

Daśavatāras in the Hymns of the Āḷvārs

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Abstract: *The epithets of Viṣṇu are 1,000 that appear in the Anuśāsanaparvā of the Mahābhārata. The epic as a codified itihāsa, supposed to have reached the magnitude of its literary evolution by about 500 BCE. Interpolations (e.g., Bhagavadgītā) seem to have taken place sometime down to early centuries C.E. The sahasranāma (1,000 Epithets) of Viṣṇu and Śiva got entangled with the main epic by about this time. The 1,000 could not have been the invention of a particular seer or sage. It must have been a compilation of what was current in oral, ritual and devotional circulation since ancient time and coherently knit at one point in time. These names are likely to include the folk and the classical, national-regional and sub-regional or tribal (e.g., ‘Āycciyarkuravai’ in Cilappatikāram, Rajarajan 2016: 45-47, 338-42), and unite the two parallel streams of Indian culture, the Drāviḍian and the Āryan. For example, the name, Nārāyaṇa is of Draviḍian origin, traced from nir “water (water dweller)” (Keny 1942); cf. Jalaśayana (Jeyapriya 2018). The Tamil Āḷvārs that contributed nearly 4,000 hymns (some 3,770), called Nālāyiram on Māl/Viṣṇu have noted the 1,000 Epithets but do not present a consolidated list in a form as found in the sahasranāma of the Mahābhārata. They cite the āyiranāmam “1,000 Names” sporadically (infra). We get a list of names unevenly spread over the thousands of hymns that may not be sufficient to list 1,000.*

Keywords: *Epic, Hymns, Āḷvārs, Images, Cult*

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Introduction

The present article notes the clusters into 1,000 (*sahasranāma*) and deals mainly with the epithets about the *daśavatāras* (ten prominent incarnations) of the Lord. We propose a compilation of the Tamilized transcription of the epithets with their Sanskritic originals. The aim is to find out whether there is any intelligible concordance or correspondence between the two. It is imperative because if the Āḷvārs mention an epithet of Viṣṇu, it should be significant vis-à-vis its Sanskritic equivalent, yield

some historical idea or is substantial in the context of religious studies. The *Viṣṇusahasranāma* and its counterpart, *Śivasahasranāma* appear for the first time in the *Anuśāsanaparvā* of the *Mahābhārata*, in codified form.¹ The Vaiṣṇava-Āḷvārs (circa 6th-9th century C.E.) and Śaiva-Nāyaṅmār (5th to the 12 centuries) have noted these 1,000 epithets; e.g.

Āyirampērāṇ “one with 1,000 names” (*Tiruvantāti* I, v. 10, *Periya Tirumoli* 11.3.8)

Nāmaṅkaḷ āyiram “names 1,000” (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 5.9.11)

Pērāyiram uṭaiyāṇ “Lord credited with 1,000 names” (*Ciṛiyatirumataḷ* 1. 43)

Āyiranamam colli “utter the 1,000 names (during prayer or *pūjā* and *dhyāna*)” (*Tiruppallāṅṅu*, v. 5)

Aṟukālvāṅṅinaṅkaḷ āyiranāmaṅ colli ciṟukālaipāṭum “the six-legged bees sing the 1,000 names early in the morning” (*Periyāḷvār Tirumoli* 4.2.8) and so on²

Objective

The concern of the present article is to find out how the Āḷvārs have viewed the *daśāvatāras* of Viṣṇu that are the ten prominent incarnations. We may note here the forms of Viṣṇu is brought under iconographical categories such as *vyūha* -4, *avatāra* or *vibhava* -10, *aṃśāvatāra* -26, *dvādaśa* -12, *caturviṃśati* -24 (Desai 1973: 2-4, Jeyapriya 2015, Kalidos 2018) and those listed in the *āgamas* (e.g., *Vaikhānasa* and *Pāñcarātra* - 108 *saṃhitās*) and *śilpasāstras*. The last category includes forms such as *Vaikuṅṭhamurti*, *Śeṣaśāyī*, *Garuḍa-Nārāyaṇa*, *Hayagrīva* (the horse-faced) and so on. The *Śrītattvanidhi* (STN), a compilation of *dhyānaślokas* on Viṣṇu, by *Kṛṣṇarāja Uḍaiyār* (first half of the 19th century C.E.) of the Mysore ruling family,³ a prodigious scholar in the *śāstras*, presents a list of 76 assorted forms under (*Viṣṇutattvanidhi*, Part II of STN).

