

## Appendix II

### Short portraits of the deities

The following short portraits of the major deities mentioned in this study are meant as a tool to help the reader remembering who is who in the multitude of Tamil folk deities. It should be noted, however, that these deities often occur in a non-anthropomorphic form and that there is no absolute norm as to iconographic details. Variations exist. The list is alphabetical and the deities are itemized both under their Sanskrit and their Tamil names.

#### *Aiyaṅār*

Son of Śiva and Viṣṇu. Sitting, left leg raised and sometimes secured with a band (yogapaṭṭa); more rarely standing. Carries the elephant goad (Skt. aṅkuśa) in his right hand; his left hand is empty. He has long, matted hair, no moustache, no fangs. Vehicle: elephant. Rides also the horse (a white one). On horse he is usually portrayed with a light skin color and the śaiva markings on his forehead. His consorts are: Pūraṅai (Pūraṅā or Pūrṅā) and Puṭṭalai (Puṭṭalā). They sit left and right of Aiyaṅār and hold in the hand close to the god a flower; the position of their legs is similar to that of Aiyaṅār.

#### *Aiyappan*

Bachelor form of Aiyaṅār; his most famous shrine is at Sabarimalai. He is usually portrayed as a young man, sitting, both legs raised onto the seat and secured with a yogapaṭṭa. His right hand shows the abhaya mudrā. On his forehead is the vaiṣṇava nāmam; his skin color is pink. Variant: he sits on a tiger and carries bow and arrows.

#### *Aiyaṅārappan*

A combination of Aiyaṅār and Aiyappan, portrayed as Aiyappan or as Aiyaṅār on horseback.

#### *Akkiṇi Vīraṅ see Vīraṅ*

#### *Āḷi see pūtam*

#### *Āñcanēyar*

The monkey-god Hanumān. Usually standing and of green color, has a monkey face, holds club.

*Bhadrakālī see Pattirakālī*

*Bhairava see Vairavar*

*Camayan*

Also Camaya Karuppu(cuvāmi), the kneeling form of Karuppar, of blue color, carrying in his right, raised hand a knife or arivāl, in his left a club. He has a large moustache; his upper body can be bare.

*Cāmpān*

A god playing the drum; a form of Tamukkaṭi Vīraṅ in the Trichy area.

*Caṅkili Karuppar*

Karuppar with a chain. Standing and kneeling forms occur. Has a chain across his chest or around his neck. Iconography like Karuppar.

*Caṅkili Pūtattār see Pūtattār*

*Cannāci*

Ascetic. Characteristics are his beard and moustache and his matted hair which is usually piled up in a large knot on his head. His forehead and his bare body are marked with the śaiva stripes. He sits (sometimes on a tiger or a tiger skin) in the lotus position or with one leg raised onto the seat and held by a yogapaṭṭa or with both legs raised onto the seat. In his right hand he usually carries a rosary, in his left a water-pot or a vessel for gaṅjā; the gaṅjā vessel or a chillum can be depicted below his seat.

*Cappāṇi*

A 'lame' god. His iconography is like that of Camayan and Noṇṇi: he is kneeling and of a blue color. Sometimes the knife in his right hand points to the ground rather than upwards.

*Cōṇai*

A 'red' god, sometimes identified with Karuppar. Iconography varies: a standing god of pink color with śaiva markings on his forehead, a moustache, fangs; in his right a knife or dagger pointing to the ground, in his left a club. His complexion can also be red, yellow or purple and sometimes he is kneeling. His hands usually hold a dagger and club, or a dagger and the kapāla. There may be a dog at his feet (Koṭimaṅkalam).

*Ellaippiṭāri, Ellaiyamman*

Iconography similar to that of Māriyamman; four arms, carries in upper right the uṭukkai (the tapered drum) around which a snake is curled, in

the lower right a sword, in the upper left a sling (pācam, Skt. pāśa), in the lower left a kapāla; or the lower left shows the varada mudrā. Generally Ellaiyamman is considered to be the reverse part of Māriyamman, i. e., Reṇukā with the low-caste woman's head. Other iconographies are possible.

*Hanumān see Āñcanēyar*

*Icakki*

A goddess prominent in the Tirunelveli district. She is portrayed with a child in her hands and/or mouth. Her appearance is fierce: fangs, long open hair, protruding eyes.

*Ilāṭacannāci see Cannāci*

Ilāṭa- or Lāṭa- can be derived from Tamil 'ilāṭam', which designates an area in the Deccan (Gujarat). Ilāṭacannāci accordingly is an ascetic from that area.

