OFER PERES
Heidelberg University

Murukaṉ's "Six Battle-Camps" The Origin and Development of the *Āṟupaṭaivīṭu* Concept

Introduction

South Asian holy places often come in sets. This phenomenon holds profound significance within the landscape of Hindu religious traditions, across the various sects included under this umbrella. Sets of holy sites, characterized by shared thematic elements, by mythology, and by pilgrimage routes, embody a complex interplay of cultural, social, and religious elements. These sets can differ widely from each other, yet they are all deeply rooted in the practice of pilgrimage, which has particular significance and popularity in South Asia. Among them, the twelve *jyotir-liṅga*s, the fifty-one (or 108) *śakti-pīṭha*s, the "seven holy cities" (*sapta-purī*), and the five Śiva temples of the element-*liṅga*s (*pañcabhūta-sthala*s), are some notable configurations. These sets can be small or large, scattered across South Asia or centered in one region, and the connections between them can be based on a shared mythology, ritual links, or some physical correspondence. Some of the above examples belong to a common type of sets, which Anne Feldhaus described as "numbered sets" (Feldhaus 2003: 127–36). In numbered sets, the temples or sites are interlinked by an abstract idea (at times based on mythology) that is expressed in a number.[1] Some of the numbered sets, like the *śakti-pīṭha*s and *pañcabhūta-sthala*s symbolize a simultaneous unity and individuality of the places (each *śakti-pīṭha* has one part of the Goddess's body; each *bhūta-liṅga* is made of one of the five elements in nature). In other sets, the common element is duplicated and distributed in several different places, such as the set of twelve *jyotir-liṅga* temples, the *sapta-purī*, and the seven Tamil temples with *tyāgarāja* icon, commonly known as *sapta-viṭaṅkastalam*. In these cases, the duplication is by a typological number.

1 Ewa Dębicka-Borek's chapter in this volume is a scholarly treatment of one such numbered set, namely, the set of nine Narasiṃhas in Ahobilam.

Ofer Peres. 2025. "Murukaṉ's 'Six Battle-Camps:' The Origin and Development of the *Āṟupaṭaivīṭu* Concept". In *Routes, Patterns, Ideologies: Navigating Sacred Sites in India*, edited by Ewa Dębicka-Borek, and Ofer Peres, 123–170. Ethno-Indology: Heidelberg Studies in South Asian Rituals, Volume 18. Heidelberg: Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing. https://doi.org/10.11588/hasp.1561.c22687

This article studies the history of one widely known numbered set—a group of six holy places of the Hindu god Murukaṉ in Tamil Nadu, conventionally called "the six battle-camps" (*āṟupaṭaivīṭu*). On the surface, this cluster of sites seems to be a typical case of a numbered set, in particular because of the inherent relation of Murukaṉ to the number six.[2] However, in the following pages I show that it has an entangled history that involves traditions of textual transmission and commentary, and the early history of print in the Tamil language.

Murukaṉ and the "six battle-camps"

Murukaṉ is one of the most popular divinities among Tamil people. Within the Hindu pantheon, he is identified from a very early stage with Śiva's son, Skanda (also known as Subrahmaṇya, Kārttikeya, or Ṣaṇmukha). Yet Murukaṉ is also deeply rooted in the Tamil religious and literary traditions from their earliest known stages, at the beginning of the common era. Among the numerous Tamil temples dedicated to Murukaṉ, there is a set of six temples that are conventionally called *aṟupaṭaivīṭu*[3] ("the six battle-camps"), located in Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Tiruccĕntūr, Paḻaṉi, Cuvāmimalai, Tiruttaṇi, and Paḻamutircolai.[4]

Nowadays, it is generally accepted among Murukaṉ's devotees that these six temples, as a group, are the most important pilgrimage centers for the Murukaṉ cult. An article from *Hinduism Today* magazine, published in 2007, illustrates the contemporary popular ideas about the "six battle-camps."[5] This article, titled "Journey to Murukaṉ," describes a pilgrimage journey that its authors took to all the six sites, in the order presented above. According to the authors, Murukaṉ "shower[s] grace upon the seeker who visits His six abodes" (*Hinduism*

2 Murukaṉ's mythology is suffused with 'six-ness:' he was born out of six sparks from Śiva's third eye and was raised as six separate infants by six of the *kṛttikā*s (the Pleiades). Even though he was later 'welded' into a single child by Umā, when she took them\him in her lap, one of his forms remains Ṣaṇmukha, "Six-faced."

3 A note on transliteration: since this article has transliteration of both Sanskrit and Tamil, I follow David Shulman's Tamil transliteration scheme (Shulman 2016: xii), marking the short Tamil vowels *ĕ* and *ŏ* (which are distinctive to the Dravidian languages) and not marking the Sanskrit diphthongs and the long Tamil diphthongs.

4 Since the occurrences of these sites' names in written sources make up a large part of this article's data, I use their standard ('correct') transcription throughout the article, rather than the more popularly used phonetic equivalents (i.e., Tiruparankundram, Tiruchendur, Paḻani, Swamimalai, Tiruttaṇi, and Paḻamuthirsolai).

5 *Hinduism Today* is a magazine on various aspects of what is conventionally called "Hindu" faith, produced by a Hawaii-based monastic community that is a branch of the "Kailāsa Parampara."

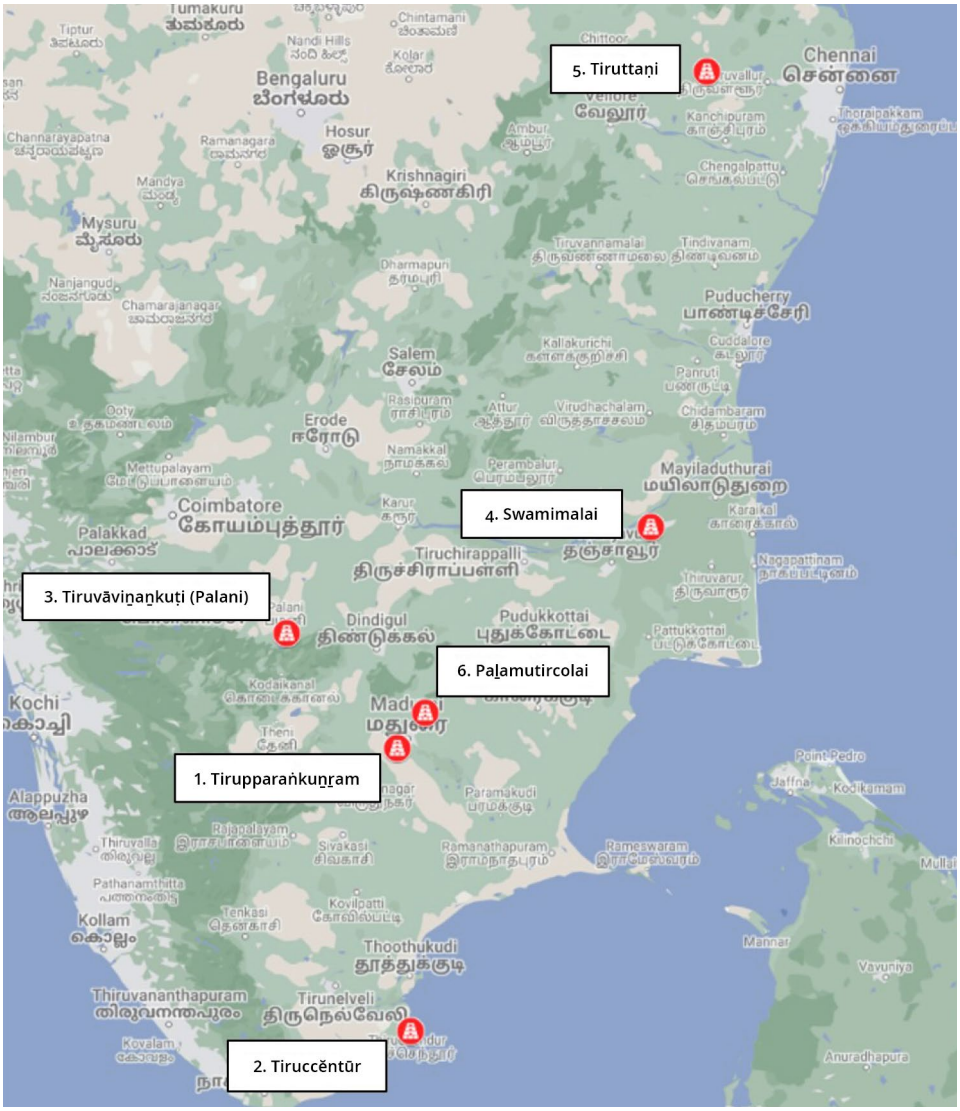

Fig. 1 Map data © 2024 Google.

Today editors 2007: 39). Each of the six sites is associated with an episode from Murukaṉ's mythology. In Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam he is said to have married his first, 'celestial' wife, Tĕyvayānai (or Devasenā, in the Sanskrit sources). Tiruccĕntūr was the place where Murukaṉ encamped before and after his oceanic battle with the demon Cūr/Cūrapaṉmaṉ (Skt. Sūrapadma). Paḻaṇi is where Murukaṉ came, in his childhood, to practice austerities, after losing a contest to his elder brother, Gaṇapati. The prize in that contest, initiated by Śiva, was a pomegranate,

a symbol of wisdom. Śiva came to Paḻaṉi and consoled Murukaṉ with the words: "**you** are the fruit" (*paḻam nī*), which provides a popular etymology for the town's name. Another episode from Murukaṉ's childhood is said to have taken place in Cuvāmimalai. Here, Murukaṉ locked up Brahmā when the latter did not know the meaning of the syllable "Om." When Śiva later came to speak for Brahmā, he revealed his own ignorance about the meaning of the sacred syllable and eventually Murukaṉ taught this sacred knowledge to Śiva. Tiruttaṇi is the place in which Murukaṉ married his second, 'tribal,' wife, Vaḷḷi. It is also where Murukaṉ delivered the supreme Śaiva knowledge to the sage Agastya. Finally, in Paḻamutircolai the saint and poetess Auvaiyār had an encounter with a young boy who sat on a tree above her and who later turned out to be no other than Murukaṉ himself.

Even a preliminary examination of the above description shows that this temple-set has some quirks. First, the sequence of the sites makes little sense, both as a pilgrimage route (in particular, the route between the first three sites) and with regard to the mythological chronology.[6] Along with the issue of sequence, there is some imbalance in these myths' relative significance, which further enhances the sense of asymmetry: the killing of the demon Cūr—basically, the victory of Good over Bad—can hardly be compared to a 'casual' vision given to Auvaiyār, or even to Murukaṉ's myth of the fruit in Paḻaṉi.[7]

In addition to the asymmetry in their mythology, there is also some imbalance in aspects of the temples themselves: although the list of "six battle-camps" includes *some* of the most popular Murukaṉ temples, they are not *the* six most popular Murukaṉ temples, nor are they the six wealthiest Murukaṉ temples.[8] Similarly, although some of them are among the oldest known Murukaṉ temples, it is not a list of the six oldest Murukaṉ temples. This could be further problematized: among these six temples, the one located in Paḻaṉi is not the extremely

6 In Paḻaṉi and Cuvāmimalai, that is, the third and fourth "battle-camps," the myths concern Murukaṉ's childhood, while the others concern his adulthood. In addition, Murukaṉ's marriage with Tĕyvayāṉai in Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (the first "battle-camp") is supposed to have taken place after his victory over Cūr, which is associated with Tiruccĕntūr (the second "battle-camp").

7 This is more than an intuitive observation: the central myths of Murukaṉ were canonized in the fifteenth-century *Kantapurāṇam*. The central narrative is Skanda's war with Cūr and his army of demons. One can also find there Murukaṉ's marriage to Tĕyvayāṉai and his love affair and marriage with Vaḷḷi. The main story of Cuvāmimalai is there, but it is not associated with the place. However, the abovementioned stories of Paḻaṉi and Paḻamutircolai are not included in this text. While this has no necessary implications on the antiquity of these narratives, it does provide some scale of relative importance and popularity, at least up to the fifteenth century.

8 For example, the Kumārakoṭṭam temple in Kanchipuram and Kantacāmi temple in Tirupporūr are two very popular and important temples not included among the "six battle-camps."

popular hill-temple of Paḻaṉi, but the smaller and less-frequented Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi temple.[9] In addition, the temple of Paḻamutircolai is a relatively minor pilgrimage center, which did not have a structure prior to the last few decades.[10] Nevertheless, these six sites are, indeed, linked by a common thread, which also provides the *raison d'être* for their given order: the "six battle-camps" list is based on an old Tamil text called *The Guide to Lord Murukaṉ* (*Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*).

The development of the "six battle-camps" concept, from its roots in *The Guide to Lord Murukaṉ* (hereafter, *The Guide*) to its contemporary expressions, stands in the focus of the current article. For the sake of clarity, I first provide a very brief historical survey of Murukaṉ's cult and some of the major stepping-stones of its devotional literature. Next, I follow the textual route which begins with *The Guide*, goes through its medieval commentaries, to its allusions in the early modern and modern devotional literature on Murukaṉ. I show that the concept of Murukaṉ's six abodes did not arise from *The Guide* and was originally a distinct, abstract notion. I point out the dynamics by which *The Guide* became associated with this concept, and the origins of the term *paṭaivīṭu* ("battle-camp"). Finally, I address the unique case of Tiruttaṇi and how it came to be regarded as the fifth "battle-camp."

Murukaṉ's cult and devotional literature

The first references to Murukaṉ and his cult are found in the earliest layers of Tamil *caṅkam* (pronounced "sangam") literature, from the beginning of the first millennium CE. Murukaṉ is depicted there as a youthful hunter-warrior-lover mountain god, and is associated with rituals of ecstatic dancing, intoxication, and blood offerings (Clothey 1978: 25–35). In addition, within the context of the *caṅkam*

9 In the *Hinduism Today* article quoted above, the authors ask their guide, a member of the hill temple's administrative board, about the difference between the temples, and he answers that the two temples are considered as one, since they are under the same management and share the same priesthood (*Hinduism Today* editors 2007: 46). However, it should be noted that the same management is responsible for over thirty temples in and around Paḻaṉi (See Somasundaram Pillai 1941). In addition, the seventeenth-century *talapurāṇam* of Palani (*Paḻaṉittalapurāṇam* by Palacuppiramaṇiya Kavirāyar), which extolls all the shrines around the town, differentiates between the temples, and speaks only of the Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi in the context of Murukaṉ's six sacred sites.

10 I could not find information on this temple's date of construction. However, Fred Clothey mentions only the site—and not the temple—in his 1972 article "Pilgrimage Centers in the Tamil Cultus of Murukan" (Clothey 1972: 85n10) and does not mention it at all in his more elaborate work on Murukaṉ (Clothey 1978). In the 2007 *Hinduism Today* piece mentioned above, the authors interview the son of the temple's chief priest who says the temple "was constructed recently" (*Hinduism Today* editors 2007: 52).

poetry's system of conventions, with its divisions to poetic landscapes (*tiṇai*), Murukaṉ is associated with the *kuṟiñci* landscape, that is, the hill landscape of *kaḷavu*, "stolen love" (Ramanujan 2005: 115). In short, Murukaṉ is a divinity with substantial presence in the earliest existing Tamil records. More important for the matter at hand, Murukaṉ is also the subject of what is considered the first Tamil devotional poem—the above-mentioned "Guide to Lord Murukaṉ." This text, dated to the sixth century, belongs to the later strata of the *caṅkam* literature, and it is ascribed to Nakkīrar, a famous poet and 'president' of the ancient Tamil academy (Wilden 2015: 8).

Āṟṟuppaṭai ("guide poem") is a genre of *caṅkam*-age Tamil poems, in which a bard addresses his fellow practitioners and directs them to the residence of a generous patron who has supported him. It is, in essence, a eulogy poem for that patron, describing the latter's land and town, his heroic victories and his many merits and qualities. In *The Guide*, the patron is replaced with God, and instead of one residence the text describes several places where one may find Murukaṉ and appeal for his help. Due to this shift of subject, from patron to God, it is considered a transitional and innovative text, which stands out as a representation of a moment of change and a bridge between the secular *caṅkam* poetry and the wave of *bhakti* poetry that washed over the Tamil speaking region from the seventh century onwards (Zvelebil 1974: 50–51). Nevertheless, the style of *The Guide* and most of its descriptions of nature and social life are better associated with the category of *caṅkam* poetry (Zvelebil 1973: 129–30). *The Guide* mostly consists of long descriptive clauses portraying various natural sceneries, landscapes, and Murukaṉ himself, who is presented as more of a 'universal' god, featuring some of Skanda's purāṇic attributes, yet without directly narrating his purāṇic mythology (Zvelebil 1974: 49–51, Clothey 1978: 69–72). The worship depicted in *The Guide* combines cult elements attested in the *caṅkam* poetry, such as the possession-dance of the *velaṉ* priests and blood offerings, alongside descriptions of Brahminic practices. However, *The Guide*'s main point of emphasis is not mythology, theology, or ritual, but the personal sentiment of devotion (*bhakti*) toward Murukaṉ, and Murukaṉ's intrinsic relation to the various places that are described.