Methods Used

The method followed is an effort to locate the names in Sanskrit originals vis-à-vis its recasting in Tamil or as for the matter in other ancient Indian languages (cf. Rajarajan et al. 2017. 2017a, 2017b). This is to point out the syncretistic fabric of Indian culture. The origin of Viṣṇu could not be ascribed to any particular region; it may be the Himālyas or the Western Ghats, rooted in tribal deliberation and archaic thought. We have collated the names from literature study of the *sahasranāmas* (e.g., T.M.P. Mahādevan 1976) and the *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam*. This is mainly desk-work based in libraries. The illustrations belong to a late phase of Indian art dated from the 16th - 17th century. This chronological drift from the ancient to later medieval and modern suggests Indian religious traditions are deep rooted in unchanging ritual. These *nāmas* were recited in temples whether *Kāñcīpuram* (*Vaikuṅṭha Perumāl*), *Badarī Ta. Vatari* (*Badarīnātha*) or *Pūri* (*Jagannātha*, ‘*Puruṣottamam*’ in *Ācāryas*’ hagiography *Āṟayirappaṭi*-G p. 116) through the ages. The visuals have been collected by visit to the field. I have adopted a mixed method to give the bibliographies in footnotes and the most vital under references.

Discussion and Findings

The *daśāvatāras* are the following: *Matsya* “Fish”, *Kūrma* “Tortoise”, *Varāha* “(wild) Boar”, *Nṛsiṃha* “Man-Lion”, *Vāmana* “Dwarf”/Trivikrama (*Neṅiyōṇ*, the Tall), *Paraśurāma* “Rāma with Battleaxe”, *Śrī Rāma* (*Dāśarathi*), *Balarāma*, *Kṛṣṇa* (the Black) or the Buddha and *Kalki*.⁴ Let us see how the Āḷvārs visualize these names.⁵ *Matsya* is called *Mīṇ* (*Periyāḷvār Tirumoli* 1.6.11, *Tiruccantaviruttam* v. 33) or *Keṅṭai*, a species of carp fish [family cyprinidae] (*Periya Tirumoli* 4.5.6).⁶ In Sanskrit, it

is also called *śṛṅgi* (*Viṣṇusahasranāma* 536, 797), the equivalent of which and that of *matsya* is hard to discern in Tamil. *Maccam* (*Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. V, p. 3002) could be a transcription, but it fails to appear in the Ālvārs' hymns. The Lord assumed this form to save the worlds and *Vedas* from peril.

Kūrma is *Āmai* (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 2.8.5), supposed to live in water ('nīril|vā|um|āmai' *Tiruccantaviruttam*, v. 20). *Kūrmam* could be a Tamil transcription (*Tamil Lexicon*, II, p. 1075) but fails to appear in the hymns. This *avatāra*'s manifest purpose was to support the Manthara when the Ocean of Milk (Kṣīrābdi) was churned. The Manthara was mounted on the [back]-shell of the Tortoise.

