Anpēṭakaḷiyā (love is the wick) and Tirukkaṇṉēṉ (I have seen to Auspicious-Śrī).
⁹ South Indian Temple Inscriptions, Vol. III, Pt. II, no. 1291.
CE. This was also a period of political tribulation, turbulence and transition because the Pallavas and Early Pāṇḍyas exit from the historical scene and the Cōḷas, Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Calukyas of Kālyāṇi come to the forefront with the former commanding an upper hand. Under such chaotic conditions, so many of the Āḻvārs could not have worked peacefully composing their hymns and visiting centers of Viṣṇuism. The Āḻvārs refer to the Pāṇḍya and Pallava in their hymns and not the Cōḷa of the Imperial House that begins with Vijayālaya around 850 CE.¹⁰ That means by about the time of the emergence of the Cōḷas under Vijayālaya (c. 850-70 CE) the Āḻvārs have gone behind the historical curtain. Therefore, the dates suggested by Raju Kalidos 1999 seem to be workable to further proceed with the history of the divyadeśas (cf. Rajarajan 2012a).

Coming to the main theme of our investigation, the distribution pattern of the divyadeśas in the subcontinent may be listed as follows:¹¹

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¹⁰ In fact Tirumaṅkai refers to a Cōḷa. He was a king of the post-Caṅkam period that does not belong to the lineage of Vijayālaya (850-70 CE), the founder of the Imperial Cōḷa house. There was a family of the Cōḷas during the Caṅkam Age (down to 250 CE) that ceased to rule the Kāviri delta around 250 CE with the advent of the Kaḷabhras. It seems their successors continued to survive as minor chiefs (Sastri 1984: 104-107). One of these kings was Kōccēnkaṉ whose date is uncertain (may be the 6th century CE). He was also known as Kōccōḷaṇ (Periya Tirumoli 6.6.9). He is said to have built 70 temples (manimāṭakkōyil “towered gem-like temple”) for Iśvara (tirumoliyāy Īcaṟku ejilmaṭat elupatu ceytu ulakam āṇṭa [ibid. 6.6.8] “He built seventy beautifully towered temples for Īśvara, He whose mouth utters the sacred words” - tirumoli or tiravāymoil is the title of several of the poems composed by the Āḻvārs). Some scholars suggest these were temples for Śiva (Nāḷāyiram, Mullai Nilayam ed., Vol. II, p. 236). I am of the opinion all the 70 need not have been for Śiva because Iśvara is an epithet of the common genre that Śiva and Viṣṇu share. The Viṣṇusahasranāma (epithet nos. 36, 74) calls Viṣṇu Iśvara and what is more important he is called Śivaḥ (ibid. epithets 27, 600). Therefore, the 70 temples assigned to Kōccōḷaṇ by tradition must have been for both Śiva and Viṣṇu. One among them was Naraiyūr (Nācciyaṟkōyil) in Cōḷanāḍu, which divyadeśa Tirumaṅkai extols. These temples are likely to have built of brick and mortar as it was the tradition then and the age of kāṟṟaḷi (stone temple) had not yet begun, which was invigorated during and after the time of Vijayālaya. In fact the early Cōḷas seem to have dedicated themselves to convert all brick temples into stone during 850-986 CE (cf. Dehejia 1990).

¹¹ The list is as it appears in the Nāḷāyiratviviyappirapantam (shortly Nāḷāyiram), the Little Flower Company, Chennai 2008.
Malainātu (Hill Country) – totally 13: Nāvāy, Vittuvakkōtu (Vicci-kōtu or Viṇcikkōtu), Kāṭkarai (or Trikkakkara), Mūlkkālam, Vallavāl (or Vallā, Śrīvallabha-ksetra - see Clooney 1991: 260-76), Kaṭittāṇam, Ĉeṅkuṇṛur (Cirrāru), Puliyūr (Kūṭṭanātu), Vāraṅgilai (Ārammulā), Vaṅvaṅṭur (Vamuṅṭur), Aṅantapuram, Vaṭṭāru and Vaṅparicāram (Tiruppaticāram).

Pāṇḍinātu (the Pāṇḍya country) - 18: Kuṟunkuṭi (Vāmana-ksetra), Ĉivaramāṇkai (Vāgaṇāmalai, Nāņkuṇē or Tōtādri-ksetra), (Nava-tiruppatis 1-9, see Rajarajan 2012) 1. Vaikuntam, 2. Varakuṇamaṇkai, 3. Pulinṅkuṭi, 4-5. Tolaivillimāṇkalam (Īraṭṭaitiruppattai – Twin Temples), 6. Kuṭantai (Peruṅkulam), 7. Kōḷur, 8. Teṉṭiruppērai (or Pōraį), 9. Kurukūr (Āḻvār Tirunakari), Villiputtūr (Śrīvilliputtūr), Tāṅkāl (Ṭaṅkāl), Kūṭal/Maturai, Mālirucōlai, Mōkūr, Kōṭṭiįur (Kōṭṭiyūr or Koṭṭi-kṣetra), Pullāṇi (Darbhasayana) and Meyya.

Cōlānātu (the Cōḷa country) - 40: Arāṅkam (Śrīraṅgam), Kōḷi (Urāyai, Nīkalāpūr, Urāntai), Karapam.vnur (Uttamarkōyil, Kadamba-kṣetra), Vellāraį (Vedagiri or Svetagiri), Ânpil, Pērnanak (Kōyilaṭi or Appakkūṭṭāṭan), Kāṇṭiyūr (Trimūrti-kṣetra), Kūṭalūr (Āṭṭurai, Saṅgama-kṣetra), Kavittalam (Kapi-sthala, Kṛṣṇāranya-kṣetra), Pulḷampūṇtaṅkuṭi, Āṭanur, Kuṭantai (Śāṅgāpaṇi temple, Bhāskara-kṣetra), Vinṇakar (Oppiliyappāṅkōyil, Mārkanḍeya-kṣetra), Naraiyūr, Cērai (Paṅcasāra-kṣetra), Kaṇṇamaṇkai (Kṛṣṇamaṅgala-kṣetra), Kaṇṇapuram (Kṛṣṇāranya-kṣetra, Pańcaṅśa-kṣetra and Saptapunya-kṣetra), Kaṇṇāṅkuṭi (Kṛṣṇāranya-kṣetra), Nākai (Nakapatṭiṅgam), Taṅcaimāṇamakkōyil/Taṅcāvūr (Dhanavadi 2005), Nantipuravinṅkāram (Nantakōyil, Daṅkinaṣagamaṇṇam and Śrīvaca-sthalam), Vēḻiyāṅkuṭi, Āḷunṭur (Ṭēraḷunṭur), Ĉiṟupuliyūr, Talaicceṅkanaṁmatiyan (Talaicceṅkāṭu), Intalur (Mayilāṭṭurai, Viḷantai), Kāvalamṭai (Nāṅkūr), Kājiccirāmaviṅṅkāram (Cīṛkāḷi), Arimēyaviṅṅkāram (Nāṅkūr), Vaṅpuruṭṭōtam (Nāṅkūr), Cempōncekkōyil (Nāṅkūr), Maṅmināṭakkōyil (Nāṅkūr), Vaṅkuntavinṅkāram (Nāṅkūr), Āḷi/Nakari, Tēvaṅārtokai (Kēlaiccāḷai), Teṟṭiyampalam (Nāṅkūr), Veḷḷakkuḷam (Aṉañṅkōyil), Pāṛtaṇppalli (Nāṅkūr) and Cittaṟakūṭam (Tillai-Citamparam).

Naṭunātu (Intermediary country) - 2: Ayintai (Vaiintipuram/ Vaḥīndrapuram) and Kövalūr.
Toṇṭaināṭu (northern Tamilnadu) - 22: Kacci-Attikiri (Attiyūr, Kāncīpuram, Satyavrada-kṣetra), Āṭṭapuyakkaram (Aṣṭbhujahasta - Kāncī), Taṅkā (Tūppul - Kāncī), Vēḷukkai (Kāncī), Nīrakam (Kāncī), Pāṭakam (Kāncī), Nilāṭṭiṅkaḷṭuṇṭam (Kāncī), Ūrakam (Kāncī), Veṅkē (Kāncī), Kārakam (Kāncī), Kārvāṅam (Kāncī), Kāḻvaṅ (Kāncī), Pavaḷavaṅ (Kāncī), Paramēccuraviṅṇakaram (Vaikuṇṭha Perumāl temple, Kāncī), Puṭṭukūṭu, Niṅgavūr (Tinṇaṅgūr), Evvūl (Tiruvaṅḷūr, Pūṇyāvatīrṇavāya-kṣetra), Allikkēṇi (Bṛḍāraṇya-kṣetra), Nīrmalai (Toyādri-kṣetra), Īṭavaṇṭai (Vaṭantai), Kaṭalmallai (Māmallapuram, Mahābalipura-kṣetra, Ardhaṣetra) and Kaṭikai (Cōṅkara, Cōṅkapuram or Cōṅcakiṅkapuram).12

Vaṭanāṭu (northern country) - 11: Ayoṭṭi (Ayodhyā), Naimicāraṇyam, Piruti (Jyoṣimaṭha, Nandaprayāgā), Kaṇṭameṇṭukāṭiṅnakar (Devaprayāgā), Vaṭariyācchiramam (Bhadrinātha), Cāḷakkirāmam (Śālagrāma, Muktnātha in Nepal), Vaṭamaturai (Mathurā, Brṇḍāvanam, Govardhana), Āyppāṭi (Gokula), Tuvarai or Tuvārakai (Dvārakā), Ĉiṅkāveṅkūṭam (Ahobilam) and Veṅkāṭam (Tiruppaṭi-Tirumala, Ādivaṅkaḥ-kṣetra).

Though the traditional list brings Veṅkāṭam under Vaṭanāṭu, it was part of the Tamil country of those times and should be listed under Toṇṭaināṭu; cf. the literary expression (Tolkāppiyam, Pāyiram; Subrahmanian 1990: 787): Vaṭavēṅkāṭam teṅkumari āyiṭait Tamīkūrūn nullulakam (“the good world where Tamil is spoken extends from Veṅkāṭam in the north to Kumari [the Cape, Comari of classical authors supra] in the south”).

Heavens - 2: Pāṛkaṭal “Ocean of Milk” and Paramapadam or Vaikuṇṭha (Vaikuṇṭha).