Although Murukaṉ was clearly a popular god in the Tamil speaking region around the middle of the first millennium, the following centuries are marked by a gap in the textual evidence for his cult (Gros 2009: 268, Clothey 1978: 73–77). The infrequent mentions of Murukaṉ in the early body of Śaiva *bhakti* poems (the *Tevāram*, composed between the seventh and ninth centuries) refer to him only as Śiva's son, without any additional religious significance.[11] Yet this long period of relative 'silence' (with regard to the Murukaṉ cult), from the seventh to the

11 Within this vast corpus there are only around forty such mentions (Clothey 1978: 75).

thirteenth century, may have been only a "literary event," in Leslie Orr's words, which does not reflect the actual patterns of Murukaṉ worship in medieval Tamil Nadu (Orr 2014: 37). In any case, during this period, there were relatively few temples with individual images of Murukaṉ; these were usually in his form as Subrahmaṇya, and in "multi-shrine contexts" (p. 25). This state changes from around the middle of the tenth century, a period from which an increasing number of separate shrines for Murukaṉ can be found, including a complex iconography that represents different aspects of his divinity and mythology (Clothey 1978: 77).

The growth in Murukaṉ's popularity from the tenth century onwards manifested primarily within the context of the Śaiva religion and temple culture. The post-medieval cult of Murukaṉ became a part of Śaiva system, using Śaiva infrastructure, in the institutional sense as well as with regard to philosophy: the metaphysical speculations that developed around Murukaṉ are anchored in the basic elements of Tamil *Caivacittāntam* (the Tamil formulation of the Śaivasiddhānta system). As for *The Guide*—despite its association with the ancient, 'tribal' Murukaṉ cult, which is irrelevant to the Śaiva framework, it was not left behind but rather the opposite: *The Guide* was included in the eleventh book of the Śaiva devotional corpus, the *Tirumuṟai,* compiled in the twelfth century (Francis 2017: 321).[12]

Two literary milestones that have had an immense influence on the shaping of the cult to this day are commonly dated to the fifteenth century. One milestone is Kacciyappa Civācāriyār's *Kantapurāṇam*, which, despite its name, is not a Tamil translation of the Sanskrit *Skanda Purāṇa*, but rather an independent Tamil work that presents a complete and integrated account of the Tamil Skanda-Murukaṉ mythology. Although neither the narratives it tells nor its integration of Tamil and Sanskrit themes are new, the *Kantapurāṇam* nevertheless represents a significant moment of canonization of Murukaṉ's Tamil purāṇic mythology, and to some extent also of the Tamil mythology of Śiva: the *Kantapurāṇam* became a highly influential text in the Śaiva tradition, and it remained a reference point for later tellings of Śaiva mythology (Shulman 1980: 30–31).

The second fifteenth-century literary milestone is the huge body of devotional poetry ascribed to Aruṇakirināṭar, an interesting figure with a juicy biography. According to tradition, Aruṇakirināṭar "spent his young years as a rioter, good-for-nothing brawler, drunkard, and unbridled seducer of women" (Zvelebil 1973: 239). His lifestyle eventually led him to illness and social rejection, and, in his despair,

12 Although *The Guide* belonged to two different canons—the *Pattupāṭṭu* ("Ten Idylls") of the *caṅkam* corpus and the Śaiva *Tirumuṟai*—in the extant manuscripts it is transmitted mostly alone or within a compilation of loosely-related texts. Thus, as Francis shows, at least in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *The Guide* was mostly regarded as a devotional text without an exclusive connection to the Śaiva context (see Francis 2017).

he attempted suicide by jumping from the eastern tower of the Tiruvaṇṇāmalai temple. However, his body was caught before crushing on the paved ground by no other than Murukaṉ himself. As a result, he became an ardent Murukaṉ *bhakta* and composed numerous devotional songs in His honor. Aruṇakirinātar's works mark the beginning of a wave of devotional poetry to Murukaṉ that continued throughout the early-modern period and, to some extent, to this day.[13] Murukaṉ's association with the Tamil language (which has its earliest manifestations already in the middle of the first millennium), first in his depiction as a supreme poet of Tamil and, in later narratives, as a preceptor of Tamil language and literature (Ramaswamy 1998: 81), was intensified through Aruṇakirinātar's works[14] and became an inseparable part of Murukaṉ's popular image. With the sprouting of the first buds of 'Dravidianism' in the late nineteenth century, which came into full bloom in the middle of the twentieth century, this association, along with Murukaṉ's ancient roots in Tamil literature and religion, turned Murukaṉ into an "emblem of Tamil identity" (Orr 2014: 21).[15]

The Guide to Lord Murukaṉ and the "six battle-camps"

The Guide to Lord Murukaṉ is generally accepted to be the source for Murukaṉ's set of six pilgrimage centers, the "six battle-camps" (*aṟupaṭaivīṭukaḷ*). However, reading the text may lead to a different conclusion. Hence, I will first present *The Guide*'s structure and contents, to facilitate this argument.[16]

13 Countless devotional works from this long period are available today in print. Although few are revered like Aruṇakirinātar's poems, some were canonized alongside them, such as Kumarakuruparar's *Kantar-kali-veṇpā* (seventeenth century) and Devaraya Swamigal's *Kantar-caṣṭi-kavacam* (late nineteenth century), which is used by Murukaṉ devotees for daily worship.

14 See the many examples from Aruṇakirinātar's poems in Cĕṅkalvarāya Piḷḷai's 1941 *Murukarun Tamiḻum*, which examines in detail this very notion.

15 This process is eloquently summarized by Clothey: "[Murukaṉ]…is riding the crest of a Tamil self-consciousness which has come to new focus in the minds of many Tamilians, at least since Bishop Caldwell's publication of a comparative Dravidian grammar in 1856…. The cult of Murukaṉ is, in some respects, an expression of Tamil self-consciousness, for many Tamilians recognize that Murukaṉ has been identified with the Tamil cultural heritage for centuries and feel he is an embodiment of their heritage" (Clothey 1978: 2).

16 I am greatly indebted to Maanasa Visweswaran, who generously shared with me her detailed translation of the *The Guide*, a part of her MA thesis written under the supervision of Prof. Eva Wilden at Hamburg University (Visweswaran 2022). Her diligent

The Guide is composed of 317 lines in the *akaval* meter. It begins with an introductory sentence of 66 lines, in which the speaker turns to his audience and says: "if you desire a pilgrimage to the feet of Murukaṉ—you will obtain [what you wish]." Most of this sentence consists of descriptive clauses, depicting Murukaṉ and the bloody battle-field from which he came out victorious. The following sentences explain where Murukaṉ could be found. The first is ten lines long and it says that Murukaṉ resides on a hill near Madurai (which is identifiable as Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam). The hill itself is described very briefly and most of these lines describe the near city of Madurai. The next sentence, forty-eight lines long, says that it is Murukaṉ's "well-established habit" (*nilaiiya paṇpe*, TMĀP 125) to go to Cīralaivāy (i.e., Tiruccĕntūr). This sentence mostly consists of a description of the six-faced and twelve-armed form of Murukaṉ. The site itself is not described. Next, the speaker says that Murukaṉ also resides in Āviṉaṉkuṭi (i.e, the temple at the foot of Paḻaṉi hill) along with his wife. There, Murukaṉ is worshipped and praised by all the sages, gods, and other divinities, in what seems to be a procession, the description of which takes up most of the fifty-one lines dedicated to this place. In the next sentence, starting in line 176, the speaker says that Murukaṉ also resides in Erakam, where brahmins perform their rituals and chants. The brahmins' description takes up all thirteen lines that are dedicated to Erakam. Then we are told that Murukaṉ has another well-established habit: "dancing on every hill" (*kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*, TMĀP 217).[17] The expression "every hill" is predicated by twenty-eight lines which describe the dance-rituals of the hill-tribes' women and shaman-priest (*velaṉ*), typical of Murukaṉ's cult in the *caṅkam* literature, and the beautiful form of Murukaṉ himself as he dances with these women, embracing them. Lines 218–48 say that Murukaṉ is one whose known nature is to reside wherever he is worshipped (*āṇṭ' āṇṭ' uṟaitalum aṟintav aṟe*, TMĀP 248). This sentence consists mostly of descriptions of the occasions on which Murukaṉ is worshipped: various rituals performed during festivals in many towns and villages, mostly by the hill-tribes' women (*kuṟa makaḷ*) and the *velaṉ* priests. In line 249, the speaker turns again, like at the beginning, to his (imagined) audience and says that even though Murukaṉ is everywhere, "when you come to see him 'in person'" (*muntu nī kaṇṭ' uḻi*, TMĀP 252ab), bowing with your hands folded, even before your thoughts are filled with praises of Murukaṉ (and here comes a long list of these praises, as an embedded *stotra* (TMĀP 256–80))—the God's attendants will speak in your favor, and Murukaṉ will appear, tell you "fear not!" and grant you the rarest of gifts (i.e., liberation) (TMĀP 287–95). The poem then ends with

linguistic analysis of the work, as well as her detailed comments and insights on the earlier influences on *The Guide*, have been extremely valuable.

17 TMĀP 217: "…Also, His well-established habit is dancing on each and every hill" (*kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭalu(m) niṉṟa taṉ paṇpe*).

a long clause (lines 296–317) that describes "Him"—that is, he who grants the 'gift'—as "lord of the hill with groves of ripening fruit" (*paḻa-mutir-colai-malai kiḻavoṉe*, TMĀP 317). Most of this clause is made of subclauses that beautifully describe the hill's dense natural life, flora, and fauna.

To sum up this outline, *The Guide* begins with a personal address of the speaker to his imagined audience, talking about the benefits of pilgrimage to Murukaṉ. Then he presents four locations where Murukaṉ can be found, whether by residence or because of his habit to visit them. He adds that Murukaṉ also dances (or 'sports,' if you like) on every hill, and, in fact, he resides in every place where he is worshipped. In any case, the speaker concludes, while addressing his audience once again, when one comes to see Him in person, even before uttering the first praise, one can be sure of obtaining one's wishes.

The contents of *The Guide* do not suggest a direct or linear connection between the text and the "six battle-camps." The term "battle-camp" (*paṭaivīṭu*) does not occur in *The Guide* and, as we shall see toward the end of this article, it will not appear in the context of Murukaṉ's six holy abodes before the end of the nineteenth century. More crucially, *The Guide* points out only four sites that are associated with Murukaṉ, and although these four can be identified with four of the current "battle-camps," the text does not express the idea that Murukaṉ has "six holy abodes." Nevertheless, the "battle-camps" concept is rooted in *The Guide*'s textual tradition. The following examination of this text's transmission and influence would enable us to see how this happened.

In all the extant manuscripts and printed editions of *The Guide*, the text is divided into six sections, bearing as titles the names of Murukaṉ's so-called 'abodes' that are mentioned in the text.[18] The first section (lines 1–77) is titled "Tiruparaṅkuṉṟam," and it includes the speaker's introductory statements and

18 There is some diversity in the section-titles between the different manuscripts. The complete description can be found in Francis 2016 (512–13). In some cases, the variations are minor: for example, instead of Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam one can find Tiruppĕruṅkuṉṟam or Tirupparaṅkiri. In other cases, the more recent name of a place can appear instead of the old one, e.g., Tiruccĕntūr instead of Cīralaivāy. For a discussion on the identification of Ālaivāy with Tiruchendur, see Gillet 2014. Erakam is in some section titles called by the name of the current fourth "battle-field," Cuvāmimalai. The identification of Erakam with Cuvāmimalai, which is located in the Kaveri delta, seems to have appeared relatively late: the fourteenth-century commentator Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar identifies Erakam as a "holy hill in Cera-country" (*malai-nāṭṭ' akatt' ŏru tiruppati*, *Tirumurukāṟṟppaṭai* 1959: 60), and so does the thirteenth-century Parimelaḻakar (*Tirumurukāṟṟppaṭai* 1959: 135). In the fifteenth century, however, Villiputtūrār glosses "Erakam" as Cuvāmimalai, in his commentary on the first verse of Aruṇakirināṭar's *Kantar-antāti* (*Kantar-antāti* 1879: 5). In any case, Erakam clearly indicates an actual geographical spot, which is the important point for the current paper. The identification of Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi with the temple at the foot of Paḻaṉi hill that currently bears

the much shorter description of Murukaṉ's dwelling in Tiruparaṅkuṉṟam.[19] The second section (78–125) includes the lines that describe Murukaṉ's habit of coming to Cīralaivāy and it is titled accordingly. Similarly, the third and fourth sections are titled "Āviṉaṉkuṭi" and "Erakam," and they are in congruence with the lines that mention Murukaṉ's 'residence' in these two places (TMĀP 126–75; 176–90, respectively). The fifth section is titled "*kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*," that is, "dancing on every hill," and includes the description of this habit of Murukaṉ's (191–217). The sixth and last section, taking up almost a third of the whole poem (218–317), includes the lines that describe Murukaṉ being wherever he is worshipped, the speaker's addressing of his audience and his account of what happens when one comes to 'meet' Murukaṉ, with the long final epithet of the deity as "Lord of the hill with groves of ripening fruit" (***paḻamutircolai****malai-kiḻavoṉe*). This section is titled "Paḻamutircolaimalai."

The section-titles are taken from *The Guide*'s text itself; the first four are the sites in which Murukaṉ can be found. The last two section-titles, *kuṉṟu toṟ'āṭal* and *paḻamutircolai*, present some difficulties. *Kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*, commonly explained nowadays as signifying Tiruttaṇi,[20] is obviously not a place name, but rather Murukaṉ's habitual action—dancing or 'sporting' on every hill—which seems to be a reasonable characteristic for a deity with such a long-lasting association with the mountain landscape.[21] Although not signifying a place, it makes sense as a section-title, since it captures the general idea expressed in the relevant segment of the text. The sixth section-title is a bit trickier to interpret. In some manuscripts, the title is Colaimalai ("Colai hill"), while in others it is the compound *paḻamutircolai*, which is the name of the present-day sixth "battle-camp." Both versions echo the very last bit of *The Guide*: "O The lord of the hill with groves

---

that name is not under any dispute. Finally, it is important to note that there is no variation in the fifth section-title, *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*.

19 The text refers to Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam only as "*kuṉṟu*" ("hill"), but specifies its location, west of Madurai (*kūtal kuṭavāyiṉ*, TMĀP 71). The identification of this hill as Tiruparaṅkuṉṟam is also affirmed by a parallel from the *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu* (See Visweswaran 2022: 26 n 36).

20 See, for example, Comacuntaram 1967: 12–13; *Hinduism Today* editors 2007: 50–51.

21 This reading is supported by the five medieval commentaries on *The Guide* (see *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* 1959), dated roughly between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries (Francis 2020: 255–58). It is also supported by the commentary of the nineteenth-century scholar Ārumukanāvalar, which is an adaptation of Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar's commentary (*Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* 2011). In an appendix to the 19th edition of Ārumukanāvalar's commentary (1967), Cu. Turaicāmip Piḷḷai states similarly that "[*kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*] are the hill-sites for the dances of Murukaṉ, who is the Lord of the Kuṟiñci-landscape" (*kuṟiñci nilak kaṭavuḷ ākiya murukaṉukku viḷaiyāṭṭayarum iṭaṅkaḷ kuṉṟukaḷ ākum*, *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* 2011: 85), a view agreed upon by other twentieth-century scholars, such as Ki. Vā. Jakannātaṉ (Jakannātaṉ 1970: 159).

of ripening fruit!" (***paḻa mutir colai malai*** *kiḻavoṉe*, TMĀP 317). This epithet of Murukaṉ could be translated in several other ways. For example, it could be "the lord of the hill [called] *paḻamutircolai*," as it is commonly understood today, or, alternatively, "the lord of *colai-malai* ("Colai hill") [that has] ripening fruit." The five traditional commentators of *The Guide* read *malai* here as "hill" in singular, and since Colaimalai is also a name of a hill near Madurai (also known as Aḻakarmalai or Tirumāliruñcolaimalai), the identification of the two is possible. However, keeping in mind the poem's structure presented above, it seems unlikely that this final epithet, a part of the text's conclusion, is supposed to denote another specific location in which Murukaṉ can be found. It simply does not fit the thematic progression of the poem, which proceeds from the local to the universal.[22]

One alternative interpretation is that "the hill" (*malai*) in the last line should be read as plural, meaning that Murukaṉ, generally known as a mountain-god, is the Lord of all the hills that have groves of ripening fruit, perhaps a reference to his traditional literary role as Lord of the *kuṟiñci* landscape. In other words, the last epithet could imply that even though Murukaṉ is the Lord of the Hills, since his known nature is to come wherever he is worshipped, he would come to bless the devotee who seeks him.[23]

Even if we interpret the name Paḻamutircolai in *The Guide* as a reference to a specific abode of Murukaṉ, perhaps the one known as Colaimalai, the data provided above is still sufficient to determine the three following points: first, *The Guide*, despite encouraging the act of pilgrimage, does not offer a geographical template for pilgrimage, and definitely not the "six-battle-camps" template accepted by present-day devotees. Nothing in the text suggests that the order of the four geographic spots that appear in it beyond doubt (Tiruparaṅkuṉṟam, Cīralaivāy, Āviṉaṅkuṭi, Erakam) has any significance, nor that the geographical and physical attributes of these places have any significance, as they are not the focus of the

22 *The Guide* begins with the suggestion of pilgrimage, continues to four locations, proceeds to "every hill" and then to "every place where he is worshipped." This suggests an effect of widening the scope, turning the deity from local to universal. Then comes the poet's conclusion: a description of one's fanciful hypothetical encounter with Murukaṉ, and the poem ends with the long clause describing the hill or hills of which Murukaṉ is the lord (*kiḻavoṉ*). Thus, it is hard to believe that the poet is again pointing out another specific location of Murukaṉ in this finale.