Varāha, pronounced with pure Tamil words such as *Ēnam* (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 1.8.8), *Paṇṇi* (*Nācciyār Tirumoḷi* 11.8) and *Kēlal* (*Tirukkuruntāṇṭakam*, v. 4). The Tamil transcription is *Varākam* (*Tiruvantāti* II, v. 31, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.6.5, Parthiban 2020). His function was to save Bhūdevi from trouble when snatched away to the depth of water by the demon, Hiraṇyākṣa (one with golden eyes). The above three *avataras* represent zoomorphic or partly human and partly animal forms in visuals⁷ (Fig. 1). *Narasimha* is otherwise *Nṛsimha* or *N|a|ārasimha*. The Tamil names are *Ari/Hari* (*Tiruppallāṇṭu*, v. 6, *Periyatirumataḷ* 1. 242), *Naraciṅkam*[ṇ] (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 2.3.1, 9.3.7), *Cīyam* (*Periya Tirumoḷi* 6.5.2), *Ciṅkappirāṇ* "Lord Lion" (*Periyālvār Tirumoḷi* 5.4.2), *Cīriyaciṅkam* "cultured Lion" (*Tiruppāvai* 23), *Teḷḷiyaciṅkam* "immaculate Lion" (*Periya Tirumoḷi* 2.3.8) and so on. Among these, *Naraciṅkam* and *Ari* are transcriptions of *Narasimha* and *Hari*. Others are pure Tamil terminologies. In Indian art, the Man-Lion form of *Viṣṇu* represented with the face of a lion, sharp nails of a lion (*vajranakha*)⁸ and the human body.⁹ He is terrific mainly by gesture and known as *Ugra-Nṛsimha*. If benign, the Lord is *Kevala-Nṛsimha* and if united with *Lakṣmī*, *Lakṣmī-Nṛsimha* or *Kalyāṇa-Narasimha* (the Lion as *Kalyāṇasundaramūrti*) for whom we have a temple in *Rāmakiri* (district *Tiṅṅukkal*, Rajarajan 2021). The duty of the *avatāra* was to weed out demonic forces and wipe out terrorism on earth.

Vāmana and *Trivikrama* are allied incarnations. *Vāmana* is said to have approached the demon-king *Mahābali* demanding a *dāna* (gift of land), got three strides and grew into the Tall One, *Neṭiyōṇ*, *Trivikrama* that measured the total landed assets of the demon. The Ālvārs call *Vāmana* with various epithets such as *Kuṛaḷ* "Dwarf" (*Nācciyār Tirumoḷi* 4.9), *Kuṛaḷappaṇ* (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 7.10.2), *Māṇi* (*Periya Tirumoḷi* 1.8.5, *Tiruvantāti* II, v. 89), *Vāmaṇaṇ* (*Tiruccantaviruttam* v. 37), *Veṅkuṭaiṅvāṇaṇ* (*Periya Tirumoḷi* 9.7.3) "he who holds a white umbrella" (Fig. 2-vii) and so on. *Vāmana* is a Tamil transcription, while all other epithets stand for a "Dwarf". *Vāmana* is a cult *Mūrti* in the temples of *Kēraḷa*, e.g., *Kuṛaḷappaṇ* in *Vaṅṅparicāram* and *Vāraṅviḷai*, notified in the *Tiruvāymoḷi* of *Nammālvār*.

Trivikrama is variously called *Tirivikkiraman* (*Nācciyār Tirumoḷi* 1.7, *Periya Tirumoḷi* 9.9.5; *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. III, p. 1895), *Pāraḷantāṇ* "who measured the world" (*Periyālvār Tirumoḷi* 1.10.6), *Pāraḷanta-paṅpāḷaṇ* (cf. *Tiruvirūtam* of *Nammālvār* 80), *Taraṅiyaḷantāṇ* (*ibid.* 2.10.7), *Neṭiyavaṇ* "the Tall" (*ibid.* 5.4.8), *Kuṛaḷāki-nimirntavaṇ* "the Dwarf who elongated himself Tall" (*Periya Tirumoḷi* 2.4.2), *maṅṅalaṅta-Māl* "Māl, who measured the Earth" (*Tiruvantāti* I, v. 18) and so on (Fig. 3-viii). In these epithets, *Tirivikkiramaṇ* (*Trivikrama*) and *taraṅi* (*dharaṅi*-*Bhūdevī*) are Tamil transcriptions of Sanskritic terms. *Tri* in Sanskrit means "three". In Tamil, *tiri* is not the equal of *tri*. It means a "wick" (*Tiruvantāti* II, v. 1).¹⁰ It is a meaningless expression, just taken for granted to be the equal of *tri*, cf. *Cirītaraṅ/Śrīdhara* (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 2.7.8-9) and *Cirīrāmaṅ/Śrīrāma*. The images of *Trivikrama* appear profusely in Indian art of which the best examples are in *Varāhamaṅḍapa* of *Māmallapuram* and *Cave III* of *Badāmī*.¹¹ He is a cult *Mūrti* that appears in the *garbhagṛha* of the *Kōvaḷur* and *Ūrakam divyadeśas* (Plate 1).