The total of sthalas is 108 of which most are concentrated in the Kāviri delta (totally 40). Next in the order of numerical priority are Toṇṭaināṭu 22, Pāṇḍināṭu 18, Malaināṭu 13, Vaṭanāṭu 11, and Naṭūnāṭu and the Heavens each 2. Those that are said to be unearthly

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12 Veṅkāṭam and Ĉiṅkāveṅkūṭam during the time of the composition of the Nālāyiram fell within bounds of ancient Tamilnadu. These two were ceded to Andhra Pradesh at the time of the formation of linguistic states after independence. This applies as well to Guḍimallam.
are purely mythical and fictitious. Twenty-two of these are concentrated in two particular sthalas, i.e. Kāñci fourteen and Nāṅkūr eight. Totally 22 temples are in two sthalas though each is counted as a divyadeśa. Actually speaking, the sthalas are 88 (cf. the meaning of sthala in n. 1). 13

Among these the earliest is Māliruṅcōlai (Grove where Māl/ Viṣṇu resides) that appears in the Paripāṭal (5th century AD – Zvelebil 1974: 31). This collection of poems in its 15th long poem talks of the cult of Viṣṇu and notes the sthala, Neṭuṅkuṇṟam (Tall Hill), also called Iruṅkuṉṟam (Resident Hill) or Māliruṅkuṉṟam (Resident Hill of Māl/Viṣṇu Paripāṭal v. 15, ll. 4, 14, 17, 23). The same work refers to two other sthalas that are Iruntaiyūr and Kuḷavāy. 14 These two places are likely to have been close to Maturai but defy identification (infra). It may note the Paripāṭal is a poetic compilation in praise of Kūṭal/Maturai, its River Vaikai and the Gods Cēvvē/Murukaṉ and Māl/Viṣṇu. Zvelebil 1974: 49 adds: “on the banks of the Vaikai, that bhakti was born”. Māliruṅcōlai is noted in the Cilappattikāram (5th century AD) in its Kāṭukāṭai (ll. 77-116) and presents a lengthy description of its ecology, tīrthas and cult details. Besides the Cilappattikāram do present a graphic description of Vēṅkaṭam in the Kāṭukāṭai (ll. 41-51). The same work notes Arāṅkam. It is interesting Aṉantapuraṁ is called Āṭakamāṭam (“Terrace/Theater for Dancing”?) in the commentary to the Cilappatikāram (XXVI. 62: Āṭakamāṭattarituyil amartō “One reclining in the elevated temple at Āṭakamāṭam”, XXX. 51: Āṭakamāṭattaraanaikkitantō “He who reclines on the snake in the elevated temple at Āṭakamāṭam”). 15 Some raise the question why Āṭakamāṭam could not be Arāṅkam (Subrahmanian 1990: 76). We

13 Āṭṭapuyakkaram and Veṅkā fall in close proximity at a place called Āṭicăştetă in Kāñcipuram. Veṅkā is considered to be the birth-place of Poykai Ąlvār and considered a divyadeśa. Kaḷvaṅgūr falls within the Kāmēṅkēt Amna temple complex to the right of the garbhagṛha of Devī. These are very small temples when compared with Varadarāja Perumāḷ in Kāñci, the vaṭakalai base.

14 It is not clear whether this is Kuḷantait extolled by Nammāḻvār.

15 R. Parthasarathy’s (1993: 229, 269–70) translation of the two passages goes as follows: “Viṣṇu who sleeps in a trance at Āṭakamāṭam (and blessed him/Cēṅkuṭtuvaṉ)”’. “Arāṭta Ĉeṭṭi…Employed in the service of the Lord resting/On the divine serpent in the golden temple”. Kīṭatāṭ could not be strictly brought under “resting”. Viṣṇu just reclines that is a deceitful slumber or yoganidrā. For resting one need not recline and may even sit and rest (Kalidos 2006: I, 17-18).
presume it is a reference to Aṅantapuram (cf. Dhanavathy 2003: 37) because the place is noted in the third Canto of the work, called Vaṅcikkāṇṭam, in connection with the Cēraṅ king Ceṅkuṭṭuvan on the eve of his expedition to the north to bring a stone for sculpting an image of Kaṇṇaki (for details of the Kaṇṇaki cult see Rajarajan 2000).

Therefore, in the pre-bhakti and post-Caṅkam literature the Vaiṣṇava sthalas noted are Māliruṅcōlai, Iruntaiyūr, Kuḷavāy, Araṅkam, Vēṅkaṭam and Āṭakamāṭam/Aṅantapuram. Iruntaiyūr and Kuḷavāy could not be identified. The other 104 places are notified in the hymns of the Āḻvārs. These may be chronologically charted in the order of the Āḻvārs, noted above. Of the six Māliruṅcōlai, Araṅkam, Vēṅkaṭam and Aṅantapuram (not Āṭakamāṭam) find a place in the lists of the Āḻvārs. Iruntaiyūr and Kuḷavāy are missing. In any case during the pre-Āḻvār Vaiṣṇava tradition at least four sthalas were known. These four cover the regions of Malaināṭu (Aṅantapuram), Pāṇḍīṇāṭu (Māliruṅcōlai), Cōḷanāṭu (Araṅkam) and Toṇṭaināṭu (Vēṅkaṭam). Down to the 5th-6th century CE no place from the north is listed though the Paripāṭal and the Cilappatikāram have enough to say on the cult of the Vṛṣṇi heroes Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva, including the feminine Subhadra, sister of Kṛṣṇa and not the spouse (identified with Śrī in Śrīvaiṣṇavism; Śrī here is not Śrīdevī but the lord’s “grace”). Viṣṇu (Māl/Tirumāl), Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva are subject of exaltation in the hymns of the Āḻvārs. The Āḻvārs in their hymns extol the praise of the deśas where the Lord willingly resides. These may be listed and discussed regarding their historical sequence. The deśas by each of the Āḻvārs are the following.

**Early Group** (6th-7th century CE)

**Poykai**: Araṅkam, Kovalūr, Veṅkāṭa, Vēṅkaṭam, Pāṛkaṭal and Para-mapatam (Total 5).

**Pūtam**: Araṅkam, Kuṭantai (for a case study see Meeneshwari 1993-95), Taṅcaimāmaṇikkōyil, Kōvalūr, Kacci-Attikiri, Pāṭakam,

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16 Araṅkam appears in the hymns of ten Āḻvārs, excepting Maturakavi and Āṇṭal. It is indeed very odd that the she-mystic who is said to have taken the hand of Lord Raṅganātha at Araṅkam according to the guruparampara (cf. Ṭīviraṇappaṭi) tradition has not even a word to tell about this kṣetra. For a case study on this deśa see Kalidos 1993-95.
Historical sequence of the Vaiṣṇava Divyadeśas

Nīrmalai, Kaṭṭalmallai, Vēṅkaṭaṁ, Taṅkāl, Mālirunḍoḷai, Kōṭṭiyūr and Pāṛkaṭaḷ (Toal 13).

Pēy: Araṅkam, Kuṭaṅtai, Viṇṇakar, Kacci-Attikiri, Aṭṭapuyakkaram, Vēḷukkai, Pāṭakam, Veṅkā, Allikkēṇi, Kaṭikai, Vēṅkaṭaṁ, Māliruṇḍoḷai, Kōṭṭiyūr, Pāṛkaṭaḷ and Paramapatam (Total 15). Grand total 33.

**Middle Group (7th-8th century CE)**

Nam: Araṅkam, Pērnakar, Kuṭaṅtai, Viṇṇakar, Kaṇṇapuram, Taṅcaimāṇaṅkōyil, Veṅkā, Ayōtti, Vaṭamaturai, Vēṅkaṭaṁ, Nāvāy, Kāṭkarai, Mūḷikkāḷam, Vallavāḷ, Kaṭittāṅg, Ceṅkuṉṟūr, Puliyūr/Kuṭṭanāṭu, Vāraṉvai, Vaṇṇapārīṇa, Vēṅkaṭam, Mūḷikkaḷam, Vaḷlavā, Kaṭiktāṅg, Ceṅkuṉṟūr, Puliyūr/Kuṭṭanāṭu, Vāraṉvai, Vaṇṇapārīṇa, Vēṅkaṭam, Mūḷiruṇḍoḷai, Mōkūr and Paramapatam (Total 35).

Maturakavi: Vaikuntam/Vaikuṇṭha (Paramapatam). He was an ardent follower of Nammāḷvār (also called Caṭakōpaṇ or Kurukūr Nampi) and extols his praise in his Kaṇṇinuṅcuṟuttāmpu. He refers to no sthala and says those who trust in Kurukūr Nampi shall reach Vaikuntam/Vaikuṇṭha. Normally this reference to Vaikuṇṭha is not considered to be Vaikuntam, the listed deśa in Pāṇḍināṭu.

Kulacēkarar (alias Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ): Araṅkam, Kōḷiyūr, Kaṇṇapuram, Āḷi/Nakari, Cittirakūṭam, Ayōtti, Vēṅkaṭaṁ, Vittuvakkōṭu and Pāṛkaṭaḷ (Total 9).\(^{18}\)

Tiruppāṇ: Araṅkam, Vēṅkaṭaṁ, Pāṛkaṭaḷ and Paramapatam (Total 4).

Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi: Araṅkam, Ayōtti, Vaṭamaturai and Pāṛkaṭaḷ (Total 4).

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\(^{17}\) Araṅkam appears in the hymns of ten Āḻvārs, excepting Maturakavi and Āṇṭāḷ. It is indeed very odd that the she-mystic who is said to have taken the hand of Lord Raṅganātha at Araṅkam according to the guruparampara (cf. Āṟūvāṟappati) tradition has not even a word to tell about this kṣetra. For a case study on this deśa see Kalidos 1993-95.

\(^{18}\) Hailing from the Hill Country, he refers to few divyadeśas in Malaināṭu (i.e. Tiruvattāṟu and Vittuvakkōṭu) while Nammāḷvār has listed twelve.
Tirumāḷicai: Araṅkam, Anpil, Pērnakar, Kavittalam, Kuṭantai, Pāṭakam, Ürakam, Vēhkā, Evvuḷ, Allikkēni, Vēṅkaṭam, Kuruṅkuṭi, Kūṭal, Kōṭṭiyūr, Pāṅkatal and Paramāpata (16). Grand total 68.