23 A similar doubt is raised by Turaicāmip Piḷḷai in his appendix to Ārumukanāvalar's commentary on *The Guide*, in which he claims that according to the Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar and Uraiyāciriyar (which he quotes on this matter), there is no reason to think that an actual 'holy place' by this name has existed ("*avarkaḷ uraiyāl ippĕyar kŏṇṭa tiruppati iruntat' ĕṉa koḷḷa iṭam illai*," *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* 2011: 85). Likewise, Ponnambalam Arunachalam, in an article on the worship of Murukaṉ, suggests that *paḻamutircolai* refers to a whole category of places, among which the Murukaṉ shrine in Katartagama (in today's Sri Lanka) is included (Arunachalam 1981: 132).

descriptions (at times to the degree of not being described at all). The second point that can be argued is that although the general association of Murukaṉ with the number six is present in the text,[24] *The Guide* neither provides an inventory of six sacred sites, nor does it imply an underlying concept of six 'special' places. The third point is that *The Guide*'s division into six sections, although found in all the manuscripts of the text and its old commentaries, does not arise organically from the text—it has no internal justification, neither semantic nor syntactic.[25]

Nevertheless, this division into six was an important stepping stone in the development of the "six-battle camps" concept from *The Guide*. Since none of the extant manuscripts is earlier than late eighteenth century (Francis 2020: 306), it is difficult to point out with certainty the exact moment in which *The Guide*'s division into six sections originated. However, one medieval commentator sheds some light on this issue.

There are five medieval commentaries on *The Guide*, which survived in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts and are currently available also in print. All five commentaries are divided into six sections, in agreement with *The Guide*'s division. Since their manuscripts are just as old as *The Guide*'s, this does not provide any valuable information. Luckily, commentaries sometimes have internal segmentation. Two of the five commentaries on *The Guide* have no segmentation at all.[26] Two other commentaries, more elaborate in style, make a syntactic segmentation of the text, which does not suggest any sixfold division.[27] But the fifth commentary, by Uraiyāciriyār (perhaps thirteenth-fifteenth century), is structured differently. This commentary has line-by-line paraphrases of the source text's segments. Each glossed segment is concluded with a recapitulation

24 His six faces are described at relative length (TMĀP 91–102), but he is also described as having attacked the demon in the six parts of the day/in six ways (TMĀP 58), his six-syllable mantra contains the whole Veda (TMĀP 186), he is one who was begotten by six and remains six (or—in "sixness," TMĀP 255).

25 A more natural and logical division would be into eight sections, by separating the introductory part, which encourages the audience to perform pilgrimage (lines 1–66) from the proper section on "Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam" (lines 67–77) and splitting the last section in two: one part on Murukaṉ's known disposition of being everywhere he is worshipped (lines 217–50) and a concluding section that describes the hypothetical *darśan* of Murukaṉ (lines 251–317).

26 These are the intertwined commentaries of Kavippĕrumāl and Pariti (perhaps eleventh-thirteenth century). They are relatively simple running commentaries, which provide line-by-line paraphrases and explanations without any segmentation of the source text (See *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* 1959: 150–76).

27 These are the commentaries of Parimelaḻakar (thirteenth century) and Naccinārkkiṉiyar (fourteenth century). They both cut the source text into sentences/clauses (*tŏṭar*). After glossing the words of each segment, they paraphrase the segment, sometimes rearranging its order for clarification, and give further explanations.

of the relevant portion, which rearranges the syntactic units in a more comprehensible and natural order. What is unusual is that the points in which the text is segmented (that is, the points where he inserts his recapitulations) are in accordance with *The Guide*'s current sixfold section-division.[28] Thus, Uraiyāciriyar's commentary is the first known example for *The Guide*'s sixfold division. Since none of the other medieval commentators apply this division, we can assume that it was not an accepted feature of the text for any of them. Yet this division later became standard for all manuscripts and editions of *The Guide* and its commentaries. Hence, either Uraiyāciriyar was introducing an innovation, maybe even his own, or, perhaps, he should be dated relatively later than the other commentators, closer to the fifteenth century. In that case, the segmentation found in his commentary may reflect this period's upsurge in religious interest in Murukaṉ.

Uraiyāciriyar does not explain his segmentation of the source text, and so we are left with the same question—why was the text divided in this manner? The most reasonable possibility is that the division of *The Guide* into six sections was a religio-hermeneutical act. The sixfold division does not have an internal justification in the text, but being a text on Murukaṉ and for Murukaṉ, it has an *essential* justification. Uraiyācāriyar, or whoever it was who decided to apply Murukaṉ's 'six-ness' to *The Guide*, used a common traditional South Asian hermeneutical principle, according to which, the meaning of a text is found not only in its words but also in its form.[29] Thus, dividing a devotional text on Murukaṉ into six is a hermeneutical technique for making the text a representation of this divinity; the division embodies the deepest meaning of the text—God himself.

So far, we have seen that *The Guide to Lord Murukaṉ*, despite some modern claims, is not the source for the present-day concept of the "six-battle-camps." It associates Murukaṉ with four or five of the "battle-camp" sites, but it does not suggest a template for pilgrimage, nor a notion of six sacred abodes. *The Guide* was divided into six sections around the fifteenth century, probably as an act of religious projection of the sixfold divinity of this deity onto the first devotional poem dedicated to him. As we shall see next, the expansion of Murukaṉ's 'six-ness' that influenced Uraiyāciriyar, manifested in other early-modern texts, through an abstract notion of "six abodes."

28 That is, TMĀP 1–77; 78–125; 126–76; 177–89; 190–217; 218–317. After each of the first five segments there is a concluding recapitulation of the segment, and after the last segment—a recapitulation of the whole text. The same practice of adding a syntactically rearranged recapitulation after a segment of the text is found in Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar's commentary too, but his segments are shorter and seem to be based on syntactic units.

29 See, for example, the argument made by Mishra on Vallabhācārya's analysis of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*'s structure (Mishra 2018).

The Guide and Murukaṉ's "six abodes" in early-modern Tamil literature

The idea that Murukaṉ has six favorite (terrestrial) abodes does not find its way into texts before the fifteenth century. Among the very first references, there are two verses from Aruṇakirināṭar's fifteenth-century *Tiruppukaḻ*—a monumental collection of devotional songs to Murukaṉ. Verse 81[30] in this collection begins with a long description of prostitutes who tempt young men. The speaker admits his own foolishness and fickleness, because he cannot help hankering after them. In the last part of the verse, the speaker calls for Murukaṉ's help and blessing, turning to him by using various epithets, the last of which is:

> *O Great One who mounts the grand peacock, [and] who resides in* ***the six abodes*** *that are foremost [among] all [places]!*[31]

In another *Tiruppukaḻ* verse, the speaker begs Murukaṉ to teach him the wisdom that would release him from his worldly bondage. Here, too, the verse ends with a list of epithets in the vocative case, of which the last is:

> *O Great One who dwells in* ***six holy abodes****!*[32]

These two verses are the only references to the concept of "six abodes" in the whole *Tiruppukaḻ* (which accommodates over 1,300 verses). The word used for "abode" is *pati* or *tiruppati* ("holy abode"), which does not appear anywhere in *The Guide*. Moreover, these two verses are not linked with any specific location, nor are they related in any other form to *The Guide*. Nevertheless, Aruṇakirināṭar was, beyond doubt, familiar with *The Guide*, as we can see from the opening verse of the *Kantar-antāti,* another of this poet's famous devotional works:

> *Go to* ***Paraṅkuṉṟu****, which [is so high it] fills the sky,*
> *to* ***Cīralaivāy****, to* ***Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi****,*
> *to* ***Erakam****, to* ***every hill*** *[on which Murukaṉ]* ***dances*** *(kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal),*
> *[and] to the mountain [covered with] cool rainclouds,*
> *on which dwell herds of roaring elephants,*

30 The order of the verses varies between editions. Throughout this article, I use the numbering of the 1935 edition of the *Tiruppukaḻ* (and other works of Aruṇakirināṭar), which lists the poems alphabetically.

31 *Tiruppukaḻ* 81 … *cakalamu(m) mutal ākiya* **aṟupati** *nilai meviya | taṭa mayil taṉil eṟiya pĕrumāḷe ‖*

32 *Tiruppukaḻ* 237 … *āṟu tiruppatiyil vaḻar pĕrumāḷe ‖*

And praise [these] homes of the Youthful One,
whose skill in the great, ancient scriptures was [highly] esteemed
by Viṣṇu, whose 'soul' is Lakṣmī,
and by Śiva, whose half-body
is the lady with lovely eyebrows, Umā.[33]

In this verse, Aruṇakirināṭar mentions *The Guide*'s first five section-titles—four abodes of Murukaṉ and "dancing on every hill" (all marked in bold letters in the text above)—by their exact names and order of appearance in *The Guide*. The commentators, beginning with Villiputtūrār (presumably Aruṇakirināṭar's contemporary), unanimously claim that the hill with dark clouds and herds of elephants, which appears in the last *pāda* of the verse, is Paḻamutircolai. This interpretation can be challenged, but accepting it has interesting implications on the way Aruṇakirināṭar, and perhaps all his contemporaries, understood Paḻamutircolai's status in *The Guide*: the verse implies an essential gap between the first five 'abodes' (four places and "every hill"), and Paḻamutircolai. This gap is less evident in the translation, but unignorable when looking at the Tamil verse's word order. The first five names appear as a set list and are followed by the incomplete verbal form *cĕṉṟu* (derived from the root *cĕl*, "to go"). Only then comes the compound denoting the cloudy mountain, followed by the finite verb, "to praise" (in an imperative plural form). While the meaning is the same as in the above translation, the word-order gives the impression that reaching the last hill and praising it is a conclusion of the previous actions. In addition, the first five are categorized in the verse as Murukaṉ's "homes" (*kuṭi*), while the last is not.[34] In other words, the structure of this verse implies an interpretation of *The Guide*'s structure, according to which, Paḻmutircolai should be distinguished from the first five 'abodes,' and perhaps should not be considered as one of them at all.

---

33 *Kantar-antāti* 1:
tiruv āvi ṉaṉ kuṭi paṅkāḷar ĕṇ mutu cīr urai ca-
tir uvāviṉaṉ kuṭi vāṉ ār **paraṅkuṉṟu cīralaivāy**
tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭiy erakaṅ kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal *cĕṉṟ' a-*
tir uvāv iṉaṉ kuṭi kŏṇṭa taṇ kār varai cĕppumiṉe ‖
Aruṇakirināṭar's emphasis here is on the phono-aesthetic effect, typical to this text: in addition to the technical constraint of the *antāti* (the last word of each verse is the first word of the next one), the first two metrical units (*cīr*) of each verse are identical, while their meaning is different in each repetition. This makes the translation rather awkward and given to many interpretations, yet for our purpose, even just looking at the Tamil would have been enough.

34 It may also be of some importance that the word used here for "home" or "dwelling" is *kuṭi* and not *pati*. This could be explained as Aruṇakirināṭar's way of handling the need to match the repeating *cīr*, but it also seems that for him *pati* or *tiruppati* is a term that belongs in a different context.

Whether the last *pāda* refers to Paḷamutircolai or not, this verse demonstrates beyond doubt that for Aruṇakirināṯar, *The Guide* was well-known and significant enough to stand in the focus of the first verse of one of his greatest works. At the same time, it was not sufficiently significant to be mentioned at the beginning of *all* his works, nor to leave any other substantial reference. From a wider perspective, this verse is a standard example of how *The Guide* is referred to in early-modern Tamil devotional works—that is, by using the fixed list of *The Guide*'s section-titles, in their original order. A similar reference can be found, for example, in Pakaḷikkūṯṯar's fifteenth-century *Tiruccĕntūr piḷḷaitamiḻ*, which, following the conventions of the *piḷḷaitamiḻ* genre, describes Murukaṉ as an infant in various daily situations. The "toy drum" (*ciṟupaṟai*) chapter of Pakaḷikkūṯṯar's poem consists of ten verses that encourage the infant-Murukaṉ, in the final *pāda* of each verse, to play his toy drum, while the rest of the *pāda*s are long epithets. In the seventh verse, the epithet that takes up most of the verse describes Murukaṉ as Lord of *Paraṅkiri*, *Cīralaivāy*, *Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi*, *Erakam*, *kuṉṟu toṟ'āṭal*, and *Paḷamutircolaimalai*.[35]

Another similar reference to *The Guide* is found in the benedictory verses (*kaṭavuḷ vāḻttu*) of Kacciyappa Civācāriyar's fifteenth-century *Kantapurāṇam*. Seven verses of the benediction are dedicated to Murukaṉ.[36] In each of the first six, Murukaṉ is eulogized as the master of one of *The Guide*'s (so-called) abodes: he is The God who resides in Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (*tirupparaṅkuṉṟ'amar cey*), The God who came to Cīralaivāy (*cīralaivāy varu cey*), The immaculate One who came to Āviṉaṉkuṭi (*āviṉaṉkuṭi varum amala[ṉ]*), The six-faced Lord of Erakam (*erakatt' aṟumukaṉ*), Kumara who dances on every hill (*kuṉṟu tŏṟ' āṭiya kumara[ṉ]*), and The beautiful Lord of Paḷamutircolai (*paḷamutircolaiy am pakavaṟ*), respectively.[37] The contents of these verses are mostly epithets, which have little to no relation to the specific geographical features and mythologies of the places themselves, or to the descriptions found in *The Guide.*

The *Kantapurāṇam* has an additional noteworthy reference to *The Guide*: verse 106 of the introductory chapter on the town (*tirunakarap-paṭalam*) praises Murukaṉ of Kumarakoṭṭam (Kāñcipuram) in the following way:

> *The One who abides in Kumarakoṭṭam temple,*
> *graciously dwells on the difficult-to-reach hill [that is located] west of*
> *Madurai,*

35 The full verse (with my translation) can be found in appendix 1 to this chapter.

36 The verses (*Kantapurāṇam*, *kaṭavuḷvāḻttu* 12–18), along with my translation, can be found in appendix 2.

37 The seventh verse eulogizes Murukaṉ as the master of Kāñcipuram's Kumarakoṭṭam temple, where Kacciyappa Civācāriyar composed this work.

in Alaivāy, in Āviṉaṉkuṭi, in good Erakam,
on the hills of this earth, such as Taṇikai,
[and] in temples in other magnificent towns.[38]

The mention of "the hill west of Madurai," Alaivāy, Āviṉaṉkuṭi, and Erakam makes it clear that this is a reference to *The Guide*. It is curious that Paḻamutircolai is not mentioned here, even though it was mentioned in the benedictory verses. This may hint to the possibility that Paḻamutircolai was perceived differently, as I have suggested above with regard to the first verse of the *Kantar-antāti*. In addition, the absence of Paḻamutircolai, along with the plural "hills," makes the verse incompatible with the six-abode concept. The most interesting point, however, is the mention of Taṇikai (i.e., Tiruttaṇi) in the clause on the "hills of this earth," which corresponds to *The Guide*'s "dancing on every hill" section-title. This could have implied that the idea that Tiruttaṇi is Murukaṉ's fifth 'abode' originated from the *Kantapurāṇam*. However, as will shall see later in this chapter, Tiruttaṇi did not enter the "battle-camp" list before the twentieth century.[39]

The list-like references in fifteenth-century texts, such as those presented above, are not correlated with the concept of "six holy abodes" mentioned in the two *Tiruppukaḻ* verses quoted earlier. They still appear as two different phenomena: the latter is an expansion of Murukaṉ's 'six-ness' to include also some (unknown, abstract) six spatial manifestations; the former is a reference—perhaps tribute, perhaps lip-service—to the ancient ancestor of Murukaṉ *bhakti*, which attests to the continuity of this tradition.