*Iruḷappan*

His name can be derived from Tamil 'iruḷ', 'darkness'. His iconography varies greatly. Usually he is of pink or red color and has four arms, but in a portrait hanging in the Talaiyāri Kurunātacuvāmi temple of Maturai he is blue and has two arms. He usually wears sandals, carries in his upper right hand the uṭukkai drum, in his lower right a triśūla, in his upper left a head from which drops blood into the bowl (kapāla) he carries in his lower left. The moon and Gaṅgā in his hair characterize him as a form of Bhairava. In his upper right hand he sometimes carries a spear or a conch. Tucked away on his hip is a dagger (Poṇmēni, Maturai). He has a moustache and fangs; his upper body tends to be uncovered and may show a sacred thread.

*Iruḷāyi*

From Tamil 'iruḷ', 'darkness'. A sitting goddess (her left leg folded), usually of yellow or golden color, with fangs protruding under her lips. Carries in her right a triśūla, in her left the kapāla. Sometimes she has four arms.

*Kāḷi*

Her iconography varies. When she has four hands she carries in her right hands the uṭukkai and the triśūla, in her left hands the sling and the kapāla. She is in a sitting pose. She can have two or eight arms and be accompanied by a tiger or lion. Her color is pink or red.

*Kannimār*

The seven sisters or seven virgins. They form a unit and are portrayed as seven (sometimes eight) women sitting side by side. Each holds a flower in her right hand. Their faces are friendly (they do not have fangs); they can be of the same color or of different colors. Sometimes Virabhadra and Gaṇeśa are at their sides.

*Karuppar*

Also: Karuppar, Karuppu, Karuppuccāmi, Karuppaṇṇacāmi, Karuppaṇacāmi, -cuvāmi. Periya Karuppu, Cinṇa Karuppu (big and small Karuppu), Muttaiyā, Muttukkaruppar are other names of the standing Karuppar. He is of a blue color and has the vaiṣṇava nāmam on his forehead. Characteristic are his weapons: the arivāḷ (a curved large knife) (in his right) and the club (in his left), and a dagger (vaṅki) tied to his hips. He has a large moustache, sometimes fangs, and does not wear sandals. His hair is tied into a round bun sitting right or left on his head. He is standing or sits on a tiger, rarely on an elephant (Māmuṅṭi Karuppu; Paḷḷiyakkirakāram, Thanjavur); sometimes a cow is behind him. His vehicle is the horse (a brown one), on top of which he is sometimes portrayed carrying a whip.

*Karupparāyar*

He is a god sometimes assimilated to Aiyaṅār, sometimes to Karuppar, but usually does not share Aiyaṅār's iconography. He is portrayed as a standing deity holding club and arivāḷ and can have a red color (Tācarapāḷaiyam) and śaiva markings (Annūr, Mākkināmpaṭṭi).

*Karuppāyi*

A goddess of blue color, without fangs, with two arms carrying trisūla and kapāla. In Vaṭivēlkarai (Madurai) she is yellow and has fangs.

*Karuvaṇṇarāyar, Karuvaṇṭarāyar*

A form of Karupparāyar or Rāyar.

*Kāttavarāyar*

Either sitting or standing. Holds in his right hand a sword or knife, in his left a musical instrument (kiṇṇāram). Has a moustache and the śaiva ash stripes on his forehead. To his right is Āriyamālai, to his left another companion (the Ceṭṭi girl).

*Makāmuṇi, Māmūṇi*

A kneeling god. His color is pink or dark blue, on his forehead are the śaiva markings. He has long hair, a large moustache, sometimes fangs. He holds a bowl in both hands. Often a cobra is in front or behind him.

*Māriyamman*

She sits with one leg folded, has four hands that hold uṭukkai, sword (upper and lower right), triśūla and kapāla (upper and lower left) or a sling instead of the triśūla. Around her head is a flame halo above which a seven-headed snake spreads its hood. Often a head alone represents her. She is Reṇukā with the high-caste head and the low-caste body. On her forehead are the śaiva markings. Sometimes she is accompanied by a lion.

*Māṭaṅ, Māṭatti*

A bovine-headed god (Māṭaṅ) and a bovine-headed goddess (Māṭatti), predominantly found in the very southern parts of Tamilnadu. Māṭaṅ carries a spear or club, Māṭatti a club, and both are seen sometimes with a child in their hands or mouths. On Māṭaṅ's hip hangs a dagger. Other forms of this god are Piṇamālaicūṭimāṭaṅ (Māṭaṅ who wears a garland of dead bodies) and Cuṭalaimāṭaṅ (Māṭaṅ of the cremation ground). The former is shown with a human head, matted hair, fangs; in his right, raised hand is a club, with his left he drags a woman by her hair. Cuṭalaimāṭaṅ usually too has a human head, holds a club in his right, raised hand and has a dagger at his hip.