Later Group (8th, early 9th century CE)

Periyāḷvār: Araṅkam, Vēḷarai, Pērnakar, Kuṭantai, Kaṇṇapuram, Ayōtti, Kaṇṭamēṇṇuṅkaṭinakar, Vatariyācciramam, Cālakkirāmam, Vatamaturai, Āyppāṭi, Vēṅkaṭam, Kuruṅkuṭi, Villiputtūr, Māliruṅcōlai, Kōṭṭal, Kōṭṭiyūr, Pāṅkatal and Paramāpata (18).

Āṇṭāḷ: Kuṭantai, Kaṇṇapuram, Vatamaturai, Āyppāṭi, Tuvārakai (Dvārakā), Vēṅkaṭam, Villiputtūr, Māliruṅcōlai, Pāṅkatal and Paramāpata (10).

Tirumāṅkai: Araṅkam, Arimēyaviṅṅakaram, Köliyūr, Karampaṅūr, Vēḷarai, Pērnakar, Kaṇṭiyūr, Kūṭalūr, Pullammpūтанktu, Āṭanūr, Kuṭantai, Viṅṅakar, Naṟaiyūr, Cērai, Kaḷvaṅūr, Kaṇṇamaṅkai, Kaṇṇapuram, Kaṇṇaṅkuṭi, Nākai, Taṅcāmānaṅkkōyil, Nantipuraṅṅkaram, Vēḷiyṅṅkuṭi, Alūntūr, Cīṟupuliyūr, Talaiccāṅkanāṅmatiyam, Intalūr, Kāvaḷampāṭi, Kāḷicēṟāmaviṅṅkaram, Vāḷpuru-tōttamam, Cēṟupuḷiyuyūr, Naṅmāṭakakkōyil, Vaṅkutaviṅṅkaram, Āḷi/Nakari, Tēvaṅārtokai, Tēṟiyampalam, Maṅkkūṭam, Cittirakūṭam, Ayintai, Kōvalūr, Kacci-Attikiri, Aṭṭapuyakkaram, Taṅkāl, Vēḷuktāi, Nīṟakam, Pāṭakam, Nillāṭtikāḷṭuṇṭam, Ürakam, Vēhkā, Kāṟakam, Kāṟvāṅam, Pavalavaṇṇam, Paramēccuraviṅṅkaram, Puṭkuḷi, Nīṟgarvūr, Evvuḷ, Allikkēni, Nīṟmalai, Kaṭalmallai, Kāṭikai, Ayōtti, Nāimicāranyam, Piruti, Vatariyācciramam, Cālakkirāmam, Vatamaturai, Āyppāṭi, Cīṅkāḷṅkuṇṭram, Vēṅkaṭam, Mūḷikkāḷam, Vαllavāḷ, Puliyūr/Kuṭṭanāṭu, Kuruṅkuṭi, Vaṅkuntam, Taṅkāl, Kūṭal, Māliruṅcōlai, Mōkūr, Kōṭṭiyūr, Pullāṇī, Meyyam, Pāṅkatal and Paramāpata (82). Grand total 109.

All the twelve Āḷvārs refer to 210 that means many of the sthalas are redundant 102 times. Tirumāṅkai tops the list having extolled 81 sthalas. Nammāḷvar comes next with 35. Others in the order of numerical priority are Periyāḷvār 18, Tirumāḷicai 16, Pēy 15, Pūtām 13, Āṇṭāḷ 10, Kulacekkar 9, Poykai 6 and Toṇṭaratippoṭi and Tiru-ppān each 4. If one wants to fix the divyadeśas in an evolutionary
process, it could be done as follows, giving due credit to the number of sthalakṣetra extolled by them: Tiruppāṇ (4), Toṇṭaṛaṭippoti (4), Poykai (6), Kulacēkarar (9), Ānçāl (10), Pūtam (13), Pēy (15), Tirumaḷicai (16), Periyāḻvār (18), Nammāḻvār (35) and Tirumaṅkai (81). Maturakavi finds no place in this sequence. These will totally upset the sequence of historical development because according to the original scheme Poykai, Pūtam and Pēy were the earliest among the Āḻvārs and not Tiruppāṇ and Toṇṭaṛaṭippoti. Ānçāl was a junior who predeceased her foster father, Periyāḻvār, the veteran, goes earlier in point of time. Therefore, this could not be the yardstick to fix the dates of the Āḻvārs.

It is a point for consideration why the Āḻvār prefers to talk of a sthala and not all that existed in his time. For example, Kōvalūr, Taṅcaimāṇaṅkkōyil, Kacci-Attikiri, Pāṭaṅkam, Nīrmaḷai, Kaṭalmaḷai, Taṅkāl, Kōṭṭiyūr, Viṅnakar, Aṭṭapuyakkaram and Vēḷukkai existed during the time of Nammāḻvār and he has no hymn on these sthalas. Even though his concentration is on those in Pāṇḍināṭu and Malaināṭu, he has nothing to say on Taṅkāl and Kōṭṭiyūr that were important in the Pāṇḍan zone. Similarly, all the 108 must have existed by about the time of Tirumaṅkai, last among the Āḻvārs. He has chosen to consider 82 and concentrates more on the sthalas in Cōḷanāṭu and Toṇṭaināṭu. The reason for omitting 26 is an enigma and it is not clear that a particular Āḻvār chose to talk of a venue that he personally visited and not talk of others that he did not visit. Tirumaḷicai is supposed to have been born at a place of the same name, near Cheṅṇai (tāluka Śrīperumpūtūr [this was the place where Rājiv Gāndhi was assassinated]), but his nativity is not one among the 108. Now, there is a temple for Viṅṣṭu in that place called Jagannātha. Ānçāl’s primary concern is not Arankam, which place she is said to have visited with Periyāḻvār, her foster father, took the hand of the Lord and merged with eternity according to guruparampara (Āṟāyirappaṭi pp. 45-50) mythologies. We must keep in mind that the guruparampara mythologies are of a later date and were not known at the time of Ānçāl and so these are likely to have been fabrications of those Ācāryas that composed them. Therefore, one will have to be very

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19 Raju Kalidos (1989: 261-73) has listed 64 Viṅṣṭu temples for his study of the temple cars of which 18 appear in the Āḻvār list and one in the Śrītattvanidhi. That means 45 were not canonized.
careful while dealing with the data of the Ācāryas as sources of Vaiṣṇava/Śrīvaiṣṇava history, especially the hagiological details and dates assigned to the Āḷvārs are spurious on part of compilers of the guruparampara annals. It is precisely at this point that Indian, especially those from Tamilnadu, Vaiṣṇava scholars differ from the Indian-American Vaiṣṇava scholars (the school led by A.K. Ramanujam) who seem to be deep-rooted in their sectarian affiliation to the vadakalā-Śrīvaiṣṇavism (brāhmaṇa-dominated and propagators of the Sanskritic lore), a vicious group that is practically castrated in the scholarly circle in Tamilnadu today (infra).

Consolidated List of the sthalas (alphabetically arranged):

Abbreviations: Poykai (Po), Pūtam (Pu), Pēy (P), Nam (N), Maturakavi (Ma), Kulacēkarar (Ku), Tiruppāṇ (PA), Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi (TTP), Tirumālīcāi (TM), Periyāḷvār (Per), Âṇṭāḷ (Ā) and Tirumāṅkai (Maṅ).

Allikkēṇi (P, TM & Maṅ), Āli/Nakari (Ku & Maṅ), Aḷuntūr (Maṅ), Aṉantapuram (N), Aṉpil (TM), Aṟanākam (10, excepting Ma & Ā), Aṟimēyyaviniṅkakaram (Maṅ), Āṭaṉūr (Maṅ), Aṭṭapuyakkaram (P & Maṅ), Āyōtti (N, Ku, TTP, Per & Maṅ), Āyppāṭi (Per, Ā & Maṅ), Cāḷakkirāmam (Per & Maṅ), Ĉēṅkuṉṟam (Maṅ), Ĉēṟai (Maṅ), Ĉempoṉceykōyil (Maṅ), Ĉiṅkavēḻkuṉṟam (Maṅ), Ĉiṟupuliyūr (Maṅ), Ĉittirakūṭam (Ku & Maṅ), Ĉivaramāṅkai (N), Ĉevvul (TM & Maṅ), Kacci-Attikiri (Pu, P & Maṅ), Kāḷicapuram (Maṅ), Kaṇṇamaṅkai (Maṅ), Kaṇṇāṅkuti (Maṅ), Kaṇṇāṉpuram (Ku, N, Per, Ā & Maṅ), Kaṇṭamennuṅkasiṇakar (Per), Kaṇṭiṉūr (Maṅ), Kaṟippalai (TM), Kāṟakam (Maṅ), Kāṟampaṅ (Maṅ), Kāṟvāṅam (Maṅ), Kāṯkarai (N), Kāṭḷallai (Pu & Maṅ), Kāṭiṅkai (P & Maṅ), Kāḷampāṭi (Maṅ), Kōḷiyūr (Ku & Maṅ), Kōḷūr (N), Kōṭṭiyūr (Pu, P, TM, Per & Maṅ), Kōvalūr (Poy, P & Maṅ), Kuṭantuocrinai (N), Kurukūr (N), Kuruṅkuṭi (TM, N, Per & Maṅ),

20 This and the following nine kṣetras are within the city of Nāṅkūr: Ĉempoṉceykōyil, Kāḷaṟampāṭi, Maṇiṟkāṭam, Maṇināṭakkiyil, Pāṟṟaiṟṟappallai, Teriṟṟiṟṟam, Teṉṟar-tokai, Vaṅkuntaviṅkakaram and Vaṉpurūṟṭutamam.

21 This and the following thirteen kṣetras are within the city of Kāṇeḻpuram: Kacci-Attikiri, Taṅkā, Vēḻukkai, Niraṉkām, Pāṭakam, Nilāṭtinakaiṟṟuṭam, Ūṟakam, Veṉkā, Kāṟakam, Kāṟvāṅam, Kaḷvaṉūr, Pavaḷaṉaṉam and Paramēcכurreṅkakaram.
Historical sequence of the Vaiṣṇava Divyadeśas

Kūṭal (TM & Mañ), Kūṭalūr (Mañ), Kuțantai (Pu, P, N, TM, Per, Ā & Mañ), Māliruṇcōlai (Pu, N, Per, Ā & Mañ), Maṇikkūṭam (Mañ), Maṇmāṭakkōyil (Mañ), Meyyam (Mañ), Mōkūr (N & Mañ), Mūlkkālam (N & Mañ), Naimicāranyum (Mañ), Nākai (Mañ), Nantipuraviniṇṇakaram (Mañ), Naraiyūr (Mañ), Nāvāy (N & Mañ), Nilāṭṭankalūṭam (Mañ), Nīṭavūr (Mañ), Nīrakam (Mañ), Nīrmalai (Pu & Mañ), Paramapatham (Po, P, N, Mañ, PA, Per, Ā & Mañ), Paramēccuraviṇṇakaram (Mañ), Pāṭkal (all excepting Ma & N), Pāṭkadul (all excepting Ma & N), Pavaḷavaṇṇam/Kāṇci (Mañ), Pērunakar (N, TM, Per, Mañ), Pēṣṭiru)Pēreyil or Pērai (N), Piruti (Mañ), Puḷṅkuṭi (N), Puliyūr/Kuṭṭanāṭ (N & Mañ), Puḷḷampūṭṭāṅkūti (Mañ), Pulāni (Mañ), Puṭkuļi (Mañ), Talaiccaṅkanāṅmatiyyam (Mañ), Tēvarakai (TM, N, Per, Ā & Mañ), Vēṅkaṭam and Aṉantapuram. The total is four.