This, however, has one exception: a small section from the *Tiruvakuppu*, a less-celebrated collection of praise songs by Āruṇakirināṭar, seems to hint at a partial fusion of the two phenomena. This section of four short verses praises Murukaṉ as one who "abides in countless holy places" (*alaki(l) r̲iruppatiyi̲r payil*) and provides a short list of examples for these places. The first item in the list is "Tiruparaṅkiri—the first of the six sites" (*āṟu nilaiy ĕṉṟu mutal ākiya paraṅkiriyum*). At the same time, the rest of the list does not substantiate this fusion: it includes eight other sites, among which only two are equivalent to places from *The Guide*, and the idea of "six places" is not reiterated.[40]

---

38 *Kantapurāṇam*, *tirunakarappaṭalam* 106:
mev' aruṅ kūṭal melai vĕr̲piṇil alaivāy taṉṉil
āviṉaṉkuṭiyi(l) ṉall erakan taṇi̲r r̲aṇikaiy ātip
pūv' ulak' uḷḷa vĕr̲pi̲r pŏr̲p' u̲r̲um eṉai vaippi̲r
kovil kŏṇṭ' aruḷi vaikuṅ kumarakoṭṭattu meyoṉ ‖

39 Moreover, as far as I know, this verse was not quoted or referred to as the source of the identification of Tiruttaṇi with "*kuṉṟu to̲r̲'āṭal*" prior to 1980.

40 *Tiruvakuppu*, *pūtavetāḷa-vakuppu*, 16–19:
āṟunilaiy ĕṉṟu mutal ākiya paraṅkiriyum

A similar formulation appears in Nirampav-aḻakiya Tecikar's sixteenth-century *talapurāṇam* of Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, the first among the "six battle-camps." In the tenth chapter, "the killing of Cūr" (*Cūracaṅkārac-carukkam*), we are told that after defeating the demon, Murukaṉ went to Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam:[41]

> *He reached Paraṅkiri, the first among* ***the six holy places*** *that give joy to His heart, and sojourned there.*

Like the *Tiruvakuppu* verse, this seems like potential evidence for a fusion of the idea that Murukaṉ has six abodes with the abode-names that appear in *The Guide*. Yet it refers only to the first among the six, and, just like in the *Tiruvakuppu*, the author does not provide any further elaboration. Meanwhile, many other contemporary works do not adopt this fusion. Pālacuppiramaṇiyak Kavirāyar's seventeenth-century *Paḻaṇittalapurāṇam* eulogizes all the temples and sacred spots located around the Paḻaṉi hill. Its thirteenth chapter, dedicated to Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi, begins with a set of seven eulogy verses to Murukaṉ, somewhat reminiscent of (and perhaps inspired by) the *Kantapurāṇam* set of eulogy verses mentioned above. Here, too, each of the first six verses praises Murukaṉ as the master of one of *The Guide*'s 'abodes': he is The One of Paraṅkuṉṟam (*paraṅkuṉṟattāṉ*), The One of Alaivāy (*alaivāykkaraiyāṉ*), The One of Āviṉaṉkuṭi (*āviṉaṉkuṭiyāṉ*), The One of Erakam (*erakattāṉ*), The One who dances on every hill (*kuṉṟu-tŏṟum-āṭalāṉ*),[42] and Kumara of Colaimalai (*colaimalaikkumaraṉ*).[43] Like in the *Kan-*

āviṉaṉ ĕṭuṅ kuṭiyum āraṇa muṭint' iṭamum ‖
aruṇaiyum ilañciyuñ cĕntūr tiruppaḻaṇiy
aṭiyar maṉa paṅkayañ cĕṅkoṭ' iṭaik kaḻiyum ‖
aṉavarata(m) nīla malar mutt' ĕṟi cuṉai puṉalil
aruvi kutipāy taru cĕruttaṇiy ĕṉ vĕṟpum ĕṉum ‖
alaki(l) ṟiruppatiyiṟ payil kaṟpakāvaṭaviy
aṉupavaṉ atta(ṉ) ṉiruttaṉ arattavāṭaiyaṉ ‖
He who enjoys the [heavenly] wishing-tree groves, The Great One, the Dancer, whose garment is red, resides in coutless holy sites:
Tiruparaṅkiri—the first of the six sites, the prominent Āviṉaṉkuṭi, the peak of all Vedas, Aruṇācalam, Ilañci, Cĕntūr, Tiruppaḻaṇi, Cĕṅkoṭu, the mind-lotus of [His] devotees, Kāḻi, and the hill called Cĕruttani (i.e., Tiruttaṇi), where waterfalls always leap and splash in the ponds, scattering pearls and blue lilies.

41 TPKP *cūrcaṅkāraccarukkam*, 20ab:
tiruvuḻaṅ kaḻi pŏruntiya **tiruppatiy āṟ'** *uḷ*
varu mutaṟ pati paraṅkiriy aṭant' avaṉ vatintāṉ

42 Literally: "the One whose dance (*āṭal*) is [on] every hill."

43 The seventh verse serves a *phalaśruti* of this mini-*stotra*, which opens the thirteenth chapter of the *Paḻaṇittalapurāṇam*. It consists of additional, standard epithets of Murukaṉ, and concludes that those who would worship him will obtain divine honors. The seven verses (and their translations) can be found in appendix 3 to this chapter.

tapurāṇam, each verse consists of a list of epithets, the contents of which have little relation to the places themselves, or to the descriptions found in *The Guide*. Moreover, the idea of Murukaṉ's "six holy abodes" is not expressed in any of these verses. Thus, they, too, function as a signifier for a direct link between *The Guide* and the *Paḻaṇittalapurāṇam*, that is, between the ancient ancestor and its seventeenth-century offspring, but it is an empty link, with no other function than signifying its existence.

Alongside such references to *The Guide*, the abstract "six-abodes" notion still appears separately in other seventeenth-century texts. The *Tiruccĕntūrk-kantar-kalivĕṇpā* is a devotional-philosophical treatise, describing Murukaṉ as the supreme divinity, composed by Kumarakuruparar, a well-known seventeenth-century Murukaṉ devotee and poet. In this work, which became a part of the devotional canon of Murukaṉ's cult alongside the works of Aruṇakirināṭar, we find a single reference to the concept of Murukaṉ's abodes:

> *You dwell in the hearts of those who see [your]* ***six holy abodes*** *and utter with devotion the six syllables!*[44]

The *Kantark-kalivĕṇpā* refers to some of the main myths of Murukaṉ, but it does not mention any sacred site except Tiruccĕntūr, the home of the deity to which this work is dedicated.[45] It also does not have any 'list-reference' to *The Guide*. Other authors from this period, such as Vĕṉṟimālaik Kavirāyar, who composed the *Tiruccĕntūrppurāṇam*, ignored completely the "six abodes" notion. The same is true for Kacciyappa Muṉivar, the renowned eighteenth-century poet and scholar, who composed the *Taṇikaippurāṇam* (a *talapurāṇam* on Tiruttaṇi) and *Tanikai-yāṟṟuppaṭai* (a "guide poem" on Taṇikai), in neither of which there is a reference to the abstract concept of "six abodes," nor to the set-list of *The Guide*'s section titles.

Let us sum up what we have seen so far. First, there is no textual evidence for the idea that Murukaṉ has six particularly favorite or holy abodes prior to the fifteenth century, that is, almost a millennium after the "Guide to Murukaṉ" was composed. This gap may be attributed to the general "textual silence" of the Murukaṉ cult in this period. Yet even from the fifteenth century onwards,

---

44 TKK 109:
āṟu tiruppati *kaṇṭ' āṟ' ĕḻuttum aṉpiṉ uṭaṉ*
kūṟum avar cintai kuṭikŏṇṭoṉe ‖

45 According to tradition, the author, Kumarakuruparar was unable to speak until the age of five. His parents took him to the Tiruccĕntūr temple, and by Murukaṉ's blessing he was given not only speech but also perfect knowledge of both Tamil and Sanskrit. He then sang the *Tiruccĕntūrk-kantar-kalivĕṇpā* (*Ceyttŏṇṭarppurāṇam*, 935–38). Even so, Tiruccĕntūr is mentioned only twice in the text (TKK 98, 110).

this concept did not occupy a central place in devotional texts. It was mentioned by some poets and ignored by others, but other than two uncertain cases (the verses from the *Tiruvakuppu* and the *Tirupparaṅkirippurāṇam*), it remained an abstract idea that is not directly correlated with any specific locations, including the places mentioned in *The Guide.* Thus, it seems to be merely a non-particular expansion of Murukaṉ's association with the number six that, although known, had minor importance for the central figures in the early-modern Śaiva and Kaumāra literary traditions. During the same period, *The Guide* itself was alluded to by some of these early-modern poets, not very frequently, but in a consistent manner—by mentioning the names of its six places/section-titles, in the same given order. The consistency of these allusions suggests that the sixfold division of the text and the section-titles were, by this time, generally accepted. The fixed template of these allusions strengthens the conviction that this list is not meant to provide a map—the geographical aspect seems almost irrelevant—but rather that these names are used as codes for 'constructing' the divinity from its parts: the deity is represented through the division of His ancient text into the typological number that captures His essence; alluding to it by using this sixfold division is a form a verbal embodiment of God.

Nevertheless, the identification of the "six abodes" with the section-titles of *The Guide* seems to have been almost inevitable. After all, five of them were already accepted as known geographic spots, and *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal* is a minor inconsistency in this scheme: it is understood as "every hill," a general category of holy sites. Since this set of places still floated between the literary and the purely abstract realms, and was not yet perceived as a sacred map, it posed no problem. And thus, in Beschi's Tamil-Tamil dictionary, the *Catur-akarāti* (first published in 1732), we find an indication for this fusion: an entry for *Cuppiramaṇiyar-piratāṉat-talam* ("the important sites of Subrahmaṇya"), which presents a short list of names—Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Tiruccīralaivāy, Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi, Tiruverakam, *kuṉṟukaḷ* ("hills"), and Colaimalai.[46] That is not to say that Murukaṉ's six places have become a matter of common knowledge or a central concept for the cult. As mentioned above, the eighteenth-century renowned poet and scholar Kacciyappa Muṉivar ignored the notion completely in his devotional works, and, in addition, other dictionaries from around the same period, such as Proença's *Tamil-Portuguese Dictionary* (1679) and Fabricious's *A Malabar and English Dictionary* (1779) do not mention this concept at all. This inconsistency continues deep into the nineteenth century until, at the turn of the twentieth century, Murukaṉ's "six abodes" begin to have a clearer, more palpable form.

46 This is found in the *tŏkaiy-akarāti* section of the dictionary.

The Guide and Murukaṉ's "six abodes" in the nineteenth and early twentieth century

From the nineteenth century onwards, even larger numbers of devotional works addressed to Murukaṉ are composed, which at this period are more easily distributed by the growing use of print in Tamil Nadu. The increase in devotional writing to Murukaṉ comes hand in hand with the major efforts by Śaiva publishers to print religious works in Tamil. One of the earliest Tamil texts to have been printed in Tamil Nadu, and the first among *caṅkam* texts, was *The Guide to Lord Murukaṉ*, with the first edition perhaps as early as 1834 (Francis 2020: 287, Francis 2017: 322–23). The central part that print-culture played in promoting religious trends in Tamil Nadu during this period was already discussed by Richard Weiss (2016). We can assume that the resurgence of *The Guide* in print entailed a rise in its popularity and its status among Murukaṉ devotees. The publication of *The Guide*'s printed editions may also explain why in dictionaries published after the middle of the nineteenth century, the "six abodes" of Murukaṉ are consistently associated with the section titles of *The Guide*: Dupuis and Mousset (1855), Winslow (1862), Visvanatha Pillai (1888), and Ciṅkāravelu Mutaliyār's encyclopedia *Apitāṉacintāmaṇi* (1910), all mention them as the "six important places of Subrahmaṇiya."

The association between *The Guide* and Murukaṉ's six important sites, although attested in dictionaries, did not play a part in this period's devotional poetry. An example for this can be taken from the writings of Kumarakurutāca Cuvāmikaḷ, alias Pamban Swamigal. Pamban Swamigal, born around the middle of the nineteenth century, was a prolific author of devotional texts to Murukaṉ. His devotional hymns are considered his earliest writings and are said to amass to 6,666 verses in total. His corpus of devotional hymns begins with a poem to Murukaṉ as "king of gods" (*amararkoṉ*), which is then followed by poems dedicated to many temples and holy places, composed in a style similar to the Śaiva *Tevāram* poems. The first six among these temple-hymns are titled *Tiruppaṟaṅkiri*, *Tiruccĕntil*, *Tiruppaḻanimalai*, *Tiruverakam*, *Tirukkuṉṟutoṟāṭal*, and *Tiruccolaimalai*, respectively. In other words, Pampan Swamigal opened his collection of temple eulogy-songs with a reference to *The Guide*, similar to what we have seen in Aruṇakirināṭar's *Kantar-antāti* and Pālacuppiramaṇiyak Kavirāyar's *Paḻaṇittalapurāṇam*, although more elaborate (to each temple or 'place' he devoted a decade of verses).[47] In another one of his works, the *Tiruvalaṅkaṟ-ṟiraṭṭu* ("Collection of divine garlands"), we find another set of such decades, yet slightly

47 It is difficult to confirm beyond doubt that the arrangement of the hymns was decided by Pamban Swamigal himself or by a later editor, as the information on the editing of his devotional hymns is practically non-existent. However, since many of his other

different: the first two are titled "Tirupparaṅkiri" and "Tiruccīralaivāy," respectively. The third is titled "Tiruverakam" (which we would expect to find as fourth), the fourth is titled "*palakiri*" ("many hills"), which obviously stands for *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*, and the fifth—"Tiruccolaimalai" (normally the sixth in the list). Then, there are three decades, the first two are titled "Tiruppaḻani," and the third—"Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi." Thus, the template of the six names in their given order is not maintained here.[48] One point, to which I shall return later, should be noted—for Pamban Swamigal, *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal* (paralleled with *palakiri*) does not mark a single place but a category of places, that is, the hills where Murukaṉ dwells.[49]

A third mention of our 'places' appears in the same collection of Pamban's poems, the *Tiruvalankaṟ-ṟiraṭṭu*, in a ten-verse poem called *Tirukkantar tiruppalāṇṭu* (*Tiruvalankaṟṟiraṭṭu* 58). Each verse of this poem ends with the words "I sing [this] *pallāṇṭu* to *Guha* (Murukaṉ)" (*kukaṉukkup pallāṇṭu kūṟutume*). The third verse goes as follows:

> *He, who graciously bestows greater-than-great wealth*
> *On those who meditate on [his] feet,*
> *[while] being at Tirupparaṅkuṉram, which is abundant with waters,*
> *at Tiruccĕntūr, in which beauty abounds,*
> *at the immensely flourishing Tiruverakam,*
> *at the faultless Paḻani,*
> *and on the beautiful Tiruccolai mountain, of expansive wealth—*
> *I sing [this] pallāṇṭu to Guha.*[50]

The absence of *kuṉṟutoṟ'āṭal* from this verse, along with the substitution of Āviṉaṉkuṭi with Paḻaṉi (i.e., the central hill-temple), indicates a certain shift in the meaning of these references to *The Guide*, from being mainly literary to being a direct call for a real pilgrimage to well-known (and central) places. At

works were printed during his lifetime, one may assume that it was indeed his own decision, or by his approval, and at any rate in agreement with his line of thought.

48 Here, too, we do not have sufficient information to decide whether this shift in the order of poems was Pamban Swamigal's own decision or his editors'.

49 The epithet that repeats in each verse of this decade (*Tiruvalaṅkaṟṟiraṭṭu*, *mutaṟ kaṇṭam*, 11) is "O Murukaṉ who resides on many hills!" (*pala kiriy uṟai murukā*). In the decade titled *kuṉṟutoṟ'āṭal* (*Kumarakurutāca Cuvāmikaḷ Pāṭal* 6), the repeating epithet is "…O Noble One, full of beauty, whose manner is to dance on every hill" (…**kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal** *vati mañc' ār pĕruntakaiyaṉe*).

50 *Tiruvalankaṟ-ṟiraṭṭu*, *mutaṟ kaṇṭam*, 58.3:
nīr vaḷam ār paraṅkuṉṟiku(m) nīṭ' ĕḻi(l) ṉimir tiruccĕntililum
cīr vaḷam ār tiruverakan taṉṉilun tīt' aṟu paḻaniyilum
er vaḷam ār tiruccolaiy aṅ kiṟiyilum irunt' aṭi niṉaivārkkup
pār vaḷa(m) mel vala(m) nalk' aruṭ kukaṉukkup pallāṇṭu kūṟutume ‖

the same time, it should be emphasized that the concept of "six abodes" does not play a part in Pamban's references to *The Guide,* since the last two of the three examples above do not maintain a sixfold template. In fact, this concept is almost completely absent from his devotional poetry, with the exception of one verse, in a poem called *ĕṇṇ alaṅkāra lakari* ("The Billow of Number-Ornaments"). Poems of this type use successive numbers for praising a deity. In the current case, there are ten verses that use the numbers one to ten. The sixth verse goes as follows:

> *"Six are his mouths," it was said [, and therefore]*
> *six was the number of women whose breasts*[51] *suckled him.*
> *Six are his most important places,*
> *[and] six are the syllables in his mantra.*[52]

As in the earlier examples for this notion in poetry (and unlike some of the dictionaries), there is no information about the places. Given the context, it seems to be only a 'number-ornament' and not a reference to a sacred geography.