Plate: 1 Trivikrama in the garbhagr̥ha of Ūrakam Temple

The Āṭvārs do not deploy an epithet that is the equal of Paraśurāma. He is *māmuṇi* “great sage” or Tēvaṅ “God” (*Periya Tirumoḷi* 5.3.1). The name Paracurāmaṅ earlier appears in the *Maṇimēkalai* (22, l. 34). It is not clear why it fails to appear in the Āṭvārs’ hymns. He appeared as sage and took the battle-axe to cut the heads of kings twenty-one times on earth (*Periya Tirumoḷi* 6.7.2).¹² Rāma of the race of Raghu (cf. the *Raghuvamśa* of Kālidāsa) is known as Dāsarathi-Rāma. Periyāṭvār, Kulacēkarar and Tirumaṅkai call Rāma Tācarati (*Tirumoḷi* 3.9.2, *Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi* 8.5, *Periya Tirumoḷi* 10.2.3). He is also called Cīrāmaṅ/Śīrāma (*Periya Tirumoḷi* 8.6.8), Irākavaṅ/Rāghava (*Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi* 8.1-4) and Kākuttaṅ (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 5.4.3).¹³ Tācarati, Cīrāmaṅ and Irāmaṅ are Tamil transcriptions. As is the epic, the art of *Rāmāyaṇa* commands an epic setting in Indian art historical tradition. A complete set of paintings from the *Bālakāṇḍam* to the *Uttarakāṇḍam* are in the following temples: Rāmasvāmi (Kumbhakōnam), Tirukōkaraṇam (Bṛhadāmbā) and Aḷakarkōyil (Saundararaja Perumāḷ); and the temple cars of Vaṭuvūr and Tāṅippāḷi (North [vaṭa]-Ārkkāṭu), including Rāmakiri.¹⁴ The Āṭvārs provide minute descriptions of the epics event from the *Bālakāṇḍa* to the *Uttarakāṇḍa* in addition to confirming Rāma was an incarnation of Viṣṇu, the *Irāmāvatāram* of Kampaṅ (12th century).

Balarāma, according to mythology, is supposed to be the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa and an incarnation of Ādiśeṣa. His emblem is the *halāyudha* “ploughshare”. The Āṭvārs call him Palatēvaṅ (*Tiruppāvai* 17, cf. Palarāmaṅ in *Tamil Lexicon*, IV, 2535), Veḷḷaimūrṭti “Lord White” (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 5.8.2) and Irāmaṅ (*ibid.* 10.3.10). Palatēvaṅ and Irāmaṅ are transcriptions. Veḷḷaimūrṭti denotes his colour. He rarely appears in art. The Māmallapuram relief of Govardhanadhāri includes both Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva.¹⁵ He was one among the three Mūrṭtis of the Vṛṣṇi (*yādava*) hero-worship in the North and placed in the *garbhagr̥ha* of the Pūri Jagannātha temple. This cult, reflected in the *Paripāṭal* and works of Āṅḷāḷ, *Nācciyār Tirumoḷi* and *Tiruppāvai*:

unpiyum nīyum urāṅkēlōr empāvāy “Your (younger) brother (Kṛṣṇa) and you (Baladeva) do not sleep (and get up) (*Tiruppāvai* v. 17).