Kṣetras of the pre-Āḻvār time are Māliruṇcōlai, Aṉanakam, Vēṅkaṭam and Aṉantapuram. The total is four.

The list of deśas notified by the Early Āḻvārs (6th - 7th century) is: Allikkēṇi, Aṭṭapuyakkaram, Kacci-Attikiri, Kaṭalmallai, Kaṭikai, Kōṭiyūr, Kovalūr, Kuṭantai, Nīrmalai, Veṅkā, Pāṭkal, Paramapatham, Pāṭkam, Taṅcāṁāṅiṅkuṅkiyil, Taṅkāl, Veṅakkai and Viṅnakar. The total is seventeen (4 + 17 = 21). Most deśas are concentrated in Toṇṭaināṭu.

The deśas that come to prominence during the period of the Middle Āḻvārs (7th-8th century) are: Aṉantapuram, Anppil, Ayōṭti.

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22 Cf. the list prepared by Raju Kalidos 2006: 304-305.
23 Māliruṇcōlai, Aṉanakam and Vēṅkaṭam appearing in earlier literature (e.g. Paripāṭal and Cilappatikāram) are not included.
Ceṅkuṇṟūr, Cittirakūṭam, Cīvaramāṅkai, Evvuļ, Tolaivillimaṅkalam, Kaṅṇapuram, Kaṭittāgam, Kaṭkaraī, Kaavittalam, Kōliyūr, Kōḷūr, Kuṭantai, Kuruṅkūṭi, Kuruṅkuṭṭi, Kuṭṭal, Maṇimāṭkōyil, Meyyam, Mōkūr, Mūḷikkālam, Naimicāranyam, Nāvāy, Niṅavūr, Pērnakar, Puljinḵuṭi, Puliyūr/Kuṭṭanāṭu, Pullāṅi, Puṭkulī, Teṅṭirupperai, Āli/Nakari, Vallavāl, Vaṅparicāram, Vaṅvaṇṭūr, Varakūṇamāṅkai, Vāraṇvilai, Vaṭamaturai, Vaṭṭtu, Vittuvakkōṭu and Ūrakam. The total is forty-one (4 + 17 + 40 = 61).

The deśas that entered the scene in the last round of the Later Āḻvārs (8th-9th century) are the following: Aṭṭapuyakkaram, Arimmēyaviṇṇakaram, Ātaṅkūr, Āyppāṭī, Cālakkirāmam, Cempoṉceykōyil, Cērai, Cīṅkavēṅṟam, Ciṟupuliyūr, Intalūr, Kāḷiccīrāmaviṇṇakaram, Kaḷvaṅgūr, Kaṅṇamāṅkai, Kaṅṇakūṭi, Kaṇṭamenuṅkaṭinakar, Kaṇṭīṉur, Karakam, Karampanṉur, Kārvāgam, Kāvalampāṭī, Kūṭalūr, Maṇikkūṭam, Nākai, Nantipuraviṇṇakaram, Nāḷaiyūr, Nilāttuṇṭam, Nīrakam, Pavaḷavaṇṇam, Paramēccuraviṇṇakaram, Pāṭṭanapalli, Piruti, Puḷampūṭtaiṅkuṭi, Talaiccaṅkanāṭmatiyam, Tāṅkā, Tēṟṟiyampalam, Tēvaṇārtokai, Vaikuntam, Vaikuntaviṇṇakaram, Vaṇpurutottamam, Vaṭariyācciramam, Vaiṭṭaluṅkaṭi, Veṅintipuram, Veṅkaṭam, Veḷḷakulam, Veḷḷarai, Veḷḷiyaṅkuṭi, Villiputtūr and Viṭṭvantai (4 + 17 + 40 + 47 = 108).

This is the traditional list of 108 divyadeśas that ardent Vaiṣṇavas would like to visit. However, the Śrītattvanidhi, a compilation of dhyānaślokaś from various sources, compiled by Kṛṣṇarāja Uṭaiyār (19th century), gives a list of 117 (Kalidos 2006: I, 307), citing the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa (c. 350-950 CE, O’Flaherty 1994: 17) as the source of its authority. For classification it follows the traditional order in the ensuing pattern: Heavens (total number of deśas 2), North India (11), Toṇṭaināṭu (22), Naṭunāṭu (4), Cōḷanāṭu (43), Pāṇḍināṭu (19), Malaināṭu (13) and Karnāṭaka (3). In the original list of 108 none from Karnāṭaka is counted. The Śrītattvanidhi adds Janārđana, Mahiṣāśūraṭthān (modern Mysore) and Mēlkoṭevātināṁrayanāpuram (Mēlkoṭe). The other newly added places are Yadottakāri, Śrīperumputūr, Śrīmuṣṭa, Taṅcaiyāḷīmaṇi, Reṇuṇāṭai and Maṇgārkūṭi/Campakāranyam. The Sanskritic intonation of the names appears odd: e.g. Aṭṭapuyakkaram/Aṣṭa-

24 This is the birth place of Ācārya Rāmānuja. The temple on the site goes after the name Ādi Keśava Perumāḷ.
bhujūr, Paramēccuraviṇṇakaram/Pamameśvaravaṇṇahanūr, Tiruvāli-Tirunakari/Tirnāṭărınagari, Pulḷāni/Pullāranyam, Pulīṅkuti/Kuṇiṅgudi and so on.

To a modern tourist with all the sophisticated travel facilities by air, road or rail it might appear the Āḻvārs could not have visited all the sthalas listed by them, especially those in the distant north (e.g. Śālagrāma in Nepal), but why not by walk is the question? It was their avowed ambition to visit all the kṣetras because they considered the kṣetra the Lord Viṣṇu himself, cf. the Viṣṇusahasranāma epithet: Kṣetrajña (no. 16) that considers the Lord himself the sacred temple. 25 Paramapatam (the Vaiṣṇava heaven, Vaikuṇṭha) and Pāṅkal (Ocean of Milk) are purely mythical (vide, Attachment). No mortal could hope to visit these places. 26 Those who have faith in Viṣṇu may hope to visit these places only after demise. Again it is a moot point that only a few sthalas alone existed during a particular point of time that was canonized by the Āḻvārs. More could have been there that were not canonized. When attain popularity, they could have been canonized. For example, one may ask whether Śrīmuṣṇam or Maṇṉārkuti existed only at the time of the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa (say 10th century CE). There could have been a small temple there during the pre-10th century that came to be canonized later when popularity increases. Epigraphical sources in the temple date since the Middle and later Cōḷa period (10th-11th century - Rajarajan 2006: I, 64). More pronounced evidences come during the period of the Nāyakas of Taṅcāvūr in the 16th-17th century (cf. Rajarajan 2006: I, 64-65). In any case it could not be definitely stated that this sthala existed during the Āḻvār period.

Several temples (kṣetras) existed in one sthala, e.g. Kāñci (14) and Nāṅkūr (8). In both the cases the sthala is Kāñci or Nāṅkūr and what the Āḻvārs considered was the temple, the kṣetra. In such a case total number of sthalas could not have been more than 88. The Hindu

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25 Cf. the beautiful Tamil expression, tirutaliyā “Lord Sacred Temple” (Tēvāram 6.290.3), Ōṅkuyarköyilugaiyār (ibid. 1.26.3) “He is frozen in the form of the Temple” or “he who resides in the tall-rising temple”. These references pertain to a sacred Śaiva venue in Pāṇḍināṭu at Puttūr (Place of the Anthill) on the way from Maturai to Kāraikklūti via Mēlūr.

26 The Tiruvilāiyāṭ Purāṇam records a myth of Varagaṇa Pāṇḍya (CE 862-80) visiting the Śīvaloka (Jeyapriya 2013: Chap. II) and presents a description of how it was.
faith is that each temple is situated on the Meru, the *Axis mundi*, and that the temple was the Lord himself transformed in the form of an architectural edifice (*supra*. cf. n. 26). If such a lofty imaginary vision of a *sthala* is considered, then we may have faith in 108 in which case the temple may fall within a radius of 5-7 kms in case of Kāñci or Nāṅkūr.

