LOCATION AND PHYSICAL FEATURES

Tiruvāppukkā is situated 5 kilometres North of Tiruchchirāppalli, 1.6 kilometres East of Śrīrangam and on the North bank of river Kāvēri. It is in Tiruchchirāppalli taluk which forms part of the Tiruchchirāppalli district of the Madras State. It is an island formed by the bifurcation of the Kāvēri into the two known as the Kāvēri and Kollidam. At the western (upper) end of the island is the upper Anicut and at the eastern end is the Grand Anicut (Kallanai). The trunk road to Madras runs northwards from Tiruchchirāppalli across the island. The place is connected with the highway on its western and eastern sides.

The sources available for this study are varied in nature and details. Ample information is available from the 154 inscriptions copied from this temple. However many more, might have been destroyed during the renovation work carried on from time to time. They range in date from early Chōla period to the time of Nāyaka of Madurai (10th to 18th centuries). The maximum information on the various aspects of the life of the people of this area is available from these inscriptions. Naturally, this study involves a detailed analysis of the inscriptions (both published and unpublished)
of this temple and also supplemented by the inscriptions from the adjoining places - particularly the Śrīraṅgam temple, wherever necessary and by other sources such as literary works, both published and unpublished.

The temple complex occupying an area of 80 acres comprises of a vast rectangular enclosure with a big gateway (gōmuram) on the western side. The car streets running on the four sides of the temple are enclosed by a great wall on all sides measuring in perimeter 2357 metres (7656 feet) in breadth 2 metres (6 feet) and in height 11 metres (35 feet) known as "Tirunirittam tiruvaṭil" which was recently renovated. The long and broad street opposite to western gateway known as 'gāndhi street' connects the temple with the main road. Tiruvāpaikkā is a compact little town nucleating around this temple.

PHYSICAL FEATURES :

Both Śrīraṅgam (occupying an area of 160 acres) and Tiruvāpaikkā are situated in the widest part (at the western side) of the island extending upto 27 kilometres (17 miles) from the point of bifurcation of the Kāverī into two branches known as Kolliḍam and Kāverī at the upper Anicut. At the confluence it is actually separated by the Grand Anicut (Kallanai). Comparitively speaking,
the area around Śrīraṅgam is fully studded with several constructions in the course of its growth; but Tiruvāṉaiḷai does not have so many constructions in spite of the availability of more space in and around the complex. Private constructions are seen to-day from the fifth prākāra (outer wall) onwards at Śrīraṅgam and from the fourth prākāra onwards (outer wall) at Tiruvāṉaiḷai. This growth in course of time has eclipsed the availability of space for cultivation to support the activities of the temple. Tiruvāṉaiḷai also faces almost similar situation but to a lesser degree. The sprawling nature of these two temples compel them to a very great extent to buy or acquire the land-holdings elsewhere and more particularly either on the North of Kollidam or on the South of Kāverī. The eastern parts of this island might have once belonged to these temples though no direct evidence is available. There are only a few strips of land to-day in these parts that really belong to these two temples or to the temple servants who might have inherited them as service īḷams and now holding the ownership. The inscription of these temples state that lands outside this island and even from far off places were donated to the temple. In a way there had been a competition in owning lands in and around these river basins between the temples and individual. In so far as Tiruvāṉaiḷai is concerned we find on one occasion.
i.e. 1232-33 A.D. that the temple acquired lands to the extent of 21 and odd ವೆಳ (about 145 acres) from a single village on the North bank of Kollidam called Rājarājan Kūparāgudi (now identifiable) at a point very near the temple across the river.

The garbhagriha of the temple is below the ground level and is always surrounded by water which is indeed a curious phenomenon. An arrangement has been made by which through water is baled out from the precincts of the linga where water surrounds it again and again.

PLACE NAMES AND THEIR ORIGINS:

Aiyādigal Kāḻavarkōn (586-610 A.D.) in his Kāṭētra Vinīla refers to this place as Āṇāikka, and this is the first and the foremost reference to this place and the temple. Appar (c.625 A.D.) gives the origin of the temple and particularly relates how the spider became the Chōla king Köchčhangappān in his rebirth by the grace of God and built this temple. He refers to the place as Āṇikka. Kapiladevar mentions this place as Āṇaiyūr. Sekkilār (12th century) refers to this place as Kāmar Pati. (a place loved by all). He gives the etymological meaning of Tiruvāṇāikka and says that the place derived its name because of the deep penance and worship by the white
elephant of the Lord who was pleased to take his stand under the Vannāval tree. (Jambu tree).