Kṛṣṇa could not be transcribed in Tamil because the letters, ṛ and ṣ are peculiar to Sanskrit (Kiruttiṇaṅ, cf. *Tamil Lexicon*, II, 931). His equivalent in Tamil is Kaṇṇaṅ (Prakrit Kaṇha) that is absent in Sanskrit. Kaṇṇaṅ (*kaṇ* + *avaṅ*) means one dear to the eyes. The hymns of Periyālvār (*vide* his *Tirumoli*) are classical examples of a devotee fondling the child-Kṛṣṇa with pet lullabies, Telugu *uyyāla* (cf. Aṅṅamācārya's hymns). Several Tamil epithets are the equal of Kṛṣṇa. They are Māl or Tirumāl (*Tiruppallāṅṭu*, v. 11), Neṭumāl (*Nācciyār Tirumoli* 13.5), Ceṅkaṅ "red-eyed" (*Tiruccantaviruttam*, v. 75), Kaṇṇaṅ (*Perumāl Tirumoli* 7.6) and so on. The hero of the world's greatest epic, the *Mahābhārata*, the presence of Kṛṣṇa in Indian art since very early times is remarkable. Besides, he is the hero of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. His forms are countless that provided the heroic theme for the miniatures of the Rājasthāni School of paintings (Kaṅgra, Pahāri and so on).

The Buddha is considered an *avatāra* alternatively in place of Kṛṣṇa. The Ālvārs never think the case so. For them, the Buddhists and Jains were despicable heretics. They are called Puttar/Buddhas (*Tirumālai* v. 7; *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. V, p. 2759), *Tuvariūtaiyār* "yellow-robed" (*Periya Tirumoli* 2.1.6), Pōtiyar/Bodhis (*Periya Tirumoli* 9.7.9) and Cākkiyar/Śākya (*Tiruvāymoḷi* 4.10.5). They are called *Camāṅkuṅṭar* (Jain ruffians) and *Cākkiyappēykal* (Śākya ghouls). However, a Pallava inscription from Māmallapuram counts the Buddha as one among the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu.¹⁶ The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Drāviḍa-born, also considers the Buddha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. It seems from one quarter there was a tendency to accept the Buddha while the Ālvārs and Nāyaṁmār rejected the Buddhists and Jains. Kalki is the yet to come incarnation of Viṣṇu, is supposed to appear on a white horse, holding a sword in hand to redress the grievances of the righteous and punish the evil mongers at the end of the Kaliyuga in a village in the Sambal valley. The Ālvārs do not narrate this story. He is called Kaṛki (*Periyālvār Tirumoli* 4.9.9, *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. II, pp. 818-19) who comes mounted on a fierce horse, *kaṭumparimēl-Kaṛki* (*Periya Tirumoli* 2.5.3).

What are summarized in the above account are chips from a huge block. The Ālvārs' view of the epithets of Viṣṇu and mythologies are kaleidoscopic in dimension. It could not be the capsule in a brief article. It deems an intensive study (for details, see Rajarajan, Parthiban & Kalidos 2017: 145-55). In any case, the Ālvārs knew the *daśavatāras* of Viṣṇu and transcribed the names in Tamil. A few given in their original format in Tamil may not be intelligible to non-Tamil scholars. The transcription of some epithets does not convey any understandable idea; e.g. *Tirivikkiramaṅ*, *Cirirāmaṅ*, *tiri* and *ciri* do not give the meaning we expect (i.e. *tri* and *śrī*) in a Tamil dictionary.