The poet-devotee Devaraya Swamigal was a contemporary of Pamban Swamigal. His *Kantar-caṣṭi-kavacam*, a poem of 118 couplets, is currently one of the most popular devotional songs on Murukaṉ and a part of the daily worship (Zvelebil 1995: 663). The poem, dedicated to Murukaṉ in Tiruccĕntūr, is another example for the relative absence of the "six abodes" from the nineteenth-century devotional literature, as it does not mention the concept of "six abodes," nor does it have any 'list reference' to *The Guide*'s six section-titles. In present-day publications and on devotee websites, Devaraya Swamigal is attributed with five additional "*kavacam*" poems, each dedicated to one of the five other "battle-camps."[53] However, this

---

51 The last *cīr* of the second *pāda* appears in all the editions as *mu***kai***cciyar ĕṇ*. Since this makes little sense, I read here *mu***lai***cciyar [ĕṇ]*, which is more thematically consistent with the preceding *pĕyarĕccam* "*uṇṭa*."

52 *Tiruvalankaṟ-ṟiraṭṭu, mutaṟ kaṇṭam* 45.3 c–d
āṟ' ām avar āṉaṉam ĕṉṟ' aṟaital
āṟ' ām avar uṇṭa mu[l]aicciyar ĕṇ
āṟ' ām avar mukkiyamāṉa talam
āṟ' ām avar mantirav akkarame ‖

53 One example for such a printed publication is *Āṟu-kantar-caṣṭi-kavacaṅkaḷ* (2012). On the web, see: https://kaumaram.com/text_new/k6_kavasam_u.html and https://murugan.org/texts/devaraya.htm. The six *kavacam*s also appears in the "Project Madurai" website, accessed February 11, 2025, (https://www.projectmadurai.org/pm_etexts/pdf/pm0034_02.pdf). In addition, these six *kavacam* poems attributed to Devaraya Swamigal appear on some (relatively new) wall panels in the outer *prakāra* of the Kapalīśvarar temple in Mayilapur, Chennai, near the Paḷaṉi-Āṇṭavar shrine.

attribution is somewhat dubious, since there are no old editions of these poems, which differ significantly in style and length from the *Kantar-caṣṭi-kavacam*.[54]

To conclude this section, by the nineteenth century, the notion of Murukaṉ's six holy abodes was established and was already fused with the list of *The Guide*'s section-titles in some circles, to the degree that it appeared in dictionaries. However, as the above examples show, this does not entail its acceptance in all the devotee circles, nor does it mean it became a key notion in the mainstream of the Murukaṉ cult. As we have seen, for two prominent and influential devotees such as Pamban Swamigal and Devaraya Swamigal, it seems to have been a rather minor to non-existent element within their theological system. The change, however, did not take place until later.

The resurgence of the *Tiruppukaḷ*

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, an important turn of events began to unfold when Va. Ta. Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai, a head clerk at the Mañcakuppam district court and an ardent devotee of Murukaṉ, heard for the first time in his life a quote from Aruṇakiranātar's *Tiruppukaḷ* and decided to dedicate his life to the collection and publication of this poet's works, beginning with the *Tiruppukaḷ*. Prior to that, Aruṇakirinātar's poems, like many other literary and devotional works, were scattered throughout the Tamil region on palm-leaf manuscripts. Between 1876 and 1903, Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai collected hundreds of them. The first volume, with only 603 poems, was published in 1894, followed by a second volume in 1902, and a revised second edition in 1909 (Zvelebil 1992: 209–10). Subsequent editions were published by Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai's son, Va. Cu. Ceṅkalvarāya Piḷḷai, who continued his father's endeavor after his death (Zvelebil 1995: 136).[55]

54 Even if we accept the claim that these six poems should be taken together as one body of works by Devaraya Swamigal, it does not change the current argument, since the poems, despite making occasional references to the "battle camp" sites, are only loosely linked to the places they are associated with (and that appear in their titles). In addition, the fifth poem, titled *kuṉṟu toṟ'āṭum kumaraṉ* ("Kumara who dances on every hill"), does not mention Tiruttaṇi. Thus, in this case, too, the sixfold formation seems to be intended to echo the structure of *The Guide* as the ancient source of Murukaṉ *bhakti*.

55 Va. Cu. Ceṅkalvarāya Piḷḷai eventually published between 1952 and 1957 the *Murukaveḷ paṉṉiru tirumuṟaikaḷ*, an anthology of devotional works, mostly of Atuṇakirinātar's alongside several notable others. The whole anthology is structured to parallel the Śaiva *Tirumuṟai*, in an attempt to create a Kaumāra parallel to the Tamil Śaiva scriptures. This is stated in the preface to the works and apparent by the choice of the name "*Tirumuṟai*." His endeavor complements his father's wish to form a Kaumāra parallel to the Śaiva *Tevāram* anthology. Thus, the first seven books of this anthology,

Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai organized the *Tiruppukaḻ* poems in groups, the first of which was of poems dedicated to the 'abodes' mentioned in *The Guide*. Next, he grouped together the poems on Śiva's *pañcabhūta* temples, followed by groups of poems organized by region (*nāṭu*), and, at the end, the general poems (i.e., poems not associated with any specific site). In other words, Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai followed the footsteps of all the poets we have seen so far, as his editing work echoes the same type of allusion to *The Guide*. However, for Cuppiramaṇia Piḷḷai, the poems' context was (like Pamban Swamigal's poems) clearly geographical and not only literary. Thus, under the title of Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi he included all the poems to Paḻaṉi hill as well. Similarly, under the category of *kuṉṟutoṟ' āṭal*, he gathered first all the poems that use this expression or what he considered its variants (i.e., *kiriy ĕṅkaṇum*, *pala kuṉṟum*, *pala malai*, *pala vĕṟpu*, *malai yāvum*),[56] but then also added the poems dedicated to many different mountains and mountain-shrines, beginning with mythical mountains like Kailāsa (Tam. *kayilai*) and Skanda-giri (*kanta-kiri*), followed by thirty-two different terrestrial hills and mountains. It should be noted that within this list of hills, Tiruttaṇi occupies a significant position as one of the temples that has the largest number of poems, yet it is not the first in the list and nothing suggests it has a unique status.

Cuppiramaṇia Piḷḷai explained the arrangement of the poems, in his own words, in his preface to the first edition of the *Tiruppukaḻ*: "when arranging [the poems], the songs of the six [holy] sites—Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Tiruccĕntūr, Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi, Tiruverakam, *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*, Paḻamutircolai—which are the central **"battle-camps"** (*paṭaivīṭu)* of Lord Murukaṉ, were placed first."[57]

These words reveal a full-fledged fusion between the abstract concept of "six abodes" and The Guide's section-titles, in the circles of Cuppiramaṇia Piḷḷai and his collaborators in the *Tiruppukaḻ* publishing project, which are contemporaries of Pamban Swamigal and Devaraya Swamigal. This fusion will soon have become a common property, with the distribution of the *Tiruppukaḻ*s's printed editions. The question of how the tradition of paying tribute to *The Guide*, which appeared relatively insignificant at the end of the eighteenth century, became a central component in the new networking of the cult, seems to have a simple answer: print. As I have said above, *The Guide* was being printed in multiple editions from 1834 onwards, and this may well have been one of the consequences of its new form

which include Aruṇakiri's temple-poems (with Ceṅkalvarāya Piḷḷai'a own commentary), parallel the *Tevāram*; the eleventh book, like the *Tirumuṟai*'s, is a collection of poems (and verse-selections) from a variety of sources, and the twelfth book is the *Ceyttŏṇtarppurāṇam*, a hagiography of famous Murukaṉ devotees, which parallels the *Pĕriyapurāṇam*.

56 All the expressions mean "every/many hill(s)/mountain[s]."

57 From his preface to the first edition of the Tiruppukaḻ (*tiruppukaḻ mutaṟpatippiṉ mukavurai*), *Tiruppukaḻ* 1921: vii.

and extent of distribution, which has raised *The Guide*'s symbolic significance for the Murukaṉ devotees of the late nineteenth-century.

The above quote from Cuppiramṇiya Piḷḷai's preface is also an early indication of the use of *paṭaivīṭu* ("battle camp") in this context. In all but one pre-twentieth-century dictionaries I have checked, if the term *paṭaivīṭu* appears at all, it is only in its original meaning of "arsenal" or "soldiers' quarters."[58] Dupuis and Mousset's dictionary (1855) is the only exception, adding "temple" as a possible translation. In his 1910 Tamil encyclopedia, the *Apitāṉacintāmaṇi*, Singaravelu Mudaliar used *paṭaivīṭu* to describe only Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, without applying this term to the "important Subrahmaṇya places" (which appear elsewhere in this work), or to any other one of them in particular. In the same year, Nā. Katiraivel Pillai, in his *Tamiḻ-mŏḻiy-akarāti*,[59] translated *paṭaivīṭu*, alongside the original meanings, as temple (*tevālayam*), and, in a separate entry, *tiruppaṭaivīṭu* is translated as "an abode of gods, [in which they] sit with crowds of great-ones."[60] In addition, in the separate entries for Murukaṉ's sites, he used "battle camps" and "Subrahmaṇya's important places" interchangeably.[61] Hence, when the term "battle-camps" appeared in the first edition of the *Tiruppukaḻ* in 1894, it was not yet the accepted and standard appellation for these six sites, and, therefore, it may be the source for the present-day popularity of this term. Cĕnkalvarāya Piḷḷai, Cuppiramaṇia Piḷḷai's son, expressed his opinion on how this term was coined. In his commentary on *Tiruppukaḻ* 81 (the verse quoted above on "the Lord who resides in six foremost-of-all holy abodes" *cakalamum mutal ākiya aṟupati nilai meviya pĕrumāḷe*), he writes:

> [the six abodes are] the places called *tiruppaṟaṅkuṉṟam*, *tiruccĕntūr*, *tiru āviṉaṉkuṭi (paḻaṉi)*, *tiruverakam*, *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*, [and] *paḻamutircolai*, who have primacy among all [holy] places. These places are, therefore, six

58 Proença (1769) and Beschi (1824 [1732]) do not have an entry for *paṭaivīṭu*. Fabricious (1779) and Winslow (1862) give only the original (i.e., literal) meaning.

59 The first edition of the dictionary was printed in 1910. Unfortunately, I could not find anything earlier than the sixth edition (1928).

60 *tevarkaḷ periyorkaḷ kuṭṭatt' uṭaṉ irukkum.*

61 "Cĕntil" (i.e., Tiruccĕntūr) is "one of Murukakkaṭavuḷ's *battle-camps*" (*murukakkaṭavuḷatu paṭaivīṭukaḷuḷ ŏṉṟu*), but in the entry for Tiruccĕntūr it is defined as "one of Subrahmaṇiya's important places." Similarly, Āviṉaṉkuṭi is "one of the six places that belong to Subrahmaṇya mūrtti," and Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi (i.e., the same place): "one of Subrahmaṇya's battle-camps." Erakam is "one of the six places of Subrahmaṇiya," and Colaimalai—"a place of Subrahmaṇiya, one of the battle-camps." Interestingly, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam is described just as "a major hill of Subrahmaṇya" (*cuppiramaṇiyarukkup piratāṉa malai*). Tiruttaṇi is not described as one of the six places. Naturally, there is no entry for *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*.

> homes (*vīṭu*) of Murukaṉ, which are mentioned in the [*Tiru-*]*murukāṟṟup-paṭai.* People of later times started calling [them] by the altered [form]: "*āṟupaṭai vīṭu*" ([from] "*āṟṟuppaṭai vīṭu*").[62]

According to Cĕṅkalvarāya Piḷḷai, the term *āṟupaṭaivīṭu* is a corrupted form of *āṟṟuppaṭai-vīṭu*, that is, "the homes [which appear in Murukaṉ's] guide-poem." Since the word "*āṟu*" ("way") can also mean "six," this term was altered, or perhaps misunderstood, by later readers, who disjointed the first part of the compound from the text's name (*tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*). Taking "āṟu" as "six" causes, in turn, a reorganization of the compound, so it now comes to mean "the six *paṭai-vīṭu*," hence, "the six battle-camps." This, too, may have been a peripheral influence of *The Guide*'s distribution after its publication in print (from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards), among audiences who were not necessarily familiar with genres of the *caṅkam* era, and in any case were more interested in the devotional value of this text. Whether Cĕṅkalvarāya Piḷḷai's explanation is historically accurate or not, by the middle of the twentieth century "the six battle-camps" became the standard appellation for Murukaṉ's six holy abodes.

The first edition of the *Tiruppukaḷ* was published in 1894, sixty years after the first printed edition of *The Guide*. By this time, the concept of Murukaṉ's six abodes is well established. The abodes are considered a set of Murukaṉ's most sacred spots and, therefore, auspicious pilgrimage sites. They are identified with the names that appear in the six section-titles of *The Guide*. They are elevated to a special status among the numerous holy sites of Murukaṉ in the Tamil region, which are now perceived jointly, to form a 'sacred landscape,' by virtue of their appearance in the unified and accessible corpus of the *Tiruppukaḷ*. In addition, the six abodes obtained a new appellation—"the six battle-camps"—which is perhaps another outcome of *The Guide*'s shift into the cult's mainstream during the nineteenth-century, thanks to its publication in print form. These innovations are not reflected in the writings of some author-devotees who are contemporaries of the *Tiruppukaḷ*'s editor. Nevertheless, most of the innovations can be perceived in dictionaries and encyclopedias from the later part of the nineteenth century. Thus, things at this point in time—the turn of the twentieth century—are not too far from what the pilgrim-authors of the *Hinduism Today* piece described in 2007. Yet there is still one important difference from the present-day "six-battle camps:" the fifth "battle-camp," *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*, is still considered a category of sites and

62 Cĕṅkalvarāya Piḷḷai 1992, Part I vol. II, 646: "*cakala talaṅkaḷukkum mutaṉmaiyākav uḷḷa tiruppaṟaṅkuṉṟam, tiruccĕntūr, tiru āviṉaṉkuṭi (paḻaṉi), tiruverakam, kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal, paḻamutircolai ĕṉṉum talaṅkaḷ. it talaṅkaḷ murukaṟṟuppaṭaiyiṟ kūṟappaṭṭa murukaveḷiṉ āṟu vīṭukaḷ ātaliṉ. ("āṟṟppaṭai vīṭu") āṟupaṭai vīṭu ĕṉa maruviniṟkap piṉṉor aḻaikkalāyiṉār*."

not a specific place. As a result, the "six battle-camps" could not have been considered yet a pilgrimage route. This last development consists of two different issues, which should be put as two separate questions. The first is—when and how did the idea that Tiruttaṇi can stand for *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal* originate? There is no certain answer to this, yet we can track at least one important source that may have been the spark to ignite the spreading of this idea.[63] This will be discussed below. The second question is more complex—when and how did the idea that *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal* stands for Tiruttaṇi become the accepted opinion by the general public of Murukaṉ devotees? This question will stand in the focus of a follow-up research I am conducting, and therefore will be only briefly addressed below.

Vaḷḷimalai Swami and the *Tiruppukaḻp-pārāyaṇat-tavaněṟit-tirumuṟai*

One plausible origin for Tiruttaṇi's status as one of Murukaṉ's "battle-camps" points in the direction of a person called Vaḷḷimalai Swami. Vaḷḷimalai Swami was born in 1870 to a poor brahmin family in a village near Erode.[64] He was given the name Artanāri, after the deity of Tiruccĕṅkŏṭu temple (Ardhanārīśvara), by whose blessing he was born. His father died when he was very young and he was raised by his maternal uncle in Mysore, where he was trained as a cook, eventually becoming the head cook in the royal palace and a personal cook for the king. He took little interest in religious matters and received no literary education. In the fourth decade of his life, he experienced a series of personal tragedies, as five of his six children died one after the other. In addition, he began to suffer from a stomach ailment that could not be cured by any standard means. Feeling distaste for worldly life, he then followed the advice of a fellow worker at the king's court and took a long pilgrimage to ask for the grace of Paḻaṉi Āṇṭavar, that is, Murukaṉ in his form as the Lord of Paḻaṉi hill. Artanāri remained in Paḻaṉi with his family between 1908 and 1912, doing simple services for the temple, and soon was cured of his disease. One day during this period, he happened to hear

63 As I have shown above, there is one verse from the *Kantapurāṇam* (*tirunakarappaṭalam* 106, quoted above) that could be interpreted in a manner that suggests that Tiruttaṇi is the first or most important among Murukaṉ's hill temples. However, none of the authors quoted above, nor the authors of dictionaries and encyclopedias, have picked up this verse as a source for such an identification.