Kālamēgam (15th century) gives different names for this place; Amutāsvaram, Karivagam, Kāvai, Dantivāgam Nañabhumi, Nañanagar, Ām anra bhūtalam. Kāvai is the abbreviated form of Tiruvānaikkā. Most of the names mentioned above indicate the association of elephant with this place. The Tiruvānaikkā Ula by this poet gives the origin of the place. Pushpadanta, a ganañātha of Lord Śiva was cursed to be born as an elephant and he prayed Lord and attained salvation in this place. The lord had ordered that the place should be named as Tiruvānaikkā. Arupagirināthar (15th century) refers this place as Kāvai, Gajāraṇyam, Kayappati, Karivagam, Sambu (Jambu) kēśvaram.

Tiruvānaikkā seems to be the ancient name perpetuated through the ages as evidenced by almost all the Tamil inscriptions from this temple up to the period of Nāyakas, though the other sources give different names.

The term Tiruvānaikkā means 'elephant grove' and the place is presently called Tiruvānaikkāval, Tiruvānaikkōvil and Jambukēśvaram. The Sanskrit name Jambukēśvaram had its origin from the name of the legendary sage symbolised by the Jambu tree and is applied to the God of this temple.
because the image is placed under a Jambu tree. Jambuka is a diminutive form of Jambu. The association of trees with place names is a well known phenomenon in human history especially so in Tamilnadu. The names Marudamundurai (Madurai), Āḷāṅgulam, Āḷāṅgudi, Āḷandurai, Vēppiṭaipatti, Vēmbattūr, Vēppaṅgulam, Kadambattūr, Papaiyūr, Pulilampatti etc. suggest very clearly that the places so called now have sprung up after the respective trees such as Marudam, Āḷa (bānian) Vēmbu (margosa), Kadamba, Papai (palmyra) and Pulī (tamarind). Besides there are famous centres of worship among saivites and vaishnavities which are associated with particular trees held sacred on account of the fact that the deities of the place were housed under the respective trees. These trees, in addition to the tīrtha, athala and mūrti are also respected and worshipped (e.g. mango (āmra) in Kambarēśvarar temple at Kāṇchi). This was perhaps the beginnings of temples in Tamilnādu Tiruveppāval (Jambu or Jambuka) is the tree of the place (athala vṛiksha) and hence the name Jambukeśvaram i.e. the place where Īśvara i.e. Śiva is pleased to be under the Jambu or Jambuka tree.

**THE NAMES OF THE MAIN DEITIES:**

Appar refers to the main deity as Saḷumīrttirāḷ meaning the linga here is made up of water and even now the linga is surrounded by water. Tiruṇānaśambandar refers
to the main deity as Āṇaikkā Appal and Veppāval amarṇdu uṟai vṛdiyan and the inscriptions also refer to the deity as "tiruvempāval kīl initu amarṇdu aruliva tirubbhuvanapati i.e. Lord of the three worlds, who is pleased to reside gladly under the shade of the sacred white Jambu tree and in later period the God is named as Jambukēśvarar. An inscription of Parāntaka I (946–47 A.D.) refers to the main deity as Mahādeva Pattārakar (bhātṭāraka). Another inscription of Kulottunga I dated in his 47th year (1116–17 A.D.) refers to the deity as Tiruvāṇaikkā Emperumān. The epigraph of Rājarāja III (= 1240 A.D.) refers to the deity as tiruvāṇaikkā Udaiyā nāyanār whereas the epigraph of Viṭa Rāmanatha (= 1260 A.D.) refers to the deity as Tiruvāṇaikkā Udaiyar. Later epigraphs refer to the deity as "Nāyanār alagiya Tiruvāṇaikkā Udaiya tambirāpar. But now the deity is more familiarly known by the Sanskrit name Jambukēśvarar. The other names of the deity such as Tiru-

vaṇaikkā Udaiyar etc. popular in Chōla - Hoysala period disappear especially in Vijayanagara times.

Appar refers to the goddess as Vādiveyamangai.
The present name Akhilapādeśvari (one who rules over the universe) seems to have gained currency only after 1260 A.D. for there is a reference to an inscription of Jata-
varma Sundara Pāṇḍya I of both Vadivēyumāṅgaḷ and Akhilāṭānāyaki. Kālamēgam (15th century) refers to the deity as Vagivudaiya māṅgaḷ along with the other name Akhilāṭānāyaki. It is to be noted in this connection that more importance is given to the goddess Akhilandesvāri than the presiding deity of the temple in later days. In the two athalamuparamā namely Pantiyapa puranam by Kamalai Nanapprahasar in 1566 A.D. and Tiruvāṇaikkā puranam by Kraochhiappa Munivar in 1783 A.D. We get the stories about Śiva, Dēvi, Jambu Muni, elephant and spider connecting the place and the temple and about the nāva tīrthas with their related legends.