The *daśavatāras*, in the art of Tamilnadu as a running panel from *Matsya* to Kalki of the Vijayanagara-Nāyaka period, was a popular representation. Separate enclaves for the ten Mūrtis are in the temples at Tāṅṅkompu (district Tiṅṅkkal), Aḷakarkōyil (Maturai) and Vaikuntam (**Tāmiraparaṅi basin in Tirunelvēli zone Fig. 1**). The unique feature in the Tāṅṅkompu temple is that in the place of Varāhamurti, Hayagrīva is replaced (cf. **Fig. 3-xiii**). In the Vaikuntam temple, the head of Kalki is in horse form. In a study of the wood-carved temple cars of Tamilnadu, as many as 47 such narrative panels have been reported (Kalidos 1989: 338-40, cf. Mevissen 2010). The wood-carved sculptures found on the Rāmakiri *tēr* (Car Temple)¹⁷ of the Kalyāṇa-Narasimha Perumāl temple is reported hereunder (**Fig. 2 i-xi**). This chariot was not included in the mega-survey of Raju Kalidos (1989). Two stucco images from the *vimāna* of the Katir (Āditya) Narasimha Perumāl temple, *Kaṅṅivāṅi*, are included that illustrate Paraśurāma and horse-faced Kalki (or Hayagrīva as Kalidos 2019 says). The earliest of such running panel in *maṅḍala* form may be found in the Pāpanāseśvara temple at Alampūr of the Eastern Calukyas. Interestingly, this image finds the Buddha in the centre of the *maṅḍala* as though the *avatāras* proceed from the Buddha or the Himālayas that may be true of the origin of the *bhakti* cult.



Figure 1: Daśāvātāras (Matsya, Kūrma [zoomorphic], Varāha, Nṛsiṃha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Śrī Rāma, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Kalki), Kaḷḷarpirān Temple, Vaikuntam (Navatiruppati)



Figure 2: Wood-carved sculptures from the Kalyāṇa-Nṛsiṃha Temple Car (*Tēr*): i) Matsya, ii) Kūrma, iii-iv) Varāha (Prajāya, Bhū), v-vi) Nṛsiṃha (Hiraṇya-yuddham, Yoga), vii) Vāmana, viii) Trivikrama (Tiruccentūr *tēr*), ix) Balarāma, x) Kṛṣṇa (Govardhanadhāri), xi) Rāma (Paṭṭābhi)



Figure 3: Stucco images from the *vimāna*, Katir-Nṛsiṃha Perumāl Temple, Kannivāṭi (Tintukkal): xii) Paraśurāma, xiii) Kalki (or Hayagrīva?)

Concluding Remarks

The recital of the *nāmāvaḷis* gets back to time immemorial, e.g., *mahācārya*-Bhīṣma doing it in the battlefield at Kurukṣetra, and thus had the *Viśvarūpa-darśana* of the Lord *Kṛṣṇa*. The *nāmāvaḷis* percolated to various segments of India from Gandhāra to Kāmarūpa and the Himālayas to the Cape. Whichever may be the region, the names of *Viṣṇu* are subject to regional dialectical variations. *Viṣṇu* in Bengal is *Biṣṇu*, and we cannot transcribe this name in Tamil. It becomes *Viṭṭu* in the hymns of the woman-mystic *Āṇṭāḷ* or *Viṇṭu* (*Puraṇānūru* 391) in ancient Tamil lore. These philological variations are due to impact geography and climate. *Jagan[nātha]* could not be verbatim brought out in Tamil because in their phonetic system we do not have ‘j|a’ (stopped consonant - palatal voiced). It could only be *Cakannātaṅ* (‘c|a’ stopped consonant - medio palatal¹⁷). In any case the *Vīrattappā* of the south is *Bīrthappa* in Bengal. Indian religions and languages are a strange blend of unity in diversity.

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Notes

1. T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, Bombay 1976; Svami Tapasyananda, *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, Madras 1986.
2. “Morphological Riddles in Tamil Transcription of *Viṣṇu*’s Epithets and An overview of Mythologies in Hymns of the Āḷvārs” (Rajarajan, Parthiban & Kalidos 2017b: chap. VI).