Another important point is that what the Āḻvārs saw during the 6th-9th century were not the temples that we find today. A good case of phenomenal growth is the Tirumala/Tirupati (Vēṇkaṭam) temple. There are several temples for Viṣṇu at the base of the seven hills, Saptagiri, named after Śrīnivāsa, Govindarāja (supposed to have been built by Rāmānujācārya; Aiyangar 1940: 262), Godaṇḍa-Rama, Alamēlu-Maṅgammā (Tiruccāṉūr) and so on and it is not clear which temple the Āḻvārs note. It is a point for serious consideration whether it is the temple on the hill top (Aiyangar 1940: 4) because Rāmānujācārya is said to have rolled his body on the hill to reach the temple. He did so because the hill was an abstraction of Ādiśeṣa himself (cf. n. 22) and that he should not set his foot on him, the hill, Śeṣasaila. The Āḻvārs consider Māliruṅcōlai the Tiruppāṟkaṭal and Vēṇkaṭam the Vaikuṇṭha (*Tiruvāymo ṇli* 10.7.8). Nammāḻvār beautifully says Tirumāḷiruṅcōlai is the Pāṟkaṭal that is his head. The Vaikuṇṭha of Tirumāl is Tiruvēṅ-kaṭam that is his body:

\[
\text{Tirumāḷiruṅcōlaimalaiyē Tiruppāṟkaṭalē yēṉralaiyē}
\]
\[
\text{Tirumāl Vaikuntamē taṉtiruvēṅkaṭamē yēṉatuṭalē}
\]
\[
\text{(*Tiruvāymo ṇli* 10.7.8).}
\]

The temple that the Āḻvārs did see during the 6th-9th centuries has undergone spectacular changes today (Figs. 16-18). The inner part of the temple, i.e. what lay inside the *tirumati* as it was 100 years ago, has not undergone any drastic change. What all done is to cover the pillars and *vimāna* with golden plates. The original structures such as the *garbhagṛha*, *Guruḍa* shrine, chapels for Yoga-Nṛṣirṁha, Varadarāja, Rāmānuja, Ainamahal, kalyāṇa-manḍapa, *tirumaṅjana-

27 The seven hills are extolled in a hymn of the Veṅkaṭeśvarasuprabhātam v. 15: Śrīśeṣasaila guruḍaćala veṇkatāḍri nārāyanāḍri vṛṣabhāḍri vṛṣādṛimukhyām / Ākhyaṁ dvadāśavateraniśām vadanti Šrīveṅkaṭācalapate dava suprabhātam. This hymn gives the names of the hills Śrīsaila, Šeṣasaila, Garuḍaćala, Veṅkaṭāḍri, Nārāyanāḍri, Vṛṣabhāḍri and Vṛṣādri.
Historical sequence of the Vaiṣṇava Divyadeśas

maṇḍapa, Tirumalanāyaka-maṇḍapa, Raṅganāyaka-maṇḍapa and so on remain intact (Sitapati 1972: Plan). Forty years back, a devotee had to wait outside the prime gopura till 4-5 PM (having been closed after midday services) for reopening of the Gateway to get into the temple.28 A crowd of some 200-300 pilgrims was waiting for darśana. Today several thousands wait for hours if one pays money and days for a free darśana (cf. the mega-queue that waits at the Gate of the Śt. Peters Church in Rome, the bustle of tourists in the Pompeii Pago Martittimo or Herculaneum in Naples and the crowd in Sistine chapel or Vatican Museum). The difference is that the bustle comes down within a few hours in Rome and Naples whereas it lasts for days together in Tirumala/Tirupati. The additions to the Tirumala temple outside the wall are beyond imagination. How many free-feeding boarding houses both at the foothills and atop the hill; how many paid lodging cottages; what a scenic addition to the temple structures; jewels worth how many billions of dollars to the Lord and the vāhanas that one saw in 1940 may not be the ones that he sees today (Figs. 1-7).29 What was once a simple brass-plated Śesavāhana is today in molten gold (cf. Figs. 6-7). I am sure no temple on earth would have seen such a tremendous growth within a period of 50

28 Interview with Raju Kalidos, who visited the temple in 1966 when a student of bachelor’s study. See photos (Figs. 1-2, 6-7) that were shot in the later 1930s (source Aiyangar 1940). See in photo 6 the priest seated to the left of the vāhana may have been 20 and the same person in photo 7 is more than 80 years old. We will have to verify whether both are the same.

29 While working on this part of the article, I happened to note a fantastic, rather “shocking”, newspaper report (contributor’s name not given) in a popular Tamil daily, called Tiṉamalar (dated 2nd October 2010), on the splendors of the Lord of the Tirumalai temple (Figs. 4-5) that may be summarized as follows (facts subject to verification): 1) The golden pītāmbara of the Lord is six kg in weight. Any one could offer such a vastra to the Lord by paying Rs. 12,500 (US $ 250) and will have to wait in reservation for three years on paying the money. This is called mēlcāttuvāstram (upper garment). 2) The ulcāttuvāstram (inner garment) is worth Rs. 20,000 ($ 400) and after paying the due one will have to wait for 10 years. 3) The cosmetics for the Lord are brought from Amsterdam (roses), Spain (kumkum), Nepal (kasturi), China (punuku) and Paris (aromatic scents). 4) The jewels are worth several billions of dollars. The sālagrama golden shoulder hang is twelve kg in weight and three priests are required to lift it and place on the Lord’s image. They say there is no time to put on all these ornaments on the sacred image of the Lord in a recurring process during yearly days. The latest news (February 2011) is that they a Museum of Jewels is to be set in the temple. Cf. the Exhibits in the Vatican, Rome. 5) A blue gem alone is worth 20 million dollars (?).
years (cf. Parker 1992: 121n). If Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār were alive today and visit the temple, he would not believe his own eyes and say it was the same Vēṇkaṭam that he saw in the 9th century. Tirupati/Tirumala is the only venue of a temple on earth that shows stages of development at a bullet-train-speed within a time bracket of 50 years.

Mālorūncōlai and Mōkūr fall within a distance of 15 kms in the north-south direction. In both the cases the present temples are of Vijayanagara-Nāyaka period as the style of architecture and iconography would prove (Rajarajan 2006: I, 44-47; II, Plan II). In between these two another center of early medieval art, Āḻvār time, is found that houses an image of Ugra-Nṛsiṁha in the cella of a rock-cut cave (Kalidos 2006: I, 224-25). Again the north-facing group of caves in Tirupparanukurram consists of a rock-cut cella for Viṣṇu-Vaikunṭha-mūrti (Rajarajan 1991: figs. 1-2), which is not a divyadeśa.  

We may recall here that the Paripāṭal has references to Iruntaiyūr and Kūḷavāy. It is not clear these two refer to the Paraṅkūram and Āḻvār time. In any case the Meyyam or Mālorūncōlai of the Āḻvār time are not those that we find today. Through the historic periods, these temples have undergone drastic changes and added with several maṇḍapas, shrines for Āvaraṇamūrtis, gopuras, tirukkuḷams, vāhanas and so on (Plan 1). These could not be those of the time that the Āḻvārs composed their hymns. 

Shrines for Āvaraṇamūrtis peep into the temple arena only after the time of Kulōttunga I (AD 1070-1120). Early medieval temples, cave or structural, do not accommodate separate chapels for Lakṣmī or Murukāṅṭam as told in the Tirumurukāṟṟuppatai (250 CE, Zvelebil 1974: 50). It has been proved with authentic evidence that the present group of northern caves at Paraṅkūram accommodates no house for Murukāṅ (Rajarajan 2001). In two instances temples for Viṣṇu and Murukāṅ are said to have coexisted. They are Paraṅkūram, Mālorūncōlai, called Paḷamutircōlai in Kaumāra tradition. Vēṇkaṭam was also considered a temple for Śiva (Aiyangar 1940: 266). The tug-of-war between the Vaiṣṇavas and Kaumāras was so intense that they went to the court of law claiming the present Saunrarāja Perumāḷ temple at Aḷakarkōyil was their original Murukāṅ temple. The same fight existed in case of Tirupati-Tirumala also (Aiyangar 1940, Vol. I).

It was a seat of the Murukāṅ cult as told in the Tirumurukāṟṟuppatai (250 CE, Zvelebil 1974: 50). It has been proved with authentic evidence that the present group of northern caves at Paraṅkūram accommodates no house for Murukāṅ (Rajarajan 2001). In two instances temples for Viṣṇu and Murukāṅ are said to have coexisted. They are Paraṅkūram, Mālorūncōlai, called Paḷamutircōlai in Kaumāra tradition. Vēṇkaṭam was also considered a temple for Śiva (Aiyangar 1940: 266). The tug-of-war between the Vaiṣṇavas and Kaumāras was so intense that they went to the court of law claiming the present Saunrarāja Perumāḷ temple at Aḷakarkōyil was their original Murukāṅ temple. The same fight existed in case of Tirupati-Tirumala also (Aiyangar 1940, Vol. I).

Tirumaṅkai talks of tanks, pools, forts, towered edifices and pavilions: poliḷum vāṭiyum matilum māṭaṁṭikaiyum mānṭapamum (Periya Tirumoli 2.3.10). These might have been some early edifices built of brick and not the pillared halls that we find during the Cōḷa or Vijayanagara-Nāyaka time. All structures of the present temple, the holy of holies, maṇḍapas, gopura, tirumatiḻ, tirukkuḷam and vāhanas (including tēr) are of Vijayanagara-Nāyaka time.
Historical sequence of the Vaiṣṇava Divyadeśas

These come to the scene only during the Vijayanagara-Nāyaka period (Rajarajan 2006: II, Plans I & II). The Āṭāvaimalai early medieval rock-cut cave temple for Nṛṣimha (Fig. 8) is added with a mahāmaṇḍapa, shrine for Garuda and Lakṣmī that are structural and Vijayanagara-Nāyaka additions (Figs. 9-11). Similarly the present day temple complex of either Māliruṇcōlai or Meyyam (Rajarajan 2006: II, Plan VIII of Meyyam) did not exist during the Āḻvār times. The temple tank in the plan of Rajarajan was built during the Vijayanagara time whereas the Āḻvār's sing the natural water reservoirs (Fig. 12). The rock-cut mūlabera in Meyyam is of the Āḻvār time and not the balibera (Fig. 13).

In any case all that is told by the Āḻvār is not imaginary or idealized vision of a temple that he saw in his mental eye. His aim was to extol the Mūrti as he found him in sayana, sthānaka, āsana or dancing mode (cf. Kalidos 1999: 223-50), the sthala, the kṣetra, the vrksa (flora and fauna), the tīrtha, the utsava (cf. Younger 1982) and so on. There may be an iota of poetic imagination of what the Āḻvār say (e.g. references to towered edifices and golden forts in small villages) but the divyadeśa is a reality because we find all the 108 today. One may locate the nine and fourteen temples of the Āḻvār’s time in the cities of Nāṅkūr and Kāñci of the 9th century in separate

32 Vasudha Narayanan (1998: 88) says separate chapels for Śrīdevī appear in Viṣṇu temples since the 7th century CE. It is not so. In none of the Pallava structural temple (e.g. Vaikuṇṭha Perumāl) or rock-cut caves (e.g. Varāhamaṇḍapa and Advivarāhaviṣṇu-grha) do we find a chapel for Devī. The same is the case with that of the Western Calukyas of Badāmī (e.g. Caves III & II), early Pāṇḍyas, Rāṣṭrakūtas and Eastern Calukyas. If in case one finds a chapel for Devī (e.g. Āṭāvaimalai Fig. 10) it is a later addition. The Malaiyaṭippatti early medieval cave finds some ruined structural additions for Devī, Garuda and the Ācāryas. These are of the Nāyaka period (Kalidos 1988: 57-69). The Kont-gudi complex in Aihole is a cluster of temples for gods and none for Devī (see a recent book, Soundararajan 2009).