64 This account of Vaḷḷimalai Swami's life is based on his short biography (*Śrī-saccitānanta-svāmikaḷiṉ-caritrac-carukkam*) given in the preface to the TPTM (1978: xiv–xxxii).

a *devadāsī* from Madurai, who came for the temple's *utsavam* (festival), sing a verse from the *Tiruppukaḻ*. Artanāri was enchanted. Having spent most of his life in the Kannada-speaking Mysore and having received no relevant education, Artanāri's Tamil skills were very basic. Yet he decided to please his Lord by means of the *Tiruppukaḻ*. For that purpose, he studied Tamil, and, in addition, he found a way to contact the Chennai publisher of the *Tiruppukaḻ*, who in 1912 was Va. Cu. Cĕnkalvarāya Piḷḷai (Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai's son), and ordered a copy of the work to be sent to him in Paḷaṇi. At this stage in his life, the forty-two-year-old Artanāri learned the *Tiruppukaḻ* and started reciting verses in the temple's courtyard, with growing numbers of people gathering to listen to his recitations. He later traveled to Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, where he spent a few months with Ramana Maharshi, and then went off for three years on a pilgrimage in the northern parts of the Indian subcontinent. Throughout this time, Artanāri continued learning and reciting the *Tiruppukaḻ*. He returned to Tiruvaṇṇāmalai in 1916, but very soon, after an encounter with Ceṣātri Cuvāmikaḷ, settled in a mountain cave on the Vaḷḷimalai hill, the place where, according to tradition, Murukaṇ courted his second wife, Vaḷḷi, and which also gave Artanāri his famous name—Vaḷḷimalai Swami. His exclusive form of worship was to sing *Tiruppukaḻ* verses, for which he also composed melodies. He initiated *Tiruppukaḻ bhajan*-groups wherever he went, with several such groups gathered in Vaḷḷimalai itself. As years went by, his mountain cave turned into an ashram and attracted pilgrims and continued to draw pilgrims also after his passing away in 1950.

The impact of Vaḷḷimalai Swami's life-project was immense. Zvelebil describes him as one who "was mostly responsible for the Tamils adopting Murukaṇ as their 'national' deity" (Zvelebil 1995: 734). This strong influence that Zvelebil attributes to Vaḷḷimalai Swami is the result of his part in spreading the *Tiruppukaḻ* throughout Tamil Nadu and beyond (Clothey 1978: 115). In addition to singing Aruṇakiri's poems himself and organizing *Tiruppukaḻ bhajan*-groups, Vaḷḷimalai Swami's most significant contribution was his *Tiruppukaḻp-pārāyaṇat-tavanĕṟit-tirumuṟai*. This work is particularly important in our context, since it is here that we find, for the first time, the identification of the fifth 'battle-camp" as Tiruttaṇi. The *Tiruppukaḻp-pārāyaṇat-tavanĕṟit-tirumuṟai* ("The Virtuous System for the Path of Adoration [by] Recitation of the *Tiruppukaḻ*," hereafter *The System*) is a practical prayer book, which provides a selection of *Tiruppukaḻ* verses, alongside verses from other works by Aruṇakirinātar (*Kantar-antāti*, *Kantar-alaṅkāram*, *Kantar-anupūti*, and *Tiruvakuppu*), with a detailed plan for their recitation according to the days of the week.[65]

65 The existing editions of this work were published by the "Vaḷḷimalai Swami's Tiruppukaḻ council," from 1957 onwards, yet they are based on earlier editions published by Vaḷḷimalai Swami himself.

The System's plan includes clusters of general verses, which are to be recited every day, and specific verses for each weekday. The division of verses is structured according to Murukaṉ's "six battle-camps." The special daily verses of Sunday to Friday are mostly (although not exclusively) associated with Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Tiruccĕntūr, Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi, Tiruverakam, *kuṉṟu toṟ'āṭal*, and Paḻamutircolai, respectively. The verses for Saturday include a selection from the six other days' special verses (one verse for each of the six "battle-camps"), with the addition of Aruṇakirināṭar's *kṣettirak-kovai*, a *Tiruppukaḻ* poem that lists twenty-nine of Murukaṉ's most important places. In each day's recitation, after the initial benedictory verses and before the day's special verses, appear two verses of Aruṇakirināṭar that were already quoted above: *Kantar-antāti* 1, which mentions all the section-titles of *The Guide*, and *Tiruppukaḻ* 237, which praises Murukaṉ as having "six holy abodes." Hence, the daily prayers are structured according to the notion of six abodes and are filled with devotional content that is associated with the names of *The Guide*'s section-titles.

Vaḷḷimalai Swami settled, perhaps for the first time, some of the ambivalent issues around the place-names from *The Guide*. The most important—and perhaps controversial, as we shall see below—is his interpretation of *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal.* Among the six special verses for Thursdays, dedicated to *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*, only two are on Murukaṉ's tendency to inhabit the hills,[66] one is a general verse not dedicated to any place, and three are on Tiruttaṇi.[67] In other words, Vaḷḷimalai Swami makes a firm association of the "many hills" with one specific place—he does not include any other of the thirty-one hills and mountains that appear in the *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal* section of the *Tiruppukaḻ* editions, only Tiruttaṇi.

Where did this idea come from? Vaḷḷimalai Swami was not a part of any monastery (*maṭam*), and the gurus he met during his life, that is, Ramana Maharshi and Ceṣātri Swamigal, were not associated with the Murukaṉ cult (nor were they familiar with the *Tiruppukaḻ* before meeting him). It also does not seem probable that he learned it from his attested personal encounters with Cĕṇkalvarāya Piḷḷai, who does not imply this identification of Tiruttaṇi in his extensive commentary of the *Tiruppukaḻ*. Thus, it may well have been Vaḷḷimalai Swami's own innovation,[68]

66 TPTM 41, 67 [*Tiruppukaḻ* 778, 30].

67 TPTM 42, 43, 68 [*Tiruppukaḻ* 1249, 296, 783].

68 Tiruttaṇi is known to have been one of Vaḷḷimalai Swami's most adored places. He is also associated with Tiruttaṇi in another way—Vaḷḷimalai Swami started in 1917 the tradition of Tiruttaṇi's "step festival," which takes place every year on December 31st (thus unusual in being set according to the Gregorian calendar rather than the traditional calendar) and in which pilgrims recite *Tiruppukaḻ* poems while climbing the steps leading to the temple (*Śrī-saccitānanta-svāmikaḷiṉ-caritrac-carukkam*, in TPTM 1978: XXVII). Yet if it was personal taste that led Vaḷḷimalai Swami to make this choice, would it not be more reasonable that he chose Vaḷḷimalai and not Tiruttaṇi?

perhaps inspired by or based upon the verse from the *Kantapurāṇam* that was mentioned above (although we have no way to know for certain). In any case, this idea, which is mostly left unexplained,[69] was not immediately embraced. As the following example shows, this caused some incongruity in the scholarly understanding of the "six battle camps."

In 1970, the renowned Tamil scholar Ki. Vā. Jagannātaṉ published a short article titled "*Āṟupaṭaivīṭukaḷ*." In this article, he explains the etymology of the term *paṭaivīṭu*,[70] describes the sites' origin in *The Guide*, and their unique aspects. Regarding the fifth "battle-camp," *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*, he says: "It is Murukaṉ's nature to be in a state of 'sporting' in each and every hill" (Jakannātaṉ 1970: 159). He adds that another suitable name for this *paṭaivīṭu* would be "*pala kuṉṟu*," that is, "many hills," and quotes Aruṇakirināṭar who eulogized Murukaṉ as "the Lord of many hills." Finally, he explains Nakkīrar's choice of this description by referring to Murukaṉ's association with the *kuṟiñci* hill-landscape. Nothing in his words suggests that *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal* could be considered a specific sacred site. Two years later, in 1972, Fred Clothey published an article in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, named "Pilgrimage Centers in the Tamil Cultus of Murukaṉ," which also deals with the "six battle-camps." Clothey writes that "[T]he Murukaṉ devotees are virtually unanimous in acclaiming the existence of six pilgrimage centers of special sacrality. However, in the present cultus only five of these sites are accepted as authentic without dispute" (Clothey 1972: 81–82). Surprisingly, the "accepted" five sites that Clothey names are Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi, Tiruverakam, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Tiruccĕṉtūr, and Tiruttaṇi. The sixth center, Clothey continues, is under dispute. Both in this article and in his 1978 book, *The Many Faces of Murukaṉ*, Clothey repeats this statement. Although the identification of Paḻamutircolaimalai with the Aḻakarmalai is found everywhere from the medieval commentaries on *The Guide* to all the nineteenth-century dictionaries, Clothey mentions it only in a footnote, saying that "[R]umor associates

69 The closest thing to an explanation is what we find, for example, in Comacuntaram Cĕṭṭiyār and Vĕṅkaṭeca Carmā *viḷakkam* about *The Guide*, in which they say that "in the current usage, when talking in general, *kuṉṟutoṟāṭal* [means] that [Murukaṉ] dwells on every hill, and when considering [it] as a single place, it means Tiruttanikai" (*kuṉṟutoṟāṭal: tŏkaiyākac cŏṉṉāl kuṉṟukaḷ toṟum ĕḻunt' aruḷiy uḷḷāṉ ĕṉṟum, taṉittalamākak karutiṉāl tiruttaṇikai ĕṉṟum cŏlluvatu vaḻakku*, Comacuntaram Cĕṭṭiyār and Vĕṅkaṭeca Carmā 1969: 152). In his introduction to the *Tiruttaṇikai-canniti-muṟai*, Mu. Caṇmukam Piḷḷai quotes the above-mentioned *Kantapurāṇam* verse (*tirunakarappaṭalam* 106) as an explanation for the identification of Tiruttaṇi with the fifth "battle-camp," yet this reference is not found in any of the many other modern materials I have come across (*Tiruttaṇikaicannitimuṟai* 1980: ix-x).

70 That is, he explains the compound "battle-camp," and the association of this term with Murukaṉ's myth of the war against Cūr (Jakannātaṉ 1970: 155).

the Paḻamutircolai with Alakarmalai" (Clothey 1972: 85n30). Another odd point is that Clothey never follows the 'right' order of "battle-camps:" In both his article and book, he begins with Paḻani, then Tiruccĕntūr, Tiruttaṇi, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, and finally Cuvāmimalai, leaving the sixth and last slot empty. Thus, it appears that he organizes the sites according to their popularity, from the most popular to the least.

Another peculiar (and obviously confused) observation of Clothey is that he takes the last and what he calls the "most obscure" shrine to be *kuṉṟutoṟāṭal* (Clothey 1978: 117). This is in accordance with his organizing principle, but it also implies that he associates Tiruttaṇi with the name "Paḻamutircolai." Colaimalai is not even suggested in the list of the potential sites to fill the sixth slot. What caused Clothey, who conducted several years of fieldwork in Tamil Nadu in the late 1960's, such a confusion? And how did he arrive at the depiction of Murukaṉ's "six battle camps" that is so different from his contemporary Ki. Vā. Jagganātaṉ's? It is hard to believe that it is the result of sloppiness. Rather, it seems that Clothey based his knowledge of "battle-camps" on human informants and not on textual materials, focusing on the contemporary common knowledge regarding the "battle camps." In the late 1960's, the Paḻamutircolai temple was not yet constructed. At the same time, the temple at Tiruttaṇi was the third most popular Murukaṉ temple in Tamil Nadu. Perhaps Clothey's informants belonged to the same devotional circles as Vaḷḷilmalai Swami, but there are other possibilities: Tiruttaṇi has several more advantages, one of which is its proximity to Chennai, the modern cultural, political, and economic center of the region. Clothey only hints at the political importance of Tiruttaṇi's location, saying it is "the northern outpost of Murukaṉ's sacred domain" (p. 123). This point implies the potential dynamics that may have eventually led to the acceptance of Tiruttaṇi as the fifth "battle camp" despite being contested by some even today.[71] Further research is necessary to track down the spread of this notion and to analyze the underlying currents that made it popular.[72]

---

71 Some of the recent books on the "battle-camps" that take a textual approach, show some difficulties with the identification of Tiruttaṇi as the fifth battle-camp." For example, in Tirumarukal Ciṅkāravelaṉār's *Āṟupaṭaivīṭukaḷ* (2003), the author lists under "the fifth battle-camp—*kuṉṟu toṟ'āṭal*" eight hill-shrines, among which Tiruttaṇi is only the fourth (the others are Curuḷimalai, Ilañci, Kuṉṟakkuṭi, Vayalūr, Virālimalai, Vaittīcuvaraṉ koyil, and Cĕṉṉimalai) (Ciṅkāravelaṉār 2003: 115–52). Another example is *Aḻaku murukaṉiṉ ālayaṅkaḷ* (2016) by P. Cuvāmināṭaṉ. While the author indeed takes Tiruttaṇi to be the fifth *paṭaivīṭu*, he adds that "Nakkīrar called Tiruttaṇi *'kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*.' Even though *'kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal*' refers to all hill-sites where Murukaṉ appears, spiritual instructors have concluded that it indicates Tiruttaṇi as the best [place] among them" (Cuvāmināṭaṉ 2016: 116).

72 As part of my undertaking in the SITes project, I am currently conducting a follow-up research, aiming to trace the spread of this identification (kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal=Tiruttaṇi) in texts from the second half of the twentieth century, in order to map its branching

Conclusion

Murukaṉ's "six battle-camps" is a set of six Tamil temples which are connected by a textual thread, but it is an inconsistent one, with several gaps and deviations. Its origins can be traced to the sixth century, in *The Guide to Lord Murukaṉ*, which mentions four important shrines. This text was divided into six sections by at least one medieval commentator (Uraiyāciriyār), as a form of hermeneutical embodiment of the deity. In the existing manuscripts, each section was titled after an important word or aspect from the relevant part of the text, and the medieval commentators also associated the last epithet in *The Guide* with a specific site, Colaimalai. And so, around the fifteenth century, *The Guide* had a six-fold division with section-titles, of which five were considered to refer to terrestrial holy sites. While the acknowledgement of the text seems to have had certain importance for the devotees of this period, it was not a central element in the cult. Similarly, the concept of Murukaṉ's "six holy abodes," which appears in texts from around the same period, seems to be of minor importance to the cult, just an abstract expansion of Murukaṉ's 'six-ness.' Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, this state does not change much—we find some sporadic occurrences of tributes and allusions to *The Guide*, made by mentioning its six section-titles, and some references to Murukaṉ's six abodes, but the two seem hardly to coincide. The real change seems to have taken place in the nineteenth century, with the publication of *The Guide*'s first printed editions. The complete fusion of the abstract "six abodes" concept with *The Guide*'s section-titles is reflected in the printed editions of the *Tiruppukaḻ*, from the end of the nineteenth century. The *Tiruppukaḻ*'s printed editions put Murukaṉ's six abodes at the center of the cult, and also affixed their common appellation—"the six battle-camps."

From the sixth century until the twentieth century, the term *kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭal* did not indicate a specific location. "Dancing on every hill" was understood as an expression which emphasizes Murukaṉ's innate relationship—in ritual and in literature—with the hill landscape. Later, when it was considered to be one of Murukaṉ's "battle-camps," it was understood as a category of hill-shrines. At some point around the middle of the twentieth century, the title "dancing on every hill" came to be identified with one specific hill-shrine—Tiruttaṇi. This may have happened through the teachings of Vaḷḷamalai Swami, an influential Murukaṉ devotee, who recorded this identification in his *Tiruppukaḻ*-based prayer book, the *Tiruppukaḻp pārāyaṇat tavanĕṟit tirumuṟai*. As soon as this idea (i.e., that the fifth

in time and space. This would allow cross-referencing it with historical events and trends, and provide a better understanding of the complex dynamics behind shifts in religious notions.

"battle-camp" is a defined, terrestrial site) was thus formed, the *āṟupaṭaivīṭu* set of temples could go through its last transition and become a pilgrimage route.[73]

Murukaṉ's "six battle-camps" have their roots in the ancient corpus of Tamil poetry, yet their present reality as a temple-set was determined by a variety of elements, not all expected. These include aspects of literary transmission, such as the transmission of *The Guide* between and across different types of literary corpora (e.g., *Pattupaṭṭu* and *Tirumuṟai*), the application of theological-hermeneutics, and the allusion-strategies of early-modern poets to produce the semblance of a continuous tradition, by relying on the segmentation of *The Guide*. The list of the "six battle-camps" was and remained for a very long time—in fact, for most of its history—a literary allusion, a reference to a *literary* moment of transition into Murukaṉ-*bhakti*. This allusion was devoid of specific theological or mythological meaning, but like the medieval segmentation of the text, it embodied the deity. Another influential factor in the history of the "six battle-camps" was the technological advancement that resulted in an outburst of printed editions of Tamil texts. And not least important is the human factor: the development of the current perception of the "battle camps" involved moments in which individual people heard a verse of poetry that changed their lives—we have seen above two such instances! The case of Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai is particularly important: the most crucial change in the history of the "six battle-camps" concept took place when Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai decided to dedicate his life to publishing the *Tiruppukaḷ* and creating (as he says in his own words) a religious corpus for the Murukaṉ cult that would parallel the Śaiva *Tevāram*.[74] The implications of this decision (and its successful execution) are not purely literary: just as the *Tevāram* maps the Śaiva pilgrimage-centers throughout the Tamil region, so does the *Tiruppukaḷ* in its anthologized form, thus forming a Kaumāra sacred landscape for the cult's devotees, which, in turn, allows the six "battle-camps" to shift to the center of scriptural and practical attention. However, up to the point in which the fifth "battle-camp" was generally accepted to be Tiruttaṇi, the religious centers were distant from other types of centers (e.g., economic and political): looking at the six sites's geographical distribution, it is evident that without Tiruttaṇi, up in the north, the "battle camps" 'cover' only the southern half of the Tamil-speaking region. Despite the cultural (and historical) importance of Madurai, it is very far from the modern political center, which is Chennai. But by including Tiruttaṇi, the sacred region of Murukaṉ marked by these sites overlaps with the territory of the modern Tamil Nadu. Further research is necessary to establish the undercurrents

73 A recent example for this current perception of the *āṟupaṭaivīṭu* as a pilgrimage route is found in this blog: https://visakhkrishna.medium.com/the-six-divine-barracks-of-the-tamil-country-f37f8f072339 (accessed January 25, 2024).