*Maturai Vīraṅ*

He either stands or sits on a (white) horse. In his right raised hand is a sword or large knife. He has a fair complexion, śaiva markings on his forehead, a moustache, usually no fangs, but wears sandals. Right and left of him are Pommi and Veḷḷaiyammāl (his consorts). They each hold a flower. The arrack or toddy bottle and a white dog often are in front of him. In the northeastern districts Maturai Vīraṅ has fiercer traits: he is of a much bigger size, is seated, has a red complexion, fangs, a moustache and sometimes a beard and is also portrayed alone or only with Pommi. In his hands he carries sword and shield. A lion and/or tiger are his seat or are behind and under him. Here too, the arrack and/or toddy bottles or pots are not missing.

*Muṇi*

Muṇi has various forms: sitting, standing and kneeling. The kneeling form is Makāmuṇi. The sitting Muṇis (often in groups) are large (six to seven meters high), have various skin colors (white, red, blue, yellow),

fangs. Usually the right leg hangs down and rests on the head of a demon while the left leg is folded, the left foot touching the right knee. Sometimes the leg position is reversed. The left hand rests on the left knee, the right holds a sword or other pointed weapon. While the Muṇis as a group are not always distinguished from each other in the Erode and Coimbatore districts, as guardians of Paccaivāḷiyammaṇ or Kāttāiyammaṇ in the northeastern districts they show distinguishing features: Vāḷvu (or Vāḷ, Vā) Muṇi is blue or white, has a vaiṣṇava nāmam on his forehead, sometimes a beard (and is identified with Mahāviṣṇu), Vēta Muṇi has a long beard and long matted hair and carries a rosary and a book, Cemmuṇi is red, sits on a lion and carries a stringed instrument, Karumuṇi is black, Muttumuṇi is yellow and sometimes sits on a horse (all three are without beard) etc. The animals seen with Muṇi are: lion, tiger, elephant, horse (Antiyūr); snake, dog, tiger (other areas). As a standing figure Muṇi can be both of normal size (human height) or a giant. The standing Muṇi has his right hand raised showing the palm, his left holds a club. The most common color of Muṇi's complexion is red, on his forehead are the śaiva stripes.

### *Muṇiyāṇṭi*

Muṇiyāṇṭi is a form of the standing Muṇi. In his right, raised hand he carries a knife or dagger pointing towards the ground, in his left is the kapāla. His hair is matted. He has fangs, a large moustache, is red.

### *Muttaiyā see Karuppar*

### *Nākar, Nākarāja, Nākakkaṇṇi*

The cobra deity depicted with five, seven or nine heads, with or without fangs, often sheltering a Śivaliṅga.

### *Noṇṭi*

The kneeling, 'lame' form of Karuppar.

### *Oṇṭi Vīraṇ*

A form of Karuppar.

### *Pāmpāṭṭi (Cittar)*

A snake-charmer figure shown playing a flute-type instrument in front of a cobra.

### *Pattirakāḷi, Patrakāḷi (Bhadrakāḷi)*

Pattirakāḷi is usually of a green or dark color. In her eight arms she holds (right): triśūla, uṭukkai-drum, knife, axe; (left): shield, snake, kapāla and

bell. She can have ten hands and her weapons can vary; sometimes she holds also a child, a bow, the noose (pācam). She has fangs, matted long hair, sometimes her head is framed by a fire halo. At her feet can be a human figure, Dakṣa. She decorates the front part of the large horse on which sits Karuppar (rarely Aiyaṅār).

### *Pēcci(yamman)*

There are two forms, one sitting, one standing. Sitting, Pēcci is shown pulling the intestines from the belly of a woman (a queen, wife of Vallārajan) who lies across her lap. She has four arms, her right upper hand holds a triśūla, her left upper the child she has removed from the queen's belly; her lower two hands are engaged in tearing open the queen's belly. In some images she is shown with intestines hanging from her mouth. At Pēcci's feet is a man, said to be the king. The goddess has fangs, long, matted hair. Standing, Pēcci has two hands holding a knife or sword (right) and the kapāla or a child (left), has fangs and a halo of flames.

### *Periyaṅnacāmi*

He can be blue or red, holds in his right hand a spear that points to the tiger at his feet, in his left a club, or he holds in his right the arivāḷ and in his left a spear (vēl).

### *Piṭāri*

Various iconographies. See Ellaippiṭāri.