33 For example the present day Allikkēṇi temple is a macro-complex with the following falling within a tirumati (sacred wall): Five garbhaṅgas for pañcaviṣās (infra Attachment), chapels for Varadarāja, Raṅganātha, Nṛṣimha and Śrī Rāma, shrines for Devīs, an enclave for Āḻvār, ardhamanaṇḍapa, mukhamanaṇḍapa, mahāmanaṇḍapa, 32-pillared maṇḍapa, uṉjalmaṇḍapa (swing pavilion), vasanta manṇḍapa (pavilion for the spring festival), kalyāṇamaṇḍapa (marriage pavilion), a pavilion that falls outside the wall in the east, two gopuras, balipītha, dvajastambha, Garudapītha, teppakkulam and so on (Radhakrishnan 2006: Chap II).

34 Especially the Lord in the divyadeśas of Pāṇḍināṭu region is viewed mostly in dancing form (Rajarajan 2010).
zones but today these are found within the congested city and streets of contemporary time within a range of walkable distance. Overall, we are thankful to the mystics of the 6th-9th centuries for presenting us an overview of the Vaiṣṇava temples and venues that existed in their times. To get back to the question posed at the commencement of the essay, “landscape of myth” or “landscape of history”, it may be affirmed the Āḻvārs deal with the landscape of history and not myth. To say simply why it is “history”, I may add all the 108 exist today and these have evolved over a long period of time during the 6th - early 9th century CE down to the contemporary time. What I mean is Allikkēṇi of today (Figs. 14-15) is totally different (Figs. 14-15) from what Pēyāḷvār saw in the 6th century CE but the deśa is a reality, its topographical setting and ecology (vide, Attachment). A sthala could not be imagined and described. The aim of the Āḻvār was to visit the sthala and describe the Mūrti, the kṣetra, tīrtha, vrkṣa and above all its sacred geography with its flourishing flora and fauna as they found it (for a graphic description of these details see Rajarajan 2012a). Pāṟkaṭal and Vaikuṇṭha are exceptions (vide, for case studies see Attachment). More sthalas seem to have been added during the subsequent periods (e.g. the Śrītattvanidhi version) down to the 19th century CE and several of these are not brought under divyadeśas (e.g. Ādi Keśava at Śrīperumpūtūr, Varadarāja at Kāñcipuram, a stronghold of vaṭakalai Śrīvaiṣṇavism),35 Kodaṇḍa Rāma at Madhuāntakam and so on see Kalidos 1989: 261-73).

Argument

This part of the article is added to reply certain questions that rose during discussion when presented in an elite audience. I am to emphasize that most Indian-American and American (I mean the US) scho-lars working in American Universities writing on Śrīvaiṣṇavism are prejudiced of the fundamentals of its basic philosophy and that of Viṣṇuism (supra). I want to emphasize Śrīvaiṣṇavism is a philophical approach to Viṣṇuism and Viṣṇuism/Vaiṣṇavism is a major religion in India, counted one among the ṣanmatas (Tamil aruvakaiccamayam).

35 For a case study on Teṉkalai Śrīvaiṣṇavism in South India, see Lester (1994: 39-53) and Mumme (1987: 257-266).
I should emphasise Śrīvaiṣṇavism in which Śrī (the Lord’s “grace” *supra*) is given greater importance than Viṣṇu is not the main focus of attention here. Some American scholars employ unhistorical phrases such as “Śrīvaiṣṇava poems”, “Śrīvaiṣṇava divyadeśas” and so on. The Āḻvārs’ works are not poems.

They composed hymns that generate sanctity, which when recited arises from the depth of the bosom of a devotee, melts his tissues: kātalākik kacintu kaṇṭīr malki “I am in love [My Lord Śiva], I melt and shed tears” Tēvāram 3.307.1; ūṇiṇai urukki ulḷoli perukki “melt the tissues and arouse the inner light” Tiruvācakam: Piṭittapattu v. 9; appākik kacinturukum “[I] liquefy due to love of you” Tiruvācakam: Čivapurāṇam 1. 57; he/she being in a state of frenzy. It is not something like a movie song or pop music.

The sublime in the Tamil hymnists is so unfathomable that John Bunyan (*vide*, Pilgrim’s Progress 17th century CE) is a baccā before Nāṇacampantar, the child prodigy, and Māṇikkavacakar (7th-8th century CE), a veteran. The *divyadeśas* were not Śrīvaiṣṇava at about the early 9th century CE and no true Vaiṣṇava brings them under this category.

Śrīvaiṣṇavism as a codified system of thought/philosophy developed after the time of Śrī Rāmānujācārya (e.g. his *Śrībhāṣya*) in the 12th
century CE whereas all the twelve Āḻvārs are dated during the 6th–
early 9th century CE. A ray of Śrīvaiṣṇava ideology may be found
the hymns of Āṇṭāl et al who emphasize the importance of the Feminine
Principle (śrī “grace” transformed) as one may find in Tiruppāvai.

The subject-matter in the hymns of the Āḻvārs is Viṣṇu, the
foremost of the millions of gods: muppattumūvar amarar: Tiruppavai
v. 20. The Āḻvārs consider Śrī, Bhū and Nappiṅṇai, Viṣṇu’s three
consorts as secondary or tertiary principles: utaṉamar kātāl makkir
tirumakal maṉmakalāyarr/măṭamakal evirvan mūvar “the three
consorts are Srīdevī, Bhūdevī and the āyar[gopi]-girl, Nappiṅṇai”
Tiruvāyumolī 1.9.4; vide, Kalidos 2011. Āṇṭāl in another place
categorically declares it is her aim to sing the praise of the Lord
Viṣṇu: “As on today and the seven more births to come I am for you
and for you only I shall offer my obeisance”: erraiukkum ēṭē
piṟavikkum uṟṟai uṟṟaṁṭu uṟṟaṁṭeviyom (Tiruppavai
v. 29). She also advices her fellow maidens to sing the praise of the
Lord Nārāyaṇa, also called Keśava: Nāyakar peṇpiḷḷāy
Nārāyaṇamūrtti Kecavaṇai pāṭavum ni (Tiruppavai v. 7). “He is
the god of gods”, Āṇṭāl says, “let us go and worship him, He will shower
his blessings scrutinising our demands”: Tēvāti tēvaṇic ceṇumām
cēvittāl/āvāveṅṟaiyavēlottēḷ-empēvay (Tiruppavai v. 8). In the
Nācciyaṛ Tirumoḷī 1.1 she declares: Uṇṇaiyu mumpiyaiyum toḷutēṇ “I
worship you and your brother (Bala-deva)”, a hint at the Vṛṣṇi hero-
worship.

The Śrīvaiṣṇava concept > Viṣṇu without śrī is a naught38
< developed due to some religious upheavals in the 12th century CE.39

Rāmānuja. Śrīvaiṣṇavism is an interpretative philosophy on part of the Ācāryas.
These interpreters are not the end-point in Vaiṣṇavism.

38 In the Śrīraṅgam temple one visits Tāyār (Mother Śrī) first and then goes to the
main sanctum of Lord Rāganātha. It is due to the popular belief the Lord may not
shower his mercy unless the devotee has obtained the blessings of the Goddess. This
idea should have come to the ritual picture only after the Vijayanagara time when the
shrine for Tāyār was erected.

39 Tele-interview with a Śrīvaiṣṇava scholar, Prof. J. Rangaswami of the Tamil
University of Thanjavur (this scholar has translated the Śrīvacanabhuṣanam and
Ācāryahdyaya of Piḷḷaḷi Lokācārya in English) who on 17-2-2011 told me: > It is sheer
idiosyncrasy to talk of Śrīvaiṣṇavism before the time of Nāṭhamuni (10th century CE)
who codified the Nālāyiram into a canon. For the Tamil Vaiṣṇavas the Nālāyiram is
the Veda and not the commentaries of the Ācāryas who came after Rāmānuja.
Śrīvaiṣṇavism as a cultivated system developed during and after the time of
Rāmānuja, popularized by his disciples <
Historical sequence of the Vaiṣṇava Divyadeśas

Śrīraṅgam (Raṅganātha temple – divyadeśa) and Kāñcīpuram (Varadarāja temple) at that point of time were the bases of Śrīvaiṣṇava mode of approach after the time of Rāmānuja, the former emphasizing the Pāñcarātra- and latter Vaikhānasa- āgamas respectively for the teṅkalai (Tamil/Nālāyiram dominated) and vaṭakalai (Sanskrit/Vedas dominated) schisms (Rangasvami 1993-95: 107-22). Therefore, the usage of phrases such as “Śrīvaiṣṇava poems (meaning the Nālāyiram)” and “Śrīvaiṣṇava divyadeśas (of the Āḻvārs)” is mere fallacy. I may also add here in the early medieval temples (c. 550-850 CE, contemporaneous with the Āḻvārs), rock-cut or structural, Viṣṇu rarely appears with Devīs, Śrī and Bhū, and never with Nappiṅṇai (cf. Kalidos 2011 cites K.R. Srinivasan 1972: 51 who finds Nappiṅṇai in the Govardhanadhāri relief of Māmallapuram). Good examples are Trimūrti-maṇḍapa in Māmallapuram, Kīḻmāvilaṅkai cave temple, Tiruccirāppalḷi Pāṇḍya (lower) cave (west-facing cella) and so on (Kalidos 2006: pls. LXI. 1, LXXXII. 1). Though not approved divyadeśas by the Āḻvārs, these are archaeological evidences to show the not-so-well-known concept of Śrīvaiṣṇavism during a time contemporaneous with the Āḻvārs as reflected in the temple arts.41

I have cited a newspaper report only to show how tremendously the assets of the Tirumala have increased during the past 50 years. It may be “anonymous” (see n. 28) to very serious to an American or American-Indian and they may look “spuriously” in understanding the ideas behind the interpretation of photo nos. 6 & 7. Coming to the

40 Śrī and Bhū may or may not be present with the Lord Śeṣaśāyī; e.g. Uṇḍavalli in Āndhradesā (without Devīs), ruined image in the middle cella of the Shore temple at Māmallapuram (without Devīs), Ciṅkāvaram, Nāmakkal, Malaiyāṭippattī, Tirumeyyam and Taṅkāl (divyadeśa). In the maṇḍapa of the Malaiyāṭippattī rock-cut cave for Raṅganātha Śrī and Bhū appear with seated and standing Viṣṇu but these two are not cult images (Kalidos 1988: Pl. Ia). The garbhagṛha in the Tirupparaṅkuṇṟam (west facing cella) north group of caves accommodates seated Viṣṇu with Devīs (Rajarajan 1991: figs. 1-2). It is an example of a Śrīvaiṣṇava image in the early art of Tamilnadu that is placed in the garbhagṛha. The image of Bhūvarāhamūrti in the Ādivarāha-Viṣṇu-ṛgṛha is with Bhūdevi (Champakalakshmi 2001: fig. p. 80), placed in a cella-like apartment on the backwall of the cave. Sīhāṅaka-Viṣṇu appears alone in the Trimūrti-maṇḍapa of Māmallapuram, Kīḻmāvilaṅkai cave and Tiruccirāppalḷi lower cave (west facing cella). In my view the presence of Devī/s is not the only criteria for Śrīvaiṣṇava status.