74 *Tiruppukaḷ* 1921, preface to the first edition: vi.

that popularized the idea of Tiruttaṇi as the fifth "battle-camp." This will definitely add another twist to the entangled history of the *āṟupaṭaivīṭukaḷ,* an unusual example of 'numbered set' of South Asian holy places.

From a wider perspective, the complex turns of events that gave birth to the current form of the "six battle camps" can add to our understanding of the powers that connect sacred sites. Sacred sites can be perceived as points of interaction between the mythological and the geographical. This is particularly evident in South Asia, with its many examples of "sacred landscapes." Scholarly reflections on sacred sites are often based on an analysis of human-related dynamics (mainly social and economic aspects) and religious dynamics, expressed in mythologies and theologies, along with their manifestations in the temples' architecture and narrative traditions. The sacred site is indeed the point of interaction between these currents, usually embodied through ritual and experienced by pilgrims. Yet the example of the "six battle-camps" shows that we must also consider the effects of literary-aesthetic currents as additional factors in this system: as we have seen above, shifts and innovations of a literary nature, such as changes in modes of transmission, commentary, and editing, the addition of melodical aspects, and, moreover, the aesthetic effect of literature (and performative art) on human beings, can play a crucial role in the development of religious phenomena.

ORCID®
Ofer Peres https://orcid.org/0009-0003-4105-5518

Acknowledgements

This research on which this article is based was carried out in the context of Beethoven CLASSIC 4, a Polish-German Funding Initiative (funding period: 9/2022–8/2025), with the project entitled: "South Indian Temples: Nodal Points in Webs of Connections" (HU 733/6–1).

Some of the preliminary work was carried out within the framework of "The New Ecology of Expressive Forms in Early-Modern South India" (NEEM) project, which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement no. 786083—NEEM).

Appendix (1) *Tiruccĕntūrppiḷḷaittamiḻ, ciṟupaṟaipparuvam* 7:

aṟan taru purantarātiyar ulakil aramakaḷir āṭu(m) maṇiy ūcal ciṟṟil
ammaṉai kaḻaṅku pala cĕṟiyun taṭañ cāral aruvi pāy paraṅkiriyum uṭ-
puran taru puṉiṟṟu vĕḷ vaḷaik kaṭaṟ ṟirait tŏṟum pŏruta cīralaivāyu(m) mĕṉ
potu kamaḻ tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭiyum ariya maṟai pukalum erakamum iṉimaik
kuṟan taru kŏṭicciyar pĕrun kuravai muṟai kulavu kuṉṟu toṟ' āṭalum taṉ
koṇmū muḻaṅkum atu kaṇṭ' iṉam ĕṉak karaṭa kuñcaram piḷiṟum aravam
ciṟanta paḻamutircolai malaiyum puranta nī ciṟupaṟai muḻakkiy aruḷe
cĕruvil ĕtir pŏrutara para nirutar kula kalakaṉe ciṟupaṟai muḻakkiy aruḷe

In Paraṅkiri waterfalls run down the wide slopes,
heavenly nymphs from the world of Indra and the other celestials
(the world obtained by [preserving] *dharma*),
huddle to bathe, sit on gem-set swings
and play many [games, such as] *ammāṉai, kaḻaṅku,* and play-houses,
to Cīralaivāy all the ocean-waves reach, [full of] fresh, white conch-shells,
Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi is fragrant with soft buds,
in Erakam the difficult Vedas are chanted,
on every hill the *kuṟava* hill-women sport,
sweetly rejoicing, according to [their] custom, in the great *kuravai* [dance]
on the eminent Paḻamutircolai hill rutting elephants trumpet,
calling their herds, having noticed the thundering approach of cool rain clouds.
You, who protect [all these places], sound you little drum!
You, who fought the tribes of enemy-demons, confronting [them] on the battlefield,
Sound you little drum!

Appendix (2) verses from the *Kantapurāṇam*, *kaṭavuḷ-vāḻttu* 12–18:

irupp' araṅ kuṟaitt' iṭum eḵka vel uṭaip
pŏruppar aṅk' uṇarv' uṟap putalvi taṉ micai
virupp' araṅk' amar iṭai viḷaṅkak kāṭṭiya
tirupparaṅkuṉṟ'amar ceyaip poṟṟuvāṃ ‖12‖

We praise the God who resides in Tiruppaṟaṅkuṉṟam,
who has revealed his love toward the daughter of the hunters

whose pointed spears are whetted with iron files
on the deadly battlefield,
to make them know [his divine nature].[75]

cūr alai vāy iṭait tŏlaittu mārpu kīṇṭ'
īralai vāy iṭum ĕḵkam entiye
veral aivāy taru vĕḷḷi vĕṟp' ŏrīic
cīralaivāy varu ceyaip poṟṟuvām ‖13‖

We praise the God who took in his hand the pointed spear
that would kill Cūr in his oceanic abode, tear open [his] chest, and devour [his] liver,
left the silvery Mount Kailāsa, with its bamboos and lions,
[and] came to Cīralaivāy.

kāviṉaṉ kuṭil uṟu kāmar pŏṉ ṉakar
meviṉaṉ kuṭivara viḷiyac cūramutal
pūviṉaṉ kuṭilaiyam pŏruṭku māl uṟa
āviṉaṉkuṭi varum amalaṟ poṟṟuvām ‖14‖

We praise the Immaculate One
who settled in Indra's beautiful celestial city of gold,
who killed Cūr and [all] the other [demons],
who caused confusion to the lotus-born Brahma, regarding the meaning of Om,
[and] who came to Āviṉaṉkuṭi.

nīr akatte taṉai niṉaiyum aṉpiṉor
perakatt' alamarum piṟavi nītt' iṭun
tārakatt' uruvam ān talaimaiy ĕytiya
erakatt' aṟumukaṉ aṭikaḷ ettuvām ‖15‖

We praise the feet of the six-faced Lord of Erakam,
who obtained the supremacy of which form is the Om
that removes the [state of] recurrent birth upon the vast earth
[for] the devotees who meditate on Him in [their] good hearts.

75 The hunters' daughter is Murukaṉ's second wife, Vaḷḷi. The verse probably refers to the episode in which Vaḷḷi's kinsmen fight Murukaṉ for having an extramarital affair with her, and he kills and then revives them.

ŏṉṟu tŏṟ' āṭalaiy ŏruviy āvi mĕy
tuṉṟu tŏṟ' āṭalait tŏṭaṅki aivakai
maṉṟu tŏṟ' āṭiya valḷal kāmuṟak
kuṉṟu tŏṟ' āṭiya kumaraṟ poṟṟuvām ‖16‖

We praise Kumara who dances on every hill,
to pray to the generous Śiva,
who left behind the task of coalescing all the souls,
undertook the [divine] play of attaching a body to each soul
and dances in each of the five halls.[76]

ĕḻ a(m) mutiraip puṇatt' iṟaivi muṉpu taṉ
kiḻa(m) mutir iḷa nalaṅ kiṭaippa muṉṉavaṉ
maḻamutir kaḷiṟ' ĕṉa varutal veṇṭiya
paḻamutircolaiy am pakavaṟ poṟṟuvām ‖17‖

We praise the beautiful Lord of Paḻamutircolai
who wished his elder brother would arrive as a rutting elephant
in front of the Goddess from the fields of tall, beautiful millet,
in order to obtain, in his old form, the pleasures of [her] ripe youth.[77]

īṟu cer pŏḻutiṇum iṟutiy iṉṟiye
māṟ' ilāt' irunt' iṭum vaḷaṅkŏḷ kāñciyiṟ
kūṟu cīr puṇai taru kumarakoṭṭam vāḻ
āṟu mā mukap pirāṇ aṭikaḷ poṟṟuvām ‖18‖

We praise the feet of the great six-faced Lord,
who resides in the highly praised Kumarakoṭṭam temple,
in Kāñcipuram of which wealth is unequalled
and that would remain unextinct even at the end of the eon.

76 These are the five temple halls in which Śiva is known to dance: Cidambaram, Tiruvalaṅkāṭu, Maturai, Tirunĕlveli, and Tirukuṟṟālam.

77 This is a reference to the episode in which Murukaṉ approaches Vaḷḷi in the form of an old ascetic and tries to seduce her. She rejects him and runs away, and he prays for his brother, Vināyakar (Ganeśa), to appear on her path in the form of a frightening elephant. Vināyakar accepts the request, and, upon seeing him, Vaḷḷi rushes quickly back to Murukaṉ 's arms.

Tirunakarappaṭalam 106:

mev' aruṅ kūṭal melai vĕṟpiṉil alaivāy taṉṉil
āviṉaṉkuṭiyi(l) ṉall erakan taṉiṟ ṟaṇikaiy ātip
pūv' ulak' uḷḷa vĕṟpiṟ pŏṟp' uṟu, eṉai vaippiṟ
kovil kŏṇṭ' aruḷi vaikuṅ kumarakoṭṭattu meyoṉ ‖106‖

The One who abides in Kumarakoṭṭam temple,
graciously dwells on the difficult to reach hill, [that is located] west of Maturai,
in Alaivāy, in Āviṉaṉkuṭi, in good Erakam, on the hills of this earth, such as Taṇikai,
[and] in temples in other magnificent towns.

Appendix (3) *Paḻaṉittalapurāṇam, tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭiccarukkam* 1–7

teṉ imir potak kuravaṉ ṟĕriv arum potak kuravaṉ
ṟāṉ utavav āraṇattāṉ ṟaḻuvu tĕyvavāraṇattā(ṉ)
ṉāṉakara vaccirattāṉ āṟ'āyav ac-cirattāṉ
vāṉa paraṅ kuṉṟat tāṉ vaḻarnta paraṅkuṉṟattāṉ ‖1‖

He who has [garlands of] *Kurava* flowers, humming with bees,
the preceptor of the obscure knowledge,
the [master] of the Vedas that he himself delivered,
he who embraced the divine [she-]elephant,[78]
whose fragrant hand [holds] the *vajra* [weapon],
He whose heads are six—
[he is] the [Lord] of the Paraṅkuṉṟam,
[the hill which] he elevated [so much that even] the lofty heavens diminished.

nāk' avir kolaṅ kaiyā(ṉ) ṉavai tavir kol aṅkaiyāṉ
vekam uṭaṉ ūṟ' ūrāṉ viri pŏḻili(ṉ) ṉūṟ' ūrāṉ
mokam ŏḻi vāyiṉāṉ moṉa mŏḻi vāyiṉāṉ
māka malai vāykkaraiyāṉ maruvum alaivāyk karaiyāṉ ‖2‖

He who never disfavors a form of glittering youth [for himself],
and who [holds] in his beautiful hand a staff that removes [all] blemish,

78 Tĕyvayāṉai ("divine elephant") is Murukaṉ's first wife, which he married in Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam.

whose enemies were destroyed by [his] wrath
    [and] whose hundreds of 'hometowns' are full of groves,
whose abode is without delusion and whose mouth speaks silent [teachings],
He who [resides] on the tip of the heavenly mountain—
    [He is the One who dwells] on the shore of the place that the waves 'embrace.'[79]

vaṉ paṇa nāk' arav' araiyāṉ matalai cūkara varaiyāṉ
iṉpa(m) mayil vāk' aṉattāṉ eṟṟu(m) mayil vākaṉattāṉ
aṉpar uḷa(m) malaiv' elāṉ aṇi kŏḷ civa malai velā(ṉ)
ṉaṉk' ĕḻum āviṉaṉ kuṭiyā(ṉ) ṉalaṅ kĕḻum āviṉaṉkuṭiyāṉ ‖3‖

The son of [Śiva], who has fierce, hooded snakes on his waist,
the Lord of the hogs' mountain,[80]
he whose mount is the peacock,
he who is praised by the goose[-riding Brahma]
    [and by Viṣṇu, whose] arms [hold] the loving peacock[-like lady],
he who never accepts delusion in the hearts of [his] devotees
    [and] who [holds] the spear, [residing on] the beautiful Śiva-malai,[81]
the kin of [Śiva who rides] the good, tall bull—
[he is] the Lord of Āviṉaṉkuṭi that abounds with wealth.

cīlar tamakk' aṟam aṟaintāṉ cey paṭiṟarkk' aṟa maṟaintāṉ
māl avaṉ iṉpam arumakaṉ maṟaivarar aṉp' amaru(m) makaṉ
kola malark katampattāṉ kuḻaiviṉar mikka tampattā(ṉ)
ṉūlavari(ṉ) ṉer akattā(ṉ) ṉuvalav arum erakattāṉ ‖4‖

The son of Him who taught the *dharma* for [the benefit of] the virtuous people,
he who is entirely hidden for the cruel [people],
Viṣṇu's beloved son-in-law,
the devoted son of the great [Śiva, who spoke] the Vedas,
he who has beautiful [garlands of] blooming *Katampa* [flowers],
who is a great pillar [for] those who languish,
who [dwells] in the virtue of learned—
[he is] the Lord of the ineffable Erakam.

---

79 That is, Alaivāy (=Tiruccĕntūr).
80 The "hogs' mountain" (*cūkara varai* or *varāka kiri*) is a hill near Paḻaṉi, which is mentioned in this *purāṇa*.
81 Civamalai is another hill in the Paḻaṉi area (also described in this text).

mĕlliyalāḷ paḻa(m) nimalai vimalai cey paḻani malai
cĕlviyar mekāravaṉañ ciṟanta kaṉṉikāra vaṉa(m)
mallal vaḻanāṭṭiṉāṉ vaikāvūr nāṭṭiṉāṉ
kŏl ciṉa vel āṭalāṉ kuṉṟu tŏṟum āṭalāṉ ‖5‖

The son of the tender, ancient, immaculate [Goddess],
he who [dwells] in the wealthy, fertile lands [that include] Paḻani hill, Mekāra forest,[82]
the excellent Kaṉṉikāra forest, and who resides in [Tiru]vaikāvūr,[83]
he who [uses] the lethal, raging spear in battle—
[he is] the One who dances [on] every hill.

vĕvviyav āc' akatt' uṟaiyāṉ veta vācakat tuṟaiyāṉ
mai vaṉa mā(l) ṟāṉ aṉattāṉ vāltt' iṭum āṟ' āṉaṉattāṉ
pauva(m) māviṉaik kŏṉṟāṉ pavam uṟu(m) mā viṉaikk' ŏṉṟāṉ
ṟĕvvar puram alaikkum araṉ cey colai malaik kumaraṉ ‖6‖

He who never dwells in hearts that 'burn' with faults,
who [instructs] the path [given in] the Veda's words,
whose six faces are worshipped [by] the collyrium-color Viṣṇu [and] the goose[-riding Brahma],
who chopped down the mango [tree] in the ocean,[84]
who is completely unattached to the great karma that [causes] the [state of recurrent] birth,
the son of the Hara, who destroyed of the enemies' city (i.e., *tripuram*)—
[he is] Kumaraṉ [who resides in] Colai-malai.

vāri cuṭuñ cara vaṇattāṉ maruka veḷ caravaṇattāṉ
cūr tapa muṉ pŏrum ayilāṉ curecar virump' ŏru mayilāṉ
cīr uṇarvu tarum aṭikaḷ tevar ot' arum aṭikaḷ
ārvam uṟap paṇivārey amarar ciṟapp' aṇivāre ‖7‖

Veḷ, the son-in-law of the Beautiful [Viṣṇu],
who [was] the arrow that burned down the fortifications [of Tripura],
who [was born in] Śaravaṇa [pond],
whose spear formerly fought to kill Cūr,

82 According to the commentator, this is another name for Vilvavaṉam. The place names that appear in this *pāda* may be related to sites around Paḻaṉi.
83 This seems to be the Vilavavaṉecuvarar temple, near Kumbakonam. Its relation to the current context is unclear.
84 This is a reference to the episode of the killing of the demon Cūr (Śūrapadma), who, in his escape from Murukaṉ, turned himself into a mango tree in the middle of the ocean.

the one and only peacock[-rider], adored by the best of gods,
the preceptor who grants the most profound knowledge,
the Lord whom [even] the gods cannot describe in words—
those who worship [him] lovingly will be 'adorned' with divine honors.