### *Pūraṅai see Aiyaṅār*

### *Puṣkalai see Aiyaṅār*

### *Pūtam*

Pūtam, from Skt. bhūta, 'demon'. Giant-sized, pot-bellied, standing, Pūtam is an entrance guardian. He is often in pairs. He holds sword and club and has a dagger tied to his hips. The Pūtam has fangs, large protruding eyes, a moustache, sometimes a beard. The female companion resembles the male in iconography. Some Pūtams only hold a club in their left, while the right hand is raised, the open palm showing outwards. The Pūtams can have śaiva or vaiṣṇava markings on their foreheads. The fat-bellied figures below the legs of the large horses of Aiyaṅār and Karuppar and similar figures sitting on top of the corners of temple walls are also called Pūtam.

*Pūtattār*

Usually Caṅkili Pūtattār. He holds a club in his right hand. As sitting, pot-bellied demon with fangs and in a standing form holding a staff, he is portrayed as the guardian of the Nellaiyappar temple in Tirunelvēli. In the Kurṛālam temple he is shown in relief with a raised right hand holding a club, his left hand resting on his left hip. A large chain hangs from his shoulders to his feet. Other images show him with fangs, flame-halo and a club in each hand. He is usually associated with Śiva (e. g., as born from his sweat like Virabhadra).

*Rākkāyi*

Also Irākkāyi, (I)rākkāyiamman. Various iconographies; color: green or yellow, has four hands holding (right) uṭukkai and triśūlam, (left) a child and the kapāla. Weapons can differ: the right upper hand can hold a knife. She has fangs and may have a flame-halo.

*Rāyar*

Also Irāyar. Can be either a śaiva or vaiṣṇava deity and then has the nāmam or the śaiva stripes on his forehead. Is shown with sword and shield or with a club in his right hand. He is variously identified as child of Śiva (born from Śiva's forehead eye) or as child of Śiva and Viṣṇu.

*Samnyāsin see Cannāci**Śāstā see Aiyaṅār**Talaiyāri*

A standing figure, usually of dark color, no fangs, with moustache, holding a stick or staff in his right hand, simple dress (bare upper body, vēṣṭi folded to knees' height).

*Tamukkaṭi Vīraṅ*

Player of the tamukku drum, a drum tied in front of the belly and played with two sticks or stiff rubber strips. The figure is of a dark color, shown wearing a cloth on his head tied into a turban and with simple dress (bare upper body, vēṣṭi folded to knees' height).

*Taṅṅāci*

A form of Cannāci in the Coimbatore district; see Cannāci.

*Urumar*

A form of Karuppar, usually with knife or arivāḷ and club.



*Vairavar (Bhairava)*

Various iconographies. Has four hands holding *uṭukkai* and *triśūla* (right) and *pācam* and *kapālam* (left) or a sword (in right) and *uṭukkai* and *kapālam* in left. He is naked and accompanied by a dog.

*Vēṭiyappar*

Usually depicted in relief as a hero about to shoot an arrow. He is standing sideways, his legs in a striding position.

*Vīrabhadra see Vīrapattiraṅ**Vīrapattiraṅ*

In the Madurai area there are two forms: *Akkiṇi* (Agni) *Vīrapattiraṅ* and *Akōra* (Aghora) *Vīrapattiraṅ*. *Akkiṇi Vīrapattiraṅ* has a fire halo, eight hands of which the top right and the bottom left hold a *triśūla* pointing to a figure lying at his feet (*Dakṣa*). The other right hands hold: *uṭukkai*, snake, *vaḷaitaṭi* (boomerang); left: shield, a severed head, and a bell. *Akōra Vīrapattiraṅ* has ten hands; the top right holds a spear pointing to the figure at his feet (*Dakṣa*). His other right hands hold: *uṭukkai*, *triśūla*, snake, knife; in his other left hands he has: a head, snake, arrow, bell, shield. Both gods have moustaches and fangs and they often wear sandals. Sometimes both gods have ten arms (*Kīḷa Vāṇiyaṅkuṭi*). On a wall painting in the *Māriyamman* temple of *Vayalūr* (Cuddalore) *Akōra Vīrapattiraṅ* is shown with two hands holding a sword and a head. In another form *Vīrapattiraṅ* is sitting, has two hands holding sword and club and resembles *Vīraṅ* (*Tiruvaṅṅāmalai*, Cuddalore, Viluppuram).

*Vīraṅ, Vīrakkārar*

Sometimes a form of *Maturai Vīraṅ*. Iconography varies. In the northern areas he is shown sitting on a tiger, holding in his two hands sword and shield, a dagger in his belt. He has a red color, moustache and fangs. A dog and/or a lion can be in his company. *Akkiṇi Vīraṅ* is a hero found in the temples of *Paccaivāḷiyamman*. There he is a sitting figure, red, with sword and club in his hands.