41 If any one wants to dispute these arguments, he/she is most welcome to India to any one of the research centers, particularly the Tamil University of Thanjavur or the Adyar Research Centre, where we shall meet and debate.
anonymous newspaper report, I may add now there is a school that gives importance to “contemporary history” (cf. a Department of Contemporary History in the School of Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi) and “oral history” in Europe. Scholars on contemporary history depend mainly on Newspaper reports (Diehl 1978: 123-27, Rajaraman 1988: 314-15) and personally biased interviews.\(^{42}\) Anita Diehl’s work is a doctoral thesis of the University of Lund.\(^{43}\) Are we to treat these “anonymous” theses? Several American scholars produce calendar posters for illustration in their scholarly publications on religion and Hinduism (Hawley 1988: fig. 1, Narayanan 1988: figs. 10-11,\(^{44}\) McDermott 1988: figs. 28, 30-31). Are

\(^{42}\) If you write a thesis on a contemporary politician in Tamilnadu who had been in the field for the past 60 years, the investigator invariably depends on newspapers and personal interviews that belong to his party cadre. Do you think such a person will open his mind regarding number of wives/concubines of their leader, their children (how many and to whom born?), and personal assets in 1950 and 2010? Under such circumstances, methodology could not be uniform in all historical investigations. We find historians of religion, historians of art and those deals with both. Could any one bring them into a compartment or fence their thoughts by talking of methodology? There is an Indian saying: for Vālmīki (and Shakespeare) there is no grammar; what they write is grammar. I am neither Vālmīki nor Shakespeare but their student. I very well remember Shakespeare’s advice to a scholar of my standing, a Humboldtian if not a Harvardian: “Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice; Take each man’s censure, but reserve thy judgement” (Hamlet Act I, Scene 3). I also keep in mind Shakespeare’s words: “I have immortal longings in me” (Antony and Cleopatra, Act V, Scene 2). These citations are irrelevant to the problem under study but may serve to answer the precarious questions that arise in course of discussion. I want to point out here that in a Harvard publication (Parker 1992: 110-123) the data presented could be found in any contemporary newspaper in Tamil or English. Scholars interested may refer to newspapers during 1979-1987.

\(^{43}\) These scholars cite third-rate newspapers such as Tiṉattanti (popular among the unlettered mass) and Vijutalai (that fanatics of DK political lineage read) that no decent man, not to speak of the educated, reads in Tamilnadu. The news agency that I have cited is on a better level read by the elite. I do not say it does not talk nonsense. It does. This standard as well applies to news media all over the world, whether the Times of India or New York. I am giving this an example and it has not relevance to the main discussion on divyadeśas. When I cite a newspaper report on the subject, it was questioned by an American. It is my counter-question how they permit scholars in contemporary history quoting newspapers. Do not scholars from Harvard work on contemporary Indian or American history? If these scholars take a double-stand in historical research Harvard will be hollow-vard.

\(^{44}\) If you want historical images Śrī/Lakṣmī go to Ellora Cave XVI, the Nandi-mandapa part of its monolithic section or the dark hole-like pathway that leads to the Laṅkeśvara in the same group of cave temples (Kalidos 2006: III, pl. XVI. 1). You do
they historical or what authority do they command in the sphere of Indian art? Are not these “anonymous”? The pinnacle of these cheap illustrations is by Jacobson (2004: 237-64, figs. 1-8) who offers a justification for this type of unhistorical idioms in art. The most fantastic visualisation is that child-Śiva is found sleeping in fig. 8 of Jacobson 2004. To my knowledge there is no iconographic form of Śiva in the canons or myth that view Śiva in reclining mode whether as a child, lad or grown up man (see the *virutta-kumāra-pālaṇaḥ* [Sanskrit śṛddha-kumāra-bāla] in *Tiruvilaiāṭar Purāṇam*). It is typical of the Buddha (chronologically earlier) and Viśṇu-Śeṣāśayī. The calendar posters are wild imaginations and fantasies on the part uneducated street painters/printers. Going to the other extreme, an art historian may justify he is investigating the sociological setting of these new entrants in the realm of Hindu iconography, which traditional scholars view with apathy (cf. Dallapiccola ed. 1989) and in my view such illustrations are unscrupulously art historical. These
scholars construe their own methodology of art history vis-à-vis religion that is against the injunctions of the śāstras as told in Dallapiccola ed. 1989.

Coming to my illustrations Figs. 6-7, carefully examine the legends for these figures in which it is clearly stated photo 6 was shot in the 1930s and photo 7 in September 2010. Therefore, my proposition that the priest in photo 6 (maybe aged 20) is the same in photo 7 (aged above 80). I have prudently added the motifs are subject to verification. In endnote 27 I have only said Prof. Raju Kalidos visited the Tirumala temple in 1966. Our entire family was on the hills in 2000 on the occasion of my marriage. The hill-temple at Tirumala was entirely different in 2010 when compared with 2000 and 1966.

It may be shocking to some who read endnote 28. Let me give a small statistics of the budget of the Tirumala temple as reported in scholarly journals. In 1978-79 the Budget estimate of the temple was Rs. 1,755.26 lakhs (Venugopal 1978: 571-72). Within a period of three years during 1982-83 it rose to several millions, the fixed deposit alone being 45.97 crores (more than a million American dollars) of Indian rupees (Reddy 1983: 953-56). This is what statistics says. Who knows what the actual figure was if you do not depend on newspaper reports? And who knows how many lakhs of rupees were swindled? If you ask for today’s budget estimate of the Devasthānam nobody will give you the genuine figures and even if told they may be fake. If one wants to know the truth behind the citations given in endnote 28 no one may come forward to divulge the secret. There may or may not this bed is the queen, who lies naked, awaiting the oblation of soma-semen from her husband. Known as “The Clan-founding Goddess” (kula-mutalēvī), she embodies the Mother goddess to whom her maidservant prays for victory, as well as the anāṅku (a Tamil term whose semantic field corresponds to that śakti in Sanskrit) that pervades the royal capital-fortress. That anāṅku, transmitted by her to the king each time they have sexual intercourse (kūṭal), is carried inside of him as the energy that wins him victory in battle. Nearly all of the elements of the later kuladevī cults appear to be present in this early Tamil poem.

47 Sir, this is India, home of black-money and politico-religious public robbery (keep in mind 2G-Spectrum hot-news and a Central Indian minister and his paramour jail days. Some time back there was a hubbub regarding the missing jewels in the Tirumala temple. Where there is wealth, there is ample opportunity for banditry. I hope the Vatican is free from these malices. But when we visited the Church one of my friends found 2,000 euro pickpocketed. From time immemorial the region around Tirupati was the home of kaḷḷas (literally “robbers”). Today these original kaḷḷas have disappeared, giving place for the modern politician/kaḷḷa.
be any reality if one says a blue gem is worth 20 million US dollars (cf. endnote 28). See Fig. 17 and find out the jewels that could not be valued in terms of millions of euros and dollars.

Acknowledgement

I am obliged to Prof. Raju Kalidos for having given a final touch to the article as it stands in its present format, especially note 43.
Attachment

Allikēṇi and Pārkaṭal in the Āḻvār hymns
Allikēṇi and Pārkaṭal are the two earthly and unearthly celestial abodes of Viṣṇu. It may be of some value to see how the Āḻvārs view these two deśas in their hymns (for case studies of Araṅkam and Kuṁbhakōṇam see Kalidos 1993-95: 136–52, Meeneshwari 1993-95: 95–106). A. Karkuzhali 2005 has presented the summary of the hymns on temple studied by her, e.g. Nācciyārkōyil and Naṟiayar. M. Kannan 2006 has presented a summary of the Āḻvār hymns in his doctoral thesis on Viṣṇu temples of the Kāviri delta around Tiruvārūr, e.g. Kanṭrapuram. Similarly, several other scholars working on Śaiva tiruttalamams (e.g. Aṣṭavīrattānam and Sapataviṭaṅga-sthalas) have presented the summaries of the Tēvāram hymns on the temples related to their studies.

Allikkēṇi
(Tiru)Allikkēṇi appears in the hymns of Pēy (Tiruvantāti III, v. 16), Maḻicai (Nāṟmukāṭ Tiruvantāti v. 35) and Maṅkai (Periya Tirumuḷi 2.3. 1-10). The total number of hymns is 12. Tirumaṅkai in his Ĉiṟiya Tirumṭal ll. 137–152 (Little Epistle) and Periya Tirumṭal ll. 225–266 (Long Epistle) presents a collective list of select divyadeśas but Allikkēṇi does not figure in these accounts.

Pēyāḻvār finds the waves of the ocean dashing against the wall of the temple at Allikkēṇi (modern Triplicane), vantutaitta veṇṭiraikaḷ (Tirvantāti III, v. 16). Today it is not the case. The Bay lay at a considerable distance say about a km from the temple. It is likely it was the case at the time of Pēy in the 6th century CE. Maḻicai views Mayilai (modern Mylapore) and Allikkēṇi in close quarters: Māmayilai māvallikkēṇiyāṇ “He of the great Mayilai and the great Allikkēṇi” (Nāṟmukāṇ Tiruvantāṭi v. 35). It seems in that time both the venues were viewed as one and the same. Today there is a temple for Kāpālīśvara at Mayilai or Mayilāpūr. Nobody views it a Vaiṣṇava divyadeśa. On the other the Nāyaṉmār view Mayilai a talam of the Śaivas (Tēvāram Tirumṛugai 2, Patikam 183).