Abbreviations

TMĀP	*Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*
TPKP	*Tirupparaṅkirippurāṇam*
TKK	*Tiruccĕntūrkkantarkalivĕṇpā*
TPTM	*Tiruppukaḻppārāyaṇattavanĕṟittirumuṟai*

Bibliography

Primary sources

Āṟu kantar caṣṭi kavacaṅkaḷ. Pālaṇtevarāyaṉ iyaṟṟiya āṟu kantar caṣṭi kavacaṅkaḷ. Cĕṉṉai: Kalaimakaḷ Ṭireṭars, 2012.

Ceyttŏṇṭarppurāṇam of Ve. Cĕ. Cŏkkaliṅkam Piḷḷai. *Ceyttŏṇṭarp purāṇam: murukaveḷ paṉṉiru tirumuṟaiyil paṉṉiraṇṭānt tirumuṟai, uraiy āciriyār: va. cu. cĕṅkalvarāya piḷḷai.* Cĕṉṉai: Tirunĕlveli Tĕṉṉintiya Caivacittānta nūṟpatippu kaḻakam, 1992 [1951].

Kantapurāṇam of Kacciyappa Civācāriyar. *Kantapurāṇam kacciyappa-civācāriya-cuvāmikaḷ aruḷic cĕytatu mutalāvatu uṟpatti-kāṇṭam capāpati aiyarkumārar cuppiramaṇiya-cāstirikaḷ iyaṟṟiya uraiy uṭaṉ.* Yāḻppāṇam: kalāniti yantiracālai, 1907.

Kantarantāti of Aruṇakirināṭar. *Aruṇakirināṭar aruḷiccĕyta kantarantāti mūlamum avar kālattiṟṟāney ataṟku villipttūrār cĕyta uraiyum*. Cĕṉṉai: vivekaviḷakka accukkūṭam, 1879.

Kantarcaṣṭikavacam of Devaraya Swamigal. *Tevarāya cuvāmikaḷ aruḷic cĕyta kantar caṣṭi kavacam.* Cĕṉṉai: Tirunĕlvelit Tĕṉṉintiya Caivacittānta Nūṟpatippuk Kaḻakam, 1924.

Kumarakurutāca Cuvāmikaḷ Pāṭal of Pamban Swamigal. *Kumāra cuvāmiy ĕṉṉum śrīmat kumarakurutāca cuvāmikaḷ aruḷic cĕyta mutal maṇṭalam ākiya kumarakurutāca cuvāmikaḷ pāṭal.* Cĕṉṉai: Cātu Accukkūṭam, 1930.

Paḻaṉittalapurāṇam of Palacuppiramaṇiya Kavirāyar. *Palacuppiramaṇiya kavirāyar avarkaḷ iyaṟṟiya paḻanittalapurāṇam mūṉṟām patippu iṉtu yāḻpaṇṇattu melaippuloli nā. katiraiveṟ piḷḷai avarkaḷ iyaṟṟiya põḻipp' uraiy uṭaṉ*. Cĕṉṉai: Vittiyāratnākara Accukkūṭam, 1914.

Tiruvalaṅkaṟṟiraṭṭu of Pamban Swamigal. *Kumāra cuvāmiy ĕṉṉum śrīmat kumarakurutāca cuvāmikaḷ aruḷic cĕyta iraṇṭāvatu maṇṭalam ākiya tiruvalaṅkaṯ-ṯiraṭṭu: mutaṯ kaṇṭam.* Cĕṉṉai: Cātu Accukkūṭam, 1929.

Taṇikaippurāṇam of Kacciyappa Muṉivar. *Taṇikaippurāṇam kuṟipp' uraiy uṭaṉ. kacciyappa muṉivar, kuṟippurai ta. ca, mīṇāṭcicuntaram piḷḷai.* [Tiruvāvaṭuturai:] Tiruvāvaṭuturai Ātīṉam, 1960.

Taṇikaiyāṟṟuppaṭai of Kacciyappa Muṉivar. *Tirukailācap paramparait tiruvāvaṭuturai ātīṉattuk kacciyappamunivār aruḷiccĕyta tiruttaṇikaiyāṟṟuppaṭai.* Cĕṉṉai: Kantacāmi Mutaliyār, 1911.

Tiruccĕntūrkkantarkalivĕṇpā of Kumarakuruparar. *Tiruccĕntūrk kantar kalivĕṇpā śrī la śrī kācivāci ātikumara kurupara cuvāmikaḷ aruḷic cĕytatu, aṅkilattil śrī mu. aruṇācalam avarkaḷ mŏḻi pĕyarpp' uṭaṉum, intiyil Sri B. D. Jain mŏḻi pĕyarpp' uṭaṉum.* Cĕṉṉai: Pārati Vijayam Accukkūṭam, 1949.

Tiruccĕntūrppiḷḷaittamiḻ of Pakaḻikkūttar. *Tiruccĕntūrppiḷḷaittamiḻ pakaḻikkūttar aruḷiyatu.* Cĕṉṉai: A. Iraṅkacāmimutaliyār Saṉs, 1928.

Tiruccĕntūrppurāṇam of Vĕṉṟimālaik Kavirācar. *Vĕṉṟimālai kavirācar iyaṟṟiya tiruccĕntūrp purāṇam, uraiy āciriyar: yāḻppāṇattu nīrveli śrīmat ca. civappirakāca paṇṭitar avarkaḷ.* Yaḻppāṇam [Jaffna]: Caiva Paripalaṉa Capai, 1969.

Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai. Tirumurukāṟṟupaṭai uraikkottu nacciṉārkkiṉiyar, uraiyāciriyar, parimēlaḻakar, kavipperumāḷ, pariti uraikaḷum, āṅkila moḻipeyarppum kūṭiyatu. Ed. By K. M. Vēṅkaṭarāmaiyar & Vē. Rā. Teyvacikāmaṇik Kavuṇṭar. Tiruppaṉantāḷ: śrī kāci maṭam, 1959.

Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai. Tirumurukāṟṟupaṭai mūlamum yāḻppāṇam nallūr śrī-la-śrī āṟumukanāvalar avarkaḷ nacciṉārkkiṉiyar uraik karuttait taḻuvic cĕyta putt' uraiyum. Cĕṉṉai: Āṟumuka Nāvalar V. Accakam, 2011 [1853].

Tirupparaṅkirippurāṇam of Nirampav Aḻakiya Tecikar. *Śrī nirampa aḻakiya tecikar aruḷiccĕyta tirupparaṅkirippurāṇam mūlamum maturait tamiḻc caṅka vittuvāṉ mu. rā. aruṇācalak kavirāyar eḻutiya pŏḻipp' uraiyum.* Maturai: Mīṇalocaṉi Acciyantiracālai, 1928.

Tiruppukaḻ of Aruṇakirināṯar. *Tiruvaṇṇāmalaiyil ĕḻunt' aruḷiy irunta aruṇakirināṯa svāmikaḷ tiruvāy malarnt' aruḷiya tiruppukaḻ: mutaṟpākam.* Cĕṉṉai: Pi. Ār. Rāmaiyar Kampaṉi, 1921.

Tiruppukaḻ of Aruṇakirināṯar. *Aruṇakirināṯar aruḷic cĕyta kantaralaṅkāram, kantar-anupūti, kantarantāti, tiruvakuppu, tiruppukaḻ mutaliya aruḷ nūlkaḷ.* Ceṉṉai: Caivacittānta Makā Camājam, 1935.

Tiruppukaḻppārāyaṇattavanĕṟittirumuṟai of Vaḷḷimalai Swami.*Tiruppukaḻp pārāyaṇat tavanĕṟit tirumuṟai 8 anupantaṅkaḷ uṭaṉ kūṭiyatu, vĕḷḷi viḻā patippu, māṉasija pūjai muṟaiyākat tŏkutt' aruḷiyavar: śrī vaḷḷimalai tiruppukaḻ saccitānantā svāmikaḷ.* Cĕṉṉai: Śrī Vaḷḷimalai Svāmi Saccitānantā Tiruppukaḻ Capai, 1978 [1957].

Tiruttaṇikai-canniti-muṟai of Kantappa Muṉivar. Ed. by Mu. Caṇmukam

Piḷḷai. *Tirittaṇikaik kantappa ayyar pāṭiya tiruttaṇikaic canniti muṟai: canniti muṟai pirapantaṅkaḷ 12, taṇikai paṟṟiya veṟu cila ciṟupirapantaṅkaḷ, paṭaṅkaḷ uṭaṉ talavaralāṟu, kalvĕṭṭu, cĕppeṭukaḷ mutaliyaṇa aṭaṅkiyuḷḷaṇa*. Cĕṉṉai: Ti. Ki. Nārāyaṇacāmi, 1980.

Tiruvakuppu of Aruṇakirināṭar. In *Murukaveḷ paṇṇiru tirumuṟai, aruṇakirināṭar aruḷiya kantar-alaṅkāram, kantar-antāti, tiruvakuppu, kantar-anupūti ākiya paṇuvalkaḷum patiṇŏrān tirumuṟaiyum – tŏkuti 6, uraiy āciriyār: va. cu. cĕṅkalvarāya piḷḷai.* Cĕṉṉai: Tirunĕlveli Tĕṉṉintiya Caivacittānta nūṟpatippu kaḻakam limiṭeṭ, 1971.

Secondary sources

Āṟumukanāvalar. 2011 [20th edition]. *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai mūlamum yāḻppāṇam nallūr śrī-la-śrī āṟumukanāvalar avarkaḷ nacciṇārkkiṇiyar uraikkaruttait taḻuvic cĕyta putturaiyum.* Cĕṉṉai: Āṟumuka Nāvalar Vi. Accakam.

Arunachalam, Ponnambalam. 1981 [1931]. *Studies and Translations Philosophical and Religious*. Colombo Sri Lanka: Department of Hindu Affairs Ministry of Regional Development.

Beschi, Constantino Giuseppe. 1824. *Satur-Agarathi (Quadruple Dictionary) in Tamil by Viramamunivar (Beschi)*. Madras: The College of Madras.

Cĕṅkalvarāya Piḷḷai, Va. Cu. 1941. *Murukarun Tamiḻum*.

——. (editor and commentator). 1992 [1951]. *Murukavēḷ Paṉṉiru Tirumuṟai*. Ceṉṉai: Tirunĕlveli Tĕṉṉintiya Caiva Cittānta Nūṟpatippuk Kaḻakām. Cĕṉṉai: V. S. Sengalvaraya Mudaliyar.

Ciṅkāravelaṉār, Tirumarukal. 2003. *Āṟupaṭai vīṭukaḷ.* Cĕṉṉai: Aṟivu Nilaiyam Patippakam.

Clothey, Fred. 1972. "Pilgrimage Centers in the Tamil Cultus of Murukan." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 40, no. 1: 79–95. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1461919 (accessed April 27, 2025)

——. 1978. *The Many Faces of Murukaṉ: The History and Meaning of a South Indian God.* The Hague: Mouton.

Comacuntaram Cĕttiar, Kayappakkam and Āngīrasa Cu. Veṅkaṭesa Carmā. 1969. *Sakala kāriya cittiyum caivat tirumuṟaikaḷum*. Cĕṉṉai: Liṭṭil Pḷavar Kampĕṉi.

Comacuntaram, S. 1967. *Cuvāmimalai tiruvalañculi tala varalāṟu*. [Cuvāmimalai:] Śrī Cuvāmināṭacuvāmi tevastāṉa vĕliyīṭu.

Cuvāmināṭaṉ, Pi. 2016. *Aḻaku murukaṉiṉ ālayaṅkaḷ*. Cĕṉṉai: Sree Media Works.

Dupuis, Louis Savinien and Louis Marie Mousset. 1855. *Dictionnaire Tamoul-Français par deux missionnaires apostoliques de la congrégation des missiones-étrangères*. Pondichéry: Imprimerie des missionaires apostoliques.

Fabricious, Johann Philipp. 1809 [1779]. *A Malabar and English Dictionary*. Vepery: [Lutheran Mission Press].

Feldhaus, Anne. 2003. *Connected Places: Region, Pilgrimage, and Geographical Imagination in India*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Francis, Emmanuel. 2016. "Found in Paratexts: Murukaṉ's Places in Manuscripts of the *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*." In *The Archaeology of Bhakti II: Royal Bhakti, Local Bhakti*, edited by Emmanuel Francis and Charlotte Schmid, 495–532. Pondicherry: Institut français de Pondichéry; École française d'Extrême-Orient.

——. 2017. "The Other Way Round: From Print to Manuscript." In *Indic Manuscript Cultures through the Ages: Material, Textual, and Historical Investigations*, edited by Vincenzo Vergiani, Daniele Cuneo, and Camillo Alessio Formigatti, 320–51. Berlin: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110543100.

——. 2020. "Stanzas on the *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*: What for?In *Colophons, Prefaces, Satellite Stanzas: Paratextual Elements and Their Role in the Transmission of Indian Texts*, edited by Eva Wilden and Suganya Anandakichenin, 281–330. Hamburg: Department of Indian and Tibetan Studies Universität Hamburg.

Gillet, Valérie. 2014. "When Tradition Meets Archaeological Reality: The Site of Tiruccentūr." In *The Archaeology of Bhakti I: Mathurā and Maturai, Back and Forth*, edited by Emmanuel Francis and Charlotte Schmid, 289–321. Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry; École Française d'Extrême-Orient.

Gros, François. 2009. "Aruṇakirināṯar: The Return of Murukaṉ." In *Deep Rivers: Selected Writings on Tamil Literature*, edited by Jennifer Clare and M. Kannan, trans. by M. P. Boseman, 267–280. Pondichéry: Institut Français de Pondichéry.

Hinduism Today editors. 2007. "Journey to Murugan." *Hinduism Today*, October \ November \ December 2007: 38–53.

Jakannāṯaṉ, Ki. Vā. 1970. "Āṟupaṭai vīṭukaḷ." In *Tirukkayilāya paramparait tarumaiyātīṉattukkuc cōṉtamāṉa puḷḷirukkuveḷūr śrī vaittiyanātacuvāmi tirukkōyil makā kumpāpiṣeeka viḻā malar*. Vaittīsvaraṉkooyil: Vaittīśvaraṉkooyil Śrī Vaittiyanātacuvāmi Teevastāṉam.

Mishra, Anand. 2018. "Meaning in the Structure of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa." *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 22: 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11407-018-9219-3.

Mutaliyār, Ciṅkāravelu Ā. 1910. *Apitāṉacintāmaṇi*. Ceṉṉai: Vaijayanti Accuyantiracālai.

Orr, Leslie. 2014. "The Medieval Murukaṉ: The Place of a God among His Tamil Worshippers." In *Hindu Ritual at the Margins: Innovations, Transformations, Reconsiderations*, edited by Linda Penkower and Tracy Pintchman, 21–41. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Proença, Antao de and Xavier S. Thani Nayagam. 1966. *Antao De Proença's Tamil-Portuguese Dictionary AD 1679. Prepared for Publication by Xavier S.*

Thani Nayagam. Kuala Lumpur: Department of Indian Studies University of Malaya.

Ramanujan, A. K. 2005. *Nammāḻvār: Hymns for the Drowning*. Mumbai: Penguin Books.

Ramaswamy, Sumathi. 1998. "Language of the People in the World of Gods: Ideologies of Tamil before the Nation." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 1: 66–92. https://doi.org/10.2307/2659024.

Shulman, David. 1980. *Tamil Temple Myths: Sacrifice and Divine Marriage in the South Indian Śaiva Tradition*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

——. 2016. *Tamil: A Biography*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Somasundaram Pillai, J. M. 1941. *Palni: The Sacred Hill of Muruga. Palni: Sri Dandayuthapani Swami Devasthanam.*

Visvanatha Pillai, V. 1972 [1888]. *A Tamil-English Dictionary.* Madras: Madras School Book and Literature Society.

Visweswaran, Maanasa. 2022. "An Annotated Translation of the *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* and A Study of the Streams of Influence from Sanskrit Texts." Master's thesis, University of Hamburg.

Weiss, Richard, S. 2016. "Religion and the Emergence of Print in Colonial India: Arumuga Navalar's Publishing Project." *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 53, no. 4: 1–28.

Wilden, Eva Maria. 2015. *Manuscript, Print, and Memory: Relics of the Caṅkam in Tamilnadu.* Berlin: De Gruyter.

Winslow, Miron. 1862. *A Comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary of High and Low Tamil*. Madras: P.R. Hunt American Mission Press.

Zvelebil Kamil. 1973. *The Smile of Murugan: On Tamil Literature of South India*. Leiden: Brill.

——. 1974. *A History of Indian Literature. Vol. 10 Dravidian Literatures. Fasc. 1 Tamil Literature*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

——. 1975. *Tamil Literature*. Leiden: Brill.

——. 1992. *Companion Studies to the History of Tamil Literature*. Leiden: Brill.

——. 1995. *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*. Leiden: Brill.