3. See Rajarajan 2020: 222, fn. 1.
4. A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, Calcutta 1971, pp. 304-9. Besides, there are 26 partial incarnations of the Lord called *aṃśāvatāra* (e.g. Mohinī, *Garuḍa*).
5. All the epithets of the gods and goddesses are in Sanskrit, the pan-Indian language for dissemination of religious wisdom in south and southeast Asia. It is because you may find an image of Viṣṇu in Kashmir or Kanyākumari or Gandhāra (modern Afghanistan) or Assam. If one calls it by the Tamil name Māl or Tirumāl, it may not be intelligible to those in other topographical segments of the subcontinent. Therefore, the ancient and medieval *śāstra*-makers employed a common language, i.e. Sanskrit that is audible to one in Tamilnadu or Bengal and in any part of the Asian world, now global.
6. The select references are given in this article; otherwise it might be an index which is not the aim of the present article. We have later prepared a dictionary based on the ‘Nālāyiram’ (Rajarajan, Parthiban & Kalidos 2017a, also 2017).
7. In North Indian art the *Matsya* and *Kūrma* appear in zoomorphic form (Desai 1973: figs. 53-57). Gupta period *Varāha* images have been reported in Joanna Williams, *The Art of the Gupta India: Empire and Province*, New Delhi 1983, figs. 126-127. A rare example of Pallava image has been discovered in Māmallapuram, close to the Shore temple, in the near past. *Vide*, Raju Kalidos, *Encyclopaedia of Hindu Iconography: Early Medieval, Vol. I Viṣṇu*, Delhi 2006, pl. LXIII. 2. The revival of this tradition may be found in the Vaikuntam and Tāṭikkompu temples of the Nāyaka period (17th century). For an article on Tāṭikkompu see S. Gopalakrishnan in *East and West*, Rome 1996.
8. *Vajranakha* means diamond-like nail. Narasimha had to kill demon called Hiraṇya, meaning one with a golden mien. Gold could be cut only with a diamond-instrument. That is why the Lord is said to have diamond-nails. The epithet appears in *Viṣṇuaṣṭottaram*, Epithet no. 54.
9. Raju Kalidos, *Nṛsiṃha* in Early Medieval Literature and Art, *Annali dell’ Istituto Universitario Orientale*, Naples 1999, Vol. 59: 1-4, pp. 168-82, pls. I-VI.
10. Cf. the hymn: *appētakaliyā ārvamē neyyāka inṇuruku cintai iṭu tiri* “love is the lamp, earnestness is the oil (ghee), the involved mind is the wick” (*Tiruvantāti* II, v. 1).
11. Raju Kalidos, *Encyclopaedia...* Vol. I, pls. XLI. 1, LXIII. 2.
12. The Vēlūr (slang: Vellore) temple cars finds the three Rāmas in a row. *Vide*, Raju Kalidos, *Temple Cars of Medieval Tamiḷaham*, Madurai 1989, fig. 43. Paraśurāma usually carries the *paraśu* “battle-axe” in a hand. *Vide*, R.K.K. Rajarajan ed., *Studies in Indian Art History*, Delhi 2010, Colour Plate XV. 9, BW 16.
13. The forerunner of the Solar Race (*Sūryavamśa*) was Kakutstha and so Rāma is called Kākuttaṇ.
14. Raju Kalidos, Pañcamukha-Āñjaneya in Canonic Literature and Art, *East and West*, Rome 1991, Vol. 41: 1-4, pp. 133-51 (figs. 16); R.K.K. Rajarajan & Ganeshram eds. *op. cit.*, Colour Plates XIX 1-2, XX 1-2, XXI 1-2, XXII 1-2, BW 5, BW 7.
15. Raju Kalidos, *Encyclopaedia...* Vol. I, pl. LXV.
16. K.R. Srinivasan, *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, New Delhi 1964, p. 173.
17. For iconographical studies on ‘temple cars’ see, Kalidos 1989, Parthiban, R.K. and R.K.K. Rajarajan 2016, Rajarajan (1998, 2021).
18. The Telugu spoken in the Cittūr district (Āndhra-Tamilnāḍu border) is unacceptable to the classical Telugus in East Godāvārī district.

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