Maṅkai talks of the festivals that take place in the temple, virperuvīḷa (big festival Periya Tirumuḷi 2.3.1). He also views Mayilai
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and Allikkēṇi as one and the same (ibid. v. 2). Today the name of the temple is Pārthasārathi, the Lord Kṛṣṇa who drove the chariot for Arjuna at the time of the Great Bhārata War. The Periya Tirumolī (2.3.1) notes the Lord as driver of a chariot. He is said to have visited the Gaurava court on the eve of the war as dūta on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas (ibid. 2.3.5). The clear notation of a charioteer appears in another hymn (ibid. 2.3.6):

Intiraṇ ciṟuvaṇ tērmuṇ nīgrāṇait tiruvallikkēṇi kaṇṭēṇē

“I found him (Kṛṣṇa) by the side of a chariot with the little one (son) of Indra (Arjuna) at Tiruvallikkēṇi”.

The Tiruvāyurmoḷī (7.8.3) designates Kṛṣṇa the driver of a carved chariot, cittiṟattērvalavaṅē.

The venue was in an enchanting grove where the cuckoo and peacocks do fly. The Mayilaittiruvallikkēṇi was full of towering edifices and pools with fishes and groves (with plants) dripping honey (ibid. 2.3.7). Besides the ponds and pools, there was a fort (tirumatil?!), towered palaces and pavilions (cf. n. 22). The Lord is sthānaka (standing mode) in the temple at Mayilaittiruvallikkēṇi that was built by the southern King Toṇṭaiyaṅ (ibid. 2.3.10). The Toṇṭaiyaṅ (cf. Aiyangar 1940: Chap. I) noted here is the Pallava king, Nandivarmaṅ II whom Tirumāṅkai converted to Vaiṣṇavism. It was he who built the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ (deśa Paramēccuraviṇṇakaram) temple at Kāṇci (Periya Tirumolī 2.9.1-10).

To say crisply Mayilai and Allikkēṇi went together as one deśa. The waves of the Bay of Bengal dashed against the walls of the temple (cf. Rabe 2001: pl. 2 of the Shore temple at Māmallapuram, photo taken in 1797). The venue was full of towered edifices and a wall (called fort) surrounded the temple. The temple was fitted with pillared halls. It was a grove with water reservoirs where peacocks and cuckoo generated a rhythm of sweet voice. Above all the Lord, the mūlabera was in sthānaka mode.

K.V. Soundararajan (1993-95: 26) has the following to say on the organization of the present temple: It is an example of the Pañcaṭhira concept. “It was in the suburb of Mayilai. What we see in the sanctum is a group of images, all standing (supra, Periya Tirumolī 2.3.10) except for one, and which represent the Pañcaṭhira cult group of hero gods of the Vṛṣṇi clan to which Kṛṣṇa belonged and shows the
images of Vāsudeva or Kṛṣṇa (called Pārthasārathi in local tradition), Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Subhadra (called Rukmiṇī in local tradition), Sātyaki and Balarama (or Saṅkarṣaṇa) seated at the southern end facing north. Such temple of the Bhāgavata Vaiṣṇavism reached Tamilnadu in the 7th century AD”.

R. Radhakrishnan 2006 finds the following shrines today: Pārthasārathi (east facing), Gopālakṛṣṇa (east facing), Varadarāja (east facing), Nṛṣimha (west facing) and Āṇṭāḷ (east facing) as named by the temple administration. Though the vyūha and pañcavīra concepts were familiar to the Āḻvārs, they do not link these with the Allikkēṇi temple, which means the organization of five mūlaberas in separate garbhagṛhas in the temple is of later imposition. This is to confirm not only the original format of the sthala but also its organization had undergone radical changes since the 6th to the 16th century CE. The Agramanḍa of the temple and the rāyagopura (Figs. 14-15) did not exist during the Āḻvār period and Āḻvārs had no known idea of these.

Pāṛkaṭal

Of all the deśas those that the Āḻvārs view close to the sea are Kaṭalmallai (Mallai of the Sea) and Allikkēṇi. Pāṛkaṭal (Kṣīrābdhi “Ocean of Milk”) is in the heavens. What all the Āḻvārs have to say on this fictitious deśa is purely imaginary. Ten of the twelve Āḻvārs, excepting Maturakavi and Pāṇi, have found the Lord in this mythical deśa. The sea or ocean is called Pāṛkaṭal (Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi 4.4, Tiruppāvai 2, Nācciyār Tirumoḷi 5.7, Periyāḻvār Tirumoḷi 4.10.5, Periya Tirumoḷi 1.6.6, Tiruvāyumoḷi 2.5.7 and so on). It is also called Kaṭal “ocean” (Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi 2.8, Nācciyār Tirumoḷi 2.3, Periya Tirumoḷi 5.6.1, Periya Tiruvantāti v. 77). It is also called Paṇīkkaṭal “misty (icy) ocean” (Periyāḻvār Tirumoḷi 5.4.9) and Neṭuṇkaṭal “long (extensive or deep) ocean” (Periya Tirumoḷi 1.6.9). The Lord is supposed to be in the reclining mode in the Ocean of Milk:

Kaṭalkiṇṭantaṇaḥ “one lying on the ocean” (Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi 2.8)

Pāṛkaṭalul paṭyattuyiṇaḥ “reclining on the Ocean of Milk” (Tiruppāvai 2)

Paṇkiya pāṛkaṭal paṭṭikolvāṇ “reclining on the erupting Ocean of Milk” (Nācciyār Tirumoḷi 5.7)
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Kaṭaṅkaṭaṅkaṭaṅ karuṇā “the black gem that lies on the ocean” (Periya Tirumoli 5.6.1)

Kārkaṭaktuṭaṅkaṭaṅ “reclining on the gloomy ocean” (ibid. 9.9.1)

Pāṟkaṭaḷ ceṅnta paramañ “the Eternal that reached the Ocean of Milk” (Tiruvāymoli 3.7.1).

By reclining it is meant he closes the eyes and sleeps or pretends to sleep, pāṟkaṭaḷaṅkaṭaṅtu “reclining on the gloomy ocean” (ibid. 9.9.1)

The Lord pretends to recline on the gushing Ocean of Milk upon a bed provided by the white snake:

Veḷḷai veḷḷattin mēloru pāmpai mettaiyäka virittu atag mēlē kaḷḷa nittirai (Periyāḻvār Tirumoli 5.1.7).

The snake is called Aṅgantaṅ (Ananta “the Eternal” Periya Tirumoli 7.8.1) or aravam (ibid. 8.10.7), pāmpu (Tiruvāymoli 2.5.7) and nākam (ibid. 8.1.8).

Periyāḻvār says it is a deceitful slumber, kaḷḷa nittirai. Nammāḻvār says it is a yogic slumber, yōka nittirai (Tiruvāymoli 2.6.5).

It is said in another context the Pāṟkaṭaḷ is Aṅkam as the venue is surrounded by the waters of the Rivers Kāviri and Koḷḷaṅṭam (Kalidos 1993-95: 136–52), pāḷliyāvatu pāṟkaṭaḷaṅkaṭaṅ (Periya Tirumoli 1.8.2, cf. Tiruvāymoli 10.7.8 supra). Talking of Veḷḷiyaṅkuṭi, a divyadeśa, it is said the Pāṟkaṭaḷ is the venue where the Lord is pleased to sleep and that it is a temple: Pāṟkaṭaḷ tuyinra paramañyar pāḷlikoḷ kōyil (Periya Tirumoli 4.10.4). The she-mystic, Āṇṭāḷ, views the reclining Lord with an erotic eye and wants to cohabit with him (Kalidos 1997: 117-38):

Pāṟkaṭaḷ pāḷlikolvāṅīp puṇarヴァrōcaivāṅā “It is my desire I shall cohabit the reclining Lord” (Nācciḻvār Tirumoli 5.7).

Āṇṭāḷ may be okay in imagining the venue of sleep is the bedroom for her sexual freeplay, which symbolically means milk is the sustaining element as is Lord Viṣṇu where as Śrī offers wealth and progeny to her devotees. This fundamentally speaking is the symbolism of Viṣṇuism (sustenance) and Śrīviṣṇuism (that assures plenty).
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Illustrations

Map: Broad view of the location of Divyadeśas

Plan 1 Satyamūrti temple, Meyyam (after Rajarajan 2006: Plan VIII)
   RC Rock-cut Shrine
   KLM Kalyāṇamaṇḍapa
   RG Rāyagopura
   TPK Teppakkulam

Figures:
1. Gopura of the Tirumala temple (photo 1930s)
2. Aerial view of the Tirumala temple (photo 1930s)
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4. Lord Veṅkateśvaraji-Tirumalai (written in devanāgari at the base of the image) in garbhagṛha of the Tirumala temple (photo 1930s)
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8. Rock-cut shrine, Āṉaimalai © AUTHOR
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10. Chapel for Lakṣmī, Āṉaimalai © AUTHOR
11. Chapel for Garuḍa, Āṉaimalai © AUTHOR
12. Temple tank (Vijayanagara period), Tirumeyyam © AUTHOR
13. Rock-cut mulabera (early Pāṇḍya), Tirumeyyam rock-cut temple for Viṣṇu © AUTHOR
14. Agramaṇḍapa, Allikkēṇi
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16. The present golden vimāna, called Ānandanilayam, and gopura of the temple, Tirumala © Tirumala Temple
17. The gem-decorated balibera of Veṅkaṭeśvara, Tirumala (how may billions worth?) © Tirumala Temple
18. Rathotsava (Car Festival) and the temple is the background (2010), Tirumala © Tirumala Temple
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Figure 3. Aerial view of the Tirumala temple (photo 2000 © Rajarajan).

Figure 4. Lord Vēṅkaṭeśvarajī-Tirumalai (written in devanāgarī at the base of the image) in garbhagṛha of the Tirumala temple (photo 1930s).
Figure 5. *Balibera* of Vēṅkatēśvara (1930s).

Figure 6. The *balibera* on Śeṣavāhana with attending priests (1930s).
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Figure 10. Chapel for Lakṣmī, Āṉaimalai.
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Figure 12. Temple tank (Vijayanagara period), Tirumeyyam.
Figure 13. Rock-cut *mulabera* (early Pāṇḍya), Tirumeyyam rock-cut temple for Viṣṇu.

Figure 14. *Agramandapa*, Allikkēni.
Figure 15. Gopura, Allikkēni.

Figure 16. The present golden vimāna, called Ānandanilayam, and gopura of the temple, Tirumala.
Figure 17. The gem-decorated *balībera* of Veṇkaṭeśvara, Tirumala (how may billions worth?).

Figure 18. *Rathotsava* (Car Festival) and the temple is the background (2010), Tirumala.