According to puranic version God Śiva himself told the greatness about this sthala to Umadēvi and Nandi. A penitent saint (Jambu Muni) here swallowed a jambu fruit with its seed after offering it to God Śiva as Hivedana. The seed sprouted and became a tree in the very body of the saint. At the request of the saint, Śiva took his place as a linga which was made by water by Umadevi who came here to do penance at the instructions of the Lord. Hence the place is called Jambukēśvaram and the linga is called Jambunathar. Both the Muni and dēvi got the grace of God. By this time two Śiva ganas called Pushpadanā and Mālyavān were born in this kahetra by a curse one as a white elephant
and the other as a spider. Beholding the linga, the elephant began a daily worship of Śiva with flowers (arbhaṇa) and offered a shower of water (abhisheka) with its trunk. The spider also worshipped the same linga, its service being in the nature of spreading its web over the linga with its thread in the manner of canopy over the linga so as to check the fall on it of dry leaves from the tree. Taking the spider’s web as unclean moss or cobweb, the elephant destroyed it and proceeded with its own worship in the manner as detailed above. The spider spun its nest again and again over the linga and the elephant removed it relentlessly again and again. Neither the spider nor the elephant understood each other and became violent opponents. One day the spider made its way into the elephant’s trunk and bit it frequently. Unable to bear the pain the elephant dashed its trunk on the ground and fell down dead. The spider which was lying hidden within the elephant’s trunk was also killed as the elephant was dashing its trunk. Admiring their devotion God gave them salvation (mokṣha) and named the place as Tiruvaṅgaiṅkaā.

Mālyavaṅ who was the spider in the story, took rebirth this time in the royal Chola family. Subhādeva was then the Chola king. Having no children he and his
wife Kamalādevī did penance. The kind God granted them their desire. The spider of the former birth entered the queen's womb. When she had labour pains the queen was told by astrologers that if the delivery of the child could be delayed by one nāligai (24 minutes) the child would rule over the 3 worlds. Longing to have a celebrated son, the queen bade her attendants to tie her legs and hang her head down with feet up till the auspicious hour passed. When she was let loose at the correct time, she gave birth to a boy of ravishing beauty but with red eyes as a result of forced stay in the womb. She cried out of joy "my king of red eyes" and so crying did immediately. King Subhadēva crowned him at the right age. Kochengappān who had reminiscence or knowledge of his previous birth and service to God began building this temple for Lord Śiva near the white Jambu tree in the elephant grove, where he, as a spider, had formerly worshipped the linga.

Kochengappān is said to have constructed, according to the statement made by Tirumaigai Kēḻvar the 70 mādakkōil i.e., shrines built on a raised platform which is generally attributed to the memory of the king about his previous birth involving him in a fight with the elephant so as to prevent it from entering the temple.
It is almost futile to analyse the *sthalamūrāpa* with the methods of historical criticism. It is typical of the Indian way of recording the history of a hoary institution like temples by investing them with a divine origin and connecting them with the Gods Brahma, Indira and sages like Agastiya etc. These type of stories are repeated in the *sthalamūrāpa* of many a temple in the same monotonous pattern. Their aim was to appeal to faith and not reason. Nevertheless, it cannot be gain said that these legends were quite popular among the devotees through the ages.

A more detailed study of the place, names of deities has been taken up in the chapter on Literary works about the temple.
REFERENCES

1. Tiruvannikā temple inscriptions:

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The texts of unpublished inscriptions also were made available to me (by the kind courtesy of the Chief Epigraphist, ASI, Mysore) and they have been thoroughly studied.

2. Śrīraṅgam Temple Inscriptions:

SII., Vol.24. Nos. 1 to 10, 12 to 108, 194 to 203, 265 to 277, 282, 293.


11. All the temples of Śiva bear names ending in Īśvaram such as Rājarājēśvaram, Kēdaśvaram, Tirukkandēśvaram etc.

12. **Mūvar Tevaram**, Verses 60. 1-10.


15. ARSIE., 1938, No.6.

16. Ibid., 1891. No.31; SII., Vol.3, No.76.

17. Ibid., 1938, No.13.

18. Ibid., 1938, No.4.

19. Purur Tevaram, Verse 60.10.

20. ARSIE., 1891, No.32.


23. Tirumangai Alvar, Periva Tirumoli, VI, 6.